

Søren Kierkegaard

*Fear &  
Trembling*

*Dialectical Lyric*



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Trembling*

*Dialectical Lyric*

Translated, with Introduction, Notes, and  
Historical Glossary of Kierkegaardian Terms, by

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# Editor's Introduction

## §1

Dare one write an Introduction to a classic text like *Fear and Trembling*? A reader's reason for reading such an Introduction is to get at the classic text itself, which for some reason has become too old, or too difficult, to easily access directly. Yet many a reader has noticed that Introductions to classic texts are usually not only duller and more scholarly, but even often harder to understand than the text to which they intend to introduce a reader. When C. S. Lewis was asked to write an Introduction to Athanasius's *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, he wrote:

I have found as a tutor in English Literature that if the average student wants to find out something about Platonism, the very last thing he thinks of doing is to take a translation of Plato off the library shelf and read the *Symposium*. He would rather read some dreary modern book ten times as long, all about "isms" and influences and only once in twelve pages telling him what Plato actually said. . . . The student is half-afraid to meet one of the great philosophers face to face. He feels himself inadequate and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator. The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism.<sup>1</sup>

My experience as a teacher of philosophy is not too different from that of Lewis teaching English Literature. The classic texts, in my experience, are both more valuable and easier understood than more contemporary and "up to date" Introductions to the same set of ideas and arguments. More importantly, the average student seems to grow more through wrestling with a classic text, with all its idiosyncrasies, oddities, and errors, than through learning a detailed, streamlined summary of what a contemporary scholar thinks the classic author meant. Perhaps the streamlining, intended to remove embarrassments, also removes much of what was exciting in the same text.

The situation of someone writing an Introduction to Kierkegaard, however, is a bit more awkward than Lewis's. Both Kierkegaard and Athanasius would have understood themselves *contra mundum*, against the world, but Athanasius fought an open battle concerning doctrines openly disputed, whereas Kierkegaard's first goal was to

make it apparent that there was a dispute over which to battle. In a journal from 1850, he writes

When the debate is about doctrine, it is easy to keep the issue in focus. The difficulty of my task is of course that I say: In general, the doctrine, as it is presented is entirely sound. Thus I am not fighting against that. My contention is that something should follow from this.<sup>2</sup>

He first of all made it his task to show that his opponents had deceived both themselves and others into accepting a false, and all-too-easy conception of existence—including the Christian life—without ever quite realizing that they had substituted one set of ideas for another. Possessed of prodigious erudition and knowledge, they had nonetheless robbed existence of its fear and trembling, consistently making things easier and easier.

Kierkegaard confronted this attitude in a variety of ways, sometimes ironic, sometimes earnest, sometimes humorous. One of his pseudonyms, the loafer Johannes Climacus, concluded that “when all join together to make everything easier in every way, there remains only one possible danger, namely, the danger that the easiness would become so great that it would become all too easy.”<sup>3</sup> Kierkegaard’s writings, then, often intend to combat the general tendency of thinking that the most important aspects of human existence—determining the ultimate goals and anchors of human life—could be made easier and easier in the same way that technological improvements have made travel easier and easier.

Now comes the point that really sticks out to the Introduction writer. Why is it so hard to introduce Kierkegaard? An Introduction is responsible for creating a bridge or pathway by which the reader can properly approach the text, receive its message, wrestle with it, and grow through encountering it. It is meant to make it easier to approach the text. Is there a straightforward way to make it easier for a reader to approach a text whose author had the goal of making things difficult? Whose author despised “paragraph gobblers” and summary writers precisely because they made encountering difficult ideas all too easy, all too forgettable?

## §2

Perhaps it could go like this:

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813–1855) was born and died in Copenhagen, Denmark. His authorship was primarily concerned with matters in the disciplines of philosophy<sup>4</sup> and theology,<sup>5</sup> but he also made important contributions in the fields of literary theory,<sup>6</sup> drama<sup>7</sup> and theater criticism,<sup>8</sup>



musical aesthetics,<sup>9</sup> and dance criticism,<sup>10</sup> and his influence haunts not only literature<sup>11</sup> but both stage<sup>12</sup> and cinema.<sup>13</sup> Although he had wide-ranging knowledge of the Greek and Roman classics<sup>14</sup> and saw himself as protecting core doctrines of the early Christian church, he is known principally for his contemporary controversies—his opposition to the “passionless” and “spiritless” tendencies of modern society,<sup>15</sup> his criticism of the German philosopher G. W. F. Hegel<sup>16</sup> and his many followers in Denmark,<sup>17</sup> his creative appropriation of various ideas and preoccupations arising from German Romanticism<sup>18</sup> such as mood,<sup>19</sup> folktales,<sup>20</sup> mythology,<sup>21</sup> irony,<sup>22</sup> and (unhappy) romantic love<sup>23</sup>—and for being the “first existentialist”<sup>24</sup> or the “father of existentialism,”<sup>25</sup> for his role in giving decisive philosophical attention to the nature of freedom<sup>26</sup> and self-formation,<sup>27</sup> above all for his groundbreaking work on freedom, anxiety, and self-positing, and for the influence of these ideas upon Martin Heidegger,<sup>28</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre,<sup>29</sup> and Simone de Beauvoir.<sup>30</sup>

“The scholarly introduction distracts by its very erudition,”<sup>31</sup> as one of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms puts it. Yes, I think it is fair to say that an Introduction like this, despite its scholarly earnestness, is not especially helpful for someone first approaching Kierkegaard. It would have been easy to continue the Introduction with an account of the intellectual currents of his time, followed by a detailed account of the two, three, or four phases of Kierkegaard’s authorship, followed next by an account of how the first authorship in particular proceeded through the complicated use of pseudonyms and “indirect communication,” the relationship between the pseudonymous writings and the simultaneously published “discourses” that directly concerned religious topics and were published under Kierkegaard’s own name, then to zero in on *Fear and Trembling* and its particular role in developing the ideas of *Either/Or* Part I and Part II, how these ideas then pointed forward to the problems and ideas of works like *Philosophical Fragments*, *Stages on Life’s Way*, and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*—not to mention its relationship with important “Second Authorship” texts like *The Sickness unto Death* and *Works of Love*—and then, finally, to proceed to a summary of the text itself, an overview of each section, some words on its various targets, and so on. I wonder if any reader could make it through such an Introduction, and if they did, whether they would not be more exhausted and confused when they had finished it than if they had simply begun *Fear and Trembling* with no Introduction at all.

Perhaps worse, suppose that the Introduction somehow skated through these dangers and provided a memorable and easily digested summary of the main ideas and arguments of *Fear and Trembling*. Such a scholarly Introduction could all too easily provide a substitute for the text and fall into a kind of performative contradiction,

leading readers to become dependent upon exactly the kind of substitution Kierkegaard hoped to break down. Its summaries and reconstructed arguments would provide the reader with a “map” to the text that might easily prevent the reader from encountering the text in all its strength and vigor, its danger and terror.

### §3

It is not too hard to imagine another way of proceeding:

<sup>32</sup>“An old man, who himself suffered exceedingly from melancholy, has a son in his old age, who inherits all this melancholy.”<sup>33</sup> Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born in 1813, seventh and last child of Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard and Ane Sørensdatter Kierkegaard. Michael Pedersen had grown up in severe poverty in rural Jutland, his family indentured servants of the parish priest. After an uncle brought him to Copenhagen and introduced him to business, he became a successful clothing merchant. This success allowed him to retire early, at the age of forty, but retirement brought the stern Michael Kierkegaard little satisfaction; he was haunted by the belief that God had cursed him for sins of his youth—haunted, above all, by his memory of the day when, as a young man, he had shaken his fist at heaven and cursed God for his wretched life.<sup>34</sup> He believed that his wealth was no blessing and that he would live to see each of his children die before him by the age of thirty-three, the age when Christ had died. In fact, five of his children did die by the age of thirty-three, and this seventh child was already the second child named Søren. Reflecting on this melancholy, death-obsessed household, Kierkegaard would later say that he had been “the entire misfortune of my life” and that “although I was a child, I was confusedly taken to be an old man,” and “I understood myself as suffering from the fact that I was an old man when I was eight years old and had never been young.”<sup>35</sup> The extravagances of Kierkegaard’s twenties—the hours spent in cafés chatting, smoking cigars, and sipping coffee, his constant attendance at the theater, the expensive drinking party for which he billed his father, repeatedly putting off taking his degree from the University of Copenhagen—are best understood perhaps as a form of rebellion against this over-stern childhood, or perhaps as the necessary correction of a stubborn spirit spreading its wings after being kept too long in confinement; as Sven Møller Kristensen put it, a “violent outcome” is expected when “the normal desires of life are halted by a pietistic upbringing.”<sup>36</sup> The religious earnestness of Kierkegaard’s thirties, on the other hand, can be understood in light of his final reconciliation with his father just before the latter’s death, and a consequent reconciliation

with his father's austere, often dour Protestantism. His writing career drew energy from the sharp opposition of his father's austerity and his own youthful aestheticism, developing out of this opposition, or "contradiction" as he might term it, a large and substantive body of material for his writing career. Throughout his authorship Kierkegaard restlessly returned to various psychological positions he had occupied or been tempted to adopt in order to draw out the consequences of these positions and the lives to which they would lead.

A "psychologizing" Introduction of this kind might seem appealing for reasons quite different from the "scholarly" one. The psychologizing Introduction provides not a mass of details but a point of origin from which it claims it can explain Kierkegaard's preoccupations and ideas. The psychologizing Introduction says that knowledge of Kierkegaard's childhood and family influences will provide a privileged entry point for his writings: a story of causal influences, woven together through the enforced proximity of the childhood home—a neat, packaged portrait from which we can now derive his later ideas as either continuations of or reactions to the overbearing personality and self-tormenting guilt of his father. It promises that this description of Kierkegaard's family home will provide an accessible approach to Kierkegaard's writings and a means to understanding what they are up to.

Perhaps it is best to consider it in conjunction with another possible Introduction below.

#### §4

Søren Kierkegaard died when he was just forty-two. He spent his twenties doing nothing much in particular, taking a leisurely ten years to acquire a degree for which his eldest brother, Peter, required only four, and at thirty-eight his publications almost ceased, until the death of Bishop Mynster in 1854 produced a sudden explosion over the final year of his life, the so-called "Attack on Christendom," during which time he published pamphlets and newspaper articles that leveled searing attacks against the state-supported Danish church. How, then, can we explain his miraculous output during the years 1843 to 1850, during which he published more than a dozen often sizable books on an astounding array of topics and several dozen discourses containing meditations on a variety of biblical texts and religious topics? John Updike, writing of Iris Murdoch, said:

Her tumultuous love life had been a long tutorial in suffering, power, treachery, and bliss; the romantic seethe was for her, like the sea for Conrad and war for Hemingway, a treasury of essential impression.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Similarly, it was Kierkegaard's unhappy love that made him. His vexed romance with Regine Olsen provided a king's ransom of "essential impression" concerning the stuff of life and an endless energy or "infinite impulse" directed into his writing. "Beloved she was," he wrote years later. "My existence was to accentuate hers absolutely; my activity as an author could also be viewed as a monument to her praise and honor."<sup>39</sup> They met in 1837, he proposed in 1840, and he broke the engagement in 1841; despite their estrangement and Regine's becoming married to another man, they contrived to frequently pass each other while walking the streets of Copenhagen—never speaking until the day Regine was to leave with her husband for the Danish West Indies, when she tracked him down, found him, and shouted out, "God bless you! May all go well with you," leaving him in stunned silence.<sup>40</sup> They never met again. When he died, Kierkegaard left her the entirety of his estate, including a set of his own writings specially bound for her.<sup>41</sup> Every thread of Kierkegaard's authorship is spun from the thrill, the seethe, and the suffering of this relationship, and for the reader of his difficult, multifaceted, and confusing works, knowledge of this love is the key that opens every stubborn door and the magic words that dismiss every obfuscating illusion. This is, above all, true of his most famous work, *Fear and Trembling*, a work whose occasion was Kierkegaard's realization that in breaking their engagement in order to protect Regine from the suffering she would endure as his wife, he had lacked faith.<sup>42</sup>

Who doesn't enjoy a love story? Who doesn't love a scandal? Like the psychologizing Introduction, this Introduction makes a promise to the reader. Instead of Kierkegaard's home, it focuses on a particular moment in his life; in lieu of the father, it places the beloved, the muse, the individual to whom Kierkegaard owed his transformation from a directionless, melancholy young man with literary talent into an astoundingly productive author whose every pain was now channeled into authorship. It promises that the details of this relationship will allow the reader to access Kierkegaard's writings, sidestep his concealments, and discern his meaning.

Now, it seems that at least one of these promissory notes must come up void. How could both be true? And there is another problem: if either works, then Kierkegaard would consider himself to have failed. In one of his most important reflections on the nature of writing, he said:

Anyone who experiences anything primitively also experiences in ideality the possibilities of the same thing and the possibility of its opposite. These possibilities are his legitimate literary property. His own personal actuality, however, is not. His speaking and his producing are, in fact, born of silence.<sup>43</sup>

If we work through this statement backward, we first see that Kierkegaard denied that an author should begin with his own "actuality," that is, with the details, the facts,

actions, and events of his life. The author, properly speaking, remains silent about these details. Instead, Kierkegaard refers us to a particular mode of experience, saying that when someone experiences something “primitively,” that person also experiences “in ideality” its full range of possibilities, including its opposite.

Experiencing something “primitively” means having a direct encounter with it rather than one that is derivative or indirect; it marks the difference between experiencing the grief of seeing a parent die and knowing about such grief only by reading about it. Kierkegaard is therefore saying that what the author can do is grasp not just their own grief but (“in ideality”) the possibilities of such grief in general. The author can use this experience to open up a whole range of possible ways such grief might be felt or processed by other individuals. The author does not write up their own grief but keeps silent about that. Instead, the author writes about the possibilities illumined by his own primitive experience.

If Kierkegaard deliberately refrained from writing about “his own actuality,” then should we expect that actuality to be the key to understanding his writings? And why should our own derived, non-primitive experience of his life’s events be more useful for grasping these possibilities than other methods—are they even the methods that he himself supposed would allow readers to grasp him? If his writings only express his childhood or his failed romance, then do his writings even have any significance for *us*, his readers, who did not experience these things ourselves?

Adopting either of these approaches, then, means trying to approach Kierkegaard even while following a method at odds with what he would have wanted and makes it questionable whether there is even any reason for reading his works.

## §5

Let us try now something quite different; let us quote from Kierkegaard’s own writings and see how one of his pseudonyms, Johannes Climacus introduces himself:

It is now about four years since the idea came to me of wanting to try my hand as an author. I remember it very clearly. It was on a Sunday; yes, correct, it was a Sunday afternoon. As usual, I was sitting outside the café in Frederiksberg Gardens. . . . I had been a student for a half score of years. Although I was never lazy, all my activity was nevertheless only like a splendid inactivity, a kind of occupation I still much prefer and for which I perhaps have a little genius. I read a great deal, spent the rest of the day loafing and thinking, or thinking and loafing, but nothing came of it.

So there I sat and smoked my cigar until I drifted into thought. Among other thoughts, I recall these. You are getting on in years, I said to myself, and are becoming an old man without being anything and without actually

undertaking anything. On the other hand, wherever you look in literature or in life, you see the names and figures of celebrities, the prized and highly acclaimed people, prominent or much discussed, the many benefactors of the age who know how to benefit humankind by making life easier and easier, some by railroads, others by omnibuses and steamships, others by telegraph, others by easily understood surveys and brief publications about everything worth knowing, and finally the true benefactors of the age who by virtue of thought systematically make spiritual existence easier and easier and yet more and more meaningful—and what are you doing?

At this point my introspection was interrupted because my cigar was finished and a new one had to be lit. So I smoked again, and then suddenly this thought crossed my mind: You must do something, but since with your limited capabilities it will be impossible to make anything easier than it has become, you must, with the same humanitarian enthusiasm as the others have, take it upon yourself to make something more difficult. This idea pleased me enormously; it also flattered me that for this effort I would be loved and respected, as much as anyone else, by the entire community. In other words, when all join together to make everything easier in every way, there remains only one possible danger, namely, the danger that the easiness would become so great that it would become all too easy. So only one lack remains, even though not yet felt, the lack of difficulty. Out of love of humankind, out of despair over my awkward predicament of having achieved nothing and of being unable to make anything easier than it had already been made, out of genuine interest in those who make everything easy, I comprehended that it was my task: to make difficulties everywhere. It was also especially striking to me that I might actually have my indolence to thank that this task became mine. Far from having found it, like an Aladdin, by a stroke of good luck, I must instead assume that my indolence, by preventing me from opportunely proceeding to make things easy, has forced me into doing the only thing that remained.<sup>44</sup>

One cannot easily tell the story better than Kierkegaard himself. Climacus, however, is not Kierkegaard. He is like a humorous distillation of certain aspects and possibilities of Kierkegaard's life. For example, we notice the complete absence of the very historical factors highlighted before, the father and the love interest—two factors heavy on Kierkegaard's mind when he reached his "half score" of student years and felt the need to complete his studies. Nonetheless, Climacus explains why, even though Kierkegaard wrote quite interesting Introductions for most of his writings, the typical Introduction fits Kierkegaard so poorly. His own Introductions might be humorous, earnest, ironic, or all of these at once; they might be bracing, distant, and

removed, or warm and intimate. He even wrote a work—*Prefaces*—that was nothing but one Introduction after another. His Introductions are among the most accessible and often the most entertaining of his writings and show a very alert sense of where his reader is and how to help that reader follow a thread into the work itself. However, his Introductions are not intended to make things *easier* for the reader. They are instead meant to prepare the reader to encounter difficulties.

In a late writing, he argued that what his contemporaries called “a teacher in Christianity no more resembles what the New Testament understands by a teacher in Christianity . . . than a chest of drawers resembles a dancer.”<sup>45</sup> If joining existence is more like dancing than like hopping on the train, then should we be surprised that on the first day of class, the teacher says: “Be prepared to sweat.” Should we expect any different? Would we want it to be any different?

## Endnotes

1. C. S. Lewis, Introduction, *On the Incarnation* (Yonkers, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 2.
2. Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, vol. 24, p. 117; NB22:23; *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, vol. 8, p. 113. (Journals cited hereafter in this format: SKS 24, 117; NB22:23 / KJN 8, 113.)
3. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 187.
4. The history and development of this influence is far too complex to present in summary form. In lieu of this, the student might benefit from a few reliable starting points. With this in view, the reader could begin with Georg Lukács's essay "The Foundering of Form against Life" (collected in *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock [New York: Columbia University Press, 2010], 44–58), which in the words of John Dickson reintroduced the "European cultural elite" to Kierkegaard at the turn of the twentieth century ("Georg Lukács and the Leap of Faith," *The European Legacy* 25, no. 6 (2020), 620) along with Simone de Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Citadel Press, 1976). Within the world of contemporary analytic philosophy, one can do well to begin with Harry Frankfurt (1929–2023) and Robert Merrihew Adams (b. 1937). With Frankfurt, one should begin with *The Importance of What We Care About* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and *Reasons of Love* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) and then *Love, Reason, and Will: Kierkegaard after Frankfurt*, ed. Anthony Rudd and John Davenport (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015). For Adams, on the other hand, the reader can begin with *The Virtue of Faith and Other Essays in Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and his magnum opus, *Finite and Infinite Goods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Readers should also be aware of the critique presented in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984) and the response to this critique, which can be gauged through *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre: Essays on Freedom, Narrative, and Virtue*, ed. John J. Davenport and Anthony Rudd (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2001).
5. The influence of Kierkegaard upon theology is scarcely simpler to summarize than what can be said of his influence upon philosophy. Beyond the obvious examples of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer within the realm of Lutheranism (see Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968]; Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, trans. Martin Kuske and Isle Todt [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003]), the reader can usefully consult Heinrich Roos (*Søren Kierkegaard and Catholicism* [Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954] and David Gouwens, *Kierkegaard as Religious Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
6. On this front, one could simply begin with the large and growing number of articles titled "Kierkegaard and . . ." or ". . . and Kierkegaard," such as James E. Ruoff, "Kierkegaard and Shakespeare," *Comparative Literature* 20 (1968), 343–54; Toni Ann Culjak, "Dickinson and Kierkegaard: Arrival



at Despair," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1987), 145–55; William Wiegand, "Salinger and Kierkegaard," *Minnesota Review* 41 (1965): 137–56.

7. For an example, see John Gillies, "The Question of Original Sin in *Hamlet*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (2013): 396–97, 399–400, 403–5, 411, 424.

8. Examples of this can be found in George Pattison, "Søren Kierkegaard: A Theater Critic of the Heiberg School," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 23, no. 1 (1983), 25–33; Roy Martinez, "Acting with Kierkegaard," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2003), 299–307; András Nagy, "Kierkegaard's View on Theater 'with Continual References' to Contemporary Theater Theories," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 33 (2022), 141–73.

9. Kierkegaard is frequently mentioned in treatments of Mozart and *Don Giovanni*. For example, see Julian Rushton, *Don Giovanni* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 82–86.

10. A summary of the literature on this topic can be found in Alexander Jech, "Kierkegaard's Dancers of Faith and of Infinity," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 29 (2019), 29–57.

11. For example, see the novels of philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch (1919–1999), who stated that Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* was one of only three philosophical works that deeply influenced her (see Justin Broackes, *Iris Murdoch, Philosopher: A Collection of Essays* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012], 17, n42), or the writings of Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen).

12. A notable recent example of this haunting is provided by Stephen Adley Guirgis, *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005), with its powerfully affecting portrayal of Hell and Purgatory in terms of Kierkegaardian despair.

13. The two best examples are, first, Gabriel Axel's film *Babette's Feast*, based on the short story of the same name by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen), which presents a thoroughly Kierkegaardian exploration of love, resignation, and faith, and, second, Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*, in which the funeral sermon reproduces one of Kierkegaard's upbuilding discourses, "The Lord Gave, and the Lord Took Away; Blessed Be the Name of the Lord" (*Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990], 109–124).

14. Louis Mackey, in his invaluable *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 268, notes Kierkegaard's "veneration for the Greeks, and in particular his devotion to Socrates, outranked only by his devotion to Christ." The reader can find a summary and guide to further reading in Rick Anthony Furtak, "Greek Philosophy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), who discusses the way in which Kierkegaard "studied some classical authors and texts in a scholarly manner, giving sustained attention to these works in the original languages and consulting the secondary literature by leading historians of philosophy," paired with a more selective, less contextualized engagement with other classical authors (129), as well as the way in which "ancient philosophy is repeatedly cited as a model of what philosophy ought to be" (131).

15. Two examples of contemporary engagement with this aspect of Kierkegaard's thought can be found in John D. Mullen, *Kierkegaard's Philosophy: Self-Deception and Cowardice in the Present Age* (New York: Mentor Books, 1981); Ronald L. Hall, *Word and Spirit: A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
16. An excellent starting point for entering this vast literature can be found through Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980) and Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
17. Here one can usefully begin with Jon Stewart, *The Cultural Crisis of the Danish Golden Age: Heiberg, Martensen, and Kierkegaard* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2015), which begins with the Danish Golden Age and near the end positions Kierkegaard's critique relative to present debates.
18. The reader can find an entry into this discussion through reading Sylvia Walsh, "Living Poetically: Kierkegaard and German Romanticism," *History of European Ideas* 20, nos. 1–3 (1995), 189–94.
19. This idea is summarized and explained in Alexander Jech, "Narrative Variation and the Mood of Freedom in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 25 (2020), 24–56.
20. For a summary, the reader can consult Grethe Kjaer, "The Role of Folk and Fairy Tales in Kierkegaard's Authorship," in *Kierkegaard on Art and Communication*, ed. George Pattison (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992).
21. Kierkegaard's engagement with Greek mythic motifs and ideas (such as Agamemnon, Antigone, Ariadne, Eros, the Furies, Minerva, Nemesis, and Prometheus) is handled one by one in Katalin Nun and Jon Stewart, eds., *Kierkegaard's Literary Figures and Motifs*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 2015). His engagement with Norse mythology is summarized in Troy Wellington Smith, "From Enthusiasm to Irony: Kierkegaard's Reception of Norse Mythology and Literature," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 24 (2018), 223–46.
22. The reader can find the relationship between Kierkegaard and his Romantic and Idealist forebears developed in Fred Rush, *Irony and Idealism: Rereading Schlegel, Hegel, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), which situates Kierkegaard's view of irony in terms of a "triangulation" (213) and synthesis of elements of Schlegelian "Romantic" irony and Hegelian critiques of irony.
23. Rick Anthony Furtak, *Wisdom in Love* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005) situates Kierkegaard's views in relation to both the Greeks and certain Romantic preoccupations.
24. The reader can find this claim explored in R. Z. Friedman, "Kierkegaard: First Existentialist or Last Kantian?," *Religious Studies* 18 (1982), 159–70, and Robert Stern, "Kierkegaard," in *An Introduction to Modern European Philosophy*, ed. J. Teichman and G. White (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 49–61.

25. Examples of this claim are made in Alister E. McGrath, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Christian Thought* (city: Wiley Publishing, 1995), 301 (but this source is unreliable on Kierkegaard) and K. Brian Söderquist, "Kierkegaard and Existentialism: From Anxiety to Autonomy," in *A Companion to Kierkegaard*, ed. Jon Stewart (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 81–95.
26. The reader can consult Gregory R. Beabout, *Freedom and Its Misuses: Kierkegaard on Anxiety and Despair* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1996) and Michelle Kosch, *Freedom and Reason in Kant, Schelling, and Kierkegaard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
27. The reader can obtain bearings in this vast literature by beginning with Merold Westphal, *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996) and Hubert Dreyfus, "Kierkegaard on the Self," in *Ethics, Love, and Faith in Kierkegaard*, ed. Edward Mooney (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 11–23.
28. This relationship is difficult to trace at times because of Heidegger's silence, but interesting work has been done by Dan Magurshak, "The Keystone of the Kierkegaard–Heidegger Relationship," in *The Concept of Anxiety*, ed. Robert Perkins (Macon, AL: Mercer University Press, 1985), 167–95, and Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin, "You Can't Get Something for Nothing: Kierkegaard and Heidegger on How Not to Overcome Nihilism," *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 30 (1987), 33–75, to show this hidden influence.
29. For example, see K. Brian Söderquist, "Is Hell the Other? Kierkegaard and Sartre on the Dialectic of Recognition," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 26 (2021), 501–22.
30. I have already mentioned Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, which is invaluable in this connection. For discussion in the secondary literature, see Sylvia Walsh, "Feminine Devotion and Self-Abandonment: Simone de Beauvoir and Soren Kierkegaard on the Woman in Love," *Philosophy Today*, 42: Supplement (1998), 35–40; Mélissa Fox-Muratou, "Kierkegaard and Beauvoir: Existential Ethics as a Humanism," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook* 25 (2020), 241–64.
31. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 14.
32. Courtesy of Museum of National History, Frederiksborg Castle, Hillerød, Denmark.
33. Soren Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals*, trans. Alastair Hannay (New York: Penguin Random House, 1996), 229 (SKS 20, 35; NB:34 / KJN 4, 34).
34. See Walter Lowrie, *A Short Life of Kierkegaard* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1942), 71–73.
35. SKS 21, 333; NB10:153 / KJN 5, 344.
36. Sven Møller Kristensen, *Den Dobbelt Eros: Studier i den danske romantik* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1966), 242 (my own translation).
37. John Updike, "Young Iris," *Due Considerations: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 2007), 562.

38. Courtesy of the Royal Library, Denmark.
39. *SKS* 19, 443; *Not15:14 / KJN* 3, 443.
40. Joakim Garff, *Kierkegaard's Muse: The Mystery of Regine Olsen*, trans. Alastair Hannay (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 9–10.
41. *Kierkegaard's Muse*, 51; see also his retrospective on the relationship written out in Notebook 15 (*SKS* 19, 439; *Not15:6 / KJN* 3, 438) regarding the two vellum copies printed of his writings, “one for her and one for me.”
42. Kierkegaard, *Papers and Journals*, 144 (*SKS* 19, 231; *Not8:20 / KJN* 3, 226).
43. Søren Kierkegaard, *Two Ages: A Literary Review*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 98.
44. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 185–86.
45. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Moment and Other Late Writings*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 53 (*SKS* 14, 190 / *M*, 53).

# *Fear and Trembling*

*Dialectical Lyric*

BY  
JOHANNES DE SILENTIO\*

1843

## Notes on the Danish Edition Title Page

\*“Fear and Trembling” is a reference to Paul’s letter to the Philippians 2:12: “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God at work in you.”

“Dialectical Lyric” paradoxically juxtaposes two opposite genres:

“Dialectical” denotes the method as philosophical and focused upon addressing the problems and paradoxes within human life through logical development and rational means. This word goes back to the Socratic style of philosophy in which a position was proposed and then subjected to rigorous cross-examination with the aim of discovering problems in the concept; but this negative process could also be followed by a second positive phase in which someone attempts to reformulate the concept in light of the flaws exposed during cross-examination with the aim of correcting those problems and positing an improved formulation of the concept. The process could naturally then be continued until the concept could survive the process of Socratic cross-examination without any flaws being discovered (see *Meno* 86e–87b, *Phaedo* 100a–101d). For Kierkegaard, “dialectic” is not identical with this Socratic sense but often involves a concept being subjected (either actually or potentially) to philosophical analysis with the aim of drawing out its logical implications and potential contradictions.

For Kierkegaard, this Socratic meaning tends to be more important than the meaning of “dialectic” in G. W. F. Hegel’s (1770–1831) philosophy, where it denotes an ongoing and opposing movement in the nature of thought and in the world-historical process.

“Lyric,” on the other hand, denotes poetic methods and content, and very often the poet and poetry are used to denote art and the artist in general, and therefore “lyric” is concerned especially with the power of the poet to transfigure human experience into tightly controlled forms that are beautiful and interesting, which may be insightful, but may also obscure possible objections not just through its beauty but through a work of art’s apparent closure and completeness. “Johannes de Silentio”—“John of Silence,” “John the Silent,” or “Silent John”—is listed as the author of this work. The use of such pseudonyms is an important feature of Kierkegaard’s philosophical works. Whereas an author like Plato might write dialogues with multiple characters—who speak in their own voices and do not necessarily express Plato’s own views—Kierkegaard utilized the procedure of inventing multiple pseudonyms who expressed different points of view and argued with each other, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. The precise purpose of such a complex authorship is hotly debated but is related to Kierkegaard’s theory of “indirect communication.” The new reader should keep two things in mind: First, that Kierkegaard cannot be identified with Johannes and may or may not agree with any particular statement made by Johannes; second, that Kierkegaard nevertheless thought that the point of view expressed by Johannes was important and ought to be expressed, and that those who wrestled with it would gain an important understanding of the nature of faith.

The name itself may be intended to evoke St. John the Silent (454–558), who was known for favoring a silent and solitary life of contemplation—he fled to a desert monastery after nine years as bishop of Armenia and remained there until his death at 104. He fled public life because of what he regarded as his many sins.

An earlier draft lists the author as Simon Stylita, alluding to a hermit named Simon Stylites (390?–459) who spent thirty-seven years alone atop a pillar in the desert. The pseudonym Stylita listed his occupation as “solo dancer and private individual”; at that time, the title of the work was *Movements and Positions*, drawing upon the vocabulary of dance, an influence that will reappear later in the *Problemata*.



What Tarquin the Proud said in the garden by means of the poppies  
was understood by the son, but not by the messenger.

*Hamann*<sup>1</sup>



# FOREWORD

Not only in the world of commerce, but also in that of ideas, our age is holding a veritable clearance sale. Everything is to be had at such a bargain that the question is whether in the end anyone will make a bid. Every speculative scorekeeper who conscientiously tracks the momentous progress of modern philosophy, every lecturer, tutor, and student, every outsider and insider in philosophy, does not stand still at doubting everything but goes further. Perhaps it would be inappropriate and untimely to ask them where they are really going, but, out of politeness and modesty, it is to be considered settled that they have indeed doubted everything. It would surely otherwise be a strange claim to say that they *go further*. This preliminary movement they have surely all made, and presumably so easily they see no need to leave a word as to how; for not even someone who sought a little enlightenment anxiously and worriedly found as much as a helpful hint, not even a little dietary tip, concerning how one is to conduct oneself while subject to this gigantic task.

“But has not Descartes already done it?”<sup>2</sup> Descartes, a venerable, humble, and honest thinker whose writings surely no one can read without the deepest feeling, has done what he has said, and said what he has done. Alas! Alas! Alas! That is a great rarity in our age. Descartes did not, as he himself often enough repeats, doubt in relation to faith. (“At the same time we should remember, as noted earlier, that the natural light is to be trusted only to the extent that it is compatible with divine revelation . . . But above all else we must impress on our memory the overriding rule that whatever God has revealed to us must be accepted as more certain than anything else. And although the light of reason may, with the utmost clarity and evidence, appear to suggest something different, we must still put our entire faith in divine authority rather than in our own judgment.” *Principles of Philosophy*, I, § 28 and § 76.)<sup>3</sup> He has not cried “Fire!” and made it a duty for everyone to doubt; Descartes was a quiet and solitary thinker, not some bellowing night watchman. He modestly acknowledged that his method had significance only for himself and had its basis in his earlier, warped knowledge. (“My present aim, then, is not to teach the method which everyone must follow in order to direct his reason correctly, but only to reveal how I have tried to direct my own. . . . But as soon as I had completed the course of study at the end of which one is normally admitted to the ranks of the learned, I completely changed my opinion. For I found myself beset with so many doubts and errors that I came to think I had gained nothing from my attempts to become educated but increasing recognition of my ignorance.” *Discourse on Method*, pp. 2 and 3.)<sup>4</sup>

What the ancient Greeks (who also, after all, understood a little bit about philosophy) assumed to be a lifelong task—because proficiency in doubting is not acquired in days or weeks—what the old, battle-worn warrior achieved, who had preserved the equilibrium of doubt through all snares, undaunted in denying both the certainty of the senses and the certainty of thought, incorruptible in defying both the anxiety of self-love and the insinuations of compassion—from this point, everyone in our age begins.<sup>5</sup>

In our age, no one stands still at faith, but goes further. To ask where they are off to would perhaps be a bit foolhardy; it is, on the contrary, surely a sign of courtesy and culture that I should assume that everyone has faith, as otherwise it would surely be a strange claim to say that they *go further*. In those ancient days it was otherwise; then, faith was a task for the whole life, and one took it for granted that proficiency in faith is not acquired in days or weeks. When the aged believer drew near his end, having fought the good fight and kept the faith, his heart was then still young enough not to have forgotten the anxiety and trembling which chastised the youth, and which the man perhaps governed, but which no human being quite outgrows—except in the case of one who, as soon as possible, goes further. That point to which these venerable figures attained—there, everyone in our age begins, so as to go further.

The present writer is by no means a philosopher; he has not understood the System, whether it exists or whether it has been finished.<sup>6</sup> He already has enough for his weak head in the thought of what gigantic heads everyone in our time must have, since everyone has such gigantic thoughts. Even if one were able to translate the whole content of faith into conceptual form, it would not thereby follow that one had understood faith, understood how one entered into it, or how it entered into one. The present writer is by no means a philosopher; he is, *poetice et eleganter* [to put it poetically and elegantly], a freelance—one who neither writes the System nor underwrites the System, who neither swears by the System nor swears himself over to the System. He writes because it is a luxury for him that grows more pleasant and more assured the fewer there are who buy and read what he writes. He easily foresees his fate in an age that has cast off passion to serve scholarship—in an age when a writer who would have readers must be careful to write in such a way that his writing may be comfortably perused during the after-dinner nap, and be careful to fashion his outer appearance in conformity with that polite gardener's apprentice in *The Advertiser*, who with hat in hand and a good reference from his last employer, recommends himself to an esteemed public.<sup>7</sup> He foresees his fate: to be altogether ignored. He suspects the dreadful event, that zealous criticism will school him several times over. He dreads what is even more terrible, that one or another enterprising archivist, some paragraph-gobbler (who, in order to come to scholarship's rescue, is always willing to do with others' writing what Trop<sup>8</sup> "to preserve good taste" magnanimously did with *The Destruction of the Human Race*) shall chop him into digestible abstracts, and do it

with the same stiff inflexibility as that man who, to serve the science of punctuation, divided his discourse by counting words, so there were fifty words to the period and thirty-five to the semicolon.—I bow down in deepest deference to every systematic bag-snoop: “It is not the System, it has not the least to do with the System. I invoke everything good upon the System and upon the Danish shareholders in the System; for a tower it is hardly likely to become.<sup>9</sup> I wish them, each and all, happiness and blessing.”

Respectfully,  
Johannes de silentio

## Endnotes

1. Silentio quotes Hamann in German: “Was Tarquinius Superbus in seinem Garten mit den Mohnköpfen sprach, verstand der Sohn, aber nicht der Bote.” From Hamann’s *Schriften*, ed. Friedrich Roth, 8 vols. (Berlin: Bey G. Reimer, 1821–43), 3:190.

Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), German philosopher known for his work on language, knowledge, and philosophical theology, as a sometime friend of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), as the teacher of J. G. Herder (1744–1803) and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819), and for his subsequent influence upon German Romanticism and the revolt against Enlightenment rationalism. He translated David Hume into German and published his own work under the pen name *Der Magus im Norden*, “the Magus of the North.” An intense spiritual experience in his youth provided the foundation for his lifelong devotion to a form of Lutheran pietism, but his opposition to rationalism was expressed primarily in secular and philosophical terms.

Tarquin the Proud was the seventh and final king of Rome. He had contrived with his son, Sextus, to fool the neighboring Gabii into believing they had suffered a falling-out and that the father had flogged and expelled the son. The son, arriving in Gabii, gradually achieved their trust by leading their armies to greater and greater victories over the Romans. Finally, having achieved military command, he sent a messenger to his father asking what he should do now. Tarquin said nothing to the messenger but walked through his garden, striking off the heads of the tallest poppies. The frustrated messenger eventually left and returned to Sextus, reporting what he had seen. Sextus understood the message and executed or exiled all the leading men of the city.

2. René Descartes (1596–1650), French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist, often referred to as the father of modern European philosophy.

3. René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, two vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1:202–3, 221. Silentio quotes Descartes in Latin:

Memores tamen, ut jam dictum est, huic lumini naturali tamdiu tantum esse credendum, quamdiu nihil contrarium a Deo ipso revelatur. . . . Præter cætera autem, memoriæ nostræ pro summa regula est infigendum, ea quæ nobis a Deo revelata sunt, ut omnium certissima esse credenda; et quamvis forte lumen rationis, quam maxime clarum et evidens, aliud quid nobis suggerere videretur, soli tamen auctoritati divinæ potius quam proprio nostro iudicio fidem esse adhibendam. (Renati Descartes, *Opera philosophica* (Amsterdam: Typographia Blaviana, 1685), 1:8, 23; note that in this edition, page numbering begins anew at 1 with each new section).

What Descartes says about revelation in this passage strikes a very Abrahamic note. Silentio therefore presents Descartes as an example of both faith and doubt, thereby drafting him into paradoxical juxtaposition of roles.

4. Descartes, *Discourse on the Method* in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 1:112–13. Silentio again quotes Descartes directly in Latin:

Ne quis igitur putet, me hic traditurum aliquam methodum, quam unusquisque sequi debeat ad recte regendam rationem; illam enim tantum, quam ipsemet secutus sum, exponere decrevi.

. . . Sed simul ac illud studiorum curriculum absolvi (sc. juventutis), quo decurso mos est in eruditorum numerum cooptari, plane aliud coepi cogitare. Tot enim me dubiis totque erroribus implicatum esse animadverti, ut omnes discendi conatus nihil aliud mihi profuisse judicarem, quam quod ignorantiam meam magis magisque detexissem. (Renati Descartes, *Opera philosophica*, 1: 1–2).

However, the phrase “sc. juventutis” (“of youth”) does not appear in Descartes’s text.

5. *Silentio* refers to the ancient schools of skepticism, such as the academic skepticism that arose in the Academy beginning with Arcesilaus (c. 316–241 BC, leader of the Academy [“scholarch”], c. 267–241 BC) or the school of skeptics who followed Pyrrho (c. 365–275 BC), which argued on behalf of doubt as the best and most reasonable way to live. Specifics varied between schools and also among specific teachers within these schools, but perpetual doubt of some kind was recommended both for the sake of truth (because they held that suspension of belief was the most reasonable course when the truth is uncertain) and for the sake of the soul (because suspension of belief allowed the soul to find equanimity). Since human beings are so strongly inclined to believe the deliverances of the senses, among other things, it is difficult to doubt well, and a committed skeptic would require many years of practice to acquire the ability to suspend belief consistently and achieve the promised equanimity.

6. The first direct reference to the Hegelian philosophical “System,” the object of much irony, criticism, and ridicule in Kierkegaard’s writings. The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) produced one of the most powerful and systematic philosophies in the post-Kantian era of “German Idealism.” This philosophy had become extremely popular in Denmark during Kierkegaard’s lifetime; the Danish Hegelian were led by the philosopher Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–1884). For the student with no, or limited, exposure to Hegel, the key points to know are that the Hegelian System aimed to submit all of existence, including God, to reason, and claimed to have the intellectual resources to do so. *Silentio*’s target is therefore, in the first instance, the Hegelians, but also anyone displaying what he would consider the same intellectual hubris.

The more specific, proximate target of *Silentio*’s mockery in this passage seems to be the philosopher Rasmus Nielsen (1809–1884). Kierkegaard had already (in his own name) mocked Nielsen’s attempt to publish a series of booklets presenting the Hegelian System, in the newspaper article “Open Confession” (“Aabenbart Skriftemaal,” *Fedrelandet* no. 904, June 12, 1842, sp. 7245–52), saying: “It is the System that the age is working towards. Already Prof. Nielsen has published twenty-one logical §§, which form the first part of a logic, which in turn forms the first part of an all-comprehending encyclopedia, as indicated on the cover, without, however, its [final] size being further stated—presumably so as not to frighten, since one might well dare to conclude that it will become infinitely long.” Nielsen did not finish the work; the fourth volume, published in 1844, ends mid-sentence.

7. A reference to often-used illustration used in advertisements in the newspaper *Berliner Political and News Announcements* [*Berlingske politiske og Avertisements-Tidende*] by those seeking to hire a gardener. The illustration depicted a man bent forward with a watering can in his hand, watering

a few bushes. In 1843 one such advertisement asked for a “preferably unmarried gardener . . . proficient in his profession” who can “produce evidence of sobriety and good behavior” (see *SKS* 18, 170–71; *SKS* K18, 168).

**8.** In Johan Ludvig Heiberg’s (1684–1754) play *The Reviewer and the Beast* [*Recensenten og Dyret*], Trop, the writer of a tragedy titled “The Destruction of the Human Race,” tears his manuscript into two equal pieces, saying, “If it does not cost more to save good taste, why should we not do it?” *J. L. Heibergs Samlede Skrifter: Skuespil*, 7 vols. (Copenhagen: J. H. Schubothe, 1833–41); 3:221.

**9.** See Luke 14:28, where Jesus says in a parable, “For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?”

# PRELUDE<sup>1</sup>

There was once a man who as a child had heard that beautiful story of how God tested Abraham,<sup>2</sup> how he stood the test, kept the faith, and received once again a son against expectation.<sup>3</sup> When the man grew older, he read the same story with even greater admiration, for life had separated what had been united in the child's pious simplicity. The older he became, the more often his mind turned to that story. His enthusiasm became greater and greater, and yet less and less could he understand the story. Finally, he forgot everything else for its sake. His soul had but one wish, to see Abraham; one longing, to have been witness to that event. His desire was not to see the beautiful regions of the East, not the Promised Land's earthly glory, not the God-fearing couple whose old age God had blessed, not the aged Patriarch's venerable figure, not God-given Isaac's vibrant youth—he had nothing against the same thing coming to pass on a barren heath. His craving was to follow along on the three-day journey when Abraham rode with sorrow before him and Isaac by his side. His wish was to be present in that moment when Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw Mount Moriah in the distance, the moment when he left the ass behind and went along with Isaac up the mountain—for it was this that occupied him: not the artful weaving of the imagination but the shudder of the thought.

That man was no thinker; he felt no need to go beyond faith. It seemed to him that it must be most glorious to be remembered as its father, and an enviable lot to have it, even if no one knew about it.

That man was no learned exegete; he did not know Hebrew. Had he known it, then perhaps he could have easily understood the story of Abraham.

## I.

*And God tested Abraham and said, Take Isaac, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on the mountain that I will show you.<sup>4</sup>*

It was an early morning. Abraham got up promptly, he made ready the donkeys, and left his tents, taking Isaac with him, while Sarah looked out the window after them down through the valley, until she could see them no more. They rode in silence for three days; then, on the morning of the fourth day, Abraham said not a word, but lifted up his eyes and saw Mount Moriah in the distance. He left the servant boys

behind and, leading him by the hand, went alone with Isaac up the mountain. But Abraham said to himself: "What! I will not conceal from Isaac where this path is leading him." He stood still, laid his hand on Isaac's head for a blessing, and Isaac bowed in order to receive it. Abraham's countenance was fatherly, his gaze was gentle, his speech encouraging. But Isaac could not understand him; his soul could not be uplifted. He gripped Abraham's knees, pleading at his feet, begging for his young life, for his fair hope; he reminded him of the joy in Abraham's house, he recalled the sorrow and the loneliness. Then Abraham stood the boy up and walked with him, holding his hand, and his words were full of comfort and encouragement. But Isaac could not understand him. He climbed Mount Moriah, but Isaac did not understand him. Then Abraham turned away from him a moment—but when Isaac saw Abraham's countenance once again, it was changed; his gaze was wild, his appearance a terror. He grabbed Isaac by the chest, threw him to the ground, and said: "Stupid boy, do you believe that I am your father? I am an idolater. Do you believe that this is God's decree? No, it is my desire." Then Isaac shuddered, and cried out in his anguish: "God in Heaven, have mercy on me, God of Abraham, have mercy on me, I have no father on Earth, may you therefore be my father!" But Abraham said, softly and to himself: "Lord in Heaven, I thank you; it is surely better that he believe I am an inhuman monster than that he should lose faith in you."

\*

\*   \*

When the child must be weaned, then the mother blackens her breast; it would, of course, be a shame that the breast should seem lovely when the child must not have it. The child thus believes that the breast has changed, but the mother is the same—her gaze as loving and tender as always. Fortunate the one who did not need more terrible means by which to wean the child!

## II.

It was an early morning. Abraham got up promptly, he held and embraced Sarah, bride of his old age, and Sarah kissed Isaac, who had removed her disgrace<sup>5</sup>—her pride, her hope in all generations. Then they rode silently along the way, and Abraham's gaze was fixed upon the ground until the fourth day; then he lifted up his eyes and saw, far away, Mount Moriah, but his gaze turned itself back again to the ground. Silently he laid the wood in its place, bound Isaac, silently he drew the knife. Then he saw the ram, as God had foreseen. He sacrificed it and went home. — — — Upon that day Abraham grew old; he could not escape the thought that God had demanded this of him. Isaac thrived as formerly; but Abraham's eyes were darkened and he saw joy no more.



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When the child must be weaned, then the mother, maiden-like, hides her bosom, so that the child has a mother no more. Fortunate the child who did not lose the mother in some other way!

### III.

It was an early morning. Abraham got up promptly; he kissed Sarah, the young mother, and Sarah kissed Isaac, her delight, her joy at all times. And Abraham rode pensively along the way. He thought about Hagar and the son whom he had sent out into the wilderness.<sup>6</sup> He climbed Mount Moriah, he drew the knife.

It was a quiet evening. Abraham rode out alone, and he rode to Mount Moriah; he threw himself on his face, he begged God to forgive him his sin—that he had been willing to sacrifice Isaac, that a father had forgotten his duty to his son. He often rode out this lonely way, but he had no peace. He could not grasp how it was sin that he had been willing to sacrifice his best to God, that for which he would have happily laid down his life many times over; and if it was sin, if he had not loved Isaac this way, then he could not understand how it could be forgiven. For what sin was more terrible?

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\*   \*

When the child must be weaned, then the mother too is not without sorrow that she and the child are more and more separated, that the child, who first lay under her heart, then later rested upon her breast, shall no longer be so close. Thus they mourn together this brief sorrow. Fortunate the one who kept the child so close, and did not need to sorrow more!

### IV.

It was an early morning, and everything was prepared in Abraham's house. He parted with Sarah, and Eliezer,<sup>7</sup> the faithful servant, followed him out on the way until he again turned back. They rode out together with one mind, Abraham and Isaac, until they came to Mount Moriah. Though Abraham prepared everything for the sacrifice calmly and gently, yet right when he turned himself away and drew the knife, Isaac saw Abraham's left hand clenched in despair, and a shudder ran through his body—but Abraham drew the knife.

Then they returned home again, and Sarah hurried to meet them, but Isaac had lost the faith. Not a word is spoken of this in all the world, and Isaac never told a single person what he had seen, and Abraham did not suspect that anyone had seen it.

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When the child must be weaned, then the mother has the stronger food on hand, so that the child shall not perish. Fortunate the one who had the stronger food on hand!

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In this, and many similar ways, that man of whom we spoke thought over this event. Every time he returned home after a pilgrimage to Mount Moriah, he collapsed from fatigue, he folded his hands, and said: "No one, surely, was as great as Abraham; who can understand him?"

## Endnotes

1. In Danish, the word “Stemning” is used, with the meaning of an artistic miniature used to establish a particular mood. Kierkegaard also wrote the Greek προοίμια in the margin, the plural form of προοίμιον, whose base meaning is an “opening” or “introduction.” The English equivalent—drawn primarily from music—would be a prelude, which also is a kind of artistic miniature used to establish the mood for a whole piece, and is sometimes even composed or performed independent of any following work. In another work, *The Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis speaks of concepts and moods corresponding to each other, so that changes in one create changes in the other, and so that approaching a concept with the wrong mood falsifies the concept (*SKS* 4, 322 / *CA*, 14–15). Thus, perhaps Silentio, in providing us with this set of four poetic preludes to the main work, is attempting to establish the correct mood with which to approach the concept of faith.
2. Silentio uses four related terms to denote a test or trial: “to tempt,” “temptation” (*friste, Fristelse*); “to test,” “test,” (*prove, Prove*); “to try” (*forsøge*); “trial” (*Prøvelse*). Within *Fear and Trembling*, these words generally have the same meaning: to subject someone (or something) to a test or an ordeal, with the goal of making that person or object reveal or manifest that person or object’s latent qualities. Silentio, following usage in the Danish Bible, uses “to tempt” (*friste, Fristelse*) in two senses: either as a synonym for “to test” (*prove, Prove*) or in the ordinary sense of allurement or enticement toward performing a wrong or evil action. This double meaning is present in English as well but has grown uncommon; the first meaning of “tempt” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is “to test, put to the test, try” and is still popularly used in phrases like “tempting fate.” However, because this English usage has atrophied, whenever not denoting sinful allurement, I have translated *friste* and *Fristelse* as “to test” and “test” or “trial” throughout the text.
3. The story of Abraham is told in Genesis 12–25. This story begins with God’s calling Abraham out of Ur, promising him descendants and land (Gen. 12:1–2, 17:8) and, proceeding through several periods of difficulty in which Abraham sometimes manifests doubt but more often shows faith, culminates in the ultimate test of Genesis 22. Although the final test on Mt. Moriah is Silentio’s principal concern, *Fear and Trembling* contains many references to episodes within this larger story. The reader is encouraged to read this in its entirety.
4. A free but essentially accurate rendition of Genesis 21:1–2.
5. In the ancient Near East, childlessness was regarded as a disgrace for a woman.
6. See Genesis 16 and Genesis 21:9–21 for the story of Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian maid, and Ishmael, Abraham’s son by Hagar. This episode represented a failure to trust in God’s promise.
7. See Genesis 15:1–4. Eliezer, the “faithful servant,” was so trusted by Abraham that, had Isaac not been born, Eliezer would have been his heir.

## TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM

If there were no eternal consciousness in a human being, if, as foundation for everything, there lay only a wild, fermenting force, which, writhing in dark passions, generated everything, whether great or insignificant, if a fathomless, unfillable emptiness lay hidden under everything, what then would life be except despair? If such were the case, if there were no holy bond that united humanity, if one generation rose up after another like the leaves in the forest,<sup>1</sup> if one generation replaced another like the birdsongs in the forest, if a generation went through the world as a ship goes through the sea, as the wind through the desert, an unthinking and unfruitful business, if an eternal, always hungry forgetfulness lay in wait for its prey, and there was no power strong enough to wrest this from it—how empty and hopeless would life then be! But therefore it is not so, and just as God created man and woman, so too he formed the hero and the poet or orator. The latter can do nothing of what the former does, he can only admire, love, be delighted by, and rejoice over the hero. Thus he too is happy, no less than the other; for the hero is, as it were, his better nature, with which he is in love, yet he is pleased that the other is not himself, that his love can be admiration. He is recollection's genius, who can do nothing except call to mind what has been done, do nothing except admire what has been done; he takes nothing for his own but jealously guards what has been entrusted to him. He follows his heart's choice, but when he has found that which he sought, then he roams about by every man's door with his song and with his speech, so that everyone may admire the hero as he does, be proud of the hero as he is. This is his feat, his humble deed; this is his faithful service in the hero's house. If he remains faithful in this way to his love, striving day and night with the cunning of oblivion, which would trick him out of the hero, then he has fulfilled his calling, then he is united with the hero whom he has loved, who has loved him just as faithfully, for the poet is, as it were, the hero's better nature; as powerless, yes, as a memory is, but also transfigured as a memory is. Therefore no one shall be forgotten who was great, and even it takes longer, even if misunderstanding's cloud takes the hero away,<sup>2</sup> his lover will nonetheless come, and the longer the time gone by the more faithfully he will cling to him.

No! No one shall be forgotten who was great in the world; but each was great in his own way, and each in relation to the greatness of what *he loved*. For the one who loved himself became great by himself, and the one who loved other human beings became great through his devotion, but the one who loved God became greater than all. Each shall be remembered, but each became great in relation to his *expectation*. One became great through expecting the possible; another through expecting the

eternal; but the one who expected the impossible became greater than all. Each shall be remembered, but each was great entirely in relation to the greatness of that with which he struggled. For the one who struggled with the world became great through overcoming the world, and the one who struggled with himself became great through overcoming himself; but the one who struggled with God became greater than all. Thus did they struggle in the world, man against man, one against a thousand, but the one who struggled with God was greater than all. Thus did they struggle on earth: there was one who overcame everything through his own strength, and there was one who overcame God through his powerlessness. There was one who depended upon himself and overcame everything, there was one who, secure in his strength, sacrificed everything, but the one who believed God was greater than all. There was one who was great through his power, and one who was great through his wisdom, and one who was great through his hope, and one who was great through his love, but Abraham was greater than all, great through that power whose strength is powerlessness, great through that wisdom whose secret is folly, great through that hope whose form is madness, great through that love which is hatred toward oneself.<sup>3</sup>

By faith Abraham trekked out from the land of his fathers and became a stranger in the Promised Land.<sup>4</sup> He left one thing behind, and took one thing with him; he left his worldly understanding behind and took faith with him; otherwise, he would surely not have trekked out, but would, after all, have thought it was clearly unreasonable. By faith he was a stranger in the Promised Land, and there was nothing there which reminded him of that which he cherished, but everything tempted his soul, through its newness, to melancholy longing. And yet he was God's chosen one, in whom God delighted!<sup>5</sup> Yes, if he had been an exile, banished from God's favor, then one could have better comprehended it; indeed, now it was just as if a mockery was being made of him and his faith. There one was in the world who also lived banished from the fatherland, which he loved.<sup>6</sup> He is not forgotten, and neither are his laments, when he in melancholy sought and found what he lost. From Abraham there is no lament. It is human to lament, human to weep with those who weep, but it is greater to believe, more blessed to contemplate those who believe.

By faith Abraham received the promise that in his seed all the generations of the earth should be blessed.<sup>7</sup> Time passed, the possibility was there—Abraham believed; time passed, it became unreasonable—Abraham believed. There was such a person in the world who also had an expectation. Time passed, the evening drew near, he was not wretched enough to have forgotten his expectation—therefore neither shall he be forgotten. Then he sorrowed, and sorrow did not defraud him as life had done to him, it did everything it could—in sorrow's sweetness he possessed his disappointed expectation. It is human to sorrow, it is human to sorrow with those who sorrow, but it is greater to believe, more blessed to contemplate those who believe. From Abraham we have no song of sorrow. He did not count the days while time passed; he did not

consider Sarah with suspicious glances, wondering whether she was getting too old; he did not stop the sun so that Sarah would not age and, with her, his expectation; he did not soothingly sing for Sarah his mournful lay. Abraham became old, Sarah an object of mockery in the land, and yet he was God's chosen one and heir to the promise that in his seed all the generations of the earth should be blessed. So would it not have been better, after all, if he were not God's chosen one? What is it to be God's chosen one? Is it to be denied in youth the wish of youth, so that one may with great difficulty receive its fulfillment in old age? If Abraham had wavered, then he would have given it up. He would have said to God: "Since it is not, perhaps, your will after all that it should happen, then I will give up the wish; it was my one and only wish, it was my blessedness. My soul is upright, I hide no secret grudge because you denied it." He would not be forgotten. He would save many by his example, but he would still not have become the father of faith; for it is great to give up one's wish, but it is greater to hold it fast after having given it up; it is great to grasp the eternal, but greater to hold the temporal after first having given it up.

Then comes the fulfillment of time. Had Abraham not believed, then perhaps Sarah would have died from sorrow, and Abraham, dulled in grief, would not have understood the fulfillment, but smiled at it as at a dream of youth. But Abraham believed, and therefore he was young; for the one who always hopes for the best becomes old, defrauded by life, and the one who is always prepared for the worst grows old too soon, but the one who believes preserves an eternal youth. Thus this story is praised! For Sarah, though advanced in years, was young enough to desire the pleasure of motherhood, and Abraham, though gray-haired, was still young enough to wish to be a father. In outward respects the marvel lies in the fact that it happened according to their expectation; in a deeper sense the marvel of faith lies in the fact that Abraham and Sarah were still young enough to wish, and that faith had preserved their wish, and, with it, their youth. He received the fulfillment of the promise; he received it believing, and it happened according to the promise and according to faith: for Moses struck the rock with his staff, but he did not believe.<sup>8</sup>

So there was joy in Abraham's house when Sarah stood as a bride on her golden wedding anniversary.

Yet it should not remain this way; yet one more time Abraham was to be tested. He had fought against that crafty power that devises all things, with that watchful enemy who never sleeps, with that old man who outlives everything—he had fought with time and kept faith. Now all the frightfulness of the struggle is gathered together in a single moment. "And God tested Abraham and said to him, 'Take Isaac, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on a mountain that I will show to you.'"

So everything, then, was to be for nothing, even more appallingly than if it had never happened! So the Lord, then, was only mocking Abraham! He had marvelously

made the unreasonable actual, now he would again see it brought to nothing. It was just a bit of folly, after all, but Abraham did not laugh at it as Sarah had when the promise was proclaimed.<sup>9</sup> Everything was for nothing! Seventy years' faithful expectation, the short joy of faith's fulfillment: who is the one, then, who tears the staff from the old man, who is the one who demands that he must break it himself! Who is the one who makes a man's gray hairs disconsolate, who is it that demands that he should do it himself! Is there no compassion for the vulnerable old man, none for the innocent child! And yet Abraham was God's chosen one, and this was the Lord who imposed the trial. Everything should now be lost! The glorious remembrance of posterity, the promise in Abraham's seed—it was only a whim, a fleeting thought that the Lord had had, which Abraham should now wipe out. That glorious treasure, which was just as old as the faith in Abraham's heart, many, many years older than Isaac, the fruit of Abraham's life, sanctified by prayers, matured in struggle—the blessing on Abraham's lips—this fruit should now be torn away too soon out of time and be without meaning; for what meaning did it have when Isaac should be sacrificed! That melancholy, but still blessed, hour when Abraham should bid farewell to everything that he had cherished when still one more time he should lift up his vulnerable head, when his face should shine like the Lord's, when he should gather his whole soul in a blessing that was mighty enough to make Isaac blessed all his days—this hour should not come! For Abraham would certainly take leave of Isaac, but in such a way that he himself should be left behind; death would separate them but in such a way that Isaac was his prey. The old man would not, cheerful in death, lay his hand on Isaac in blessing, but, weary of life, lay hands on Isaac in violence. And this was God who tested him. Yes, woe! Woe to the messenger who brought such news to Abraham! Who would have dared to be the emissary of this sorrow? But it was God who tested Abraham.

Yet Abraham believed, and he believed for this life. Yes, if his faith had been only for the one to come, then he would have surely more easily thrown everything away, so as to hasten out of this world to which he did not belong. But Abraham's faith was not of such a kind; for this is not really faith, but the furthest, most distant, most remote possibility of faith, which spies its object on the outermost horizon, yet is separated from it by a yawning abyss in which despair plays its tricks. But Abraham believed precisely for this life that he should grow old in the land, honored among the people, blessed by posterity, remembered forever in Isaac, his most cherished in life, whom he embraced with a love for which it is only a poor expression to say that he faithfully fulfilled the father's duty to love the son, as, of course, is heard in the summons, "the son whom you love." Jacob had twelve sons and one he loved,<sup>10</sup> Abraham had only one, whom he loved.

But Abraham believed and did not doubt, he believed the unreasonable. If Abraham had doubted—then he should have done something else, something great

and glorious; for how could Abraham do other than what is great and glorious! He would have marched out to Mount Moriah, he would have cut the wood, lit the fire, drawn the knife—he would have called out to God: “Refuse not this sacrifice, it is not the best I possess, I know this well; for what is an old man compared with the promised child? But it is the best I can give you. Let Isaac never come to know, so that he may console himself with his youth.” He would have thrust the knife in his own breast. He would have been admired in the world and his name would not have been forgotten; but it is one thing to be admired, and another to be a guiding star that saves the anguished.

But Abraham believed. He did not pray for himself that he might move the Lord; it was only when righteous punishment fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah that Abraham stepped forward with his prayers.<sup>11</sup>

We read in the Holy Scriptures: “And God tested Abraham, and said: ‘Abraham, Abraham, where are you,’ but Abraham said, ‘Here am I.’” You, to whom my address is directed, was the case thus with you? When you saw, a long way off, the difficult adversities approaching did you not say then to the mountains, Hide me, and to the hills, Fall on me?<sup>12</sup> Or were you stronger, yet did your feet nevertheless not move slowly along the way, did they not long, so to speak, to return to the old trails? When, at that place, you were called, did you answer then, or did you not perhaps answer softly and whispering? Not so with Abraham; cheerfully, freely, confidently, loudly he answered: Here am I. We read further: “And Abraham arose early in the morning.” As if it were a celebration, he hurried, and early in the morning he arrived at the arranged place on Mount Moriah. He said nothing to Sarah, nothing to Eliezer—who, after all, could understand him? Had not the nature of the temptation extracted a vow of silence from him? “He cut the wood, he bound Isaac, he lit the fire, he drew the knife.”<sup>13</sup> My listener! There was many a father who believed that to lose his child, who was the dearest object in the world to him, was to be deprived of every hope for the future; but yet there was surely no one who, in this sense, was the child of the promise in the manner Isaac was this for Abraham. There was many a father who lost his child, but in such a way that it was God, after all, the Almighty, unchangeable and unsearchable will, whose hand took it. Not so with Abraham. For him a harder test had been prepared, and Isaac’s fate, with the knife, had been laid in Abraham’s hand. And he stood there, the old man with his only hope! But he did not doubt, he looked neither to the right nor to the left in anxiety, he did not challenge Heaven with his prayers. He knew it was God the Almighty who tested him, he knew it was the hardest sacrifice that could be required of him; but he knew also that no sacrifice was too hard when God required it—and he drew the knife.

Who strengthened Abraham’s arm, who held his right arm aloft so that it did not impotently sink down? The one who gazes upon this scene is paralyzed. Who strengthened Abraham’s soul lest his eye be so darkened that he should see neither



Isaac nor the ram! The one who gazes upon this scene becomes blind.—And yet it perhaps rarely happens that someone is made lame or blind, and still more rarely does someone worthily tell what happened. We know it all—it was only a trial.

If Abraham, when he stood upon Mount Moriah, had doubted, if he had haltingly looked about him, if he, before he drew the knife, by chance had spotted the ram, if God had allowed him to sacrifice this instead of Isaac—then he would have gone home, everything would have been the same, he would have had Sarah, would have kept Isaac—yet how changed! For his return would have been a flight, his rescue a coincidence, his reward shame, his future perhaps perdition. Then he would have known neither his own faith nor God's favor, but would have known how frightful it is to march up to Mount Moriah. Then Abraham would not be forgotten, nor indeed Mount Moriah. This would not be mentioned in the way Mount Ararat is,<sup>14</sup> where the Ark landed, but be mentioned as a terror, because it was here that Abraham doubted.

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Venerable father Abraham! When you went home from Mount Moriah, you needed no tribute that could comfort you for what you had lost; for you, after all, won everything and kept Isaac, was it not so? The Lord took him no more from you, but you sat down happily with him to dine in your tent, as you do in the hereafter for all eternity. Venerable father Abraham! Millenia have passed since those days, but you need no late-coming lover to snatch your memory from the void of forgetfulness; for every tongue remembers you—and yet you reward your lover more gloriously than any, you make him blessed hereafter in your bosom, you have captured his eye and his heart by the marvelousness of your deed. Venerable father Abraham! Second father of the human race! You, who first perceived and bore witness to that gigantic passion, which turns down the terrifying struggle with the raging elements and the forces of creation in order to strive with God instead; you, who first knew this supreme passion, the holy, pure, humble expression for the divine madness that was admired by the pagans<sup>15</sup>—forgive the one who wished to speak your praise if he has not done it rightly. He spoke humbly, as it was his heart's wish, he spoke briefly, as it was seemly, but he shall never forget that you had to draw the knife before you kept Isaac, he shall not forget that in 130 years you did not go further than faith.

## Endnotes

1. Echo of Homer's *Iliad*, 6.145–49. The Trojan Glaucus, son of Hippolochus, and the Greek Diomedes, son of Tydeus, meet on the battlefield between the two great armies and speak with one another before pledging friendship and exchanging their armor with each other.

Great son of Tydeus, why ask about my lineage?	Ἵδυδεΐδῃ μεγάθυμῃ τί ἢ γενεὴν ἐρρεῖνεις;
Human generations are like leaves in their seasons.	οἷη περ φύλλων γενεὴ τοίῃ δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν.
The wind blows them to the ground, but the tree Sprouts new ones when spring comes again.	φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἄνεμος χαμάδις χέει, ἄλλα δὲ θ' ὕλη τηλεθόωσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται ὥρη:
Even so generations of men come and go.	ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεὴ ἢ μὲν φύει ἢ δ' ἀπολήγει.

See Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 116; *Homeri Opera*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1920), 1:124. Glaucus's dismissal of the importance of memory, and likening of human life to an alternating series of meaningless and repetitive "generations" and "passing-aways," contrasts with the perspective of the poem, which presupposes the worthiness of recollecting the heroes, their lineages, and their deeds. This contrast between despair over death and memorialization in poetic glory occasionally comes to the fore of the *Iliad*, as when another hero says that, despite preferring to live "immortal and ageless," the heroes instead live "either to give glory / to another man or get glory from him," 12.335, 341–42, 233–34. That is, their doom is that their best hope is the inferior immortality of poetic recollection.

2. Probably another allusion to Homer's *Iliad*, 3.381. The occasion of the Trojan War was Paris's abusing the sacred trust between guest and host (*xenia*) by leaving with Menelaus's wife, Helen, from Sparta while Menelaus's guest (in some sources, he abducts her; in others, he seduces and then absconds with her). Agamemnon, Menelaus's brother, then leads the Greeks to war with the Trojans to avenge the injustice. After several years of combat, the armies agree to allow Helen's fate to be determined by single combat between Paris and Menelaus. Menelaus completely out-matches Paris but is repeatedly prevented from killing him—his spear narrowly misses him, his sword shatters on his helmet, and the helmet strap with which he is choking Paris snaps and breaks. Finally, Aphrodite snatches Paris up, hides him in a cloud, and whisks him away to his own bedchamber. If so, then the significance of this allusion could be that "misunderstanding" functions as Aphrodite did, preventing Paris from receiving the poetic honor of one who died honorably in heroic combat.

It is also possible that *Silentio* means to allude to the scene of Jesus's transfiguration or of his ascension. In the first case, after seeing Jesus transfigured with light and speaking with Moses and Elijah, a cloud "overshadows" Peter, James, and John; God speaks from the cloud and they lower their eyes, and when they lift their eyes, Moses and Elijah are gone and only Christ remains. A key element of this event is Peter's confusion; he initially offers to erect three tents for Jesus, Moses, and John, to which God responds, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him" (Matthew 17:5). Here, the significance of the allusion might be that the "cloud of misunderstanding" stands for Peter's confusion about Christ and the requirement that it be dispelled.

In Matthew 16:13–20, Peter confesses for the first time that Jesus is the Christ; then in Matthew 16:21–28, Peter rejects Jesus’s statement that he must suffer and die, and Jesus rebukes him strongly. The transfiguration, with its divine voice speaking from the cloud, immediately follows this. If this allusion is meant, then Silentio (and Kierkegaard) thought that the scene in some sense symbolized Peter’s movement from confusion to greater understanding of *his* hero, Christ, and the necessity of Christ’s mission ending in death.

Finally, it is possible that the cloud is meant to refer to the cloud that covers Christ during the ascension. When Christ has completed his earthly mission, having been crucified, having been raised in resurrection, and having restored his disciples, he ascends into Heaven and “a cloud took him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9). Then the accent falls not on the misunderstanding so much as on the promise that, in the future, lover and hero will be reunited.

3. This paragraph, setting out a series of metrics to use in measuring greatness, describes Abraham’s faith in terms that frequently echo biblical motifs or ideas. For example, the motif of “striving with God” is based on the patriarch Jacob’s “wrestling with God” in Genesis 32:22–28. This leads God to rename him “Israel,” meaning “he who strives with God.” The entire nation then takes on the name “Israel” and, symbolically, the role of the one who “strives with God.” Silentio then seems to be suggesting that it is faith itself that constitutes “striving” with God and, insofar as Abraham was the father of faith and perfected his faith at Mount Moriah, Abraham was an even greater wrestler than Jacob. The idea that the strength of faith is powerlessness is an idea presented by Paul in 2 Corinthians. After pleading with God in prayer for him to remove “a thorn in the flesh,” Paul reports that God said to him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). In 1 Corinthians, while addressing pride and the divisions it creates within the church, Paul says: “Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God” (1 Corinthians 3:18–19). Finally, in the Gospel of John, when Jesus enters Jerusalem the final time before his death, he is approached by some Greeks. He says to his disciples, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life” (John 12:23–25). This culminates in Jesus rededicating himself to following his path to death and the Father’s promise of glorification. Silentio’s meaning seems clearly to be that the Old Testament portrait of Abraham’s faith already has the features extolled in the New Testament: Abraham’s faith accomplishes great things through God’s grace and power, not Abraham’s strength; it is so contrary to worldly wisdom as to seem folly, but actually shows up the folly of pursuing the path laid by worldly wisdom; and it is necessarily linked to a kind of “death of self” and willingness to let one’s hope die only to be brought back to life by God. Finally, while there is no New Testament statement that “the form” of faith has the appearance of madness, this could be said to represent a fair summary of worldly wisdom’s perspective on faith: someone becoming great by means of faith seems, to the contemporary observer, indistinguishable from someone suffering from madness.

4. Allusion to Hebrews 11:8–19, part of a New Testament “roll-call” of heroes of faith:

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering up his only son, of whom it was said, “Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.” He considered that God was able even to raise him from the dead, from which, figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, bowing in worship over the head of his staff. By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave directions concerning his bones.

5. *Silentio* here likens Abraham, the “chosen one,” to Jesus, the ultimate “chosen one” and “beloved Son” in whom the Father was “delighted” or “well-pleased.” See Isaiah 42:1 (“Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one, in whom my soul delights”), which is quoted in Matthew 12:18; there is an echo of this in Matthew 17:5—the transfiguration of Christ—when the Father proclaims “This is my beloved son, with whom I am well pleased.”

6. Readers and commentators sometimes attempt to determine exactly who is intended by these rather general allusions (“There was one in the world who also lived banished from the fatherland,” “There was one in the world who also had an expectation”). If we assume we *must* assign a specific referent, then perhaps the Roman poet Ovid best fits the description: he was banished from Rome by the emperor Caesar Augustus in AD 8 to a small island, Tomi, in the Black Sea, where he wrote the elegies *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*; many hold that he still believed he could convince the emperor to recall him to Rome and cancel his exile, but this expectation was dashed. Some may settle upon the prophet Jeremiah, author of the biblical book of Lamentations. In this case, perhaps the thought is that Jeremiah had some expectation that the people would heed his warnings and repent, yet of course they did not do so, Jerusalem was sacked, and its people were carried into exile—the occasion for writing Lamentations.

Making these words refer to a specific individual, however, seems to undermine their literary function. Such events could occur in any human life and what the passage emphasizes is that lament

and sorrow are typical human responses, those things which *any* of us would likely do under such circumstances. The individuality of the referent, if any, is therefore unimportant. Any alien living in a strange land and any person with disappointed expectations can find him—or herself—in these descriptions.

7. When God called Abraham to leave his home and go to an unknown land, he promised him “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3).

8. See Numbers 20:11. During the long journey from Egypt back to the Promised Land, the people began to complain about their lack of water, saying (among other things), “Why have you made us come up out of Egypt to this evil place?” God told Moses to *tell* the rock, “Yield your water!” and then God would miraculously provide water for them (Numbers 20:8). Moses, angry at the complaining people, struck the rock with his staff instead. God still provided water for the people, but Moses was barred from entering the Promised Land for his disobedience.

9. See Genesis 18:12.

So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?”

Has Silentio forgotten Genesis 17:17?

<sup>15</sup>And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup>I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” <sup>17</sup>Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, “Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”

This “forgetting” confirms the observation made by another of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms, Johannes Climacus, that Silentio makes use of “the foreshortened perspective” so as to depict Abraham “in a state of completeness.” See *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 586.

10. Jacob loved Joseph more than he loved his other sons because he was the child of his old age. Genesis 35:22–23, 37:3. But Abraham also had Ishmael for a son (through Hagar, Sarah’s Egyptian handmaid); this seems to be another example of Silentio’s “forgetting” mentioned in the note above, especially notable because Silentio has mentioned Hagar and Ishmael in the Prelude; see Prelude, note 6.

11. See Genesis 18:23–33. The Lord warns Abraham that he is going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness, and Abraham intervenes on their behalf, appealing to the Lord and bargaining until he is reassured that God will not destroy the cities if he finds even ten righteous persons in it.

12. See Luke 23:30. Jesus in this passage describes the response people will have when Jerusalem falls (or, in some interpretations, what they will do during the last days).

13. A free rendition of Genesis 22:3, 9–10:

So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the

place of which God had told him [Gen. 22:3]. . . . When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood [22:9]. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son [Gen. 22:10].

14. See Genesis 8:4, when the ark finally comes to a rest upon land again, upon “the mountains of Ararat.”

15. In ancient Greece, the term “divine madness” or *theia mania* (θεϊα μανία) referred to several different phenomena that were seen as involving a simultaneous loss of selfhood and reason, and a corresponding transformation of agency. In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Socrates divides “madness” into two kinds, one arising from “human disease,” the other from a “divine release from customary habits.” He then divides divine madness into four kinds: prophetic, ritual, poetic, and erotic (244–245d, 265a–b in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1997)). Any form of divine madness, with its loss of self, could be either beneficial or harmful, either enhance agency or reduce and degrade it.

The Greeks therefore viewed even divine madness with ambivalence. This ambivalence is given powerful literary expression in Donna Tartt, *The Secret History* (New York: Alfred E. Knopf, 1992); Plato’s *Phaedrus* appears in the novel at p. 38ff. For a recent academic treatment covering the topic widely, see Yulia Ustinova, *Divine Mania: Alteration of Consciousness in Ancient Greece* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018).

# PROBLEMATA

## Preliminary Expectoration

An old saying fetched from the external and visible world says: “Only the one who works gets the bread.”<sup>1</sup> Oddly enough, the saying does not fit the world where it is most at home; for the external world has been subjected to the law of imperfection, and here it happens again and again that the one who does not work also gets the bread and the one who sleeps gets it more abundantly than the one who works. In the external world, everything belongs to the possessor; it serves like a slave under the law of indifference, and the one who has the ring, him the spirit of the ring obeys, whether he is a Noureddin or an Aladdin, and the one who has the world’s treasures has them no matter how he got them.<sup>2</sup> In the world of spirit it is otherwise. Here there rules an eternal and divine law, here it does not rain both on the righteous and the unrighteous, here the sun shines not on both the good and the evil,<sup>3</sup> here it holds that only the one who works gets the bread, only the one who was in anxiety finds peace, only the one who descends into the underworld saves the beloved, only the one who draws the knife gets Isaac. The one who will not work does not get the bread, but becomes deceived, as the gods deceived Orpheus with an airy figure in place of the beloved; deceived him because he was soft, not courageous; deceived him because he was a Zither player, not a man.<sup>4</sup> Here it does not help to have Abraham for one’s father, or seventeen ancestors; for the one who will not work, what stands written of the maidens of Israel fits him: he gives birth to the wind; but the one who will work, he bears his own father.<sup>5</sup>

There is a knowledge that presumptuously would introduce into the world of spirit the same law of indifference as the one under which the external world sighs. It thinks that it is enough to know the great—no other work is needed. But then one does not get the bread, one perishes of hunger, while everything transforms itself into gold.<sup>6</sup> And what does it know, anyhow? There were many thousands of Greek contemporaries, uncounted numbers in later generations, who knew all of Miltiades’s triumphs, but there was only one who became sleepless over them.<sup>7</sup> There were countless generations who knew every word of Abraham’s story by heart; how many did it make sleepless?

The story of Abraham has the remarkable characteristic that it is always glorious, no matter how poorly one understands it; but of course it once again holds true here that one must labor and be heavy-laden.<sup>8</sup> But one is unwilling to work and yet

still wishes to understand the story. One speaks in Abraham's honor, but how? One gives the whole thing an entirely ordinary expression! "The great thing was that he loved God in such a way that he was willing to sacrifice his best to him." That is very true; but "the best" is an indeterminate expression. One runs together in thought and mouth "Isaac" and "the best" with sure confidence, and the contemplator can certainly smoke his pipe while meditating, and the listener may very well stretch out his legs comfortably. If the rich young ruler whom Christ met on his way had sold all his goods and given them to the poor, we would praise him as we do all who are great, and even if we could not understand him without working, he would still not yet be an Abraham, notwithstanding that he sacrificed "the best." The one thing left out of Abraham's story is the anxiety; for to money I have no ethical obligation, but to the son the father has the highest and holiest obligation. Yet anxiety is a difficult subject for the delicate; therefore one forgets it—and yet nonetheless one would speak of Abraham. One then speaks, and in the course of talking exchanges the two terms "Isaac" and "the best," and everything goes admirably. However, if it so happened that among the listeners there was a man who suffered from insomnia, then the most frightful, the deepest tragic and comic misunderstanding lies very close. He goes home, and he would do just as Abraham did; for the son is indeed the best; if that speaker came to hear of it, then perhaps he went to him, gathered all his spiritual dignity and shouted: "You abomination, you scum of the community, which devil has so possessed you that you would murder your son?" And the minister, who had not detected any warmth or perspiration while preaching about Abraham, would be surprised at himself, at the earnest wrath with which he thundered at that poor fellow; he was pleased with himself, for he had never spoken with such vigor and unction. He said to himself and his wife: "I am an orator; what has been lacking has been the occasion. When I spoke about Abraham on Sunday, I did not feel gripped at all." If the same speaker had a little superfluity of understanding that he could lose, then I think he would lose it if the sinner had calmly, and with dignity, answered: "Why, it was what you yourself preached on Sunday." Now, how could the minister have gotten such a thing in his head? Yet it was so, and his mistake was only that he had not known what he was saying. To think that there is not a poet who could bring himself to prefer such situations to the stuff and nonsense with which one stuffs comedies and novels! The comic and the tragic touch each other here in absolute infinity. The minister's discourse was perhaps, in and for itself, laughable enough, but it became infinitely laughable by its effect, and yet this was certainly natural. Or, if the sinner, without making any objection, were actually made repentant by the minister's castigation, if this zealous divine went home happy, happy in the consciousness that he was not only effective in the pulpit, but above all with irresistible power as a spiritual advisor, inasmuch as he inspired the congregation on Sunday, while he stood like a cherub with a flaming sword on Monday,<sup>9</sup> set before the one



who by his deed would put that old saying to shame, that “It does not go in the world as the preacher preaches.”\*<sup>10</sup>

If, on the other hand, the sinner was not persuaded, then his situation is tragic enough. Then he was presumably executed or sent to the madhouse—in short, he became unhappy in relation to so-called actuality; in another sense, I think that perhaps Abraham made him happy; for the one who works does not perish.

How does one explain such a contradiction as that speaker’s? Is it because Abraham has received a prescriptive right to be a great man, so that whatever he does is great, and when another does the same, it is sin, an atrocious sin? In that case, I do not wish to participate in such thoughtless praise. If faith cannot make it a holy act to be willing to murder one’s son, then let the same judgment fall on Abraham as on every other. If, perhaps, one lacks the courage to complete one’s thought, to say that Abraham is a murderer, then it would surely be better to acquire this courage than to waste time on undeserved praises. The ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he intended to murder Isaac; the religious expression is that he intended to sacrifice Isaac; but the anxiety that can surely make a person sleepless lies precisely in this contradiction, and indeed, Abraham is not who he is without the anxiety. Or perhaps Abraham did not do what is narrated there at all; perhaps due to the circumstances of the time it was something entirely different; then let us forget him—for what is the point of recollecting the past if it cannot become a present? Or perhaps the speaker had forgotten something that answered to the ethical oversight that Isaac was the son. When faith is taken away by becoming null and void—so that only the raw fact remains that Abraham intended to murder Isaac, which is easy enough to mistake for anyone who lacks faith—that is to say, the faith that makes it difficult for him.

I, for my part, do not lack the courage to think a thought whole; hitherto I have not feared any, and if I were to encounter such a thought, then I hope I will at least have the integrity to say, “This thought frightens me; it stirs up something strange and therefore I will not think it; if I do wrong thereby, the punishment will surely not be lacking.” If I had recognized it for the judgment of truth that Abraham was a murderer, I do not know whether I could have brought my reverence for him to silence. However, had I thought that, then I would have presumably kept it quiet; for into such thoughts one should not initiate others. But Abraham is not illusion, he did not sleep his way to renown, and he does not owe it to a whim of fate.

Can one speak unreservedly of Abraham, without running the risk that an individual might become deranged and do likewise? If I dared not, then I would simply

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\* In the old days, people said: “It is too bad that things do not go in the world as the preacher preaches.” Maybe the time will come, especially with the aid of philosophy, when they can say: “Fortunately things do not go as the preacher preaches, for there is still some meaning in life, but there is none in his sermons.”

keep silent about Abraham, and above all I would not scale him down in this way, so that precisely thereby he becomes a snare for the weak. If one makes faith exactly everything—that is, makes it what it is—then I certainly think that one can dare to speak without risk about it in our age, which is scarcely extravagant in faith, since it is only by faith that one acquires likeness to Abraham, not by murder. If one makes love into a flighty mood, a sensual feeling in a person, then one only lays snares for the weak when one would speak of love's accomplishments. Surely everyone has passing feelings, but if therefore everyone each intended to perform the frightful act that love has sanctified as an immortal deed, then everything is lost, both the deed and the deluded one.

Then surely it is permissible to speak of Abraham, for what is great can never do harm when it is comprehended in its greatness: it is like a double-edged sword that kills and rescues. If the lot fell upon me to speak about it, then I would begin by showing what a devout and God-fearing man Abraham was, worthy to be called God's chosen one. Only upon such a person can such a test fall; but who is such a person? Then I would describe how Abraham loved Isaac. To this end, I would bid all good spirits to stand by me so that my speech might be as glowing as a father's love. I thus hope that I should describe it in such a way that there would not be many fathers in the king's realms and lands who would dare to lay claim that he loved in this manner. But if he does not love as Abraham did, then surely every thought of sacrificing Isaac is a spiritual contest, an agon of the spirit [*Anfægtelse*]. One could already speak for several Sundays on this, one certainly need not hurry. The consequence would then be, if it were told properly, that some fathers would by no means insist on hearing more, but for the time being would be happy if they actually succeeded in loving as Abraham loved.

If there were such a one who, after having heard the greatness, but also the frightfulness, in Abraham's deed, ventured to go forward on that path, then I would saddle my horse and ride with him. At every station until we came to Mount Moriah I would explain to him that he could still turn back, could repent this misunderstanding that he was called to be tried in such a struggle, could acknowledge that he lacked the courage, that God himself must take Isaac if he intends to have him. It is my conviction that such a person is not repudiated, that he can be blessed with all others, but not in time. Would one, even in the most faithful ages, not judge such a person this way? I knew a person who once could have saved my life if he had been magnanimous. He said plainly: "I see well enough what I could do; but I dare not do it, I am afraid that later I shall lack the strength, that I shall regret it." He was not magnanimous, but who would therefore not continue to love him?

Then, when I had spoken thus, had moved the listeners to previous faith's dialectical struggle and its gigantic passion, then I would not be to blame for a delusion on the listeners' part, so that they should think: "Now, he has faith in so high a degree, it

is already enough for us to hold his coattails.” For I would add: “I by no means have faith. I am by nature a shrewd head, and every such person always has great difficulties making the movement of faith; but yet I, in and for myself, will not attribute the difficulty any worth, which brought the shrewd head no further by overcoming it than to that point where the plainest and simplest person comes more easily.”

Now, love has its priests in the poets, and every once in a while one hears a voice that knows how to uphold its honor; but concerning faith there is heard not a word—who speaks in its honor? Philosophy goes further. Theology sits by the window putting on its makeup and courts its lover, peddling its delights to philosophy. It is supposed to be difficult to understand Hegel, but to understand Abraham, that’s a small matter. To go beyond Hegel, that is a wonder, but to go beyond Abraham, that is the easiest of all. I, for my part, have spent considerable time on understanding the Hegelian philosophy, and I even think I have understood it fairly well—I am reckless enough to think that when I, despite spending so much trouble on particular passages, cannot understand him, then he himself has not been entirely clear enough. All this I do easily, naturally, without getting a headache. When, on the contrary, it is time to turn my thought to Abraham, it is as if I were annihilated. In every moment I have my eye on the gigantic paradox that is contained by Abraham’s life, in every moment I am repelled, and my thought cannot, despite all its passion, penetrate it, cannot get a hair’s breadth further. I strain every muscle to get it in my view, and at the same moment, I am paralyzed.

I am not unfamiliar with those things in the world that have been admired as great and magnanimous; my soul feels its kinship with them and is, in all humility, assured that it was also my case for which the hero fought, and in the moment of contemplation, I cry out to myself: *iam tua res agitur* [now your cause is at stake].<sup>11</sup> I think myself into the hero; I cannot think myself into Abraham; when I reach the height, I fall down, since what is offered to me is a paradox. Yet I by no means therefore consider faith to be something lowly, but on the contrary, it is the highest, and it is dishonest of philosophy to give something else in its stead and to disregard faith. Philosophy cannot and should not give faith, but it should understand itself and know what it offers and take nothing away, and least of all cheat people out of something by treating it as if it were nothing.

I am not unfamiliar with life’s troubles and dangers, I am not frightened of them, and I advance against them freely. I am not unfamiliar with the terrifying, my memory is a faithful wife and my imagination is what I myself am not, a busy little maid who sits all day with her work and in the evening knows how to speak with me with feeling, so that I must see that which she describes—though it is not just landscapes, flowers, or pastoral idylls that she paints. I have seen the terrifying with my own eyes, I do not flee the fearsome, but I know very well that even if I advance against it with courage, my courage is still not the courage of faith and is nothing to compare with

it. I cannot make the movement of faith, I cannot close my eyes and plunge myself confidently into the absurd. It is an impossibility for me, but I do not praise myself thereby. I am convinced that God is love; this thought has for me an original lyrical validity. When it is present to me, I am unspeakably happy; when it is absent, I long after it more vehemently than the lover does after the object of his love; but I do not believe—this courage is lacking in me. God's love is to me, both in the direct and the converse sense, incommensurable with the whole of actuality. I am not cowardly enough to therefore moan and complain, but neither am I deceitful enough to deny that faith is something much higher. I can well hold out in living my way, I am happy and content, but my happiness is not that of faith, and in comparison with it is actually unhappiness. I do not trouble God with my small sorrows—the particular does not concern me—I merely gaze upon my love and keep the virgin flame pure and clean; faith is convinced that God is concerned with the least matter. I am pleased in this life to give myself to the left hand; faith is humble enough to claim the right—for that this is humility I do not deny and shall never deny.

I wonder whether anyone in my time is capable of making the movement of faith? If I am not mistaken regarding this, then, if anything, they are inclined to be proud of doing what the age surely does not think me capable of, viz., the imperfect. My soul balks at what happens so often, speaking inhumanly of the great, as if some thousands of years were a gigantic distance: I prefer to speak humanly of it, as if it happened yesterday, and allow only the greatness itself to be the distance that either lifts or condemns. If I, then (*in the capacity of the tragic hero*, for higher I cannot come) had been ordered upon such an extraordinary royal journey as this to Mount Moriah, I know well what I would have done. I would not have been coward enough to remain at home, nor would I have stopped and started along the way, nor would I have forgotten the knife so that I could delay a little. I am quite persuaded that I would have arrived on the dot, would have had everything in order—perhaps I would be, if anything, too early, so that it could sooner be over and done with. But I know too what else I would have done. I would, in the same moment I mounted the horse, have said to myself: Now everything is lost, God demands Isaac, I will sacrifice him, but he is my joy—yet God is love and continues to be this for me; for in time God and I cannot speak with one another, we have no language in common.

Perhaps someone in our time will be foolish enough, envious enough of the great, to attempt to make himself and me believe that if I had actually done this I would have done something even greater than what Abraham did; for my gigantic resignation<sup>12</sup> was far more ideal and poetic than Abraham's pettiness. And yet this is the greatest untruth: for my gigantic resignation was a substitute for faith. I could not, therefore, do more than make the infinite movement to find myself and again rest in myself. I then would not have loved Isaac in the way that Abraham loved. That I was resolute in making the movement could prove my courage, in a human

way of speaking; that I loved him with my entire soul is the presupposition without which the whole thing is a misdeed; but I still did not love as Abraham did, for then I would have held back at the last minute, without, however, arriving too late at Mount Moriah. I would have, further, spoiled the whole story with my conduct; for if I had received Isaac again, then I would have been in some embarrassment. This, which Abraham found easiest, I would find hard—to again be happy with Isaac! For the one who with the infinity of his whole soul, *proprio motu et propriis auspiciis* [of his own accord and on his own responsibility], has made the infinite movement and cannot do more, keeps Isaac only with pain.

But what did Abraham do? He came neither too soon nor too late. He mounted the ass, he rode slowly along the way. During all that time, he believed; he believed that God would not demand Isaac of him, while he was, however, willing to sacrifice him when it was required. He believed in virtue of the absurd; for human calculation there could not be discussion of, and surely it was the absurd that God, who demanded it of him, in the next moment should retract the demand. He climbed the mountain, in the moment when the knife gleamed, still at that time he believed—that God would not demand Isaac. He then was perhaps surprised with the outcome, but he had arrived at his first condition through a double movement, and therefore he received Isaac with more joy than the first time.

Let us go further. We actually let Isaac be sacrificed; Abraham believed. He did not believe that he would become blessed in the hereafter, but that he should be happy here in the world. God could give him a new Isaac, call the sacrificed one back to life. He believed in virtue of the absurd; for all human calculation surely ceased long ago. That sorrow can make a person lose their mind is plain to see, and this is hard enough; that there is a willpower that can haul sail to the wind so drastically that it saves the understanding, although the person becomes a little odd, is evident also, and I do not propose to denigrate this; but that someone could lose his understanding and thereby the whole of finitude, whose stockbroker it is, and then in virtue of the absurd win precisely the same finitude—this horrifies my soul; but I will not therefore say that it is something slight, since it is, on the contrary, the only miracle. One generally thinks that that which faith produces is no work of art, that it is coarse and boorish workmanship suitable for only the more cloddish natures; yet it is far otherwise. Faith's dialectic is the finest and the most extraordinary of all, it has an elevation that I can perhaps give a notion of, but nothing more. I can make the great trampoline leap whereby I go over into infinitude, my back is like a rope-dancer's, twisted from my childhood, therefore it is easy for me, I can—one, two, three—plunge headfirst into existence, but the next thing I am incapable of doing; for this marvel I cannot do, but only be astonished by. Yes, Abraham, if at the moment he swung his leg over the ass's back, had said to himself: Now Isaac is lost, I could just as well sacrifice him here at home as travel the long way to Moriah—then I do not need Abraham, while

I now bow seven times before his name and seventy times before his deed. This is just what he did not do, I can prove by the fact that he was glad to receive Isaac, truly and deeply glad, and that he needed no preparation, no time to regather himself for finitude and its joys. If it did not stand so with Abraham, then he would perhaps have loved God, but would not have believed; for the one who loves God without faith reflects upon himself, but the one who loves God, believing, reflects on God.

On this peak Abraham stands. The last stage he loses sight of is that of infinite resignation. He actually goes further and arrives at faith; for all these caricatures of faith, that pathetic, lukewarm sluggishness that thinks: Perhaps it is not necessary, it is not worth grieving before the time; that miserable hope that says: One cannot know what will happen, it is still possible—these caricatures belong to the misery of life, and infinite resignation has already infinitely disdained them.

Abraham I cannot understand; I can in a certain sense learn nothing from him except to be astonished. When one imagines that someone could be moved to believe by considering the outcome of that story, he deceives himself, and would defraud God out of faith's first movement; one would suck the life-wisdom out of the paradox. Someone or other might succeed, for our time does not stand with faith, not with its miracle, which makes water into wine, but goes further: it makes wine into water.<sup>13</sup>

Would it not be best, after all, to stop at faith, and is it not shocking that everyone wants to go further? When someone in our age—and this is indeed proclaimed in many different ways—is unwilling to stop with love, then where will this person come to? To worldly shrewdness, petty calculation, to meanness and wretchedness, to everything that can make humanity's divine origin doubtful. Would it not be best that one remain standing at faith, and that the one who stands see to it that he does not fall? For the movement of faith must continually be made in virtue of the absurd—and yet, mark well, in such a way that one does not lose finitude, but wins it whole and entire.

I, for my part, can hope to describe faith's movements but I cannot make them. When someone intends to learn to make the movements of swimming, one can let oneself be suspended from the ceiling in a harness, and then one can certainly describe the movements, but one is not swimming; in the same manner, I can describe the movements of faith, but when I have plunged into the water then perhaps I swim (for I do not belong among the waders), but I make other movements, I make the movements of infinity, while faith makes the opposite movements; it makes, after having made the movements of infinity, those of finitude. Fortunate the one who can make these movements! He does wonders, and I shall never become weary of admiring him, whether it is Abraham or a slave in Abraham's house, whether it is a professor of philosophy or a poor serving girl; to me it is all absolutely the same, I look only at the movements. But I do watch them, and I do not let myself be fooled, neither by myself nor by some other person. The knights of infinite resignation, one recognizes easily,

their gait is airy, bold. Those, on the other hand, who bear the jewel of faith easily deceive, because their exterior has a remarkable likeness to that which both infinite resignation and faith utterly disdain—bourgeois philistinism.

I confess sincerely, in my practice I have not found any authentic examples, though I will not therefore deny that perhaps every other person is such an example. However, at the same time, I have been on the hunt for it for very many years, in vain. One ordinarily travels the world round in order to see rivers and mountains, new stars, multicolored birds, misbegotten fish, preposterous races of humanity; one abandons oneself to the bestial stupor that gapes at existence, and one thinks that one has seen something. This does not occupy me. If I know, however, where there lived such a knight of faith, then I would hike on foot to him: for this wonder occupies me absolutely. I would not let him go for a moment, every minute I would pay attention to how he went about the movements. I would consider myself as provided for life, divide my time between watching him and doing exercises myself, and thus spend all my time admiring him.

As I said, I have not found anyone like that; however, I can perhaps imagine him. Here he is. Acquaintance is established, I am introduced to him. The instant I first set eyes upon him, I immediately thrust him away from me, jump back, clap my hands, and say half aloud: "Lord God! Is this the person, is this actually him—he seems nothing but a tax collector." However, it is nevertheless him. I close in upon him a little nearer, paying attention to the least movement, seeing whether a little heterogeneous optical telegraphy from the infinite should but show itself: a glance, a facial expression, a gesture, a melancholy, a smile, which would betray the infinite in its heterogeneity with the finite. No! I examine his figure from head to toe, seeing whether there should not be a chink there through which infinitude peeks out. No! He is solid all the way through. His footing? It is vigorous, belonging entirely to finitude—no spruced up burgher who is setting out Sunday afternoon for Fresberg treads more solidly upon the ground; he belongs entirely to the world, no bourgeois philistine could belong there more. Nothing is discoverable of that foreign and aristocratic nature whereby one recognizes the knights of infinity. He enjoys everything, partakes in everything, and every time one sees him take part in something particular it is done with an industriousness that signals the worldly person whose soul clings to such things. He attends to his business affairs. When one sees him at that time, one would believe he was a pen pusher who had lost his soul to Italian bookkeeping, so punctilious is he.<sup>14</sup> He takes a holiday on Sunday. He goes to church. No heavenly glance or other sign of the incommensurable betrays him; if one did not know him, it would be impossible to single him out from the rest of the crowd, for his hearty, energetic hymn singing proves, at most, that he has good lungs. In the afternoon, he takes a walk in the woods. He is delighted with everything that he sees: with the teeming crowd, the new omnibuses,<sup>15</sup> the Sound—if one meets him on Strandveien,

one should believe him to be a mercantile soul having a fling. He is happy like this, for he is no poet, and I have in vain sought to lure out poetic incommensurability from him. Towards evening, he walks home, his gait is as indefatigable as a postman's. En route, he thinks that his wife probably has a special dish of warm food for him when he comes home, for example a roast lamb's head with vegetables. If he met a kindred spirit, then he could easily go on all the way to Østerport<sup>16</sup> conversing with him over the dish with a passion that would be in keeping with a restaurateur. As it happens, he has not four shillings, and yet he fully and firmly believes that his wife has this delectable dish ready for him. If she has, then it shall be an enviable sight for the elite, inspiring to the common people, to see him eat; for his appetite is greater than Esau's.<sup>17</sup> If his wife has it not—strangely enough—he is completely the same.

On the way, he walks past a construction site and he encounters another man. They speak a moment together, he constructs a building in an instant, he has every resource at his disposal. The stranger leaves him with the thought that he was surely a capitalist, while my admired knight thinks: Of course, if it came to it, I could easily get it. He sits at an open window and considers the neighborhood in which he lives, everything which takes place: that a rat scurries down a plank across the gutter, that the children play, everything occupies him with a peace in existence as if he were a sixteen-year-old girl. And yet he is no genius; for I have sought in vain to spy out the incommensurability of genius in him. He smokes his pipe in the evening; if one sees him, one would swear it was the butcher across the way who was vegetating in the gloaming. He lets things take their course with reckless disregard, as if he were a light-minded loafer, and yet he buys every moment he lives at the opportune time for the highest price; for he does not do the slightest thing except in virtue of the absurd.

And yet, yet—yes, I could become enraged over it for envy's sake, for this person has made and makes every movement, the movement of infinity. He empties in infinite resignation the deep sadness of existence, he knows the blessedness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the most precious thing one has in the world, and yet finitude tastes just as good to him as to someone who has never known anything higher, for his remaining in finitude would have no trace of some timid, anxious routine, and yet he has this security to enjoy himself with it as if it were the surest thing of all.

And yet, yet it is wholly the earthly figure he presents, a new creation in virtue of the absurd.<sup>18</sup> He resigned everything infinitely, and then grasped everything again in virtue of the absurd. He continually makes infinity's movement, but he makes it with such correctness and sureness that he continually gets finitude out of it; and there is no second when one suspects something different. It is supposed to be the most difficult task for a dancer to leap into a definite position in such a way that there is no instant in which he grasps for the position, but in the leap itself stands in the position. Perhaps no dancer can do this—but this knight does it. The great mass of



people live lost in worldly sorrows and joys—these are the benchwarmers who do not join in the dance. The knights of infinity are dancers and have elevation. They make the movement up and then fall down again, and this also is not an unhappy pastime and not unlovely to look upon. But every time they fall down, they are not able to immediately assume the position: they waver a moment, and this wavering shows that they are still strangers in the world. One of these is more or less successful to the degree they possess art, but even the most artistic of these knights still cannot hide this wavering. One does not need to see them in the air, one just needs to see them in the moment when they touch and have touched the earth—and one recognizes them. But to be able to fall in such a way that it seems in the same instant one stands and one walks, that transforms the leap of life into a gait, to absolutely express the sublime in the pedestrian—only this knight can do that, and this is the only miracle.

However, since this wonder can so easily disappoint, I will describe the movements in a definite instance that can illuminate their relation to actuality: for everything revolves around this.<sup>19</sup> A lad falls in love with a princess, and the whole of his life's content lies in this love, and yet the relationship is such that it is impossible for it to be realized, impossible for it to be translated from ideality into reality.<sup>†</sup> The thralls of misery, frogs in the swamp of life, naturally cry out in their shrill voices: "Such a love is foolishness! The rich brewer's widow is perfectly as good and just as solid a match." Let them croak undisturbed in the swamp. The knight of infinite resignation does not pursue this course; he does not give up the love, not even for all the world's glory. He is no fool.<sup>20</sup> He first makes sure that this love actually is his life's content, for his soul is too sound, and too proud, to squander the least trifle on some infatuation. He is not cowardly, nor afraid to allow it to sneak into his most secret, his most secluded thoughts, allowing it to twist in uncounted coils around every ligament of his consciousness—if this love should become unhappy, he will never be able to tear himself free from it. He feels a blissful pleasure in allowing love to thrill along every nerve, and yet his soul is as solemn as the one who has emptied the poisoned chalice and feels the deadly juice saturate every drop of blood.<sup>21</sup> This moment is life and death.

When, having done this, he has imbibed the whole love and immersed himself in it, he lacks not the courage to seek and to venture everything. Surveying his circumstances, he summons every rapid thought. Like trained birds, they grasp his every hint; he swings his wand over them and they fly out in every direction. But now,

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<sup>†</sup> It follows, as a matter of course, that any other interest whatsoever in which an individual has concentrated the whole reality of actuality for himself can, when it is seen to be unrealizable, provide the occasion for the movement of resignation. I have, however, chosen a love affair in which to display the movement because this interest is probably easier understood and thus exempts me from all preliminary considerations which, in a deeper sense, could concern only a very few.

when they all return, each bears the biddings of sorrow, explaining to him that it is impossible. He then becomes still, thanks them, and, when he is alone, undertakes the movement.

If what I have said here is to have any meaning, then it must be maintained that the movement happens properly.<sup>‡</sup> The knight will therefore, in the first place, have the power to concentrate his whole life's content and the meaning of actuality into one single wish. If a person lacks this concentration, this conclusive exclusivity, his soul is from the beginning divided into multiplicity, and he never comes to make the movement. He will negotiate life as shrewdly as those capitalists who place their capital in every kind of bond so as to win on one when losing on another—in short, someone who acts in this manner is no knight.

In the next place, the knight will have the power to concentrate the full conclusion of his judgment into a single act of consciousness.<sup>22</sup> If he lacks this conclusive exclusivity, his soul from the beginning is divided into multiplicity, and he will never take the time to make the movement. He will continue to run errands in life and never go into eternity; for even when right upon the edge of the moment of action, he will suddenly discover that he has forgotten something, and therefore must start over again. In the following moment, he will think it is possible, and that is also quite true; but through such considerations one never comes to make the movement. Rather, with their help one sinks deeper and deeper into the mud.

The knight, then, makes the movement—but which? Will he forget the whole thing? For in such a resolution, there is indeed a kind of concentration. No! For the knight does not contradict himself, and it is a contradiction to completely forget the whole content of his life while remaining the same being. He feels no inclination to become another being, and by no means does he regard such a transformation as something great. Only the lower natures forget themselves and become something new. In such a way has the butterfly completely forgotten that it was a caterpillar; perhaps it can again forget, just as absolutely, that it was a butterfly, so that it can

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‡ For which passion is required. Every movement of infinity happens with passion, and no reflection can produce a movement. This is the perpetual leap into existence that explains the movement, while mediation is a chimera which, as Hegel would have it, would explain everything, and which, in addition, is the one thing he never has sought to explain. Even to make the familiar Socratic distinction between what one knows and what one does not know requires passion, and, even more obviously, passion is required to make the genuinely Socratic movement, ignorance. But what our age lacks is not reflection, but passion. Therefore, in a manner of speaking, the age is really too tenacious of life to die, for to die is one of the most remarkable leaps, and a little verse by a poet has always appealed much to me, because he, after in five or six previous lines having beautifully and simply wished himself good things in life, concludes thus:

Ein seliger Sprung in die Ewigkeit      /      a blessed leap into Eternity

become a fish. The deeper natures, however, never forget themselves, and never become another being than the one they are.

The knight, then, will remember everything; but this recollection is precisely the pain, even though in this infinite resignation he is reconciled with existence.<sup>23</sup> His love for the princess became for him the expression of an eternal love, assumed a religious character, became clarified as a love for the Eternal Being, who perhaps had denied the fulfillment but yet brought him peace in the consciousness of its validity in an eternal form such as none could deprive him of.<sup>24</sup> Fools and young people go on about how everything is possible for a person. This, however, is a great delusion. In a spiritual sense, everything is possible, but in the world of finitude there is much that is not possible. This impossibility, of course, the knight makes possible by giving it a *spiritual* expression—but he expresses it spiritually in renouncing it. The wish, which would lead him out into actuality but shipwrecked him upon the impossibility, is now bent inward; but is therefore neither lost nor forgotten. One moment it is the obscure currents of desire in him that wake the memory, at other times he himself wakes it—for he is too proud to be willing that this, the object constituting the content of his whole life, should have been some passing affair of the moment. He keeps this love young, and it increases along with him both in years and in beauty.

However, he needs no finite occasion for its growth. From the moment he made the movement, the princess is lost. He does not need those erotic palpitations of the nerves on seeing the beloved, etc.; nor, in a finite sense, does he continually need to take leave of her. He recollects her in an eternal sense and knows very well that those lovers who are so nervous on leave-taking to see each other for the last time once again have the right to be nervous, the right to think that it is the last time—for such lovers forget each other the soonest. He has comprehended the deep secret that even in loving another person one should be self-sufficient. He takes no more finite consideration of what the princess does, and exactly this proves he has made the movement infinitely.<sup>25</sup> Here one can take the opportunity to see, in each case, whether the movement is true or false. There was one who also believed that he had made the movement; but behold, time passes, and the princess does something new, she marries a prince, and then his soul lost the elasticity of resignation. He saw thereby that he had not made the movement rightly; for the person who has resigned infinitely is self-sufficient. The knight does not cancel his resignation, and he keeps his love just as young as it was in its first moment. He never releases it precisely because he has made the movement infinitely. What the princess does cannot disturb him; it is only the lower natures who have the law of their actions in another person, the premises of their actions outside themselves.

If, however, the princess is like-minded, something beautiful will happen:<sup>26</sup> she will then initiate herself into that order of knighthood into which one is not admitted by ballot, but of which everyone is a member who has courage to enroll themselves;

this knightly order, in which someone proves their immortality, makes no distinction between man and woman. She, also, will preserve her love young and true, she also will have overcome her agony that she is not, as it said in the song, "Every night by her lord's side."<sup>27</sup> These two will then be exactly fitted for one another for all eternity, with such a rhythmical pre-established harmony that if ever the moment came—a moment which however does not finitely occupy them, for then they would grow old—if ever the moment came that allowed them to give their love an expression in time, they would be able to begin exactly where they would have begun if they had originally been united.<sup>28</sup> Someone who understands this—whether man or woman—can never be defrauded, for it is only the lower natures that imagine that they are defrauded. No girl who is not so proud really understands love, but all the world's cunning and shrewdness cannot defraud her who has this pride.

In infinite resignation there is peace and rest; every person who wills it, who has not degraded himself with what is still more terrible than to be too proud—self-belittlement—can discipline himself to make this movement, which in its pain reconciles one with existence. Infinite resignation is that shirt that is spoken of in an old legend. The thread is spun with tears, bleached by tears, the shirt sewn in tears, but it then also protects better than iron and steel. The imperfection in the legend is that a third party can prepare this linen.<sup>29</sup> The secret in life is that everyone must sew it themselves, and the remarkable thing is that a man can sew it fully as well as a woman. In infinite resignation there is peace and rest and solace in the pain, which will confirm whether the movement has been done correctly. It would however not be difficult to write a whole book were I to examine the various misunderstandings, the awkward positions, the shoddy movements I have encountered just in my little practice. A person generally trusts very little in spirit, and yet it belongs precisely to spirit to make this movement; it is necessary that it not be the one-sided result of a *dira necessitas* [fearful necessity];<sup>30</sup> and indeed, the more it is so, the more doubtful it always becomes whether the movement is correct.<sup>31</sup> Thus, when a person would think that a cold, barren necessity must necessarily be present, the person implies thereby that no one can experience death before actually dying, which seems to me a crass materialism.

Yet, in our time, a person typically worries very little about making the movement correctly. If someone who was learning to dance were to say, "For centuries, now, one generation after another has learned the positions; it is high time that I turn this to my advantage and without delay begin with quadrilles," people would probably laugh a little at him; but in the world of spirit, people find this utterly plausible. What, then, is education? I thought it was that curriculum that the individual runs through in order to catch up with himself; and for the one who will not undertake this race, it helps him very little to be born even in the most enlightened age. Infinite resignation is the last stage preceding faith; thus, everyone who has not made this

movement does not have faith; for in infinite resignation, for the first time, I prepare my self in my eternal validity; and only then can there be talk of seizing existence in virtue of faith.<sup>32</sup>

We will now let the knight of faith appear in the instance previously mentioned. He does everything exactly as the other knight does: he infinitely renounces the love that is his life's content, he is reconciled in the pain—but then the miracle occurs. He makes still one more movement, more wonderful than all, for he says: I believe, however, that I will get her—in virtue, namely, of the absurd, in virtue of the fact that for God everything is possible. “The absurd” does not belong to the categories proper to the scope of the understanding. It is not identical with the improbable, the unexpected, the uncalculated. In the moment the knight resigned, he assured himself of the love's impossibility, humanly speaking; this was the conclusion of the understanding, and he had energy enough to think it. In an infinite sense, it was still possible, but upon the basis of resigning it—and possession of this sort, of course, is nevertheless for the understanding no absurdity, since the understanding continues to be correct in holding that in the world of wretchedness, where it rules, the relationship was and continued to be an impossibility. This also the knight of faith is conscious of; the one thing that can save everything for him is the absurd, and this he grasps with faith. He therefore acknowledges the impossibility and in the same moment believes the absurd; for if, without declaring with all his soul's passion and with his whole heart the love's impossibility, he imagines himself to have faith, he deceives himself. His testimony is groundless if he has not even arrived at infinite resignation.

Faith is therefore no aesthetic emotion, but something far higher, precisely because it presupposes resignation. It is not the heart's immediate inclination, but the paradox of existence. Thus, when a young girl, despite all difficulties, nonetheless remains assured that her wish will be fulfilled, this assurance is not at all that of faith, and this even if she was raised by Christian parents and perhaps has gone a whole year to the parson for lessons. She is assured in all her childlike naivete and innocence, and this assurance also ennobles her being and gives her a supernatural strength, so that she, like a wonder-worker, can conjure the finite powers of existence and even make the stones weep on her behalf; while, at the same time, in her nervous agitation she can run to Herod equally well as to Pilate, and touch all the world with her pleas. Her assurance is lovely, quite so, and one can learn much from her, but what one does not learn from her is to make the movements; for her assurance dares not, in the pain of resignation, look the impossibility in the eye.

I can see, therefore, that it requires power and energy and freedom of the spirit to make resignation's infinite movement. Further, I can see that it *can* be done. What happens next astonishes me and makes my head spin; for, after having made resignation's movement, now, in virtue of the absurd, to get everything, to get the wish, whole, uncut, this is beyond human powers; this is a miracle. But this I can see:

that the young girl's assurance is only lightmindedness in comparison with faith's unshakeableness, despite its having grasped the impossibility. Every time I would make this movement, my eye is darkened; in the very moment I absolutely admire it, a monstrous anxiety grips my soul: for what then is it to tempt God?<sup>33</sup> And yet this is faith's movement, and will be so, even if philosophy wants to confuse the concepts and convince us that it has faith, even if theology wants to sell it off at a bargain rate.

Resigning does not require faith, for what I win in resignation is my eternal consciousness, and this is a purely philosophical movement. I find solace in making it when required, and I can discipline myself to make it; for whenever some finitude would grow over my head, I sharpen my hunger until I make the movement; for my eternal consciousness is my love for God, and it is for me higher than all. To resign does not require faith, but to get the least thing more than my eternal consciousness requires faith, for this is the paradox. A person often confuses the movements: someone says that one needs faith in order to give everything up, and yes, one hears what is still stranger, a person complaining that he has lost faith, and when one looks to the scale to see where he is, one sees, strangely enough, that he has only come to the point where he should make resignation's infinite movement. By resignation, I give up everything. This movement I make by myself, and when I do not make it, it is because I am cowardly and soft and lack enthusiasm, and do not feel the significance of the high dignity that every person is accorded in being his own Censor, something much nobler than to be Censor-General for the whole Roman Republic.<sup>34</sup>

This movement I do perform by myself, and by this I therefore win my self in my eternal consciousness in blessed understanding with my love for the Eternal Being. By faith I do not give up something; on the contrary, by faith I get everything, in just the sense in which it is said that someone who has faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains. It requires a purely human courage to resign the whole of temporality in order to win eternity, but I can win this, and I cannot give it up, not in all eternity, for this is a contradiction. But it requires a paradox, and a humble courage, to now grasp the whole of temporality in virtue of the absurd. This courage belongs to faith. By faith, Abraham did not give up Isaac, but by faith, he received Isaac. In virtue of resignation the rich young man should have given away everything, but then when he had done it, the knight of faith would have said to him: "In virtue of the absurd, you shall get every cent back again—can you believe it?"<sup>35</sup> And that once-rich young man would by no means treat these words lightly. For if he gave away his goods because he was bored with them, then resignation cost him little.

Temporality, finitude: around these everything revolves. I can, by my own power, resign everything and then find peace and rest in the pain; I can tolerate everything. Even if that horrifying demon, more terrifying than Death, the terror of humanity; even if Madness held the fool's motley up to my eye, and I understood that it was I who should array myself in that costume—I can still save my soul if, otherwise, it is

to me more important to act so that my love for God prevails in me rather than my earthly happiness. A person can still, in this last moment, collect his whole soul into one single glance toward Heaven from which all good gifts come, and this glance shall be understandable to him and to the one whom it seeks that he yet kept his love faithfully. Then he shall calmly costume himself in the suit. The one whose soul lacks this romanticism has sold his soul, whether he now gets a kingdom for it, or a paltry silver penny. But by his own power he cannot get the least of that which belongs to finitude; for I continually expend my power in resigning everything. By my own power I can give up the princess, and I shall not become some biting grumbler, but find joy and peace and rest in my pain; but by my own power I cannot get her again, for I expend everything in order to resign. "But by faith," says that miraculous knight, "by faith you shall get her, in virtue of the absurd." See, this movement I cannot make. Just as soon as I would begin upon it, everything turns itself about, and I flee back into resignation's pain. I can swim in life, but for this mystical floating I am too heavy. To exist thus, to express my contradiction with existence in every moment as the most beautiful and secure harmony with it, this I cannot do.

And yet it must be glorious to get the princess; this I will say every moment, and the knight of resignation who does not say this is a traitor. He has not had one single wish, and he has not held the wish young in his pain. Perhaps there was someone who found it convenient enough that the wish should no longer live, so that the pain's arrows would be blunted; but someone like this is no knight. A freeborn soul that grasped himself to be in this condition would despise himself and begin again from the beginning, and would not, for the sake of anything, allow his soul to deceive itself. And yet it must be glorious to get the princess; yet, faith's knight is the only happy person, the heir of the finite, while resignation's knight is a stranger and a foreigner. Therefore to get the princess, to live joyfully and happily day in and day out with her—for it was also conceivable, you see, that resignation's knight could get the princess, but that his soul had penetrated the fact of the impossibility of their future happiness<sup>36</sup>—to live in this manner, joyful and happy every moment in virtue of the absurd, every moment seeing the sword hovering over the beloved's head, and yet not to find rest in resignation's pain, but joy in virtue of the absurd—this is miraculous.<sup>37</sup> The one who does this is great, the only great person. The thought of him moves my soul, which is never sparing in admiring greatness.

If, now, everyone in this generation who does not intend to stop with faith is actually a man who has comprehended the horror of life, who has understood what Daub meant when he said that a soldier who stands alone at his post with a loaded rifle by a powder magazine on a stormy night gets strange thoughts; if, now, everyone who does not intend to stop with faith is actually a man who had the strength of soul to comprehend and thereby took the time to be alone with the thought that the wish was an impossibility; if everyone who does not intend to stop with faith is a man who

in the pain was reconciled, and was reconciled by the pain; if everyone who does not intend to stop with faith is a man who thereupon (and if he has not done everything that precedes, then he shouldn't trouble himself where there is discussion of faith) performed the marvelous and grasped the whole of existence in virtue of the absurd—then what I write is the highest tribute to my generation by its lowliest member, who is able to make only the movement of resignation. But then why do they not wish to stop with faith, why does one sometimes hear that people are ashamed to admit that they have faith? This I cannot comprehend. If I ever reach the point where I am able to make this movement, then I will in the future drive with four horses.

Is it actually so, is all this bourgeois philistinism I see in life, upon which I do not let my words but my conduct pass judgment, is it actually not what it seems, is it the marvel? It is indeed thinkable; for that hero of faith does indeed bear a striking likeness to this; for that hero of faith was not even an ironist and humorist, but something still higher. There is much said in our age about irony and humor, especially by people who have never been able to practice them, but who nevertheless know how to explain everything. I am not entirely unacquainted with these two passions, I know a little more about them than what is found in German and German-Danish compendiums. I know therefore that these two passions are essentially different from the passion of faith. Irony and humor also involve self-reflection and belong therefore to the sphere of infinite resignation. Their elasticity lies in the fact that the individual is incommensurable with actuality.

The last movement, faith's paradoxical movement, I cannot make, be it now duty or whatever it is; although, notwithstanding that, I would willingly do it. Whether a person has the right to say this must be left to him; it is a matter between him and the Eternal Being who is faith's object whether he in this respect can hit upon an admirable agreement. What every individual can do is to make the movement of infinite resignation; and I, for my part, would not need a moment's consideration to declare anyone a coward who would imagine that he cannot do this. With faith it is another matter. But what every person does not have a right to is to imagine otherwise, that faith is something lowly or that it is an easy matter, whereas it is the greatest and the most difficult.

One comprehends the story of Abraham in another mode. One praises God's grace, that he granted him Isaac again; the whole thing was only a trial. A trial: this word can say much and little, and yet the whole matter is over as quickly as it is said. One mounts a winged horse, in the same instant one is on Mount Moriah, in that same instant one sees the ram; one forgets that Abraham rode only on an ass, which carried him slowly along the way, that he had three days' journey, that he needed some time to cut the wood, bind Isaac, and sharpen the knife.

And yet one praises Abraham. Someone who would speak can just as well sleep, the audience can just as well fall asleep during the speech, for everything goes easily



enough without inconvenience from either side. If there was a man present who suffered from sleeplessness, then perhaps he went home, sat down in a corner, and thought: The whole thing is an affair of a moment, you just wait a minute, and then you see the ram and the trial is over. If the speaker met him in this condition, then I think he would step forward toward him and, with all his dignity, say: "You wretch, to let your soul sink into such folly! No miracle takes place, and the whole of life is a trial." As the speaker grew more effusive and he came to greater and greater effect, he would become more and more pleased with himself, and while he had observed no blood congestion when he spoke about Abraham, he now felt how the veins swelled in his forehead. Perhaps he would be dumbfounded if the sinner quietly and with dignity answered: "Well, after all, that was what you preached about last Sunday."

So, let us either abandon Abraham, or let us learn to be appalled by the gigantic paradox that constitutes the meaning of his life, so that we may understand that our age, just like every age, can be happy if someone has faith. If Abraham is not a nullity, a phantom, some ornament one uses for diversion, then the error can never lie in the fact that the sinner intends to do likewise, but rather the important thing is to see how great what Abraham did was, so that the man can judge for himself whether he has the calling and the courage to be tested in such a way. The comic contradiction in the speaker's conduct was that he made Abraham into a nonentity and yet would forbid the other to conduct himself in the same way.

Should one, then, not dare to speak about Abraham? I believe it is after all possible. If I should speak of him, then I would first describe the pain of the trial. To that end, I would, like a leech, suck all the angst and distress and agony out from a father's suffering, so that I could describe what Abraham suffered, while he yet, throughout everything, believed this. I would point out one that the journey lasted three days and a good part of the fourth; yes, these three and a half days could be infinitely longer than the few thousand years that separates me from Abraham. Then I would definitely point out—this is my opinion—that every person might still dare to turn back before he begins on such thing, and at every moment can repentantly turn back. If one does this, then I fear no peril, nor am I afraid of awakening desire among people to be tried in like manner with Abraham. But if one intends to offer for sale a bargain edition of Abraham, and yet forbids everyone to do likewise, then it is laughable.

It is, then, now my intention to extract, from the story of Abraham, the dialectic that lies within it in the form of *Problemata*, so as to see what a gigantic paradox faith is, which has the power to make a murder into a holy and God-pleasing action, a paradox which gives Abraham Isaac again, which no thought can grasp—because faith begins precisely where thought draws up.

## Endnotes

1. Probable allusion to Aesop's fable, "The Cicada and the Ants," or similar sources:

It was winter. Their grain was damp and the ants were drying it. A cicada, who was hungry, asked them for something to eat. The ants replied: "Why didn't you too store up some provisions during the summer?" "I didn't have time for that," replied the cicada. "I was singing melodiously." The ants made fun of her: "Ah well," they said, "since you sang in summer, you can dance in winter."

This fable shows that in all things one should beware of negligence, if one wishes to avoid danger and trouble. (Aesop, *The Complete Fables*, trans. Olivia and Robert Temple [New York: Penguin Books, 1998], 246.)

There is a verbal similarity to 2 Thessalonians 3:10ff, which may mislead the reader. In this passage Paul says: "Even when we were with you, we would give you this command: 'If anyone is not willing to work, then let him not eat.' For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living." However, a *saying* and a *command* are quite different, as different as the indicative and imperative moods are from each other. A saying, adage, or proverb attempts to sum up some general pattern that events always or usually follow. On the other hand, a command usually presupposes that a pattern is not being followed. Thus, Paul is issuing a command, not relating a saying or passing on some proverbial wisdom, because he is confronting the same problem Silentio mentions: namely, that despite the seeming logic of the fable, "again and again . . . the one who does not work also gets the bread and the one who sleeps gets it more abundantly than the one who works." It is to correct this defect—rather than to restate some proverbial saying—that Paul issues a command.

2. Nouraddin is the villainous enchanter opposing Aladdin in the dramatic poem *Aladdin; or, the Wonderful Lamp*, an 1805 adaptation of the familiar tale from *One Thousand and One Nights*, by Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850), the father of Danish romantic poetry. Nouraddin possesses a ring in addition to the familiar lamp (see Adam Oehlenschläger, *Poetiske Skrifter*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: 1805; ASKB 1597–98), 2:75ff).

3. Allusion to Matthew 5:45, where Jesus describes God's providence in these terms.

4. In Greek myth, Orpheus is a legendary musician and poet whose music was so beautiful it could charm wild beasts and even stones. For a late but representative example of the myth, see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 10.1–85. Orpheus fell in love with and married the nymph Eurydice, who died from a snakebite (in some versions, this happens because she is chased through a meadow by Aristaeus, who wants her for himself) soon after their wedding. Orpheus descends into the underworld in an attempt to rescue his beloved, where he sets his music to work on Hades and Persephone, the king and queen of the realm of the dead. He persuades the king and queen to allow him to leave with Eurydice—on condition that he never look back to make sure that she is really with him. However, before he escapes the underworld, he anxiously looks back at her to verify that she is still there and loses her forever.

The myth has a variety of endings. In Ovid's retelling, Orpheus considers himself forever bound by his marriage vow to Eurydice and lives a sad, isolated life, living apart from women, enjoying friendship only with the young men of Thrace. But it is more common for Orpheus to be killed during his despairing wanderings by women, wild beasts, or Zeus himself. It is from the version of the tale retold by Plato (*Symposium* 179d) that Silentio draws the idea that the gods, considering Orpheus a coward for refusing to die for love, are revenged on him twice, one by giving him an "airy apparition" of the beloved and then by having him killed by a group of Maenads, the intoxicated, frenzied female followers of the god Bacchus.

The story is one of opera's most frequently adapted tales. Kierkegaard, as a regular operagoer, would have also been aware of how the operatic tradition had shaped the story. For operatic composers, Orpheus could symbolize music, musicians, or composers in general, so that the myth can come to be a story about the nature, power, and limits of music. This has led to a variety of retellings of the myth, and a corresponding variety endings, even for a single opera like Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* of 1607. The curious reader can consult F. W. Sternfeld, "The Orpheus Myth and the Libretto of 'Orfeo,'" in *Orfeo*, ed. John Whenham (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 20–33, as a starting point.

5. Cf. Isaiah 26:18.

6. An allusion to the Greek myth of Midas, King of Phrygia, part of the Dionysiac cycle of legends. Midas was kind to Silenus, the wandering servant of Dionysius. His kindness was rewarded by Dionysius with a wish. Midas foolishly wished that all he touched would turn to gold. The threat of starvation caused Midas to realize his error and beg to be escaped from his wish; he was allowed to repent by washing in the Pactolus River (near Sardis in modern Turkey).

7. Miltiades was the Athenian general who commanded Athenian forces during their defense against the invading Persians at the Battle of Marathon. He also conquered several islands in the Mediterranean afterward. The Greek contemporary made "sleepless" by these victories was Themistocles, an Athenian politician and general whose foresight led Athens to develop the naval power that would prove crucial to defeating Persia when it invaded Greece a second time. See Plutarch's *Lives*, 10 vols., trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb Classics, New York: Macmillan, 1914), 2:11.

8. A difficult allusion to Matthew 11:28, where Christ says, "Come to me, you who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Although the invitation promises deliverance from labor and weariness, Silentio emphasizes that the promise of rest belongs to those who do, first of all, labor and become heavy-laden—not to those who demand rest even before laboring.

This allusion is obscured in most English translations because they render the Greek κοπιῶντες as "those who are weary" rather than as "those who labor" (as the Danish translation used by Kierkegaard did). Both translations are possible.

9. An allusion to Genesis 3:24. When God expels Adam and Eve from the Garden, he stations an angel (a "cherub") with a flaming sword to guard the way back to the Tree of Life.

10. This Danish saying is collected as no. 7520 in E. Mau, *Dansk Ordsprogs-Skat*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: 1879), 2:135.
11. A quotation of Horace (65–8 BC), from *Epistles*, bk. 1, ed. Roland Mayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 82, where he says more or less that “It is your concern when your neighbor’s house is on fire.”
12. The heroism of the tragic hero is defined by the individual’s resignation of that which they love for the sake of an ethically superior end, a topic clarified and much discussed in *Problemata* 1 and 2.
13. Jesus’s first recorded miracle occurred at a wedding at Cana (John 2:1–11). When the wine ran out in the middle of the celebration, he transformed the contents of six stone jars of water used for ritual purification into wine.
14. Italian, or “double-entry,” bookkeeping involves keeping a general ledger with a balance sheet made up of assets, liabilities, and equity. It requires “double” posting each transaction as both a debit and a credit within different categories. For example, if a tailor were to purchase cloth, then this transaction would be entered both as a liability (money owed to the person from whom the cloth was purchased) and as an asset (the value of the cloth). This practice was devised in 1504 by the Italian monk, Boccaccio da Borgo (1300–1342), for which reason it is often called “Italian bookkeeping.”
15. “Omnibuses” were large horse-drawn coaches capable of carrying many passengers. They were introduced to Copenhagen in 1840, three years prior to the publication of *Fear and Trembling*, and hence are an example of a novelty.
16. Østerport is one of Copenhagen’s gates.
17. Abraham’s son Isaac had two sons of his own, twins named Esau and Jacob. Esau is described as a “skillful hunter,” while Jacob is a “quiet man, dwelling in tents.” This led to the following episode recorded in Genesis 25:29–34, epitomizing both brothers’ character flaws—Jacob’s craftiness and Esau’s appetites and short-sightedness:
- Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” . . . Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Jacob said, “Swear to me now.” So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.
18. “New creation” is a Pauline phrase (used in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15) to indicate the result of being reborn through faith in Christ.
19. Faith is easily mistaken for something mundane (as in the case of the tax collector), while attitudes or conditions other than faith (such as resignation or self-assurance) can be easily mistaken for the genuine article. To allow the reader to approach the three “Problems” with the right idea in

mind, Silentio therefore introduces a detailed account of the knight of resignation in order to solve the difficulty of identifying faith when we see it by using a story of resignation to highlight faith's "relation to actuality."

**20.** The tale of the lad and the princess, with its themes of knighthood, impossible love, and ennoblement through the suffering of love, bears the mark of a troubadour story. The use of these tales, especially the Arthurian legends, was popular and widespread during the nineteenth century, and used especially to contrast the "knightly" mode of living for an ideal, whatever the costs, with the mode of life devoted to "finite," utilitarian concerns. This revival spanned literature and the arts across Europe: a few examples familiar to those acquainted with English art and literature would be the novelists Sir Walter Scott and George MacDonald; the Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Tennyson; and the painters and poets of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Such writers and artists, along with the continental counterparts in various Romantic movements and Gothic or Troubadour revivals, used images of the knight to portray an ideal of life they found important to preserve in an age of commerce and industrialization.

**21.** The image of a lover drinking poison may bring Romeo and Juliet to mind (whose love ends with them drinking poison in Juliet's tomb), which is not impossible, but the troubadour setting suggests the legend of Tristan and Isolde. In this legend, the two lovers drink a love potion whose ultimate consequence is their deaths. In the most famous version, written by Gottfried von Strassburg (d. 1210) in the thirteenth century, at the very moment they have drunk the potion, Isolde's servant Brangaene enters and proclaims "this draught will be your death!" and the writer himself remarks that the potion "was their lasting sorrow, their never-ending anguish, of which at last they died!" (Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, trans. A. T. Hatto (New York: Penguin Classics, 1960), 194–95).

The love-potion, then, is equally a death-potion—a poisoned chalice. (Later in the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner's [1813–1883] *Tristan und Isolde* makes much of this ambiguity between love-potion and death-potion.) The lad would then be a knightly, Tristan-like lover who was as wise to the ways of the world as the poets extolling Tristan: someone who knew the sorrow and the tragic consequences embedded in the passion of love, but who still valued love so highly that, in Tristan's circumstances, he would "drink the draught" even knowing the challenges that would hinder the couple from realizing their love. Similarly, if Romeo and Juliet is in view, the lad is a lover like Romeo who, more self-aware than Romeo, accepts the life-defining power of love even while already perceiving that the love could cost him his life. For further reading, see Sidney M. Johnson, "This Drink Will Be the Death of You: Interpreting the Love Potion in Gottfried's *Tristan*," in *A Companion to Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan*, ed. Will Hasty (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003), 87–112.

**22.** Silentio does not precisely specify "the full conclusion of his judgment," but his own earlier footnote suggests that the conclusion is that the love is, humanly speaking, "incapable of realization." Similarly, in his journal, Kierkegaard wrote that "the decision whether or not to assume that this and that is humanly speaking impossible for me" requires "passionate concentration" (SKS 23, 177–78; X2 A594; *Journals and Papers*, 483–84)—but even so this does not completely clarify what this impossibility amounts to.

23. “Recollection” in Kierkegaard is distinct from memory and frequently denotes experience that has gone through a process of reflection, augmentation, and crystallization into a permanent, ideal form. (See Glossary for examples.)

24. This difficult passage is crucial for understanding the knight of resignation—and, insofar as Silentio considers resignation preliminary to faith, it is also crucial to understanding Abraham and the movement of faith. The key questions concern what happens to the love and how this change affects the knight’s relationship with the “Eternal Being.” Within the troubadour tales, an impossible love for an ideal woman was often represented as turning the soul toward God and helping the knight to develop a virtuous character, but this requires that the knight always be faithful to this love which had been providentially granted him by God. Similarly, here the love is recollected (given an enduring, reflective, and idealized form) and the love is, despite being denied in time, viewed as divinely sanctioned, and crucial for gaining a self with “eternal validity.”

25. What makes resignation finite or infinite? In Danish, “finite” (*endelig*) often denotes what has definite or specific limits in terms of duration, size, or extent. In a legal context, it specifies reasons or conditions or a time period in which deliberation can take place. What is “infinite” (*uendelig*) then is the negation of these limits: that which is without limitation, not bound in terms of time, size, extent, conditions; hence it can denote what is absolute and unconditional. Here, “infinite” resignation seems to mean especially a resignation that is unconditional and not temporally bound (see Erik M. Hanson, “Finitude/Infinity,” *Kierkegaard’s Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart, 6 vols. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2014), 3:73). For further information on Kierkegaard’s use of the term, see Glossary.

26. By allowing the possibility that the princess is like-minded, Silentio also clarifies that what makes the love impossible is not necessarily, as it might have seemed at first, that the love is unrequited.

27. This is a line from one of the Danish medieval folk songs about “Sir Stig” (“Ridder Stig,” literally “Knight Stig”). The lines “now has the little maiden lost her grief / she sleeps every night by the side of her lord” are the conclusion of “Ridder Stig og Findal,” 5, 1, in the “Power of the Runes” cycle, in *Selected Danish Ballads from the Middle Ages (Udvalgte Danske Viser fra Middelalderen)*, 4 vols., ed. W. H. Abrahamson, R. Nyerup, and K. L. Rahbek (Copenhagen: 1812–1814). Similar lines appear in other songs, e.g., “Ridder Stig Hvide” concludes with “Now Sir Stig has lost his grief / he sleeps every night in the King’s sister’s arms. / Now Miss Regisse has lost her grief / she sleeps every knight by Sir Stig’s side.” The commonness of this sort of ending is also noted in Johannes C. H. R. Steenstrup, *The Medieval Popular Ballad*, trans. Edward Godfrey Cox (New York: Ginn and Company, 1914), 43. The sheer frequency of this ending, then, may give it something like the sense of the English “And they lived happily ever after,” so Silentio’s meaning is something like “if the princess preserves her love by making the infinite movement, she can overcome the pain that she and the lad did not have any ‘happily ever after.’”

28. The philosophical idea of “pre-established harmony” was devised by the German polymath Gottfried von Leibniz (1646–1716). According to this idea, created substances (monads) do not

causally interact, but, in unfolding the laws of their nature as created by God, they appear to interact with each other. Strictly speaking, however, each substance, or monad, is related only to God and to itself; a substance's previous states are the only real causes of its subsequent states, and God is the cause of each substance having come into existence as the particular substance it is. (See G. W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, in *Philosophical Essays*, trans. Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1989], 41: "God, seeing Alexander's individual notion or haecceity, sees in it at the same time the basis and reason for all the predicates which can be said truly of him"; 59, "in rigorous metaphysical truth, there is no external cause acting on us except God alone.") Many have found this idea difficult and problematic; Silentio's analogy, however, is not as difficult as Leibniz's. His appears to mean that two knights of resignation do not causally interact with each, as each relates solely to God and to themselves; but because the self they preserved through resignation was the self discovered through each other, they remain harmonized with each other by remaining in harmony with God.

**29.** The legend in question is "Erzsi the Spinner," by Hungarian author János Majláth (1786–1855), published in German. See "Erzsi die Spinnerin" in Johann Grafen Mailáth, *Magyarische Sagen, Märchen und Erzählungen*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart and Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1837), 2:18. See KSKB 1411. There is no English translation available.

**30.** Allusion to Horace, *Odes* 3.24.6; see *The Complete Odes and Epodes*, trans. David West (Oxford: Oxford University Press, ), 100. The subject of the ode is the necessity of moral restraint to govern greed so as to become free from the fear of threats to material well-being ("Though your riches surpassed / the untouched treasures of Arabia and all the wealth of India . . . if grim Necessity drives / her adamantine nail into your head, / you will not free yourself / from fear or from the snares of death").

**31.** For Kierkegaard, "spirit" has a distinctive sense, connected to the capacity for selfhood. The student of Hegel must be particularly on guard against potential misunderstanding prompted by assimilating this to Hegelian "spirit" or "Geist." See Glossary for further information on Kierkegaard's use of this term.

**32.** Someone can "go further" than resignation, going on to faith, but, at least according to Silentio, resignation is a necessary condition for authentic faith. Faith is therefore clarified as depending upon an enduring sense of the impossibility, humanly speaking, of enacting, in finitude, some anterior passion that meets the qualifications specified earlier—it is not a transient feeling, and in the passion is "concentrated the whole reality of actuality."

**33.** Deuteronomy 6:16 forbids putting God to the test ("tempting" him), and is quoted in Matthew 4:5–7 and Luke 4:9–12, when Satan is tempting Jesus in the wilderness. Satan takes Jesus up to one of the pinnacles of the temple, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." And Jesus responds: "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

34. A Roman censor was one of two senior magistrates who supervised public morals, maintained the list of citizens and their tax obligations (the census), and gave out public contracts and tax-collecting rights.

35. The story of the rich young ruler is told in Mark 10:17–27 and Luke 18:18–23.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

When, following this, Jesus says that “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God,” the disciples are amazed; and Jesus simply says, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.”

36. Here Silentio adds a final complicating factor to the idea of “impossibility” at stake in faith: if what the lad perceived was that he could marry the princess, but that they could not be happy together, is it external constraints, such as social station or similar factors, that hold them apart? If not, what does “impossibility” denote?

37. Allusion to the so-called “sword of Damocles,” a tale coming down to us from Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC), the Roman statesman and philosopher. Damocles, courtier in the court of Dionysius II (397–343 BC), tyrant of Syracuse in the fourth century BC, had praised the tyrant’s majesty, wealth, and good fortune, leading Dionysius II to ask if the courtier would like to taste his life for a day. Damocles eagerly agreed. After showering Damocles with luxuries, Dionysius had a great sword lowered over Damocles’s head, held by a single horse hair. Damocles’s desire for the luxuries surrounding him quickly died; he begged to be allowed to depart “because he no longer wanted to be happy” (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5:61).



## Problema I

### *Is there a teleological suspension of the ethical?*

The ethical as such is the universal, and as the universal, it is in force for everyone, which can be expressed from another side by saying that it is in force at every moment. It rests immanently in itself, has nothing outside itself that is its τέλος,<sup>1</sup> but is itself τέλος for everything that it has outside itself, and when the ethical has taken this up and received it into itself, it goes no further. Immediately qualified as a sensate and psychical being, the single individual is the particular individual who has his τέλος in the universal, and this is his ethical task, to continually annul his particularity in order to become the universal.<sup>2</sup> As soon as the individual intends to assert himself in his particularity over and against the universal, he sins, and only by acknowledging this can he again be reconciled with the universal. Every time the individual, after having entered the universal, feels an impulse to assert himself as the single individual, he is in a spiritual agon from which he can work himself out only by repentantly surrendering himself as the single individual to the universal.<sup>3</sup> If this is the highest that may be said about a human being and his existence, then the ethical has the same nature as man's eternal blessedness, which in all eternity and in each moment is his τέλος, as it would be a contradiction that this should be capable of being given up (that is, teleologically suspended), since it, as soon as it were to be suspended, would be forfeited, while that which is suspended is not forfeited, but precisely preserved in something higher, that which is its τέλος.

If such is the case, then Hegel has it right when, in "The Good and Conscience," he allows man to be qualified only as the particular individual and considers this qualification as a "moral form of evil" (cf. especially *The Philosophy of Right*),<sup>4</sup> which is to be annulled<sup>5</sup> in the teleology of ethical community<sup>6</sup> in such a way that the particular individual who remains in that stage either sins or lies in spiritual agony. What Hegel does not get right, on the other hand, is in speaking about faith; he is wrong not to loudly and clearly protest against Abraham's enjoying fame and honor as the Father of Faith, when he ought to be sent home and held up as a murderer.<sup>7</sup>

Faith is exactly this paradox, that the single individual is higher than the universal, yet, mark this well, in such a way that the movement repeats itself, that therefore someone, after having been in the universal, now as the single individual isolates himself as higher than the universal. If this is not faith, then Abraham is lost, then faith has never been found in the world, precisely because it has always been in it. For if the ethical—that is, ethical community—is the highest, and there is nothing incommensurable left over in man of a kind other than that incommensurability which constitutes evil, that singularity that should be expressed in the universal, then

one needs no categories other than those possessed by Greek philosophy, or those which can consistently be logically derived from those. This, Hegel should not have concealed; for he had, after all, studied the Greeks.

Now, one not infrequently hears people who, not having devoted themselves to study instead immerse themselves in clichés, say that a light shines over the Christian world, while darkness shrouds the pagan world. This type of talk has always seemed strange to me, since every more profound thinker, every more earnest artist, still rejuvenates himself in the eternal youth of the Greek people. Such a comment can be explained by the fact that someone does not know what to say, but only that one must say something. It is surely in order to say that paganism did not have faith, but if one would say something thereby, then one must be a little clearer concerning what one understands by “faith,” as otherwise one falls back into such hackneyed phrases. To explain the whole of existence, faith included, without having a conception of what faith is, is easy; and someone who offers such explanations is not the worst accountant in life if he counts upon being admired—for it is as Boileau says: “One fool always finds an even greater fool to admire him.”<sup>8</sup>

Faith is precisely this paradox, that the particular individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, is justified over and against it, not as subordinate but as superior, yet, mark this well, in such a way that it is the single individual who, after having been as the particular individual subordinate to the universal, now through the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the Absolute. This standpoint cannot be mediated, for all mediation occurs precisely in virtue of the universal; it is, and remains for all eternity, a paradox, inaccessible to thought. And yet faith is this paradox, or else (these are the consequences that I would bid the reader to have *en mente* [in mind] at all times, lest this become too verbose)—or else there has never been faith, precisely because it has always existed; or else Abraham is lost.

That this paradox can, for the individual, easily be confused with a spiritual agon, is quite true, but one should not therefore hide it. That, for many, their whole character may be such that this repels them, is quite true; but one should not for that reason make faith out to be something else, so that one also can have it—one should rather confess to lacking it. On the other hand, those who do have faith should be concerned to set out some distinguishing features so that one can discriminate the paradox from a spiritual agon.

The story of Abraham contains just such a teleological suspension of the ethical. It has not wanted for shrewd heads and painstaking scholars to search out analogies for it. Their wisdom amounts to the fine proposition that basically everything is the same. When one looks a little more closely, I doubt very much whether one will find, in the entire world, a single analogy, except a later one,<sup>9</sup> which proves nothing if it is certain that Abraham represents faith and that it has been properly expressed in him,

whose life is not just the most paradoxical that can be thought, but so paradoxical it cannot be thought at all. He acts by virtue of the absurd; for it is precisely “the absurd” that he as the single individual is higher than the universal. This paradox cannot be mediated; for as soon as someone begins thereupon, he will conclude that he was in a spiritual agon—and then he will never come to sacrifice Isaac, or if he has sacrificed Isaac, he must repentantly return to the universal. In virtue of the absurd, he gets Isaac back again. Abraham is therefore at no moment a tragic hero, but something entirely different: either a murderer or a believer. The middle term that saves the tragic hero, Abraham lacks. For this reason, I can understand the tragic hero, but not Abraham, even if in a certain, mad sense I admire him more than all others.

Abraham’s relation to Isaac is ethically expressed quite simply as this, that the father shall love the son more than himself. Yet the ethical has within its own realm distinguishable gradations; we shall see whether there is in this story any such high expression within the ethical to be found to explain his conduct ethically, ethically justify him in suspending the ethical obligation to the son, yet without for this reason moving outside the teleology of the ethical.

When an undertaking of concern to a whole people is hindered, when such an enterprise is brought to a standstill by Heaven’s disfavor, when the angry deity sends a dead calm that mocks all efforts, when the soothsayer completes his heavy deed and proclaims that the god demands a young girl as a sacrifice—then the father shall heroically offer the sacrifice.<sup>10</sup> He must nobly hide the pain, even though he could wish he were “the humble man, who dares to cry,” not the king, who must act regally.<sup>11</sup> And however lonely the pain that penetrates into his breast—and he has just three confidants among the people—soon the whole nation will be privy to his pain, but also privy to his deed: that for the welfare of the whole he would sacrifice her, his daughter, the lovely young girl. “O bosom! O fair cheeks and flaxen hair!” (v. 687).<sup>12</sup> And the daughter shall move him with her tears, and the father shall avert his face, but the hero shall lift the knife. Then, when the news of it reaches the fatherland, the beautiful maidens of Greece shall blush with enthusiasm, and if the daughter was to be a bride, the betrothed will not be angry, but be proud to share in the father’s deed, because the daughter belonged to him more tenderly than she belonged to her father.

When the bold judge, who saved Israel in the hour of need, in one breath binds God and himself with the same promise, then he must heroically transform the young girl’s jubilation, the beloved daughter’s happiness, to sorrow, and all Israel shall sorrow with her over her maidenly youth. But every freeborn man will understand, every stout-hearted woman will admire Jephthah, and every maiden in Israel will wish to conduct herself as his daughter did; for what help would it be for Jephthah to prevail by means of his promise if he did not keep it? Would the victory not again be taken from the people?<sup>13</sup>

When a son forgets his duty, when the state entrusts the father with the sword of judgment, when the laws require punishment at the father's hands, then the father must heroically forget that the guilty party is his son, he must nobly hide his pain; but there will not be a single person among the people, not even the son, who fails to admire the father. And every time the laws of Rome are expounded, it must be remembered that many have expounded them more learnedly, but none more gloriously, than Brutus.<sup>14</sup>

If, however, while a favorable wind led the fleet with full sails toward its goal, Agamemnon should have dispatched the command that fetched Iphigenia in order to sacrifice her; if Jephthah, without being bound by any promise that determined the fate of the people, had said to his daughter: Sorrow now for two months over your short youth, and then I will sacrifice you; if Brutus had had a righteous son, and yet should have called for the lictors<sup>15</sup> in order to execute him—who should then have understood them? If these three men were posed the question of why they do it, and had answered: “It is a test in which we are being tried,” would one have understood them better?

When Agamemnon, Jephthah, and Brutus, in the decisive moment, heroically overcome the pain, have heroically lost the beloved, and must just complete the outward deed, there shall never be a noble soul who lacks the tears of compassion for their pain, or admiration for their deed. If, however, these three men in the decisive moment had added to the heroic courage with which they bore the pain, the little word: “Yet it will not happen”—who then would have understood them? If they, as an explanation, added, “We believe it in virtue of the absurd,” who would have understood them better? For who could not easily understand that it was absurd, but who would understand that one could believe it?

The difference between the tragic hero and Abraham is easily made out. The tragic hero is still within the ethical. He allows one expression of the ethical to have its τέλος in a higher expression of the ethical; he demotes the ethical relation between father and son or daughter and father to a sentiment, which has its dialectic in its relation to the idea of ethical community. There can, then, be here no discussion of a teleological suspension of the ethical itself.

But Abraham's case is otherwise. With his act, he passes over the whole of the ethical and had a higher τέλος outside it, in relation to which he suspended it. For I would surely like to know how one would bring Abraham's act into relation with the universal and whether one can discover any other point of contact between what Abraham did and the universal except this: that Abraham overstepped it. It is not to save a people, not to maintain the idea of the state, that Abraham does it, not to make atonement to angry gods. If there were to be discussion whether the deity was angry, then surely he was angry only with Abraham, and Abraham's whole act stands in no relation to the universal; it is a purely private undertaking. Therefore, while the tragic

hero is great by his civic virtue, Abraham is great by a purely personal virtue. There is no higher expression for the ethical in Abraham's life than this, that the father shall love the son. The ethical in the sense of ethical community cannot there be spoken of at all. Insofar as the universal was present, it was surely concealed in Isaac, hidden so to speak in Isaac's loins, and must then cry with Isaac's mouth: "Don't do it, you are ruining everything!"

Why did Abraham do it, then? For God's sake, and what is altogether identical with this, for his own sake. He did it for God's sake because God demands this proof of his faith; he did it for his own sake so that he can make the proof. The unity here is quite rightly expressed in the word whereby one always denotes this relation: it is a trial, a temptation. A temptation; but what does that mean? That which tempts a person in other cases is surely what would hold him back from his duty; but here the temptation is the ethical itself, which would hold him back from doing God's will. But then what is duty? "Duty" surely is precisely the expression for God's will.<sup>16</sup>

Here the need for a new category to understand Abraham manifests itself. Paganism lacks all acquaintance with such a relation to the deity. The tragic hero does not enter into any private relation to the deity, but the ethical is the divine, and therefore the paradox can be mediated therein, that is, within the universal.

Abraham cannot be mediated, which can also be expressed by saying he cannot speak. As soon as I speak, I express the universal, and if I do not do that, no one can understand me. As soon as Abraham intends to express himself in the universal, he must say that his situation is a spiritual agon, for he has no higher expression of the universal that stands over the universal that he oversteps.

Therefore, while Abraham awakens my admiration, he appalls me as well. He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite—he is secure enough; the tragic hero gives up what is sure for that which is still surer, and the observer's eye rests confidently on him. But he who gives up the universal in order to grasp some still higher thing, which is not the universal, what does he do? Is it possible that this can be anything but a spiritual agon? And if it *is* possible, but the individual makes a mistake, what salvation is there for him? He suffers all the tragic hero's pain, he annihilates his joy in the world, he renounces everything, and perhaps he, in the very same moment, barricades himself off from the exalted joy that is so precious to him that he would buy it for any price. Him, the observer cannot understand in the slightest, nor indeed can he rest his eye confidently on him. Perhaps it cannot be done at all, this thing the believer intends, because it is quite inconceivable. Or if it could be done, but the individual misunderstood the deity—then what salvation is there for him? The tragic hero needs tears, and he demands tears, and where was the envious eye that was so barren that it could not cry with Agamemnon? But where is the soul that is so crazed as to dare to weep over Abraham? The tragic

hero completes his act at a definite point in time, but when time passes he does what is scarcely less significant: he visits him whose soul is engulfed by sorrow, whose breast cannot catch breath for its choked sighs, whose thoughts hang over him like a heavy shroud, pregnant with tears—he shows himself to him, he breaks the spell of sorrow, he loosens the corset, and he draws out the tear, as the suffering person forgets his suffering in that of the hero.

Abraham one cannot weep over. One draws near to him with a *horror religious* [religious terror], as Israel drew near to Mount Sinai.<sup>17</sup>—If, then, the solitary man who climbs Mount Moriah, which with its peak pierces Heaven above the flatlands of Aulis, if he is not a sleepwalker who walks confidently over the abyss, while he who stands at the foothills and, gazing upon him there, shakes with anxiety, in reverence and terror not daring once to call upon him, lest he should misstep!<sup>18</sup>

Thanks! Once again, thanks to the man who reaches out to him whom life's sorrows have overwhelmed and left behind naked, stretches out to him the expression, the leaf of the word, with which to hide his misery; thanks be to you, great Shakespeare, you who can say everything, everything, everything precisely as it is—and yet why do you never articulate this torment? Did you perhaps reserve it for yourself? As you did the beloved whose name one cannot tolerate the world to utter<sup>19</sup>—for the poet buys this power of the word to express everyone else's heavy secrets at the cost of a little secret that he cannot express, and a poet is not an apostle—he casts out devils by the power of the devil.<sup>20</sup>

But now when the ethical has thus been teleologically suspended, how then does the individual in whom it has been suspended exist? He exists as the single individual in contradiction with the universal. Then is he in sin? For this is the form of sin, as seen in the idea—just as, even though the child does not sin, because it is not conscious of its existence as such, yet its existence, seen under the idea, is sin, and the ethical requires itself of the child at each moment. If one would deny that this form can be repeated in such a way that it is not sin, then judgment falls upon Abraham. Then how did Abraham exist? He believed. This is the paradox by which he comes to stand upon the apex, which he cannot make clearer for any other; for the paradox is that he as the single individual places himself in an absolute relation to the Absolute. Is he justified? His justification is again that paradox; for if he *is*, he is not so in virtue of being something universal, but in virtue of being the single individual.

How then does the single individual assure himself that he is justified? It is easy enough to level all of existence to the idea of the state or to the idea of community. Once that is done, one can also mediate easily enough; for then one does not come to the paradox at all, that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, which I can also express appropriately in a proposition of Pythagoras, that the odd number is more perfect than the even number.<sup>21</sup> Inasmuch as, in our

age, one occasionally hears an answer in the direction of the paradox, it generally sounds like this: “One judges it according to the outcome.” A hero who has become a scandal and stumbling block [σκάνδαλον] to his contemporaries, conscious that he is a paradox that cannot be understood, cries out confidently to his contemporaries: “The outcome shall indeed prove that I was in the right!” In our age, one seldom hears this cry; for just as it does not bring forth heroes, which is its defect, so, in like manner, its advantage is that it also brings forth few caricatures. When in our age one hears this word: “It shall be judged according to the outcome,” it therefore is immediately clear with whom one has the honor to speak. Those who speak in this manner are a numerous lot, whom I will call with one common name: “Associate Professors.”<sup>22</sup> They live in their thoughts, secured in existence; they have a *permanent* position and *secure* prospects in a well-organized state, and they have centuries, or indeed even millennia between themselves and the great convulsions of existence. They do not fear that such events can be repeated, or else what would the police and the newspapers say? Their activity in life is to judge the great men, and to judge them according to the outcome.

Such a mode of conduct toward the great betrays a curious mixture of arrogance and wretched baseness—arrogance, because one thinks oneself called to judge; wretched baseness, because one feels one’s life to not be related, even in the slightest degree, to those of the great. When someone with even the smallest degree of *erectoris ingenii* [nobility of nature], who has not yet become a cold and clammy mollusk, draws near the great, it can surely not escape his notice that it has been common practice since the creation of the world that the outcome arrives last—and that if one is truly to learn something from the great, it is that one must be attentive precisely to the beginning. If one who must act were to judge himself according to the outcome, he would never come to the point of beginning. Even if the outcome is able to bring happiness to the whole world, it cannot help the hero; for he first came to know the outcome when the whole affair was finished, and it was not by this that he became a hero, but he became one by the fact that he began.

Moreover, the outcome (inasmuch as it is finitude’s answer to the infinite question) is, in its dialectic, altogether heterogeneous with the hero’s existence. Or would it be possible to prove that Abraham was justified in relating himself as the single individual to the universal by the fact that it was by a miracle that he got Isaac? If Abraham had actually sacrificed Isaac, would he therefore be less justified?

But one is curious after the outcome, as one is about the outcome of a book; the anxiety, distress, and paradox one wishes to know nothing about. The outcome—one flirts with it aesthetically; it comes just as unexpectedly, but also just as easily, as a prize in the lottery, and when one has heard the outcome, then one has been “edified.” Yet there is no temple robber who labors in chains and iron who is so base a criminal as he who plunders the holy in this way; even Judas, who sold his Lord

for thirty pieces of silver, is not more contemptible than he who sells greatness in this manner.

It runs contrary to my soul to speak inhumanly of greatness, to let it darken into some indefinite figure set far off at a gigantic distance—to let it be great yet without allowing the human element to appear within it, without which it ceases to be great; for it is not what happens to me that makes me great, but what I do, and there is surely no one who thinks that a man became great because he won the Grand Prize in the lottery. Even if a man was born in humble circumstances, I will still demand of him that he should not be so inhuman toward himself that he cannot think of the king's castle except at a distance, in a vague dream of its greatness that would simultaneously elevate and destroy it by elevating it in a base manner; I require that he should be human enough to step forward even there to walk with confidence and dignity. He must not be so inhuman as to rudely violate everything by barging into the King's Hall straight from the street, thereby losing more than the king does. On the contrary, he should take pleasure in observing every dictate of propriety with happy, confident enthusiasm, which is precisely what will make him a free man.

This is only a picture, for this distinction is merely a very imperfect expression for the distance of spirit. I require of each person that he should not think so inhumanly of himself that he dare not enter those palaces where not just the memories of the chosen ones live, but where they themselves live. He must not rudely press forward to claim his kinship with them. He should be happy every time he bows before them, but he should conduct himself confidently as a free man, and always as something more than a nurse's aide; for if he is unwilling to be more, then he will never enter therein. And what shall help him is precisely the anxiety and the distress in which the great were tried, for otherwise, if he has even a hint of backbone in him, those heroes would merely awaken his righteous envy. Whatever can be great only at a distance, which someone would attempt to make into something great with the help of empty and hollow phrases—this is annihilated by that very person.

Who was as great in the world as that favored woman, the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary?<sup>23</sup> And yet how does one speak of her? That she was favored among women does not make her great, and if it did not happen so strangely that those who listen could think just as inhumanly as those who speak, then perhaps every young girl would ask: "Why was not I also the favored one?" And if I had nothing else to say, I should not at all brush aside such a question as dumb; for with regard to a favor, abstractly considered, every human being is equally entitled. One leaves out the distress, the anxiety, the paradox. My thought is as pure as anyone's, and the thought of one who can think this way will become pure enough—and he has something frightful to expect if this is not the case; for he who once has drawn forth from these images cannot get rid of them again, and if he sins against them, then they revenge themselves by a quiet wrath more terrifying than ten ferocious critics.



Certainly, Mary bore the child miraculously, but it still went with her in the way of women, and this time is one of anxiety, distress, and paradox.<sup>24</sup> The angel was a ministering spirit, but he was not an obliging spirit who went to the young women of Israel and said, “Do not despise Mary, something extraordinary is happening to her.” But the angel came only to Mary, and no one could understand her. Really, what woman has been as offended against as Mary? And is it not also true here that the one whom God blesses, he curses in the same breath? This is the Spirit’s understanding of Mary, and she is by no means—as it outrages me to say it, but outrages me still more that people have thoughtlessly and unctuously understood her in this way—she is by no means a fine lady parading in finery and playing with a divine child. When she nonetheless said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord,” she is great, and I think it will not be difficult to explain why she became the Mother of God.<sup>25</sup> She needs no worldly admiration, just as little as Abraham needs tears, for she was no heroine, and he was no hero; but by no means did both of them become greater than these by being exempt from the distress, the torment, and the paradox; instead they became this through them.

It is great when the poet, in presenting his tragic hero for the people’s admiration, dares to say: “Weep over him, for he deserves it”; for it is great that the poet dares to restrain and discipline the crowd, dares to chasten the people so that each tests himself to see whether he is worthy to weep for the hero, for the wastewater of blubberers is a debasement of the holy—yet, greater than all this is that the knight of faith dares to say, even to the noble person who would weep for him, “Weep not for me, but weep for yourself.”<sup>26</sup>

One is moved, one returns to those beautiful times when sweet, tender longings led one to the goal of one’s wish—to see Christ wandering in the Promised Land. One forgets the anxiety, the distress, the paradox. Was it so easy a matter not to make a mistake? Was it not a terror that this person who went among the others was God, was it not terrifying to sit down to dine with him? Was it so easy a matter to become an apostle? But the outcome, the eighteen hundred years, it helps—it helps with the paltry deception whereby one deceives oneself and others. I don’t feel brave enough to wish to be contemporary with such events, but for this reason I do not judge harshly those who made a mistake, nor slightly those who saw the right thing.

But now to return to Abraham. In the time before the outcome, Abraham was either at each minute a murderer, or we stand next to the paradox that is higher than all mediations.

Abraham’s story contains, then, a teleological suspension of the ethical. As the single individual he became higher than the universal. This is the paradox that cannot be mediated. It is just as unexplained how he came into it as it is unexplained how he remained in it. If it does not stand thus with Abraham, then he is not even a tragic hero, but a murderer. To wish to call him the Father of Faith, to speak about

it to people who do not worry about anything but words, is thoughtless. A person can become a tragic hero by his own power, but not a knight of faith. When a person embarks upon the path of the tragic hero, hard in its way, many will be able to advise him; someone who walks the narrow way of faith no one can advise, no one understand. Faith is a miracle, and yet no person is excluded from it. For that in which all human beings share is passion,<sup>\*</sup> and faith is a passion.

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\* Lessing [Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 1729–1781, German dramatist, critic, and philosopher] has somewhere expressed something similar from a purely aesthetic standpoint. He really wants to show, in this passage, that sorrow also can yield a witty expression. He quotes, to this end, a reply made in some particular circumstances by the unhappy English King Edward II [lived 1284–1327, reigned 1307–1327]. In contrast to this, he quotes a story told by Diderot [Denis Diderot, 1713–1784, philosopher, author, and encyclopedist of the French Enlightenment] concerning a peasant woman and a reply of hers. Then he continues: “That too was wit and moreover the wit of a peasant woman; but the circumstances made it unavoidable. Consequently, one must not seek the justification of witty expressions of pain and sorrow in the fact that the person who said them is refined, well-bred, reasonable, and at the same time a witty person; for the passions make everyone equal again, but only in the sense that everyone, without exception, would say the same thing in the same circumstances. The peasant woman’s thought is one a queen could and must have been able to express, just as whatever the king said on that occasion could no doubt have been said by a peasant too.” See *Collected Works*, vol. 30, Letters, 223.

## Endnotes

1. In Greek philosophy, a being's τέλος (*telos*) is its end, goal, or purpose (in the sense that the oak tree is the τέλος of the acorn). In ethics, the human τέλος would be that end for which all human choices are, or should be, made, and all else is chosen either as a means to, or part of, that end.

2. Both “single individual” and “particular individual” are *den Enkelte* in Danish, which can mean either of these things, depending on what aspect (singularity or particularity) an author is emphasizing in a particular context. The reader should be forewarned that throughout the text I have translated these two phrases as context demands even though it is consistently *den Enkelte* behind them.

3. I have consistently translated the distinction between *vil gjøre sig gjeldende* and *føler en Tilskyndelse til at gjøre sig gjeldende* in terms of the former being an intention and the latter being an inclination or felt impulse. Other translations have obscured this difference to the point that English readers will find it hard to tell what difference, if any, Silentio finds between temptation and sin. This translation is informed by what Silentio writes in the Preliminary Expectoration, when he says that the ethical expression for what Abraham did is that *han vilde myrde Isaak*, where *vilde* indicates not that he *wanted* to murder Isaac, but that he *intended* to murder him. I have endeavored throughout *Problema I* to keep this distinction between impulse and intention clear so that the argument, though necessarily obscure and difficult, can become as lucid and easy to follow as possible.

4. See G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood and trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 157–86, §§129–41, particularly 167, §139: “Where . . . the will is in a state of pure inwardness, the self-consciousness is capable of making into its principle either *the universal in and for itself*, or the *arbitrariness of its own particularity*, giving the latter precedence over the universal and realizing it through its actions—i.e., it is capable of being *evil*.”

5. *Ophæves*, here used as an equivalent to Hegel's *aufheben* and carrying the multiple meanings of “to cancel,” “to preserve,” and “to elevate,” i.e., to preserve something by canceling it in its lower condition and raising it to a higher one. In everyday life, one can see the idea in how someone could convert fresh fruit into a jam (which involves destroying the fruit) and placing it up on a shelf (literally elevating it) where it can be preserved for later use. In the realm of ethics it means that the passions in their “immediate” form, right as they come from nature, have to be canceled, so that they can be preserved in an ethical form, and here the example might be how marriage cancels immediate forms of sexual appetite but also preserves them by placing them in a new, ethical context. Kierkegaard discusses this term in more detail in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 1:222–23.

6. *Det Sædelige*, the Danish term used to translate Hegel's somewhat technical term, *Sittlichkeit*. Like *Sittlichkeit*, it indicates ethical life as embodied within the life, norms, and mores of a community, as opposed to ethics conceived as an abstract ethical system or as set of personal convictions.

7. Hegel discusses the concept of “religion” in *Philosophy of Right* §270, where he describes the object of religion as “absolute truth” and religion itself as “the relation to the absolute in the *form of feeling, representational thought, and faith*.” Hegel concludes that, in this sense, “religion constitutes the *foundation*” of the ethical life that is then “unfolded” and “organized” in the ethical life of a community. In this sense, religion underwrites and justifies ethical life, but does not create a distinct realm alongside it or independent of it any more than the “essence” of a dog is another dog that we can compare with concrete dogs. He regarded using religion this way as a “fanaticism that . . . repudiates all political institutions and legal order as restrictive limitations on inner emotions and as incommensurate with the infinity of these.”

Hegel discusses the faith of Abraham in his 1824 lectures on philosophy of religion (G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. 2., ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987]). Here he identifies “the fear of the Lord” as the essence of the Judaism of Abraham and Job (p. 443). “Human beings depend on the particular” but “the fear of the Lord sets us free from all particular interests” (p. 444). This first of all involves an “absolute trust, or infinite faith,” in which one gives up what is one’s own to immerse oneself in the Lord “having this unity as one’s object and essence” (p. 444). This trust needs to find expression in “a concrete shape,” “a particular kind of existence,” which is “the family” (pp. 446–47).

8. Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), *The Art of Poetry*, trans. Albert S. Cook (Boston: Ginn, 1892), 172: “And in all times a forward scribbling fop / Has found some greater fool to cry him up.” Silentio cites Boileau in French: “Un sot trouve toujours un plus sot, qui l’admire.” Boileau, *L’Art poétique*, 1:232, *Œuvres de Boileau*, 4 vols. (Paris: 1830), 2:190.

9. Silentio later in this *Problemata* identifies the Virgin Mary as a second example of a knight of faith.

10. There are several versions of the myth of Agamemnon’s sacrifice of Iphigenia. Silentio refers to the version recounted by Euripides (480–406 BC) in *Iphigenia in Aulis*. The Greek fleet carrying the army assembled by Agamemnon, the most important of the Greek kings, to punish the Trojans for abducting Helen could not sail from Aulis to conquer Troy because of a dead calm. The soothsayer Calchas then urged Agamemnon to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to the goddess Artemis in hopes of persuading her to grant them a fair wind. For a contemporary English translation, see *Iphigenia in Aulis in Euripides V*, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 85–170.

11. In the English translation listed above, see p. 112, lines 446–50:

O fortunate man of mean,  
ignoble birth, freely you may weep and  
empty out your hearts, but the highborn—  
we suffer, decorum rules our lives and we,  
by service to the mob, become its slaves.

12. The number 687 refers to the line of the Danish translation of the play published as *Iphigeneia in Aulis* in *Euripides*, trans. Christian Wilster (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1840). In the English edition cited above, see p. 124, surrounding line 680:

O for this happy ignorance that is yours!  
 Now go into the pavilion—to be seen  
 embarrasses maidens. But first give me  
 a kiss and your right hand, for soon you go  
 to live apart from your father for too long.  
 O breast and cheeks! O golden hair!  
 What bitter burden Helen and her Troy city  
 have laid upon us!

13. Reference to Jephthah, known through the biblical book of Judges. The Ammonites have begun to make war upon Israel and some of the elders of the town of Gilead go to Jephthah to ask him to lead Israel (to become a “Judge,” or leader, over Israel) against Ammon. Jephthah, who was the son of a prostitute, had been driven out of the town of Gilead by his brothers who did not want to share their father’s inheritance with him (11:2–3). He left to dwell in the wilderness where it is said that “worthless fellows collected around Jephthah and went out with him,” which suggests he was something resembling a bandit leader prior to his summons to return home to defend Gilead. Jephthah initially attempts diplomacy but the king of the Ammonites did not listen to him. This leads to his famous vow and its consequence (Judges 11:29–40):

And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, then whatever comes out from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the Ammonites shall be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.” So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand. And he struck them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty cities, and as far as Abel-keramim, with a great blow. So the Ammonites were subdued before the people of Israel.

Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah. And behold, his daughter came out to meet him with tambourines and with dances. She was his only child; besides her he had neither son nor daughter. And as soon as he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low, and you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow.” And she said to him, “My father, you have opened your mouth to the Lord; do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has avenged you on your enemies, on the Ammonites.” So she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: leave me alone two months, that I may go up and down on the mountains and weep for my virginity, I and my companions.” So he said, “Go.” Then he sent her away for two months, and she departed, she and her companions, and wept for her virginity on the mountains. And at the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had made. She had never known a man, and it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went year by year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year.

Commentators have interpreted the tragedy of Jephthah in different, conflicting ways. One important question is whether Jephthah's decision to bind God by a vow displays faith in and submission to God or misunderstanding of, and lack of faith in, God.

14. Lucius Junius Brutus (died c. 500 BC) led the party that expelled the Tarquins from Rome after the rape of Lucretia and laid the foundations for post-monarchical, republican Rome in 509 BC. When his sons plotted to restore the Tarquins, Brutus had them executed. See Livy, *The Rise of Rome: Books One to Five*, trans. T. J. Luce (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009), 76 (Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita* 2:5).

15. Lictors were Roman officials whose function was to attend a magistrate, to bear the fasces before him, and to execute sentences of judgment upon offenders. Twelve lictors would normally attend a consul such as Brutus.

16. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), for example, identified God's will with human duty in his *Conflict of the Faculties*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni, trans. Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; rev. ed., 2008), and for this reason condemned Abraham:

Abraham should have replied to this supposedly divine voice: "That I ought not to kill my good son is quite certain. But that you, this apparition, are God—of that I am not certain, and never can be, not even if this voice rings down to me from (visible) heaven" (283).

17. Before Moses went up on Mount Sinai to receive the Law from the Lord, God told him to "set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live'" (Exodus 19:12–13).

18. A complex figure combining biblical imagery of Mount Moriah (where Abraham was tested) with Greek imagery of Aulis (where Artemis demanded that Agamemnon sacrifice Iphigenia in Euripides's *Iphigenia at Aulis*).

19. The first edition (1609) of William Shakespeare's (1564–1616) *Sonnets* was prefaced by a "Dedication" to an unnamed individual.

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER OF  
THESE INSUING SONNETS  
MR. W. H. ALL HAPPINESSE  
AND THAT ETERNITIE PROMISED  
BY  
OUR EVERLIVING POET  
WISHETH  
THE WELL-WISHING  
ADVENTURER IN  
SETTING  
FORTH

T. T.

It is unknown who authored the dedication—"T. T." seems to stand for Thomas Thorpe, the book's publisher—but the current consensus is that Shakespeare at least approved it. Kierkegaard may or may not have known the details of this debate. However, in one of his later works, *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (contained in *Without Authority*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 163; see SKS 12, 279), he included the following dedication, which may seem to echo that attached to Shakespeare's sonnets:

TO ONE UNNAMED,  
WHOSE NAME WILL ONE DAY BE NAMED,  
is dedicated,  
along with this little writing, the entire  
authorship, as it was from the beginning.

The "named" recipient of the vast majority of Kierkegaard's dedications was Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, his father. The "unnamed" recipient, of course, to whom he dedicated the entire authorship, was Regine Olsen, a fact declared openly following Kierkegaard's death. He had hidden this in plain sight in the Forewords or Prefaces to his various collections of discourses. Although differing in details, these opening Forewords, or second dedications, consistently said something like the following:

Although this little book . . . in the situation of *actuality* is like a fancy, a dream in the daytime, yet it is not without confidence and not without hope of fulfillment. It seeks that single individual, to whom it gives itself wholly, by whom it wishes to be received as if it had arisen in his own heart, that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, that single individual, who willingly reads slowly, reads repeatedly, and who reads aloud—for his own sake. If it finds him, then in the remoteness of separation the understanding is complete when he keeps the book and the understanding of himself in the inwardness of appropriation. *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 121 / UD, 5)

His reader, of course, is both "someone every human being is or can be" (*The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 95 / PV, 115)) yet *also*, specifically, Regine herself (JP, 382).

**20.** An allusion to Mark 3:22–27, in which Jesus is accused of casting out demons by the power of the devil.

And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons." And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but is coming to an end. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

**21.** The Pythagoreans gave several reasons for saying this, none easy for readers today to appreciate. Kierkegaard, studying Wilhelm Gottlieb Tennemann's *Geschichte der Philosophie* (11 vols. [Leipzig: Bei Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1798–1819], 1:105–6) jotted down the following summary of *The Pythagorean School* in one of his notebooks:

“Numbers Are the Principles of Things.”

Things are themselves numbers, and empty space is the reason that they do not form a continuum, a cohesive quantity.

The element of number is the even and the odd.

One is not a number, for every number is a plurality of units.

The even numbers are imperfect and incomplete; the odd numbers are perfect and complete.

The odd number has beginning, middle, and end because it cannot be divided into equal parts;

the even number has no middle.

the limitless and the limited (τπεπερασμενν—ταπειρν) are the principles of things.

(SKS 19, 423; NB14:2 / KJN 3, 423)

Perhaps the fundamental reason, and the most fitting for Silentio’s discussion, was that even numbers were seen as “limitless” (see Aristotle, *Metaphysics A* [986a6] for more on this point) and therefore lacking a governing principle or τέλος.

**22.** *Docenter* (pl.) literally means *tutors* and refers more precisely to university teachers who assisted the professors in the teaching of the discipline. However, Johannes de Silentio seems to be using the term to refer to the professoriate more broadly, in terms of professors’ detached objectivity, authoritative evaluations of the past, and lifetime appointments, especially in state-funded institutions where they function as civil servants within an official bureaucracy. In a contemporary context, this is best exemplified by those who have achieved tenure, i.e., associate professors. With some hesitation, I have therefore translated *Docenter* as “associate professors” rather than the more common “assistant professors,” since it would be baffling to speak of the latter as possessing “secure” positions.

**23.** At the beginning of Luke’s gospel, God sends the angel Gabriel to Mary. He greets her, saying: “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” (Luke 1:28).

**24.** “The way of women”: a biblical euphemism for menstruation; here the point is its cessation during pregnancy. This connection is made more explicit in Kierkegaard’s *Book on Adler*, where he uses Mary as an example of humility and faith: she has received the annunciation from the angel but cannot immediately see any miraculous event or verify whether she is actually pregnant until the requisite time has elapsed. “The necessary slowness is also a cross, which the chosen one has to bear with faith and humility.” In a marginal note he adds, “I wonder if she became preoccupied with asking what time it was, when the month was over—out of fear that it might be revoked.” “Only humility is capable of bearing, as did Mary, the fact that the miraculous must take its time” (SKS 15, 145 / BOA, 250).

**25.** Mary made this response to the angel Gabriel’s announcement that she would bear a child by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:38).

**26.** When Jesus is being led to crucifixion, “There followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children’” (Luke 23:27–28).



## Problema II

### *Is there an absolute duty to God?*

The ethical is the universal, and as such also the divine. One can therefore rightly say that every duty, in its ground, is duty to God; but if one cannot say more, then one says, in addition, that I really have no duty toward God.<sup>1</sup> The duty becomes duty by being referred to God, but in the duty itself I do not enter into a relation with God. It is thus a duty to love one's neighbor. It is duty by being referred to God, but in the duty I enter not into a relation with God, but with my neighbor, whom I love. If I then in this connection say that it is my duty to love God, then I really am saying only a tautology, insofar as "God" is here taken in a wholly abstract sense as the divine, viz., the universal, viz., duty. The whole existence of the human race then rounds itself off in a perfect, self-contained sphere, and the ethical is at one time that which limits and that which fills. God becomes an invisible vanishing point, an impotent thought, his power is only in the ethical which fills out existence. To the extent, then, that someone intends to love God in some manner other than the sense given here, he is a blowhard; he loves a phantom who, if it only had enough power to speak, would say to him: I do not require your love, just stay at home where you belong. Insofar as one might fall into attempting to love God otherwise, this love then becomes suspicious, like that love which Rousseau referred to, with which a person loves the Kaffirs instead of loving their neighbor.<sup>2</sup>

If, now, this development is rightly related, if there is nothing incommensurable in a human life, but the incommensurable which is only by chance, from which nothing follows insofar as existence is considered under the Idea, then Hegel is in the right; but where he is not in the right is in speaking about faith or allowing Abraham to be considered its father; for by the latter claim he has pronounced judgment both over Abraham and over faith. In the Hegelian philosophy, *das Äußere* (*die Entäußerung*) [the outer (the externalization)] is higher than *das Innere* [the inner].<sup>3</sup> This is often illustrated by an example. The child is *das Innere*, the man is *das Äußere*; thereby it comes that the child is determined precisely by the outer; and, inversely, the man as *das Äußere* is determined precisely by *das Innere*. Faith, on the contrary, is this paradox that inwardness is higher than externality; or, to recollect again an expression from before—that the uneven number is higher than the even.

For the ethical view of life, it is then the individual's task to disclose himself from the qualification of inwardness and express this in something external. Every time the individual shrinks from it, every time he intends to hold himself back in or slip down again into the qualification of interiority, feeling, mood, etc., then he sins, then he lies in a spiritual agony. The paradox of faith is this: that there is an interiority that is

incommensurable with exteriority, an interiority which, it is well to mark, is not identical with that first one, but a new interiority.<sup>4</sup> This must not be overlooked. Modern philosophy has allowed without further ado to substitute “faith” for the immediate.<sup>5</sup> When one does this, then it is a ridiculous matter to deny that faith has existed for all time. Faith now will be placed in the rather commonplace company of feeling, mood, idiosyncrasy, *vapeurs* [vagaries], etc. In that case, philosophy could be right that one ought not to stop with it. But there is nothing that justifies philosophy in this usage. Prior to faith there is an infinite movement, and only then does faith enter, *nec opinante* [unexpectedly], in virtue of the absurd. This I can understand very well without, therefore, claiming that I have faith. If faith is no different from what philosophy presents it as, then Socrates has already gone further, much further, instead of the reverse—that he did not arrive at it. He has, in an intellectual respect, made infinity’s movement. His ignorance is the infinite resignation.<sup>6</sup> This task is already suitable for human powers, even if those of our age reject it; but only when it is made, only when the individual has emptied himself in the infinite, only then has the point been reached when faith can break forth.

The paradox of faith, then, is this: that the individual is higher than the universal, that the individual, to recall a now rather rare dogmatic distinction, determines their relation to the universal by his relation to the absolute, not their relation to the absolute by his relation to the universal. The paradox can also be expressed thus—that there is an absolute duty to God; for in this relation of duty the individual relates himself absolutely to the absolute. If, in this construal, it is said that it is a duty to love God, something different is said thereby than in the foregoing; for this duty is absolute, and so the ethical is demoted to the relative. It does not follow that this should be reduced to nothing, but it receives an entirely different expression, the paradoxical expression, in such a way that, for example, love for God can bring the knight of faith to give his love for his neighbor the opposite expression of what, ethically speaking, his duty is.

If this is not the case, then faith does not have a place in existence, then faith is a spiritual agony, and Abraham is lost, then he lost himself for it.

This paradox cannot be mediated; for it depends precisely on the fact that the individual is only the individual. As soon as this individual intends to express his absolute duty in the universal, becoming conscious of this, and so recognizing himself to be in a spiritual agon; and then, if he does not resist, he does not fulfill the so-called absolute duty and if he does not do it then he sins, even if his act was, as a matter of fact, his absolute duty. So, what should Abraham have done? If he would say to another person: I love Isaac more than everything in the world, and this is why it is so hard to sacrifice him, then wouldn’t the other, shaking his head, have said: Then why do you intend to sacrifice him? Or, if that other was a sharp fellow, then he may well have seen through Abraham—seen that he made a display of feelings that stood in heaven-rending contradiction to his act.

In the story about Abraham we find such a paradox. His relation to Isaac, ethically expressed, is this: that the father shall love the son. This ethical relation is demoted to the relative in contrast to the absolute relation to God. To the question “Why,” Abraham has no other answer than that it is a trial, a temptation, which, as remarked above, is the union of its being for God’s sake and for his own sake. These two qualifications also correspond to each other in ordinary usage [as opposites]. Thus, if one sees a person do something that does not conform to universal, then one says that he scarcely did it for God’s sake, signifying thereby that he did it for his own sake. The paradox of faith has lost the intermediary, viz., the universal. It has, on the one side the expression for the highest egoism (to do the faithful deed for his own sake); on the other side the expression for the most absolute devotion, to do it for God’s sake. Faith itself cannot be mediated into the universal; for it is thereby canceled. Faith is this paradox: that the individual is completely unable to make himself intelligible to anyone. One perhaps imagines that the individual can make himself understandable to another individual who is in the same *casus* [falls under the same inflected grammatical form]. Such a point of view would be unthinkable if people in our age did not in so many ways seek to infiltrate greatness on the sly. One knight of faith cannot help another at all. Either the individual himself becomes a knight of faith by taking the paradox upon himself, or he will never become one. Partnership in these regions is completely unthinkable. Any more definite explanation of what is to be understood by Isaac can be given always only by the individual to himself. And even if one could determine ever so precisely, generally speaking, what should be understood by Isaac (which would, incidentally, be a laughable self-contradiction—to bring the single individual, who in fact stands outside the universal, under universal categories when he is supposed to act as the single individual who is outside the universal), then the individual would still never be able to reassure himself from the case of another rather than by his own case as the single individual. Even if someone were cowardly and wretched enough to attempt to become a knight of faith on the responsibility of another, he would not become that; for only the individual becomes that, as the individual; and this is greatness, which I can certainly understand without attaining it, since I lack courage; but there is also the frightful aspect, which I can still better comprehend.

It is well known that written in Luke 14:26 is a remarkable lesson about the absolute duty to God: “If someone comes to me and does not hate his own father, and his mother, and his wife, and his children, and his brother and his sister, yes even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple.” This is a hard saying—who can bear to listen to it?<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason heard very seldom. Yet this silence is only an evasion, which helps nothing. The student of theology, however—he gets to know that these words occur in the New Testament, and by means of one or another exegetical aid he finds the information that *μισειν* in this and a couple other places *per μείωσιν* means:

*minus diligo* [love less], *post habeo* [subordinate], *non colo* [not worship], *nihili facio* [make/treat as nothing].<sup>8</sup> The connection in which these words occur, however, does not seem to corroborate this tasteful explanation. In the immediately following verse, in fact, is found a parable concerning how someone who intends to erect a tower first estimates whether he is able to do so, lest someone afterward should mock him. The parable's close connection with the cited verse seems precisely to signify that the words should be construed as frightfully as possible, so that the individual might test himself whether he can erect the building.

If that pious and accommodating exegete, who by such dickering means to smuggle Christianity into the world, had the good fortune to persuade one person that, grammatically, linguistically, and *κατ' ἀναλογίαν* [by analogy], this was the meaning of that passage, then he would, it is to be hoped, also have the good fortune to, at the same moment, persuade the same person that Christendom is one of the most pitiful things in the world. For this teaching, which is one of its most lyrical expressions, where consciousness of its eternal validity swells most strongly therein, has nothing other to say but a noisy word that means nothing and signifies only that one should be less benevolent, less considerate, more indifferent; the teaching which, in the moment when it seems as if it wished to say something frightful, ends by driveling instead of terrifying—that teaching is certainly not worth the trouble of getting up for.<sup>9</sup>

The words are frightful, yet I believe well enough that one can understand them without it yet following thereby that one who has understood them therefore has the courage to do it. One should, however, be honest enough to admit to what it says, to confess that it is great, even if one does not have the courage oneself for it. The one who acts thus shall not preclude himself from participating in the beautiful story, for in manner it does indeed contain a kind of comfort for the one who had not the courage to begin the construction of the tower. But honest he must be, and not explain this lack of courage as humility, when, on the contrary, it is pride, while faith's courage is the only humble courage.

Now one easily sees that if the passage is to have any meaning, it must be understood literally. God is the one who requires absolute love. Someone who now requiring a person's love, would think that this in addition should be proved by his becoming lukewarm about everything he otherwise cherished, is not merely an egoist, but is also stupid, and someone who intends to require such a love writes his own death sentence, insofar as he has his life in the desired love. Thus, a man requires his wife to leave her father and mother, but if he would consider it a demonstration of extraordinary love for him that she, for his sake, became a lukewarm daughter, etc., then he is more stupid than the most stupid person. If he had any conception of what love is, then he would wish to discover and see therein a security that his wife would love him as no other in the realm, if he discovered that she, as daughter and sister, was perfect in love. Thus, that which in a person would be considered a sign of egoism

and stupidity, shall, with an exegete's help, be considered a worthy representation of divinity.

But how, then, to hate them? I shall not here recall the human distinction, either love or hate, not because I have so much against it—for it is, after all, passionate—but because it is egotistical and does not fit here. However, if I consider the task a paradox, then I understand it, that is, I understand it in the same manner as one can understand a paradox. The absolute duty, then, can bring someone to do what the ethical would forbid, but it can in no way bring the knight of faith to cease from loving. Abraham demonstrates this. In the moment he intends to sacrifice Isaac, the ethical expression for what he does is this: he hates Isaac. But if he actually hates Isaac, then he can be rest assured that God does not demand it of him; for Cain and Abraham are not identical.<sup>10</sup> Isaac he must love with his whole soul; inasmuch as God requires him, he must love him, if possible, even more deeply, and only then can he *sacrifice* him; for this love for Isaac is, you see, that which by its paradoxical opposition to his love for God makes the deed a sacrifice. But this is the distress and the anxiety in the paradox: that he, humanly speaking, is wholly unable to make himself understandable. Only in the moment when his deed is in absolute contradiction with his feeling, only then does he sacrifice Isaac, but his deed's reality is that by which he belongs to the universal, and thus he is and remains a murderer.

The passage in Luke must further be understood in such a way that one sees that the knight of faith does not receive any sort of higher expression of the universal (as the ethical) whatsoever in which he can save himself. Thus, if one allows the church to require this sacrifice of one of its members, then we have only a tragic hero. That is to say, the idea of the church is not qualitatively different from that of the state;<sup>11</sup> in both cases, the individual, by a simple mediation, can come into it, whereas the individual who arrives at the paradox does not come to the idea of the church; he does not come out of the paradox, but must find either his eternal blessedness therein, or his perdition. Such a churchly hero expresses the universal in his deeds, and there shall be no one in the church, not even his father and mother, etc., who will not understand him. He is not a knight of faith, and he also has a different answer than Abraham's; he does not say that it is a trial or a temptation wherein he is being tried.

One ordinarily refrains from mentioning passages like the one in Luke. One fears setting people loose, one fears that the worst will happen once the single individual has deigned to govern himself as the single individual. People further think that it is the easiest thing of all to exist as the single individual, and therefore one should just compel people to become the universal. I cannot share either this fear or this opinion, and that for the same reason. The one who has learned that it is the most frightful thing of all to exist as the single individual shall not be afraid to say that it is greatest, but he shall also say it in such a way that his words would hardly be a snare for someone gone astray, but rather help him into the universal, even if his words provide

little room for the great. The one who does not dare to mention such passages does not dare either to mention Abraham, and to think that it is easy enough to exist as the single individual contains a very worrisome indirect concession with reference to oneself; for the one who actually has respect for himself and concern for his soul is certain that the one who lives under his own supervision, alone in the entire world, lives more austere and in greater seclusion than a maiden in her bower. That there may be those who need compulsion, those who, if they were set at liberty, would like an uncontrollable animal stagger about in abandon to selfish desire; this is surely true, but one shall know that a person does not belong to them precisely by the fact that the person knows how to speak with anxiety and trembling, and speak he must out of respect for greatness the great, so that it is not forgotten out of fear of harm, which will certainly not materialize if it is spoken of in such a way that one knows it is great, knows its horror, and, without this, one does not know its greatness either.

Let us then consider the distress and anxiety in the paradox of faith a little more closely. The tragic hero resigns himself in order to express the universal, the knight of faith resigns the universal in order to become the single individual. As mentioned above, everything depends on how one is situated. The one who believes that it is easy enough to be the single individual can always be sure that he is not the knight of faith; for lost birds and vagabond geniuses are not men of faith. Those knights, on the contrary, know that it is glorious to belong to the universal. He knows that it is beautiful and pleasant to be the particular individual who translates himself into the universal, the one who, so to speak, himself sees to producing a clean, neat, and, as far as possible, faultless edition of himself, readable by all; he knows that it is refreshing to become understandable to oneself in the universal in such a way that he understands this, and that every individual who understands him also, in him, understands the universal, and both rejoice in the security of the universal. He knows it is beneficial to be born as the particular individual who has his home in the universal, his friendly abode, which immediately receives him with open arms if he wishes to remain in it. But he further knows that, higher up, there winds a lonely way, narrow and steep; he knows that it is terrifying to be born alone outside of the universal, to walk without meeting a single traveler. He knows very well where he is and how he relates to other persons. Humanly speaking, he is mad, and cannot make himself intelligible to anyone. And yet "to be mad" is the mildest expression. If he is not considered this way, then he is a hypocrite, and the higher he mounts this way, the more appalling a hypocrite he becomes.

The knight of faith knows that it is inspiring to give himself up for the universal, that it requires courage to do so, but also that there is a security within, precisely because it is for the universal; he knows that it is glorious to be understood and in such a way that even the observer is ennobled thereby. He knows this, and he feels as if bound; he could wish that it was this task that was set for him. In the same way,

Abraham could, every now and then, have wished that the task was to love Isaac as a father would and should, intelligible to everyone, not to be forgotten throughout the ages; he could wish that it was the task to sacrifice Isaac to the universal, that he could inspire fathers to illustrious deeds—and he is nearly shocked by the idea that such thoughts, for him, constitute spiritual agons, and must be treated as such; for he knows it is a lonely way he is walking, and that he achieves nothing for the universal, but is only himself being tried and tested. What did Abraham accomplish for the universal? Let me speak humanly about it, purely humanly! He uses seventy years to get a son of old age.<sup>12</sup> What others get quickly enough and enjoy for a long time, for him seventy years are required; and why? Because he is tested and tempted. Is it not laughable? But Abraham believed, and only Sarah wavered and got him to take Hagar as a concubine—for which reason he also had to send her away.<sup>13</sup> He receives Isaac—then he shall again be tested. He knows it is glorious to express the universal, glorious to live with Isaac. But it is not the task. He knows it is kingly to sacrifice such a son for the universal; he even would have found rest therein, and everyone would have rested in his deed while praising him, as the vowel rests in its silent consonant;<sup>14</sup> but that is not the task—he is being tried. That Roman general who is famous for his nickname “Cunctator”<sup>15</sup> brought the enemy to a standstill by his delay—yet what a procrastinator Abraham is in comparison with him! But he does not save the state. This is the substance of 130 years. Who can endure it? Would not one of his contemporaries, if there can be talk of such, say: “There is an eternal delay with Abraham; he finally got a son, it took long enough, and he intends to sacrifice him—is he not laughable? And at least he could explain why he intends this, but it is always a test.” More Abraham could not explain; for his life is like a book that lies under divine interdict and not like something that is *publici juris* [public property].

This is the horror. The one who does not see this can always be sure that he is not a knight of faith, but the one who sees it should not wish to deny that even the most tried of tragic heroes proceeds like someone going to a dance in comparison with the knight of faith, who comes along gradually, moving inch by inch. And when he has realized this and made quite certain that he does not have the courage to understand it, then perhaps he shall glimpse the marvelous glory that this knight achieves—that he becomes God’s confidant, the Lord’s friend, that—to speak purely humanly—he says “You”<sup>16</sup> to God in Heaven, while even the tragic hero addresses him only in the third person.

The tragic hero is soon finished, and is soon at peace; he makes the infinite movement and is now made secure in the universal. The knight of faith, however, is kept sleepless; for he is continually being tried and at every moment there is a possibility of returning in repentance to the universal, and this possibility can just as well be a spiritual agon as truth. He cannot obtain illumination about this from any person; for then he would be outside the paradox.

The knight of faith has, then, first and foremost the passion to concentrate, in a single instant, the entirety of the ethical he breaks, so that he can give himself the assurance that he actually loves Isaac with his whole soul.\* If he cannot do this, then he lies in spiritual contest, in an agon of the spirit. In the next place, he has the passion to produce this whole assurance instantaneously, and in such a way that it is just as valid as in the first moment. If he cannot do this, then he does not move from the spot; for then he must continually begin anew. The tragic hero also concentrates the ethical into a single point, which he teleologically transcended, but he has in that case a stronghold in the universal. The knight of faith has simply and solely himself, and therein lies the frightfulness. Most people live in an ethical obligation in such a way that they let every day have its cares, but they then never attain to this passionate concentration, this energized consciousness. To achieve this, the universal may in one sense be helpful to the tragic hero, but the knight of faith is alone in everything. The tragic hero does it and finds rest in the universal, the knight of faith is continually held in tension. Agamemnon gives up Iphigenia and has thereby found rest in the universal, now he proceeds to sacrifice her. If Agamemnon had not made the movement; had his soul, in the decisive moment, in place of passionate concentration been lost in common nonsense, such as that he had several more daughters, and that *vielleicht das Ausserordentliche* [perhaps the extraordinary] could still happen—then, of course, he is no hero, but a charity case. Abraham also has the hero's concentration, even if in him it is far more difficult because he has no sure footing in the universal, but he makes one movement more, whereby he gathers his soul back upon the marvel. If Abraham has not done this, then he is only an Agamemnon, insofar as one can then explain otherwise how intending to sacrifice Isaac can be defended when one does not thereby benefit the universal.

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\* Still one more time I will illuminate the difference between the collisions of the kind set for the tragic hero and those set for the knight of faith. The tragic hero assures himself that the ethical obligation is fully present in him by transforming it into a wish. In this way, Agamemnon can say: "This is my proof that I do not violate my father-duty: that that which is my duty is my only wish." Consequently, here we have wish and duty opposite each other. Happy is the life in which they coincide, so that my wish is my duty and the reverse, and for most people the task in life is precisely to remain in their duty and to transform it by their enthusiasm into their wish. The tragic hero gives up his wish in order to fulfill his duty. For the knight of faith, wish and duty are also identical, but what is required is that he give up both parts. If then he attempts to resign by giving up his wish, he will not then find peace; for it is, after all, his duty. If he attempts to remain in his duty and his wish, then he will not become a knight of faith; for the absolute duty required precisely that he should give it up. The tragic hero gets a higher expression of duty, but not an absolute duty.



Whether the single individual is now actually undergoing a spiritual agon or is a knight of faith, only the single individual himself can determine. Nevertheless, however, there can surely be constructed, out of the paradox, an identifying characteristic which someone can understand even if they are not within it. The true knight of faith is always in absolute isolation, whereas the spurious one is sectarian. This is an attempt to leap off from the paradox's narrow way and become a tragic hero for a bargain price. The tragic hero expresses the universal and sacrifices himself for this. In place of this, therefore, the sectarian Master Jackel<sup>17</sup> has a private theater, some good friends and comrades who represent the universal just as well as the court observers in *The Golden Snuffbox* represented justice.<sup>18</sup> The knight of faith, on the contrary, is the paradox, he is the single individual absolutely, only the individual without all connections and elaborations. This is the frightfulness that a sectarian weakling cannot endure. For instead of thereby learning that he is not able to do what is great and then simply confessing this, something I naturally cannot help but approve, since it is what I myself do, the bungler thinks that he, by uniting himself with some other bunglers, shall be able to do it. But it does not go thus at all; in the world of spirit no swindling is tolerated. A dozen sectarians take each other under arms, they are totally unacquainted with the lonely spiritual agons that await the knight of faith, and which he dare not flee precisely because it was still more frightful if he were to presumptuously force himself forward. Sectarians drown each other out with din and clatter so as to hold anxiety at bay by their cries, and such a hooting carnival crowd thinks it is storming Heaven and treads the same path as the knight of faith, who in the loneliness of the universe never hears a human voice, but walks alone with his frightful responsibility.

The knight of faith is assigned solely to himself: he feels the pain that he cannot make himself understood by others, but he feels no vain desire to try to instruct others. The pain is his assurance. Vain desire he does not know—his soul is too earnest for that. The spurious knight quickly betrays himself by this mastery he has acquired in a moment. He does not comprehend at all what is at stake: that insofar as another individual is to go the same way, he must, in completely the same way, become the single individual and then he does not need anyone's guidance, least of all from someone who would force it upon him. Here again, one leaps away, one cannot endure the martyrdom of unintelligibility, and in place of this they choose—conveniently enough—worldly admiration of mastery. The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher, and therein lies the profoundly human, which contains somewhat more to it than this flirting participation with other people's welfare, which is honored by the name of sympathy, while it is really nothing but vanity. Someone who intends to be only a witness confesses thereby that no person, not even the most humble, needs another person's participation or should be demeaned thereby so that another may be honored. But, just as he himself did not win what he won at a bargain price, so

likewise neither does he sell it off on the cheap; he is not wretched enough to take people's admiration and give them his silent contempt, he knows that what is truly great is equally accessible to everyone.

Then, either there is an absolute duty to God, and if there is such, it is the paradox just described, that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute—or else faith has never existed because it has always existed, or else Abraham is lost, or else one must interpret the passage in Luke 14 as did that tasteful exegete, and in the same way explain similar and corresponding passages.

## Endnotes

1. This statement would be common ground for various post-Kantian philosophers, though they might have very different ways among them of understanding “the universal” and “the divine.” It may be that, properly construed, it could be developed in ways that would also satisfy Neoplatonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, Thomists, Kantians, etc.; and Silentio probably intends it to be taken this way.

2. There is no known source in which Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) makes this remark about the Kaffirs. However, in *Emile: or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), Rousseau says, “Distrust those cosmopolitans who go to great length in their books to discover duties they do not deign to fulfill around them. A philosopher loves the Tartars so as to be spared having to love his neighbors” (p. 39). Since both are names of peoples distant from Denmark (Kierkegaard) or France and Switzerland (Rousseau)—the Kaffirs were a Bantu people in southern Africa, whereas the Tartars were a group of medieval Turkic tribes in central Asia—it is possible Silentio or Kierkegaard has confused one for the other.

3. See Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969), 523–28, on the relation of “inner” or essence to “outer” or manifestation; especially the conclusion: “[Something’s] externality is, therefore, the expression or utterance [*Außerung*] of what it is in itself” (p. 528). Or for a more accessible example, see the shorter *Logic* contained in Hegel’s *Encyclopedia*, published in English as *Hegel’s Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 197–200. The example of the child is introduced on p. 198:

Any object indeed is faulty and imperfect when it is only inward, and thus at the same time only outward, or (which is the same thing) when it is only an outward thus only an inward. For instance, a child, taken in the gross as a human being, is no doubt a rational creature; but the reason of the child as child is at first a mere inward, in the shape of his natural ability or vocation, etc. This mere inward, at the same time, has for the child the form of a mere outward, in the shape of the will of his parents, the attainments of his teachers, and the whole world of reason that environs him. The education and instruction of a child aim at making him actually and for himself what he is at first potentially and therefore for others, viz. for his grown-up friends. The reason, which at first exists in the child only as an inner possibility, is actualized through education; and conversely, the child by these means becomes conscious that the goodness, religion, and science which he had at first looked upon as an outward authority, are his own and inward nature.

4. The idea that faith is not a “natural” immediacy but a “second immediacy” or “immediacy after reflection” is important for Kierkegaard. See *Stages on Life’s Way*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 372; *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 301fn; *Works of Love*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 342–43.

5. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) classifies faith under “immediate or intuitive knowledge” in his *Encyclopedia Logic*. See especially, §63, 99:

With what is here called faith or immediate knowledge must also be identified inspiration, the heart's revelations, the truths implanted in man by nature, and also in particular, healthy reason or Common Sense, as it is called. All these forms agree in adopting as their leading principle the immediacy, or self-evident way in which a fact or body of truths is presented in consciousness.

6. Socrates (470–399 BC) was famous for his claim to be ignorant. When the Oracle at Delphi—normally famous for answering questions with difficult and ambiguous responses—was asked, “Is anyone wiser than Socrates?” the Oracle simply answered, “No.” Socrates resolved this apparent contradiction between his claimed ignorance and the Delphic proclamation of his wisdom with the idea that his superior wisdom consisted in knowing that he was ignorant, whereas others were equally ignorant but believed themselves to know what they did not know. See *Apology* 20d–22e, available in many English translations, e.g., in Plato, *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1997), 21–22.
7. This is the disciple's response to Jesus's teaching about the “Bread of Life” in John 6:60ff. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.” . . . And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”
8. Silentio has in mind exegetical aids like C. G. Bretschneider, *Lexicon Manuale Graeco-Latinum in Libros Novi Testamenti*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: 1829), 2:87.
9. It was (and is) customary for the congregation to stand for the gospel reading in many churches.
10. In the Bible, Cain is the first child of Adam and Eve (Genesis 4:1). He is also the first murderer, murdering his brother Abel out of jealousy that the Lord favored Abel over him (Genesis 4:4–5, 4:8).
11. The alert reader may wonder what Silentio means here by “the church.” Historically, there was a distinction between the “visible” and the “invisible” church. The “invisible church” denotes all genuine followers of Christ. The “visible” church denotes an organized human institution—possibly one such organization or several different and competing institutions. If we ask which of these is meant, it is clearly the visible church whose idea is “not qualitatively different from that of the state”—i.e., an organized set of human institutions, with various rules, conditions of membership, etc. This statement seems even stronger if we imagine the church to be an institution officially established by the state—which was the case in Denmark, where there was a national Lutheran church, akin to the Anglican church in England—but the most important likeness is that both function as ethically structured communities to which an individual may belong, and in virtue of which an individual may come to have duties either toward other individuals, or toward the community itself.
12. Isaac was born when Abraham was one hundred (Genesis 21:5) and Silentio here estimates that Abraham was thirty when he married, the same age as Kierkegaard when he wrote *Fear and Trembling*.

13. During the long years of waiting in the wilderness for God to fulfill the promise, Sarah at one point prevails upon Abraham to have a child by means of her handmaid, Hagar (Genesis 16:1–4):

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. She had a female Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived.

This failure of faith leads to conflict first between Sarah and Hagar and later between Ishmael, the son of Abraham through Hagar, and Isaac, the son of Abraham through Sarah. This conflict culminates in Sarah petitioning Abraham to send Hagar and Ishmael away. Abraham does not wish to do this, but God commands him to do so and promises Abraham that he will bless Ishmael as well (Genesis 21:10–13):

So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son, for the son of this slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac." And the thing was very displeasing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Be not displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your offspring be named. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."

14. The analogy is based on how Hebrew consonants can also indicate certain vowel sounds. Kierkegaard's sources seem to be Jacob Christian Lindberg, *Hovedreglerne af den hebraiske Grammatik* (2 ed., Copenhagen: 1835), 8, 17–18, and Ludvig Beatus Meyer, *Fremmed Ordbog* (Copenhagen: 1837). According to Lindberg and Meyer, such a consonant may be sounded as a consonant or it may "rest" in the vowel, its normal consonant sound going unsounded. Johannes de Silentio, however, seems to have inverted the relationship. The meaning of the analogy, however, is that in ethical existence an individual annuls particularity to "rest" in what is ethically universal.

15. The Roman general Fabius Maximus (c. 280 BC—203 BC) was appointed "dictator" by the Roman Senate in 217 BC after repeated military disasters in the Second Punic War created panic in Rome that Hannibal would soon strike the city. To prevent Hannibal's army from reaching Rome, Maximus decided to avoid the kind of direct confrontation with Hannibal that had proved ineffective before and earned the nickname "Cunctator" or "Delayer" (originally an insult; later an honorific) through the successful use of delaying tactics—what now may be termed guerrilla warfare—continually attacking Hannibal's supply lines and fighting only limited engagements on favorable grounds.

16. "You" in the Danish text is the informal "Du" used for one's close friends and family.

17. Master Jackel is a stock comic character in Danish puppet shows. Such puppet shows were ultimately based in Italian *commedia dell'arte* and each stock character embodied a particular archetypal figure. Master Jackel is the Danish equivalent of the Italian Punchinello and the English Punch.

**18.** *The Golden Snuffbox* [*Gulddaasen*] is a comedy first performed at the Danish Royal Theater in 1793, its author anonymous. It was highly successful—it has been performed at the Royal Theater thirty-one times since its premiere, though the last performance was in 1959—and generated significant public interest in identifying its author. The most popular identification, now strongly supported by historians, is the Danish writer and agronomist Christian Olufsen (1763–1827), who, at the time, was transitioning from literary pursuits to a career in agricultural science. Faldsmaal, the villain of the comedy, attempts to frame his rival for the theft of a golden snuffbox; through a variety of dishonest means, he secures “unimpeachable witnesses” (*uforkastelige Vidner*) to the supposed crime (Christian Olufsen, *Gulddaasen* [Copenhagen: 1793] act 3, scene 6, p. 71).

## Problema III

*Was it ethically defensible for Abraham to conceal his venture from Sarah, from Eliezer, from Isaac?*

The ethical, as such, is the universal, and, as the universal, is the disclosed. The individual, qualified immediately as a sensate and psychical being, is the hidden. His ethical task is then this, to strip himself of his hiddenness and become disclosed in the universal. Every time, then, that he intends to remain hidden, he therefore sins and lies in spiritual trial from which he can escape by disclosing himself.

Here we stand again at the same point. If there is not a hiddenness that has its ground in the fact that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, then Abraham's conduct cannot be defended; for he disregarded the intermediate ethical forms. If, on the contrary, there is such a hiddenness, then we stand at the paradox that cannot be mediated, since it depends precisely on the fact that the single individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, whereas the universal is precisely the mediation. The Hegelian philosophy assumes that there is no justified hiddenness, no justified incommensurability. It is consistent with itself when it requires disclosure, but it is not speaking clearly when it wishes to consider Abraham as the father of faith and to speak about faith. For faith is not the first immediacy, but a later one.<sup>1</sup> The first immediacy is the aesthetic, and here the Hegelian philosophy may well be right. But faith is not the aesthetic or else faith has never existed, because it has always existed.

It will be best to have to consider the whole case purely aesthetically and to that end to enter an aesthetic inquiry, to which I wish to invite the reader to momentarily wholly devote himself, while I, for my part, will modify my presentation in relation to the objects. The category I intend to consider a little more closely is: the *interesting*,<sup>2</sup> a category that is distinguished in our age and has acquired great significance, precisely because our age lives *in discrimine rerum* [at a turning point in history]; for it is really the category of the turning point. One should not therefore, as sometimes happens, after one loves it *pro virili* [with all one's might] oneself, disregard it because one outgrew it, but neither should one be too greedy for it; for it is certain that to become interesting, or that one's life is interesting, is not a handicraft task, but a fateful privilege, which, like every privilege in the world of spirit, is bought only in profound pain. Thus, Socrates was the most interesting person who has lived, his life the most interesting that has been led, but this existence was appointed to him by the god, and insofar as he himself had to acquire it, he was not unacquainted with pain and troubles. To wish to take such an existence in vain is not fit for anyone who thinks more earnestly about life, and yet it is not seldom in our age that one sees examples of such a

labor. The interesting, however, is a *confinium* [border category] between the aesthetic and the ethical.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, this inquiry must continually graze upon the territory of the ethical, while in order to have significance it must grasp the problem with aesthetic feeling and desire. In our age, ethics rather seldom embarks on such inquiries. The reason must be that there can be no place for them in the System. Admittedly, one might therefore do it in monographs, and furthermore, if one does not intend to make it overly detailed, then one can make it short and yet achieve the same result—if, that is, one has the predicate in one's power; for one or two predicates can betray a whole world. Should there not be place in the system for such little words?

Aristotle, in his immortal *Poetics*, says: δύο μὲν οὖν τοῦ μύθου μέρη ταῦτ' ἐστί, περιπέτεια καὶ ἀναγνώρισις [two parts of plot, then, are these: reversal and recognition]<sup>4</sup> (see *Poetics*, ch. ii). It is, of course, only the second element that occupies me here: ἀναγνώρισις, recognition. Everywhere that there can be talk of recognition there is, *eo ipso*, a preceding hiddenness. Just as recognition is the loosening, or relaxing, element, so too hiddenness is the earlier tightening element in the dramatic life. I cannot here take into consideration what Aristotle in the same chapter develops concerning the various merits of tragedy, all in relation to the collisions of περιπέτεια [*peripeteia*, reversal] and ἀναγνώρισις [*anagnorisis*, recognition], and also concerning the single and the double recognition, even if it tempts with its inwardness and its quiet absorption, a particular temptation for someone who has long tired of the superficial all-knowingness of summary-writers.

A broader remark may here find its place. In Greek tragedy, the hiddenness (and as a result thereby, the recognition) is an epic remnant, which has its ground in a fate in which the dramatic action disappears, from which this has its dark, mysterious origin. Thus, the effect of a Greek tragedy has a likeness to the impression made by a marble statue, which lacks the power of the eye. Greek tragedy is blind. A kind of abstraction is therefore required to allow it to influence one properly. A son murders his father, but he does not discover that it is his father until afterward.<sup>5</sup> A sister intends to sacrifice her brother, but in the crucial moment she makes the discovery.<sup>6</sup> This kind of tragedy does not occupy our *reflective* age. The modern drama<sup>7</sup> has given up fate, has emancipated itself dramatically, is sighted, looks into itself, absorbs fate into its dramatic consciousness. Hiddenness and disclosure are then the hero's free act, for which he is responsible.

Hiddenness and disclosure also belong in modern drama as an essential element. To adduce examples of this would be too long-winded, I am polite enough to assume that everyone in our own age, which is so aesthetically voluptuous, so potent and stimulated, that someone can conceive of such examples just as easily as the partridge, which, according to Aristotle's assertion, needs only to hear the cock's voice or its flight over her head;<sup>8</sup> I assume that everyone who just hears the word "hiddenness" will be capable of easily shaking a dozen novels and comedies out of his sleeve. I can



for this reason be brief and thus promptly suggest a broader observation. If someone is playing hide-and-seek and thereby brings the dramatic ferment into the piece by hiding some nonsense, then we have a comedy; if, however, he stands in relation to the idea, then he can approach becoming a tragic hero.

Here is just one example of the comic. A man puts on makeup and wears a wig. The same man would like to be successful with the fair sex; he is certain enough of triumph with the help of the makeup and the wig, which makes him absolutely irresistible. He captivates a girl and is on the pinnacle of happiness. Now comes the snag—can he confess it; will he not lose his power of enchantment if he reveals himself as a plain and simple and, yes, even a bald male, will he not thereby in turn lose the beloved?—True hiddenness is his free action for which Aesthetics also makes him responsible. This discipline is no friend of bald hypocrites, it abandons him to laughter. This must be enough to merely suggest what I mean; the comic cannot be the object of this investigation.

The path that I have to follow is to pursue hiddenness dialectically through the aesthetic and the ethical; for the goal is that aesthetic hiddenness and the paradox should display themselves in their absolute dissimilarity.

A couple of examples: A girl is secretly in love with someone, but without their having definitively confessed their love to each other. Her parents force her to wed another (she may, furthermore, be defined by familial devotion); she obeys her parents, she hides her love “so as not to make the other unhappy and so that no one shall ever know what she suffers.” A lad can, by a single word, come into possession of the object of his longing and his troubled dreams. This little word would, however, compromise, yes, perhaps (who knows?) destroy a whole family; he decides magnanimously to remain in silence. “The girl shall never discover it, so that she may perhaps become happy through the hand of another.” The trouble is that this pair of human beings, both of whom are individually hidden from their respective beloveds, are also hidden from each other; otherwise it would be possible to provide an extraordinary higher unity. —Their hiddenness is a free act for which they are also responsible before aesthetics. Aesthetics, however, is a courteous and sensitive science, which knows more ways out than any pawn shop manager. What then does it do? It does everything possible for the lovers. With the help of a coincidence, the respective partners in the prospective marriage get a hint of the other party’s magnanimous decision; an explanation is forthcoming, they get each other, and in addition they are ranked with actual heroes: for although they have not even had time to sleep on their heroic decision, aesthetics still considers the matter as if they had for many years courageously fought to see their intention through. Aesthetics, that is to say, doesn’t take note of the quantity of time. Whether it is joking or serious, time goes just as quickly for aesthetics.

But ethics knows nothing of either this coincidence or this sensitivity, and neither does it have so rapid a conception of time. The case thereby gets another look. It is

not well to dispute with ethics, for it has pure categories. It does not rely on experience, which of all laughable things is about the most laughable, and far from making a man clever, it will sooner make him mad if he knows of nothing higher than it. Ethics does not have coincidence, consequently it does not arrive at an explanation, it does not fool about with dignities, it lays a monstrous burden on the hero's frail shoulders, it condemns as presumptuous the intention to play Providence by his act; but it also condemns the intention to do this by his suffering. It bids one to believe in actuality and to have the courage to struggle with all the crowding difficulties of actuality instead of these bloodless sufferings that one has, on one's own responsibility, taken upon oneself; it warns against trusting in the cunning calculations of the understanding, which are more faithless than the oracles of antiquity. When it is the time to show courage, it warns against any untimely magnanimity—let actuality handle it—but now ethics itself offers every possible assistance. If, however, there was something more profound stirring in this pair, if there was earnestness about seeing to the task, earnestness about getting started, then perhaps something will come of them, but ethics cannot help them; it is offended. For they have a secret from it, a secret that they took upon themselves on their own responsibility.

Aesthetics, then, required secrecy and rewarded it, while ethics required disclosure and punished secrecy.

Sometimes, however, aesthetics itself requires disclosure. When the hero, caught in the aesthetic illusion, thinks by his silence to save another person, then it requires this silence and rewards it. When, however, the hero by his act encroaches disruptively on another person's life, it then requires disclosure. Here I stand close to the tragic hero. I will, for a moment, consider Euripedes's *Iphigenia at Aulis*. Agamemnon must sacrifice Iphigenia. Aesthetics now requires silence of Agamemnon, insofar as it would be unworthy of the hero to seek comfort from some other person, just as he, out of solicitude toward the women, should hide it from them as long as possible. On the other side, the hero, precisely to be a hero, must also be tried in the frightful trial that Clytemnestra and Iphigenia's tears will provide for him. What does aesthetics do? It has a way out, it has an old servant ready at hand who discloses everything to Clytemnestra.<sup>9</sup> Now everything is in order.

Ethics, however, has no coincidence and no old servant at hand. The aesthetic idea contradicts itself as soon as it is carried out in actuality. Ethics therefore requires disclosure. The tragic hero shows his ethical courage precisely by the fact that, not ensnared by some aesthetic illusion, he himself is the one who proclaims to Iphigenia her fate. If he does this, then the tragic hero is ethics' beloved son with whom it is well-pleased. If he remains silent, then it may be because he believes that he thereby makes it easier for others, but it may also be because he thereby makes it easier for himself. But from this latter motive he knows himself to be free. If he remains silent, then he assumes responsibility as the single individual, insofar as he disregards any

argument that may come from outside. This, as the tragic hero, he cannot do; for precisely this reason ethics loves him, because he continually expresses the universal. His heroic act requires courage, but it is also due to his courage that he dodges no argumentation. Now it is certainly true that tears are a frightful *argumentum ad hominem*,<sup>10</sup> and someone who is moved by nothing may still perhaps be moved by tears. In the play, Iphigenia is permitted to weep; in actual life she should be permitted to weep, as did Jephthah's daughter, for two months, not alone, but at her father's feet, to use all her art, "which is tears alone," and entwine herself instead of an olive branch around his knees.<sup>11</sup>

Aesthetics required disclosure, but helped itself to a coincidence; ethics required disclosure and in the tragic hero found its satisfaction.

Despite the stringency with which ethics requires disclosure, it still cannot be denied that silence and secrecy really do make a human being great, precisely because they are qualifications of inwardness. When Eros takes leave of Psyche, he says to her: "You shall bear a child who will be a divine child if you remain silent, but a human being if you betray the secret."<sup>12</sup> The tragic hero, who is ethics' favored one, is purely human; him I can understand and all his undertakings are out in the open. If I go further, then I continually come to a halt upon the paradox, the divine and the demonic, for silence characterizes both. Silence is the demon's snare, and the more that is kept silent, the more terrible the demon becomes; but silence is also the divinity's understanding with the single individual.

Before proceeding to the story of Abraham, however, I shall summon some poetic individualities. With the power of dialectics I will hold them at the apex, and I will at the same time wave the discipline of despair over them, preventing them from standing still, so that in their anxiety they may be able to bring something to light.<sup>[13 14 15]</sup>

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\* The movements and positions<sup>13</sup> could, presumably, still become objects for aesthetic treatment, although to what extent faith and the whole life of faith can become such I leave undecided. I will only, because it always is a joy to thank those whom I owe something, thank Lessing for the singular hints of a Christian drama which are found in his *Hamburg Dramaturgy*.<sup>14</sup> He has however fixed his eye on the purely divine side of this life (the consummate victory), and therefore he has doubted; perhaps he would have judged otherwise if he had been more attentive to the purely human side (*theologia viatorum*).<sup>15</sup> What he says is undeniably very short and somewhat evasive, but since I am always very glad when I can obtain an opportunity to take up Lessing, I promptly take him up. Lessing was not just one of the most comprehensive minds Germany has had; he was not merely in possession of an entirely rare precision in his knowledge, because of which one can safely rely upon him and his autopsies without fear of being deceived by loose, undocumented quotations, half understood phrases fetched from unreliable compendia, or of being disoriented by a stupid trumpeting of "novelties" that the ancients had better stated—but he had beyond this a most unusual gift for explaining what he himself has understood. There he stopped, while in our age one goes further, and one explains more than one has oneself understood.

Aristotle, in his *Politics*, tells a story about a political disturbance in Delphi, which had its ground in the matter of a marriage. The bridegroom, to whom the augurs<sup>16</sup> prophesied a disaster that would have its origin in his marriage, suddenly changed his plan in the divine moment. When he came to fetch his bride—he would not get married. More I do not need.<sup>†</sup> In Delphi this event scarcely went off without tears; if a poet were to adopt it, then I dare say he could count upon sympathy. Is it not terrible that love, which is so often an exile in life, is now also deprived of Heaven's assistance? Is that old saying, that marriages are made in Heaven, not here put to shame? In other cases, it is the troubles and difficulties of finitude, which, like evil spirits, would separate the lovers; but love has Heaven on its side and therefore this holy alliance triumphs over all enemies. Here it is Heaven itself that separates that which Heaven itself, after all, had joined. Who would have suspected this? Least of all the young bride. Only a moment ago, she sat in her room in all her beauty, and the lovely maidens had painstakingly adorned her so that they could be justified before the whole world, so that they could have not only joy from it but also envy—yes, joy that it was impossible for them to become more envious because it is impossible for her to be more beautiful. She sat alone in her room and was transformed from beauty to beauty; for all that feminine art was capable of was used worthily to adorn the worthy one. But there was something still lacking, which the young maidens would not have dreamt of; a veil, finer, lighter, and yet more concealing than that in which the young maidens had shrouded her; a bridal garment that no young maiden knew any rumor of, or could be of any assistance to her with; yes, not even the bride knew to help herself to it. It was an invisible, friendly power, which has its joy in adorning the bride, which enveloped her in it without her knowing anything of it; for she saw only how the bridegroom went by and up to the temple. She saw the door close after him and she became even more tranquil and blissful; for she knew that he now belonged to her more than ever. The temple door opened, he stepped out, but she cast her maidenly eyes down and therefore she did not see that his countenance was troubled, but he saw that Heaven seemed to be envious of the bride's loveliness and of his own happiness. The temple door opened, the young maidens saw the bridegroom step out; but they did not see that his countenance was disturbed; for they were in a hurry to fetch their bride. Then she stepped forward in all her maidenly humility, and

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† According to Aristotle, the historical catastrophe was as follows: In revenge, the [bride's] family places a temple vessel among [the bridegroom's] kitchen utensils, and he is condemned as a temple thief. However, this is immaterial, for the question is not whether the family is ingenious or stupid in taking revenge. The family gains ideal significance only to the extent that it is drawn into the dialectic of the hero. Moreover, it is fateful enough that he plunges into danger while trying to avoid it by not marrying, and also that he comes into contact with the divine in a double manner—first by the augurs' pronouncement and next by being condemned as a temple thief.

yet like a mistress surrounded by a staff of young maidens. Thus she stood at the apex of this beautiful host and waited—it was only a moment; for the temple was right nearby—and the bridegroom came—but he went past the door.

Yet here I break off; I am not a poet and proceed merely dialectically.<sup>17</sup> In the first place, note that it is in the crucial moment that the hero obtains his enlightenment; he is, then, pure and without remorse, he has not irresponsibly bound himself to the beloved. Next, he has the divine pronouncement before him, or, more correctly, against him; thus he is not directed, as fickle lovers are, by self-opinionated shrewdness. It follows, further, that the pronouncement naturally makes him just as unhappy as the bride; yes, even a little more, because he is, after all, the occasion. For it is certainly true that the augurs only predicted a misfortune for *him*, but the question is whether this misfortune is of such a nature that by striking him it will, in addition, strike the happiness of their marriage.

What shall he do now? (1) Shall he remain silent and marry, thinking “Perhaps the misfortune will not come straightaway, and in any case I have maintained love and not been afraid to make myself unhappy; but I must remain silent, for otherwise even this short moment is wasted.” This seems plausible, but by no means is it so, for in this case he has offended against the girl. He has, by his silence, after a manner made the girl guilty; for if she had known this, she certainly would never have given her assent to the alliance. Then he will in the hour of distress not just have the misfortune to bear, but also the responsibility for remaining silent and her righteous anger that he remained silent. (2) Shall he remain silent and not get married? In that case, he must enter a mystification whereby he annihilates himself in his relation to her. This aesthetics would perhaps sanction. The catastrophe could then be formed in likeness to the actuality, except that at the last moment an explanation is obtained, which however still comes after the first, since, aesthetically considered, it is a necessity to let him die, unless this discipline could find itself able to cancel that ominous prophecy. However, this conduct, no matter how magnanimous, contains an offense against the girl and the reality of her love. (3) Shall he speak? One must not forget, of course, that our hero is too poetic for renunciation of his love to have no more significance to him than an ill-fortuned business venture. If he speaks, then the whole thing becomes a story of unhappy love in the style of Axel and Valborg.<sup>‡18</sup> They become a couple

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‡ Incidentally, from this point one could pursue a different dialectical direction. Heaven proclaims to him a misfortune following from his marriage; he could, then, after all leave off getting married without on that account giving up the girl, instead living in a romantic relationship with her, which was more than adequate for the lovers. This still contains an offense against the girl, because he in his love for her does not express the universal. In any case, this would be a task both for a poet and for an ethicist who intends to defend marriage. On the whole, poetry would, if it is attentive to the religious and the individual’s inwardness, obtain far more meaningful tasks than those with which it

whom Heaven itself separates. But this separation in the current case is to be thought of somewhat differently because it, too, results from the individuals' free act. The great difficulty with the dialectic in this case, you see, is that the misfortune shall strike only him. They do not obtain, as Axel and Valborg do, a common expression for this suffering, whereas Heaven separates Axel and Valborg to an equal degree because they are equally close to each other. Were that the case here, then a way out would be conceivable. For since Heaven does not use a visible power to separate them, but leaves it up to them, it is conceivable that they would jointly decide to defy Heaven together with its misfortune.

Ethics, however, would require him to speak. His heroic courage, then, lies essentially in the fact that he gives up that aesthetic magnanimity, which cannot in this case, however, be easily imagined to contain an admixture of that vanity that lies in being concealed, since it must indeed be clear to him that he is still making the girl unhappy. The reality of this heroism, however, rests in the fact that he has had and canceled this presupposition; for otherwise one could obtain heroes easily enough, particularly in our age, which has driven itself to a matchless virtuosity in forgery and achieves the highest by leaping over the intermediate stages.

But what was the purpose of this sketch, since I still progress no further than the tragic hero? Because it was nonetheless possible that it could cast a light upon the paradox. Everything depends on this: in what relation he stands to the augurs' pronouncement, which in one way or another will become decisive for his life. Is this pronouncement *publici juris* or is it a *privatissimum*? The scene is ancient Greece; an augur's pronouncement is understandable by everyone. I do not only mean that the single individual can lexically understand the contents but also that the single individual can understand that an augur announces Heaven's decision. The augur's pronouncement is thus understandable not just by the hero but by everyone, and there no private relation to the divine results from it. He can do what he will; what

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now busies itself. Again and again one hears this sort of story in poetry: A man is bound to one girl, whom he once loved or perhaps never loved rightly, for now he has seen another, who is the ideal. A man makes a mistake in life; it was the right street but the wrong house, for just across the street on the second floor lives the ideal—one thinks *this* is a task for poetry. A lover has made a mistake; he has seen the beloved by lamplight and thought she had dark hair, but look! On closer scrutiny, she is a blonde—but the sister is the ideal. This is supposed to be a task for poetry. In my opinion, any man like that is a lout, who is intolerable enough in life but should be hissed off the stage if he attempts to make himself out to be important in poetry. Only passion against passion provides a poetic collusion, not this rummaging about within the particulars contained in the same passion. For example, when a girl in the Middle Ages, after having fallen in love, becomes convinced that earthly love is a sin, and prefers a heavenly one, then here is a poetic collision, and the girl is poetic; for her life is in the idea.

is foretold there will happen and he will not come into a closer relation to the Deity either as the object of its favor or of its wrath. Every individual will be able to understand the outcome just as well as the hero and there is no heavenly handwriting readable only to the hero. In the eventuality that he wishes to speak, he can very well do so, for he can make himself understood; in the eventuality that he wishes to remain silent, it is because he, by virtue of being the single individual, wishes to be higher than the universal, wishes to entertain himself with all sorts of fantastical imagining ideas about how she will soon forget this affair, etc.

If, on the other hand, the will of Heaven had not been announced to him by an augur, if it had come to his knowledge altogether privately, if it had set itself in an altogether private relation to him, then we are in the presence of the paradox, if it in fact exists (for my deliberation is dilemmatic). Then he would be unable to speak, even if he would very much like to do so. Then he would not enjoy the silence, but he would suffer the pain, while this would be for him precisely the assurance that he was justified. His silence did not have its ground in the fact that the single individual wished to place himself in an absolute relation to the *universal*, but instead in the fact that he, as the single individual, had been placed in an absolute relation to the *absolute*. He would then also be able to find rest therein, or so I imagine, while his magnanimous silence would continually be disturbed by the demands of the ethical. It would be altogether desirable for aesthetics to, for once, try beginning where it for so many years has ended, with the illusion of magnanimity. As soon as it did this, it would be laboring hand in hand with the religious: for this power is the only one that can free it from its struggle with the ethical.

Queen Elizabeth sacrificed her love for Essex to the state by signing his death sentence. This was an heroic act, even though a little personal resentment played a part in it, due to the fact that he had not sent her the ring. As is well-known, he had sent it, but through the malice of a lady in waiting it had been held back. Elizabeth received this piece of intelligence, so it is said *ni fallor* [If I am not mistaken], and thereupon she sat for ten days with one of her fingers in her mouth, biting it without saying a word, and thereupon she died.<sup>19</sup> This would be a task for a poet who understood how to wrest open the mouth; otherwise it would best be used by a ballet-master, with whom the poet in our age often enough confounds himself.<sup>20</sup>

Now I will develop a sketch in the direction of the demonic. To that end, I can use the legend of Agnes and the Merman.<sup>21</sup> The merman is a seducer who shoots up from the cover of the abyss, in wild lust grasps and breaks the innocent flower that, in its delicate grace, stood on the seaside and contemplatively bowed its head to the soothing breakers of the sea. This has hitherto been the opinion of the poets. Let us make an alteration. The merman was a seducer. He has called to Agnes, he has by his smooth talk elicited what was hidden in her, she has found in the merman what she sought when she gazed down upon the bottom of the sea. Agnes will follow him. The

merman has set her on his arm, Agnes flings her arms around his neck; trusting him with her whole soul, she surrenders herself to the stronger one; he already stands by the seashore, he crouches down over the sea to dive down with his prey—then Agnes looks at him once more, not afraid, not despairing, not proud of her good fortune, not intoxicated with desire, but absolutely trusting, absolutely like the lowly flower she takes herself to be, and with this one look she entrusts her whole destiny to him in absolute confidence. And see! The sea roars no more, its wild voice dies away, nature's passion, which is the mermaid's strength, abandons him, it becomes deadly calm—and still Agnes looks this way on him. Then the merman slumps down, he cannot withstand the power of innocence, his element becomes unfaithful to him, he cannot seduce Agnes. He leads her home again, he explains to her that he just wished to show her how beautiful the sea was when it was still, and Agnes believes him. — Then he returns alone, and the sea raged violently, but the despair in the merman raged more violently still. He can seduce Agnes, he can seduce a hundred Agneses, he can charm any girl—but Agnes has triumphed and the merman has lost her. Only as prey can she be his; he cannot faithfully belong to any girl; for he is, after all, only a merman. I have allowed myself a little alteration<sup>§22</sup> in the merman, for which reason I have also altered Agnes a little; for in the legend Agnes is not entirely without guilt, as it is altogether *Nonsens* and flattery and offense against the female sex to imagine a seduction where the girl has no, no, no guilt whatsoever. Agnes in the legend is, to modernize my expression a little, a woman who demands the interesting, and anyone

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§ This legend could be treated in another way also. The merman does not wish to seduce Agnes, even though he has seduced many before. He is no longer a merman, or, if you please, he is a wretched merman who has already for a long time sat down upon the bottom of the sea and grieved. Yet he knows, as the legend after all tells us, that he can be saved by the love of an innocent girl. But he has a bad conscience with regard to the girls, he dares not approach them. Then he sees Agnes. Many times already he has, while hidden in the reeds, seen her wander upon the shore. Her beauty, her quiet preoccupation with herself, captivates him; but everything is melancholy in his soul, no wild desire stirs within him. And when the merman's sighs blend with the whispering of the rushes, she inclines her ear. When she stands still and loses herself in dreams, she is lovelier than any woman and even as beautiful as a guardian angel who inspires the merman with confidence. The merman gathers his courage, he approaches Agnes, he wins her love, he hopes for his salvation. But Agnes was no quiet girl; she enjoyed the roar of the sea, and the melancholy sighs of the waves pleased her, only because then the roaring within her grew even stronger. She wishes to be away, away, to storm wildly out into the infinite with the merman whom she loves—she thus excites the merman. She rejects his humility; now she awakens his pride. And the sea roars and the waves foam, and the merman clasps Agnes in his arms and dives into the Abyss with her. Never had he been so wild, never so desiring; for by this girl he had hoped for his salvation. Soon he had tired of Agnes, yet no one ever found her corpse, for she became a mermaid who tempted men with her songs.



like that can always be sure that there is a merman close by; for mermen discover this kind with half an eye and dive after them like a shark after its prey. It is therefore very stupid, or it is even a rumor that has been spread by mermen, that so-called culture secures a girl against seduction. No, existence is more just and equitable; there is only one help, which is innocence.

We will now give the merman a human consciousness, and let the fact that he is a merman designate a human preexistence in consequence of which his life was entrapped. There is nothing to prevent him from becoming a hero; for the step he now takes is reconciling. He is saved by Agnes, the seducer is crushed, he has bowed before the power of innocence, he can never seduce again. But in the same instant two powers strive over him: Remorse, and Agnes and remorse. If remorse alone takes him, then he will be concealed; if Agnes and remorse take him, then he will be disclosed.

Now, if remorse grasps the merman and he becomes hidden, then he will surely make Agnes unhappy; for Agnes loved him in all innocence. She believed that it was true that he, in that moment, even when he seemed to be altered and however well he hid it, wished only to show her the beautiful stillness of the sea. Meanwhile, the merman himself, in his passion, becomes even more unhappy; for he loved Agnes with a multiplicity of passions and had in addition a new guilt to bear. The demonic element in remorse will certainly explain to him that precisely this is his punishment, and the more it torments him, the better.

If he gives himself up to this demonic element, then he may perhaps still make an attempt to save Agnes in such a way as one may, in a sense, save a person with the help of evil. He knows that Agnes loves him. If he is able to wrest Agnes out from this love, then she will be, in a sense, saved. But how? To reckon that a frank confession would arouse her loathing, the merman is too sensible to do. Maybe he will attempt to incite all the dark passions in her, to belittle her, to ridicule her, to make her love laughable, and, if possible, to arouse her pride. He will not spare himself any anguish, for this is the deep contradiction in the demonic, and there resides, in a sense, infinitely more good in a demoniac than in superficial people. The more selfish Agnes is, the easier she will be deceived (for it is only very inexperienced people who think that it is easy to deceive innocence, and it is easiest of all for the clever to deceive the clever), but also the more terrible the merman's suffering will be. The more ingeniously he designs his deception, the less Agnes will modestly hide her suffering from him; she will use every means, which will not be without effect—that is to say, not of dislodging him, but of tormenting him.

With the help of the demonic, the merman would also be the single individual who, as the single individual, is higher than the universal. The demonic has the same characteristic as the divine, insofar as the single individual can enter into an absolute relation to it. This is the analogy, the counterpart to the paradox of which we speak.

It therefore has a certain likeness that can deceive. In this way, the merman, to all appearances, has the proof that his silence is justified: that he, in doing this, suffers all the pains. However, there is no doubt that he can speak. He can, then, become a tragic hero, in my opinion a very great tragic hero, if he speaks. Only a few, perhaps can comprehend in what the grandeur consists.<sup>¶</sup> He will then have the courage to wrest himself out from every self-deception that he can make Agnes happy by his act; he will have courage, humanly speaking, to crush Agnes. Incidentally, I will here just make a psychological observation. The more selfishly developed Agnes is, the more glaring the self-deception will be; yes, it is not inconceivable that in actuality it could come about that a merman, by his demonic ingenuity, could not only save Agnes, humanly speaking, but draw something extraordinary out from Agnes; for a demoniac knows how to torment things out of even the most mediocre people and he can, in his own way, mean very well by a person.

The merman stands at a dialectical apex. If he is rescued from the demonic in remorse, there are two possible ways. He can hold himself back, remaining in concealment but not relying on his cleverness. He then does not come as the single individual into an absolute relation to the demonic but finds peace in the counter-paradox that the Deity will save Agnes. (This is surely how the Middle Ages would make the movement; for the merman will obviously, according to its conception, revert to the monastery.) Or he can be saved by Agnes. This might now be understood in such a way as if he, by Agnes's love, would be saved from becoming a seducer in the future (this is an aesthetic rescue attempt, which always proceeds without addressing the main point—the continuity of the merman's life); for in this respect is he saved: he is saved insofar as he becomes disclosed. He therefore marries Agnes. However, he must have recourse to the paradox. For when the single individual by his guilt has left the universal, then he can come back to it only by virtue of having come, as the single individual, into an absolute relation to the absolute. Here I will now make an observation whereby I will say more than I have said at any

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¶ Aesthetics sometimes discusses something similar with its customary pandering. The merman is saved by Agnes and the whole thing ends with a happy marriage. A happy marriage! That is easy enough. Should, however, ethics speak at the wedding ceremony, then I think that would be another matter. Aesthetics casts love's cloak over the merman, then everything is forgotten. It is in addition negligent enough to think that it proceeds at a wedding as it does at an auction, where everything is sold in whatever condition in which it is found (as-is) when the hammer strikes. Aesthetics just takes care that the lovers get each other, and whatever follows it takes no fancy to. If only it would see what happens afterward; but for this it has no time, it is straightaway well underway with slapping a new pair of lovers together. Aesthetics is the most faithless of all disciplines. Everyone who has truly loved it becomes, in a certain sense, unhappy; but the one who has never loved it is and remains a *pecus* [dumb brute].

point previously.\*\* Sin is not the first immediacy, sin is a later immediacy.<sup>23</sup> In sin the single individual is already, in the direction of the demonic paradox, higher than the universal, because it is a contradiction for the universal to wish to require itself from someone who lacks the *sine qua non*.<sup>24</sup> If philosophy, among other things, also thought that it could enter a person's head to attempt to act according to its teaching, then one would get a peculiar comedy thereby. An ethics that ignores sin is a perfectly futile discipline, but if it maintains sin, then it has *eo ipso* exceeded itself. Philosophy teaches that the immediate should be annulled. This is true enough; but what is not true is that sin is, without any qualification, the immediate, any more than faith is, without any qualification, the immediate.

As long as I move about in these spheres, everything goes easily, but what is said here does not explain Abraham; for Abraham did not become the single individual through sin; on the contrary, he was the righteous man who is God's chosen one. The analogy to Abraham then will first appear after the single individual is brought into a condition to be able to perform the universal, and now the paradox repeats itself.

The merman's movements I can therefore understand, whereas I cannot understand Abraham; for the merman comes, precisely by means of the paradox, to wish to realize the universal. If he remains hidden and is initiated into all of remorse's torments, then he will become a demoniac, and, as such, will be brought to nothing. If he remains hidden but does not in his cleverness think that through suffering the bondage of remorse he can work Agnes free, then perhaps he will get peace; but he is lost to the world. If he becomes disclosed and allows himself to be saved through Agnes, then he is the greatest human being I can imagine; for it is only aesthetics that lightmindedly thinks to praise love's power by allowing the lost to be loved by an innocent girl and thereby saved; it is only aesthetics that is mistaken and believes that the girl is the heroine instead of the merman. The merman, then, cannot belong to Agnes without him having made repentance's infinite movement, and still one more movement, the movement in virtue of the absurd. By his own power, he can make repentance's movement, but he also uses absolutely all his strength for this, and therefore it is impossible for him to again by his own power come back and grasp actuality. If one does not have enough passion for either the one or the other movement, if one proceeds carelessly through life repenting a little and thinking the rest will go well enough, then one has once and for all renounced living in the idea, and so one can very easily achieve and aid others in achieving the highest, deceiving themselves and

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\*\* In the foregoing, I have deliberately held every consideration of the question of sin and its reality back. The whole matter is adjusted to Abraham, whom I can still arrive at by immediate categories—that is, to say, insofar as I can understand him. Once sin has stepped forth, ethics runs aground precisely upon repentance; for repentance is the highest ethical expression, but precisely as such it is the deepest ethical self-contradiction.

others in the imagination that in the world of spirit things proceed as in a game of cards, where everything goes along by chance and by rule of thumb. One can then amuse oneself with the thought of how curious it really is that precisely in an age when everyone can, of course, do the highest, doubt concerning the soul's immortality can be so widespread; for someone who actually has merely made the movement of infinity hardly doubts. The conclusions of passion are the only dependable ones, i.e., the only convincing ones. Fortunately, existence is here more tender and faithful than what the wise claim of it, for it excludes no person, not even the lowliest; it deceives no one, for in the world of spirit the only one who is deceived is the one who deceives himself.

It is everyone's opinion—and insofar as I dare allow myself to judge thereof it is my opinion also—that it is not the highest to enter the monastery; but it is not at all therefore my opinion that in our age, when no one enters the monastery, everyone is greater than the profound and earnest souls who found rest in a monastery. How many in our age have passion enough to think this and then to uprightly judge themselves? The very idea of taking time upon one's conscience this way, spending the time to examine every lonely thought in sleepless vigilance in such a way that one, if one does not at every moment make the movement in virtue of the noblest and holiest in a person, may well, with anxiety and horror, discover<sup>††</sup>—and if in no other way, he may do this through anxiety itself—may call forth the dark feelings that live in every human life; whereas someone living in common with others so easily forgets, so easily lets the matter slip away, is stopped in so many ways, gets the opportunity to begin anew—this thought, alone, grasped with proper respect, I think, is able to chastise many an individual in our age who thinks he has already come to the highest. Yet this hardly concerns anyone in our age, which believes it has achieved the highest, whereas in fact no age has been as liable to the comical. And it is incomprehensible that it has not already happened that by a *generatio aequivoca* [self-procreation] our generation has itself given birth to its hero, the demon who ruthlessly puts on the terrible theatrical piece that makes the whole generation laugh and makes it forget that it is laughing at itself. Or of what is existence more deserving than being laughed at, when someone already, in his twentieth year, has arrived at the highest? And indeed, what higher movement has the age discovered since giving up entering the monastery? Is it not a pathetic worldly wisdom, shrewdness, and pusillanimity that sits in the seat of honor,

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†† People do not believe this in our earnest age; yet, strangely enough, even in the age of paganism, which is, according to its essence, inherently more lightminded and less thoroughly reflected, the two genuine representatives of the Greek view of existence γνῶθι σαυτόν (“know yourself”), each in his own way, implied that someone who deeply immerses themselves in themselves first and foremost discovers the disposition to evil. That I am thinking of Pythagoras and Socrates I perhaps need not even mention.

which cravenly deludes people into thinking that they have done the highest and underhandedly keeps them from ever trying the lesser? Someone who has made the monastic movement has just one movement left, the movement of the absurd. How many understand, in our age, what the absurd is? How many in our age live in such a way that they have renounced everything, or have received everything? How many are merely honest enough that they know what they are capable of, and what they are incapable of? And is it not true that if one does find such people, one most likely finds them among the less educated and in part among women? In a kind of clairvoyance, the age, just as a demoniac discloses himself without understanding himself, discloses its defeat; for it calls out, again and again, for the comical.

Were this actually what the age needed, then the theater perhaps needs a new piece, in which it is made laughable that someone is dying from love; or would it not sooner be redemptive for our age if it happened among us and the age were witness to such an occurrence, so that for once it could find the courage to believe in the power of spirit, courage to leave off from cravenly smothering the better in itself and enviously smothering it in others—with laughter. Does the age actually need a laughable *Erscheinung* [production or publication] by a quick wit to get something to laugh at, or does it not rather need a character of such enthusiasm to remind it of what it has forgotten?

If one wishes for a plot in a similar style that is, however, more moving, because the passion of repentance has not been set in motion, then one could use a story that is found in the Book of Tobit.<sup>25</sup> The young Tobias intends to marry Raguel and Edna's daughter Sarah. Connected with this girl is a tragic background. She has been given to seven men, all of whom perished in the bridal chamber. This is, with respect to my plot, a blemish with the story; for the comical effect is nearly unavoidable at the thought of a girl's seven futile attempts to get married, although she was quite close to doing so, just as near to doing so as a student who has seven times failed his exam. In the Book of Tobit the accent therefore lies in another place, and then the high number is of importance and in a certain sense even a contributor to the tragic effect; for the magnanimity of young Tobias is all the greater, partly inasmuch as he is his parents' only son, partly because the forbiddingness of the deterrent is more forceful. Consequently, this must be dropped. Sarah is then a girl who has never been in love, who still treasures a young girl's bliss, her prodigious mortgage on existence, her "Vollmachtbrief zum Glücke"<sup>26</sup>—to love a man with her whole heart. And yet she is more unfortunate than anyone, for she knows that the evil demon who loves her intends to kill the bridegroom on her wedding night. I have read about many griefs, but I doubt whether there is anywhere to be found so profound a grief as the one that lies upon this girl's life. After all, if the misfortune comes from without, consolation is still to be found. If existence does not provide a person with what could have made him happy, it is still a consolation that he could have received it. But the unfathomable

grief, which no amount of time can dispel, no amount of time can cure—to know that it would be no help if existence did everything! A Greek writer conceals in his simple naivete so infinitely much when he says: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεις Ἐρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύξεται μέχρι ἄν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [For absolutely no one has ever escaped love nor ever shall, so long as there is beauty and eyes to see] (See Longus's *Pastoralia*).<sup>27</sup> There were many girls who were unfortunate in love, but still such a girl *became* such; Sarah *was* that before she became it. It is grievous not to find someone to whom one can devote oneself, but it is *unspeakably* grievous to be unable to devote oneself. A young girl gives herself, and then one says, “Now she is no longer free.” But Sarah was never free, and yet had never given herself. It is grievous if a girl gave herself and was defrauded, but Sarah was defrauded before she gave herself.

What a world of sorrows will follow from Tobias finally deciding to marry her! What wedding ceremonials, what preparations! No girl has been defrauded as Sarah was; for she was defrauded of the greatest bliss of all, the absolute riches that even the poorest girl possesses, defrauded of the secure, unbounded, free, unrestrained self-loss of devotion; for there should indeed first be smoke when the heart and liver of the fish are laid upon the glowing embers.<sup>28</sup> And how is it that the mother must take leave of the daughter who must, just as she herself was defrauded of everything, in turn defraud her mother of the most beautiful thing! But just read the story. Edna prepared the wedding chamber and she had led Sarah therein, and wept, and she partook of her daughter's tears. And she said to her: “My child, be of good cheer! May the Lord of Heaven and Earth give you joy for this your sorrow! Daughter, be of good cheer.”<sup>29</sup> And now the moment of the wedding. One reads, if one can read at all for all the tears: “But when the both of them were closed in together, Tobias stood up from the bed and said: Stand up, sister! And we will pray that the Lord may have mercy upon us.” (Tobias 8:4)

If a poet read this story, if he intended to use it, I bet a hundred to one he would lay everything on the young Tobias. The heroic courage to be willing to risk his life in such a visible danger, of which the story reminds us still one more time; for the morning after the wedding Raguel says to Edna: “Send one of the maids in and let her see whether he lives; but if he does not, I can bury him and no one will know.” (Tobias 8:13)—his heroic courage would be the subject. I will allow myself to propose another. This is brave, resolute, and knightly conduct on the part of Tobias, but every man who has not the courage to do this is a strutting peacock who does not know what love is, nor what it is to be a man, nor what is worth living for; he has not even grasped that little mystery that it is better to give than to receive and he has no conception of the great one, that it is far harder to receive than it is to give; that is, if one had had the courage to do without and if in the hour of distress one did not prove a coward. No, Sarah is the heroine. She I will approach as I have never approached any girl or been tempted in thought to approach anyone of whom I have read. For what

love of God it takes to be willing to let oneself be healed when one has been warped in this way from the beginning, without guilt—from the beginning was a botched specimen of a human being! What ethical courage to assume the responsibility for allowing the beloved into such a hazardous venture! What humility before another human being! What faith in God that she would not, in the next moment, hate the man to whom she owed everything!

Let Sarah be a man and the demonic lies close at hand. The proud, noble nature can endure everything, but there is one thing it cannot endure—it cannot endure pity. There lies within it an affront that can be given him only by a higher power; for he himself can never become the object of it by himself. If he has sinned, he can bear the punishment without despairing, but to be singled out, without guilt, from his mother's womb as an offering to pity, a sweet fragrance in its nostrils—this he cannot endure. Pity has a peculiar dialectic; one moment it requires guilt, in the next it refuses it, and it is for this reason that to be predestined to pity becomes more and more terrible the more the individual's misfortune is oriented toward the spiritual. But Sarah has no guilt, she is thrown as prey for all sufferings and shall besides this still be tormented by people's pity; for even I, who admittedly admire her more than Tobias loved her, even I cannot mention her name without saying: The poor girl! Let a man be in Sarah's place, let him know that if he should love a girl, then an infernal spirit will come and murder his beloved on their wedding night, and it is surely possible that he would choose the demonic; he would withdraw within himself, and say in the manner that a demonic nature speaks in secret: "Thanks, but I am no friend of ceremonies and long-winded details; I ask not at all for love's desire, I can indeed become a Bluebeard who has his delight in seeing girls drop dead on their wedding night."<sup>30</sup> As a rule, we come to know very little about the demonic, even though this field has a valid claim, especially in our age, to be discovered, and despite the fact that the observer—if he understands anything at all about making contact with the demonic—can make use of nearly any person, at least momentarily. Shakespeare is and continually remains a hero in this regard; that most ghastly demon, the most demonic figure Shakespeare has described, but whom he also described with unequaled skill: Gloucester (later Richard III)—what made him a demon? It appears that he could not bear pity, to which he had been abandoned since childhood. His monologue in act 1 of *Richard III* is worth more than whole moral systems that have no inkling of existence's horrors or of their explanation.

[I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty  
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;  
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,  
Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,  
Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time

Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
 And that so lamely and unfashionable  
 That dogs bark at me as I halt by them—.]<sup>31</sup>

Natures such as Gloucester's cannot be saved through mediating them into an idea of society. Ethics really only mocks them, just as it would of course be a taunt directed at Sarah if someone were to say to her, "Why don't you express the universal and get married?" Such natures belong, fundamentally, to the paradox, and they are by no means more imperfect than other persons; only they are either lost in the demonic paradox or saved in the divine paradox. Time and time again one has been pleased that witches, nisses, trolls, etc. are deformed creatures, and it is undeniable that every person has an inclination, when he sees a deformity, to immediately attach to the person the conception of moral depravity. What a monstrous injustice, when the relation ought sooner be turned around. Existence itself has damaged them, just as a stepmother mars the children. This originates either through nature or through a historical relation setting them outside of the universal, which is the beginning of the demonic, for which the individual, however, has no guilt. Cumberland's Jew is thus also a demon, even though he does the good. Thus the demonic can also manifest itself as contempt for people, a contempt which, however, it is important to note, does not bring the demoniac himself to act contemptibly—on the contrary, he has the strength to know that he is better than all who judge him.<sup>32</sup>

With regard to such things, the poets ought to be the first to sound the alarm. God knows what books the current crop of young versifiers is reading! Their studies probably consist in learning rhymes by heart, and only God knows what their significance is in existence! At this moment, I know of no benefit from them other than that they convey an edifying proof of the soul's immortality, since of them one can safely say to oneself what Baggesen says about the local poet Kildevalle: If he becomes immortal, so shall we all.<sup>33</sup>—

What is said here, as occasioned by Sarah, chiefly with reference to the poetic presentation and therefore with an imaginary presupposition, has its full significance if one with psychological interest contemplates the meaning of the old saying: *nullum unquam existit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia* [great genius has never existed without some madness].<sup>34</sup> For this madness is the suffering of genius in the world, is the expression for, if I dare to speak so, divine envy, while the aspect of genius is the expression of preferment. Thus, from the beginning the genius is disoriented in relation to the universal, and brought into realization to the paradox, whether he, in despair over his limits—which in his eyes transform his omnipotence into impotence—seeks a demonic reassurance, and therefore is unwilling to admit it to either God or other people, or whether he reassures himself religiously in love for God.



Here lies the psychological task, to which one could, it seems to me, gladly dedicate a whole lifetime, and yet one so rarely hears a single word concerning it. In what relation does insanity stand to genius, can one constitute one of them out of the other; in what sense and to what extent is the genius master over his insanity; for it is self-evident that he is to a certain degree master of it, since otherwise he would indeed actually be insane. Such observations require, however, a high degree of ingenuity and love; for observing the superior person is extremely difficult. If someone, paying attention to this, were to read through a few writers of the greatest genius, it would however perhaps be possible just once, with great pains, to discover a little.

Still one more case I will imagine, of a single individual who, by being hidden and by his silence, intends to save the universal. For this I can use the legend of Faust. Faust is a doubter,<sup>‡‡35 36</sup> a spiritual apostate who goes the way of the flesh. This is the poets' opinion, and although it is repeated again and again that every age has its Faust,

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‡‡ If one does not wish to use a doubter, one could select a similar figure, an ironist for example, whose sharp eye has radically seen through the ludicrousness of existence, whose secret understanding of the powers of life has made him sure of what the patient wishes. He knows that he has the power of laughter; if he wishes to use it, he is sure of his victory; indeed, what is more, of the good fortune he will enjoy. He knows that a single voice will speak up to restrain him, but he knows he is stronger; he knows that one can still, for a moment, bring men to seem earnest, but he knows also that in secret they yearn to laugh with him; he knows that one can still, for a moment, cause a woman to hold a fan before her eyes when he speaks, but he knows that she laughs behind the fan; he knows that the fan is not absolutely opaque, he knows that one can write an invisible message upon it, he knows that when a woman strikes at him with the fan, it is because she has understood him. He knows, from unmistakable intelligence, how laughter sneaks in and dwells in concealment within a person, and when it once has taken residence, watches and waits. Let us imagine for ourselves such an Aristophanes, such a slightly altered Voltaire; for he has, in addition, a sympathetic nature, he loves existence, he loves people, and he knows that even if the judgment of laughter may perhaps raise up a redeemed younger generation, it will destroy a great number of people among his contemporaries. So he remains silent and himself forgets, as far as possible, how to laugh. But dare he remain silent? Perhaps there are a good many who scarcely understand the difficulty of which I speak. They probably think it was an admirable magnanimity to remain silent. This is not at all my opinion, for I think that every such nature, if it were to lack the magnanimity to remain silent, would be a traitor to existence. Consequently, I require this magnanimity of him; but if he has it, dare he to remain silent? Ethics is a dangerous discipline and it is quite possible that Aristophanes decided, purely on ethical grounds, to let laughter judge the perverse age. Aesthetic magnanimity cannot help, because one does not venture such things on its account. If he would remain silent, then he must enter the paradox.—Still another plot I will suggest, that, for example, a person possesses an explanation of a hero's life that explains it in a discreditable fashion, and yet a whole generation places absolute confidence in this hero without suspecting any such thing.

still one poet after another follows this beaten track. Let us make a little alteration. Faust is the doubter κατ' ἔξοχὴν [*par excellence*]; but he has a sympathetic nature. Even in Goethe's version of Faust, I miss a more profound psychological insight into doubt's secret conversations with itself. In our age, when we are assured everyone has experienced doubt, still no poet has taken a step in this direction. I even think I could willingly offer them government bonds to write upon, so that they might write all that they have experienced in this regard—they would scarcely have written more than what could be contained on the top margin.

Only when one turns Faust in upon himself, only then can doubt take up a poetic aspect, only then does he actually discover in himself all of its sufferings. He then knows that it is a spirit that upholds existence, but he knows also that the security and joy in which people live is not grounded in the power of spirit, but is easily explainable as an unreflected bliss. As a doubter, as *the* doubter, he is higher than all this, and if someone attempts to convince him that he has undergone doubt, he easily sees through it, for someone who has made a movement in the world of spirit, consequently an infinite movement, can straightaway sense through the reply whether it is a man who has been tested who speaks or a Münchhausen.<sup>37</sup> What a Tamerlane inspired with his Huns, Faust knows he inspires with his doubt—to scare people to the point of terror, to let existence falter under their feet, to scatter people, to make the cry of alarm sound everywhere.<sup>38</sup> And if he does it, then he is no Tamerlane; he is in a certain sense authorized and has the authority of thought. But Faust has a sympathetic nature, he loves existence, his soul knows no envy, he realizes he cannot halt the fury he can surely awaken, he covets no herostratic notoriety<sup>39</sup>—he remains silent, he conceals the doubt in his soul with greater care than a girl who conceals a sinful love's fruit beneath her heart. He tries as much as possible to walk in step with other people but what takes place inside him he consumes within himself, and thus he offers himself as a sacrifice to the universal.

One can sometimes hear people lament when an eccentric head stirs up a whirlwind of doubt, and they say: "Would that he had remained silent!" Faust fulfills this idea. Someone who has a conception of what it means to say that a person lives on spirit will also know what the hunger of doubt means, and that the doubter hungers just as much after life's daily bread as after the nourishment of spirit. In spite of all the pains Faust suffers, which may be a perfectly good argument that it is not pride which has beset him, I shall nonetheless adopt a little precautionary measure I can easily invent; for just as Gregory of Rimini<sup>40</sup> was called *tortor infantium* because he accepted that small infants were damned, so too I could be tempted to call myself *tortor heroum*—for I am very inventive when it comes to tormenting heroes. Faust sees Margaret, but not after he has chosen lust, for my Faust does not choose lust at all. He does not see Margaret in Mephistopheles's concave mirror,<sup>41</sup> but in all her lovely innocence, and since his soul has preserved love for human beings, he can still very

well fall in love with her. But he is a doubter, and his doubt has reduced actuality to nothing for him, for my Faust is too ideal to belong among those learned doubters who doubt for one hour each semester at the lectern, but otherwise are able to do everything else even as they do this, without the help of spirit or in virtue of spirit. He is a doubter, and the doubter hungers after joy's daily bread as after the food of spirit. Yet he remains faithful to his decision and remains silent. He does not speak to any person of his doubt and neither does he speak to Margaret of his love.

It is self-evident that Faust is too ideal a figure to be content with the trite advice that if he speaks, he would provide the occasion for a general discussion, or that the whole thing would come off without consequence, or perhaps, or perhaps. (Here there lies dormant, as any comic poet will easily see, the latent comic element in the plot; by bringing Faust into an ironic relation to those slapstick fools who in our age chase after doubt and present external arguments to prove that they have actually doubted [e.g., a doctoral diploma], or vow that they have doubted everything, or prove it by once having met a doubter in their travels—these couriers and sprinters in the world of spirit who in great haste pick up a little tip about doubt, at another house another one about faith, and now pinch and scrimp<sup>42</sup> in their best manner, all according to whether the congregation wishes to have fine sand or gravel.)<sup>43</sup> Faust is too ideal a figure to go about in slippers. Someone who does not have an infinite passion is not ideal, and someone who has an infinite passion has forever saved his soul from all such nonsense. He remains silent in order to sacrifice himself—or he speaks with consciousness that he will disturb everything.

If he remains silent, then the ethical will condemn him; for it says: “You shall acknowledge the universal, and you acknowledge it precisely by speaking, and you dare not have pity on the universal.” This consideration one should probably not forget when one sometimes judges a doubter severely because he speaks. I am not inclined to judge such conduct mildly, but, as elsewhere, it matters that the movements occur properly. Even if everything ends in disaster, still, a doubter—even if by speaking he brings every possible misfortune to the world—is still far preferable to these wretched sweet toothed who take a taste of everything and intend to cure doubt without knowing it and who then as a general rule are therefore the chief occasion for doubt to break out wildly and uncontrollably.—If he speaks, then he disturbs everything; for even if this doesn't happen, he only finds out afterward, and the outcome cannot help someone either in the moment of action or with respect to responsibility.

If he remains silent on his own responsibility, he can presumably act magnanimously, but he will add to his other pains a little spiritual trial; for the universal will continually torment him and say: “You should have spoken, how will you find out for sure whether it was not after all some secret pride that governed your resolution?”

If the doubter, however, can become the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute, then he can get an authorization

for his silence. In such a case he must make his doubt into guilt. In that case, he is in the paradox, but then his doubt has been healed, even if he may get another doubt.

Even the New Testament would acknowledge such a silence. There even appear places in the New Testament that praise irony, so long as it is used to hide the better part.<sup>44</sup> This movement is, however, just as much one of irony as it is anything else that is based on subjectivity's being higher than actuality. In our time, one does not wish to know anything about this; on the whole, one does not wish to know more of irony than what Hegel has said, who, oddly enough, did not understand it much and held a grudge against it, which our age has good reason not to give up, simply because it should be on its guard against irony.<sup>45</sup> In the Sermon on the Mount, we read, "When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that people will not see you fasting."<sup>46</sup> This passage testifies directly that subjectivity is incommensurable with actuality, indeed, that it has the right to deceive. If only the people who in our age blunder about with loose talk about the idea of the congregation<sup>47</sup> would read the New Testament, then perhaps they would come upon other thoughts.

But now Abraham, how does he act? For I have not forgotten, and now perhaps the reader will be pleased to recollect, that it was for the sake of running up against this stumbling block that I became involved in the previous investigation—not as if Abraham could thereby become more comprehensible but so that the incomprehensible aspect could become more prominent; for, as I mentioned, I cannot understand Abraham, I can merely admire him. It was also noted that none of the stages described contains an analogy to Abraham; they were developed only so that they, when displayed within their own spheres, could, in their moment of variation, signify the boundary, as it were, of an unknown land. Insofar as there could be talk of an analogy, it must be the analogy of sin, but this lies in a different sphere, and cannot explain Abraham, and is itself far easier to explain than Abraham.

So Abraham did not speak; he did not speak to Sarah, to Eliezer, to Isaac, he passed by the three ethical courts; for the ethical had, for Abraham, no higher expression than family life.

Aesthetics allowed, indeed required, silence of the single individual if he knew that remaining silent could save another person. This is already sufficient to show that Abraham does not lie within aesthetics' territory. His silence in no way serves to save Isaac; in fact, his whole task, which is to sacrifice Isaac for his own and for God's sake, is an offense against aesthetics, for it can certainly understand sacrificing myself, but not sacrificing another for my own sake. The aesthetic hero was silent. Ethics, however, judged him, because he was silent in virtue of his accidental particularity. His human foreknowledge was what determined that he should remain silent. Ethics cannot forgive this; every such human knowledge is only an illusion and ethics

requires an infinite movement, it requires disclosure. The aesthetic hero can speak, but is unwilling to.

The genuine tragic hero sacrifices himself and everything he has for the universal; his deed and every feeling in him belongs to the universal; he is disclosed, and in this disclosure he becomes ethics' beloved son. This does not fit Abraham; he does nothing for the universal and he is concealed.

Now we are at the paradox. Either the single individual can, as the single individual, stand in an absolute relation to the absolute, and so the ethical is not the highest; or Abraham is lost: he is neither a tragic hero nor an aesthetic hero.

In a way, it can again seem here that the paradox is the easiest and simplest of all. However, I must repeat that someone who persists in holding this demonstrates thereby that he is no knight of faith, for the distress and the anxiety is the only justification conceivable—even if it is not in general conceivable—for then the paradox is canceled.

Abraham remains silent—but he *cannot* speak, therein lies the distress and the anxiety. For if when I speak, I cannot make myself understood, then I do not speak, even if I were to speak without interruption day and night. This is Abraham's situation. He can say everything, but one thing he cannot say, and if he cannot say that—that is, say it so another can understand it—then he cannot speak. The relief of speaking is that this translates me into the universal. Now, Abraham can speak in the most beautiful words to be found in any language about how he loves Isaac. But this is not what is on his mind, it is the more profound thought that he intends to sacrifice him because it is a trial. This last thought no one can understand, and so everyone can only misunderstand the first. This distress the tragic hero knows not. In the first place, he has the consolation that every counterargument has been given its due, that he has been able to give Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, Achilles, the chorus, every living creature, every voice from humanity's heart, every cunning, every alarming, every accusing, every compassionate thought, opportunity to stand up against him. He can be sure that everything that may be said against him has been said mercilessly, ruthlessly—and to struggle against the whole world is a consolation, to struggle with oneself is frightful—he shall not fear that he has overlooked something, that he shall perhaps afterward cry out, as King Edward IV did on receiving news of the murder of Clarence [act 2, scene 1]:

[Who sued to me for him? Who (in my wrath)  
Kneel'd at my feet and bid me be advis'd?  
Who spoke of brotherhood? Who spoke of love?]\*<sup>48</sup>

The tragic hero does not know the terrifying responsibility of solitude. In the next place, he has the consolation that he can weep with Clytemnestra and Iphigenia—and

tears and cries are relieving, but unspeakable sighs torment. Agamemnon can quickly collect his soul in certainty about what he intends to do, and then still has time to console and encourage. This Abraham cannot do. When his heart is moved, when his words would contain a blessed consolation for the whole world, then he dare not speak, for would not Sarah, would not Eliezer, would not Isaac say to him: "Then why do you intend to do it? After all, you can just let things be." And if in his distress he attempted to unburden himself, attempted to embrace everything that was dear to him before he proceeded to the end, the terrifying consequence would perhaps be that Sarah, that Eliezer, that Isaac should take offense at him and believe that he was a hypocrite. Speak he cannot, he speaks no human language. And even if he understood all earthly tongues, and those he loved also understood them, still he cannot speak—he speaks in a divine tongue, he speaks in tongues.<sup>49</sup>

This distress I can understand very well; I can admire Abraham; I do not fear that someone through this story should be tempted, in light-minded fashion, to intend to be the single individual; but I confess also that I do not have the courage for it and that I would gladly renounce every expectation of going further if it were even possible, be it even so late, that I should come so far. At every moment Abraham can break off, he can repent of the whole thing as a spiritual trial; then he can speak, then everyone can understand him—but then he is Abraham no longer.

Abraham cannot speak, because he cannot say that which would explain everything (that is, so it is understood), that it is a trial such that, note well, the ethical is the temptation. Someone set in this condition is an emigrant from the sphere of the ethical. But still less can he say the next thing. That is to say, Abraham makes, as was sufficiently developed earlier, two movements. He makes resignation's infinite movement and gives up Isaac—this no one can understand, since it is a private undertaking; but next, he makes, each moment, the movement of faith. This is his consolation. For he says: Still, it will not happen, or if it happens, then the Lord will give me a new Isaac; that is, in virtue of the absurd.

The tragic hero, however, comes to the end of the story. Iphigenia bows to her father's decision, she makes resignation's infinite movement, and now they have an understanding with each other. She can understand Agamemnon because his undertaking expresses the universal. On the contrary, had Agamemnon said to her: "Although the god requires you as a sacrifice, still it is possible that he didn't require it; that is, in virtue of the absurd," then he would, in the same moment, become incomprehensible to Iphigenia. If he were able to say this in virtue of a human calculation, then Iphigenia would surely understand him; but then it would thereby follow that Agamemnon had not made the infinite movement of resignation, and so he is no hero—then the fortune-teller's foretelling is a sailor's tale, and then the whole thing is even a Vaudeville.

Abraham, then, did not speak. Only one word by him is recorded, his only answer to Isaac, which then also sufficiently demonstrates that he had not spoken

before. Isaac raises the question to Abraham of where the lamb for the burnt offering is. "And Abraham said: 'God himself shall provide the burnt offering, my son.'"<sup>50</sup>

This last word of Abraham I shall here consider a little more closely. If this word did not exist, then the whole affair would lack something; if they were different words, then perhaps everything would dissolve in confusion.

It has often been a subject of my deliberation whether a tragic hero, culminating either in a suffering or in a deed, ought to have last words. It depends, as far as I can tell, to which life-sphere he belongs, to what extent his life has intellectual significance, to what extent his suffering or deed stands in relation to spirit.

It is self-evident that the tragic hero, in his moment of culmination, can, just as any other person who has not been robbed of their voice, say a few words, perhaps a few fitting words, but the question is to what extent it is fitting for him to do so. If his life's significance rests in an external deed, then he has nothing to say, then everything that he says is essentially chatter, where he only weakens the impression he makes, whereas the tragic conventions bid him to complete his task in silence, whether it consists in a deed or in a suffering. In order not to go too far afield, I will simply take the example lying nearest at hand. If Agamemnon himself, not Calchas, should have drawn the knife to kill Iphigenia, then he would have only demeaned himself by wishing, at the last moment, to say a few words: for the meaning of his deed was, after all, obvious to all, the process of reverence, pity, emotion, and tears was completed, and besides, his life had no relation to spirit—that is, he was no teacher or witness of the spirit. If, on the other hand, the meaning of a hero's life is oriented toward spirit, then omitting a statement would diminish the impact of his life, what he has to say is not then a few fitting words or a little declaratory piece, rather the significance of his statement is that he consummates himself at the decisive moment. Such an intellectual tragic hero should have and should retain the last word. One requires that he have the same transfigured bearing proper to every tragic hero, but one still requires then one final word. If such an intellectual tragic hero culminates in a suffering (in death), then he becomes immortal in this last word before he dies, whereas, on the contrary, the ordinary tragic hero first becomes immortal after his death.

Socrates can be used as an example. He was an intellectual tragic hero. His death sentence is announced to him. In that moment he dies, and someone who does not understand that it requires the whole power of the spirit to die, and that the hero always dies before he dies, shall not advance particularly far in his consideration of life. As a hero, it is now required of Socrates that he be quiet and self-contained, but as an intellectual tragic hero it is required of him that he, in this last moment, have enough strength of spirit to consummate himself. He then cannot, as the ordinary tragic hero does, concentrate on self-control in the face of death, but he must make this movement as quickly as possible so that, in the same moment, his consciousness is beyond this struggle and he claims himself. Thus if Socrates, in the crisis of death,

had become silent, he would have weakened the effect of his life and roused the suspicion that irony's elasticity in him was not a world power but a game, the resilience of which must in the decisive moment be used according to an inverted scale to sustain him in pathos.<sup>§§51</sup>

What is here briefly suggested can, of course, not find application to Abraham if one thinks to find by means of some analogy a fitting final word for him with which to conclude, but surely they do apply insofar as one realizes the necessity of Abraham consummating himself in the last moment, not to draw the knife silently but to have a final word to say, since as the father of faith he has an absolute significance in orientation of spirit. I can form no conception of what he must say before the fact; after he has said it, I presumably can understand it, perhaps in a certain sense understand Abraham in what was said, yet without thereby coming closer to him than I was in the preceding exposition. If there had been no final statement of Socrates, then I could have imagined myself in his place and created something, and if I had not been able to, that a poet could have managed it, but no poet can make a way to Abraham.

Before I move on to consider Abraham's last word more closely, I must first point out the difficulty of Abraham coming to say anything at all. The distress and the anxiety in the paradox lay, as developed above, precisely in the silence—Abraham cannot speak.<sup>¶¶52</sup> To some extent, then, it is a self-contradiction to require that he must speak, unless one intends to have him out of the paradox again in such a way that he suspends it at the decisive moment, whereby he will cease to be Abraham and annul the whole of the foregoing. If, in this way, Abraham were now in the decisive moment to say to Isaac: "It is you that is intended," then this would be only a weakness. For if he could have spoken at all, then he ought to have spoken long before this, and the weakness would then consist in the fact that he had not had the courage and concentration of spirit to think through the whole pain beforehand, but had shoved something away from him in such a way that the actual pain was more than the imagined one. Moreover, he would fall out of the paradox with such talk, and if he

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§§ Which statement of Socrates may be regarded as the decisive one is open to divided opinions, since Socrates was poetically volatilized by Plato in so many ways. I propose the following: the death sentence is proclaimed to him, in the same moment he dies, in the same moment he overcomes his death and consummates himself in the famous answer: that he is surprised that he was condemned by a majority of only three votes. He could not have bantered more ironically with the loose and idle talk of the marketplace or the foolish remark of an idiot than he did with the death sentence that condemns him to die.

¶¶ If there is any analogy at all, it is one such as provided by the scene of Pythagoras, for in his final moment he had to consummate the silence he had always maintained, and for this reason he said: It is better to be killed than to speak. See Diogenes, [*Lives of the Philosophers*,] VIII, para. 39.



actually intended to speak with Isaac, he must transform his situation into a spiritual agon, for otherwise he could still say nothing, and if he does this, then he is not even a tragic hero.

However, a last word of Abraham has, after all, been preserved, and insofar as I can understand the paradox, I can also understand Abraham's entire mode of existence in this word. First and foremost, he does not say anything, and in this form he says what he has to say. His answer to Isaac has the form of irony, for it is always irony when I say something and yet do not say anything. Isaac asks Abraham in the belief that Abraham knows. If Abraham were now to have answered: "I know nothing," then he would have said an untruth. Abraham cannot say anything, for what he knows he cannot say. So he answers: "God shall provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my soul!" One sees hereby the double movement in Abraham's soul, such as is described in the preceding discussion. If Abraham had merely relinquished Isaac in resignation and nothing more, then he would have said an untruth: for he indeed knew that God had required Isaac as a sacrifice, and he knew that he himself, at that very moment, was ready and willing to sacrifice him. He has, then, at each moment, after having made this movement, made the next, made the movement of faith in virtue of the absurd. To this extent, he says nothing untrue: for in virtue of the absurd it is indeed possible that God could do something completely different. So he says nothing untrue, but neither does he say anything; for he speaks in a foreign language. This becomes still more evident if we consider that it was Abraham himself who would sacrifice Isaac. Had the task been otherwise, had the Lord commanded Abraham to bring Isaac to Mount Moriah so that he himself could let his lightning strike Isaac and thus take him as a sacrifice, then Abraham could, in a straightforward sense, be justified in speaking as enigmatically as he did; for then he himself would not after all, know what would happen. But the task set for Abraham is of such a kind that he shall indeed carry it out himself, and he must consequently know in the decisive moment what he himself will do, and consequently he must know that Isaac shall be sacrificed. If he did not know this with certainty, then he has not made resignation's infinite movement, then his words are probably not untrue, but he is still very far from being Abraham. He is more insignificant than a tragic hero, indeed, he is an irresolute man who can make up his mind neither one way nor the other, and for that reason will always end up speaking in riddles. But a vacillator like this is just a parody of a knight of faith.

Here it again appears that one may well understand Abraham, but understand him only in the way that one understands the paradox. For my part, I can perhaps understand Abraham, but I comprehend further that I do not have the courage to speak in this way, just as I do not have the courage to act like Abraham; but by no means do I therefore say that it is something lowly when it is, on the contrary, the only miracle.

And now, how did the contemporary age judge the tragic hero? That he was great and it admired him. And that honorable assembly of nobles, that jury which every generation establishes to judge the previous generation, judges likewise. But no one could understand Abraham. And yet what did he achieve? That he remained true to his love. But the one who loves God does not need tears, needs no admiration; he forgets the suffering in the love, yes, so completely has he forgotten it that there would not be the least suspicion of it afterward if God himself did not remember it; for he sees in secret, and knows the distress and tallies the tears and forgets nothing.

Either there is, then, a paradox, that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute or Abraham is lost.

## Endnotes

1. See *Problema II*, n4.

2. The category of the *interesting* was an important concept in German Romantic aesthetics, introduced by Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829) in his *On the Study of Greek Poetry*, trans. Stuart Barnett (Albany: State University of New York, 2001; originally published in 1797). Schlegel originally introduced the concept to capture the difference between classical and modern poetry. In his analysis, classical poetry (and classical art generally) aimed at beauty and therefore at producing a distinctly ordered work of art; modern poetry (and modern art generally) aimed at the interesting and therefore at producing works of art in which beautiful and ugly, and all manner of opposites, were combined side by side in accordance with an artist's individuality. Silentio's analysis, however, does not focus on individuality *per se* but on "the turning point," the moment when the individual faces a choice whose resolution will effect a significant transformation in the course of their life.

3. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, where Kierkegaard has Johannes Climacus provide his most complete account of different modes of life, the primary modes are three: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Climacus (a humorist) then places irony as the *confinium*, or boundary, between the aesthetic and the ethical, and humor as the boundary between the ethical and the religious (see *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 1:501–2). Does this contradict the idea here that the *confinium* is the interesting instead? One reason to think not is that in *Postscript* Climacus is describing modes of existence and detailing the different ways that individuals can attempt to orient themselves and conduct a concrete life. Thus the focus is less on irony than on "the ironist" (1:502) both as a mode of existence and as an *incognito* for the ethical individual. Ethics and aesthetics do not have that meaning here in *Problema III*; throughout the *Problema*, Silentio uses these words in their ordinary sense in terms of two sets of categories and principles by which one may evaluate or judge agents, actions, and situations. "The interesting" is a border category in that "turning points" generally involve ethical dilemmas, which have inherent aesthetic interest to an observer.

4. Aristotle (384–322 BC), *Poetics*, 12.1452b.

5. Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles (c. 496–406 BC).

6. Iphigenia in *Iphigenia in Tauris* by Euripedes (c. 480–406 BC). In this play, it turns out that Artemis has whisked away Iphigenia right before she could be sacrificed, replacing her with a hart, and has taken her to Tauris where she now serves as a priestess.

7. Kierkegaard's aesthete pseudonym, "A," author of *Either/Or*, Part I, provides an extended analysis of modern tragedy in comparison with ancient tragedy in "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama."

8. Aristotle, in describing the mating habits of all the animals he had observed—some more carefully than others—says that "Conception of the true egg and conformation of the wind-egg take

place rapidly with most birds; as for instance with the hen-partridge when in heat. The fact is that, when she stands to windward and within scent of the male, she conceives . . . for the partridge appears to have a very acute sense of smell.” *The History of Animals*, trans. d’A. W. Thompson, 6:2, 560b, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1:882.

9. See *Iphigenia at Aulis* in *Euripides V*, ed. David Grene and Richmond Lattimore, trans. Charles R. Walker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), lines 855–96.

10. A Latin phrase literally meaning “argument to the person,” i.e., an argument based on a person’s circumstances.

11. In ancient Greece, an olive branch was a symbol of good will, peace, or supplication.

12. This tale of Cupid and Psyche is preserved in *The Golden Ass* of Lucius Apuleius (c. AD 124–170). See *The Golden Ass* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), 217.

13. In a draft, “Movements and Positions” was envisioned as the subtitle for the work as a whole. The pseudonym was then one “Simon Stylita” (his name alluding to a fifth-century desert father, Simeon Stylites, who lived in isolation from the world atop a pillar in the desert, from which he received the name “Stylites” which in Greek means “standing atop a pillar”), who is presented as a “Solo Dancer and Private Individual” (*Pap.* IV B 78 / *JP* 5, 5659). Movements and positions are the language of dance, positions being ways of organizing and setting the body to increase its functional powers, so as to make various movements, in the words of Agrippina Vaganova, “easy and convenient” (Agrippina Vaganova, *Basic Principles of Classical Ballet*, trans. Anatole Chujoy (New York: Dover Publications, 1946), p. 17). Just as he did in the Preliminary Expectoration, Silentio here uses this analogy to describe modes of psychological self-organization that function to make interior movements of spirit possible.

14. See G. E. Lessing, *The Hamburg Dramaturgy*, trans. Wendy Arons and Sara Figal, ed. Natalya Baldyga (New York: Routledge, 2019), esp. Essays 1 and 2, 37–42. Silentio refers to it by its German title, *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*.

15. Early Protestant theology made a distinction between archetypal and ectypal theology. Archetypal theology is God’s own self-knowledge, whereas ectypal theology is knowledge of God communicated to creatures. Ectypal theology then had two main types: *theologia beatorum* (the knowledge of God belonging to the blessed who dwell in God’s presence, also called “knowledge of vision”) and *theologia viatorum* (the knowledge of God belonging to pilgrims, wanderers, or wayfarers). According to this schema, *theologia beatorum* and *viatorum* are distinguished by the fact that the blessed have arrived at their end and see God face-to-face, whereas “wayfarers” are still journeying and therefore their knowledge is necessarily both finite and imperfect (see Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 299–304). Silentio means that “Christian drama” might appear in a different light if one took this to involve

focusing upon how individuals must interact with God in time, subject to partial knowledge, the heterogeneity of time and eternity, and the need to engage and persevere in self-formation over time.

**16.** Silentio has here either made a mistake or introduced an unpublicized change in the story, as he does in discussing each of the four main poetic variations. Augurs were a feature of the Roman priesthood, not of Greek religion. What Aristotle in fact reports is that the bridegroom interpreted something as a bad omen (*Politics* 5.4.1303b37–1304a1). This mistake by Silentio could be an accident made by Kierkegaard, but it is suspicious that in the original story, the bridegroom behaved much more as Kierkegaard himself did, i.e., interpreting various features of his life as constituting a “bad omen” and “divine veto” against the marriage—conclusions he came to doubt immediately before writing *Fear and Trembling*, saying “Had I faith, I would have stayed with Regine” (*SKS* 18, 177; *JJ*:115 / *KJN* 2, 164). Moreover, this changes the entire meaning of the story, which otherwise would not serve Silentio’s purpose; for interpretations of accidents as pointing to a “bad omen” are significantly more private and subjective than are official pronouncements of the augurs.

**17.** Johannes de Silentio alternately disclaims being a philosopher (see Foreword) and being a poet (here in this section) even while writing a book that is described as a “dialectical lyric” and taking on the tasks of both.

**18.** Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850), *Axel og Valborg* (1810), in *Oehlenschlägers Tragødiær*, 9 vols. (Copenhagen: 1841–49), 5:4–111. Axel and Valborg were close relatives and therefore were forbidden by the church to marry until they received papal dispensation. Then, however, it was learned that they were baptismal brother and sister (baptized on the same day in the same church), which was an additional hindrance to their marriage (see Oehlenschläger, 9, 49).

**19.** This account of Queen Elizabeth’s last days is related in Lessing, *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, Essay 22, 93–95; Lessing cites David Hume’s *History of England*, 6 vols. (1759), vol. 4, and quotes extensively from William Robertson, *History of Scotland*, 2 vols. (1759), 2:284–86.

**20.** Allusion to August Bournonville (1805–1879), a former star dancer of the Paris Opera who returned to Copenhagen to lead the Royal Danish Ballet and transform it into one of the premier centers for classical dance, establishing what is now known as “the Bournonville School” and the Danish style of ballet. Bournonville sometimes referred to himself as a “Ballet-Poet.” For example, in commenting on his balletic production of *Faust*, he remarked, “Despite everything, this ballet has been extraordinarily successful and is still viewed with interest. It made my name as a ballet-poet and gave the Danish Ballet its real substance” (*My Theatre Life*, trans. Patricia N. McAndrew [Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1979], 71; for other appearances of the term, see pp. 341 and 405). Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875) seems to be the person who originally applied this title to Bournonville, in a letter from 1841 (“Bournonville is indeed matchless! He is a ballet-poet”). Kierkegaard and Bournonville were acquaintances with mixed feelings for each other. Kierkegaard greatly admired Bournonville as a dancer, but not as a poet. Bournonville admired Kierkegaard’s understanding of irony, but later viewed his attack on Bishop Mynster and the Danish church as “vile.”

(For Kierkegaard's attitudes toward Bournonville, see Anne Margrete Fiskvik, "Let No One Invite Me, for I Do Not Dance": Kierkegaard's Attitudes toward Dance," in *Kierkegaard, Literature, and the Arts*, 153; for Bournonville's indebtedness to Kierkegaard on the topic of irony, see Knud Arne Jürgensen, *The Bournonville Tradition*, 2 vols. (London: Dance Books 1997), 1:66–67; for Bournonville's reaction to Kierkegaard's attack on Mynster, see Nathaniel Kramer, "August Bournonville: Kierkegaard's Leap of Faith and the 'Noble Art of Terpsichore,'" in *Kierkegaard and his Danish Contemporaries* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 74. For Hans Christian Anderson and Bournonville's letters, see Knud Arne Jürgensen, *Whims of the Poet and the Balletmaster: H. C. Andersen's and August Bournonville's Correspondence [Digterens & Balletmesterens Luner: H. C. Andersens og August Bournonvilles Brevveksling]* [Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 2005], 126.)

21. This legend is first known to occur in a folk song, later collected in Christian Molbech in *Agnete og Havmanden*, in *One Hundred Selected Danish Ballads (Et Hundrede udvalgte danske Viser)*; Copenhagen: 1847), 313–15. Many Danish authors adapted it, such as Jens Baggesen in his poem "Agnete fra Holmegaard" (1808), Adam Oehlenschläger in his *Agnete* (1812), and Hans Christian Andersen in his *Agnete og Havmanden* (1834).

22. This condition of salvation—the merman's belief that he can be saved if a woman falls in love with him—is not present in the legend. Silentio has again either made a mistake or allowed himself an unpublicized change in the legend, for he has imported the condition that obtains in the fairy tale of "Beauty and the Beast" and placed it in the legend of Agnes and the Merman, two fairy tales that both appear in Molbech's *One Hundred Selected Danish Ballads*. This change—like the one above, in changing a "bad omen" to "augurs"—changes the essence of the original source material. It alters what the Merman must do from an internal movement of repentance, via an absolute relation to the absolute, to an external change of circumstances, via a relation to another finite being. The meaning of the new story, then, would be the folly of making one's salvation dependent upon such an external condition, a moral that Silentio draws out from the legend both in the following footnote and in the main discussion.

23. Cf. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, trans. Wallace, 42–45: "We all know the theological dogma that man's nature is evil, tainted with what is called Original Sin. Now while we accept the dogma, we must give up the setting of incident that represents original sin as consequent upon an accidental act of the first man. For the very notion of spirit is enough to show that man is evil by nature, and it is an error to imagine that he could ever be otherwise. To such extent as man is and acts like a creature of nature, his whole behavior is what it ought not to be. For the spirit it is a duty to be free and to realize itself by its own act. Nature is for man only the starting-point which he has to transform" (p. 44).

24. This remark foreshadows Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety*, in which he treats the concept of hereditary sin, the effect of which is to prevent individuals from realizing the ethical under their own power.

25. One of the intertestamental writings commonly termed "apocrypha," Jewish writings produced in the four centuries between the book of Malachi (the last book in the Hebrew Bible or Old

Testament) and New Testament writings concerned with Jesus Christ, the period known as “Second Temple Judaism.” Judaism does not accept these works as canonical. Within Christianity, their status has been debated; the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches view them as canonical or “deutero-canonical” whereas Protestant churches by and large have rejected them as inspired scripture, even if, like Luther, admitting them to be “useful and good to read.”

26. Allusion to the German poet Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805); see his poem “Resignation” in *The Poems of Schiller*, trans. Edgar A. Bowring (New York: Hurst, 1851), 77: “Take, then, these Joy-Credentials back from me.”

27. Editor’s translation. *Daphnis and Chloe* is a story of idyllic, innocent love. For a complete English translation, see *Longus: Daphnis and Chloe. Xenophon of Ephesus: Anthia and Habrocomes*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Henderson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 15.

28. See Tobit 8:1–3. The smoke and odor from the heart and liver on the embers of incense drove the demon away.

29. Tobit 7:20.

30. According to the fairy tale of Bluebeard, first recorded in Charles Perrault’s (1628–1703) *Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals (Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé, 1697)* and subject to numerous reinterpretations. Ludwig Tieck, one of the fathers of the German Romantic movement, wrote a popular version of the tale, *The Seven Wives of Bluebeard* in 1797, which may be in Kierkegaard’s mind as he uses the German spelling of the name (Blaubart) in the text.

In the basic version of the tale, Bluebeard is a wealthy nobleman with a hideous blue beard that repels women, who nonetheless has been married six times. When he marries his seventh wife, he has to leave for business and leaves her with the key to all the doors in the chateau, along with the instruction that she can go wherever she likes, but must not open the door in the basement. When, overcome by curiosity, she does open it, she finds the dismembered remains of his previous wives. He returns unexpectedly and, in his wrath, intends to kill her. She begs the chance to pray with her sister Anne. Just in the nick of time, her brothers arrive and kill Bluebeard.

It is notable that the example of Bluebeard differs from the implied analogy with Sarah in two important respects. Silentio suppresses these disanalogies in his description, which may represent a third mistake or unauthorized change to his source material. First, the repulsive feature that sets him apart without any fault on his part, his blue beard, is not actually dangerous to anyone; it is no demon that threatens murder to those he loves. Second—and this is the most important point, for it changes the whole essence of the analogy—the wives’ deaths are therefore not related to the beard, but are fundamentally due to his unjustified desire to preserve his secret and their justified desire to peer into the secret. In *Either/Or*, Part II, Judge Wilhelm argued that marriage precluded secrecy between husband and wife, and particularly condemned husbands who keep secrets from their wives (“frankness, uprightness, openness” are “the life-principle of love, and . . . secretiveness is its death”; “[it] takes courage to appear as one really is” (*Either/Or* Part II, 104). Kierkegaard himself seemed to believe this and it was a factor in his deliberations about whether or not to marry Regine

(SKS 18, 178–179; JJ:115 / *KJN* 2, 165). What is presented here is therefore hard to distinguish from the lie that such a “Bluebeard” might tell himself, namely, that his murderous life is not of his own choosing.

31. *King Richard the Third*, act 1, sc. 1. Silentio quotes the passage in German:

. . . Ich, roh geprägt, und aller Reize baar.  
Vor leicht sich dreh'nden Nymphen mich zu brüsten;  
Ich, so verkürzt urn schönes Ebenmass,  
Geschändet von der tückischen Natur,  
Entstellt, verwahrlost, vor der Zeit gesandt  
In diese Welt des Athmens, halb kaum fertig Gemacht,  
und zwar so lahm und ungeziemend,  
Dass Hunde bellen, hink' ich wo vorbei.

See *Shakespeare's dramatische Werke*, 12 vols., trans. August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck (Berlin: 1839–40), 3:235–36.

32. *The Jew*, a play by the English playwright Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), was performed regularly in Copenhagen's Royal Theater. Its central character, Sheva, is considered by all to be a miser and a usurer; in point of fact, however, he is a benevolent figure who does good deeds for others in secret. He cannot “be translated into the universal” because of the legal and social discrimination that obtained against Jews, so he adopts the social role cast for him by society, but only ironically, allowing him to “do the good” despite the unjust judgment against him.

33. Jens Baggesen (1764–1826), “The Cemetery in Sobradise” (“Kirkegaarden i Sobradise”), *Danske Værker*, 12 vols. (Copenhagen: 1827–1832), 1:282.

34. The saying *Nullum unquam exstitit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia* may ultimately be based on the writings of the Roman philosopher Seneca (4 BC–AD 65), who—commenting on Aristotle's observation of a link between melancholy temperament and madness in *Problems* 1.2.860b15–25—wrote *nullum magnum ingenium sine mixtura dementiae fuit*, “there has been no great genius without a mixture of madness.”

35. Aristophanes (445–388 BC), Athenian comic poet. Wrote forty-four comedies, eleven of which survive. Kierkegaard owned the works of Aristophanes in Greek, German, and Danish.

36. François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778), French writer of the Enlightenment. He wrote works in many genres, but the overall spirit of his works is consistently critical, satirical, and mocking.

37. “Baron Münchhausen” is the name both of an actual German baron and a fictional character based upon that individual. Hieronymus Karl Friedrich, Baron of Münchhausen (1720–1797) became a minor celebrity for the tall tales he told of his supposed exploits as a soldier and adventurer. Some of these tales were collected in his *Manual for Merry People* (*Vademecum für lustige Leute*; 1781–1783). Not all of the Baron's tales were invented; some were apparently plagiarized, as



they can be traced to earlier sources. German author Rudolf Erich Raspe (1736–1794) satirized the baron in his *Baron Münchhausen's Narrative of his Marvellous Travels and Campaigns in Russia* (1785, published anonymously in England, where the Baron's one-time friend Raspe had settled). Raspe's satirized Baron participates in adventures even more absurd than the original tall tales. In one episode he dresses himself as a Catholic priest to infiltrate the French camp, then, under cover of night, he dismounts more than three hundred cannons and throws them three leagues into the sea, which he attests is the second hardest thing he has done. In another, he is enslaved by Turks and becomes something like a “bee-herder,” during which time a fight with a bear that wishes to steal the honey of one of his bees leads to the baron making an accidental visit to the moon. The “truth” of these tales is in a “Letter to the Public” that is undersigned by Gulliver, Sinbad, and Aladdin.

38. Tamerlane or Timur the Lame (1370–1405), a Mongolian king with a reputation of being a cruel conqueror.

39. In 356 BC Herostratus burned the temple of Artemis in Ephesus, one of the so-called “Seven Wonders of the Ancient World,” so as to acquire enduring fame. In punishment for his act, he was executed and mention of his name was forbidden in order to prevent him from acquiring the fame he sought. In accomplishing the latter the Ephesian authorities evidently failed.

40. Gregory of Rimini (c. 1300–1358), Augustinian monk who lectured in Paris and Rimini, claimed that unbaptized children go to Hell, while according to the common Catholic view of the time they go to Limbo, where they experience neither torment nor heavenly bliss. For this reason he acquired the title *tortor infantium*.

41. This remark betrays a subtle mistake, or a fourth unauthorized change, in the source material. What Silentio says implies that Goethe's (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749–1832) Faust *did* see Margaret in the concave mirror, but in fact, what he sees there is some ideal of feminine beauty (*Faust*, Part 1, lines 2429–47):

FAUST

What do I see? A form from heaven above  
 Appears to me within this magic mirror  
 Lend me the swiftest of your wings, o love,  
 And lead me near to her, nearer!  
 Alas! but when I fail to keep my distance,  
 And venture closer up. To gaze,  
 I see her image dimmed as through a haze!  
 The loveliest woman in existence!  
 Can earthly beauty so amaze?  
 What lies there in recumbent grace and glistens  
 Must be quintessence of all heaven's rays!  
 Or could its like on earth be found?

## MEPHISTOPHELES

You know, a god can't strain six days, my friend,  
 And vote himself a bravo at the end,  
 Unless the job was pretty sound.  
 This once, keep gazing at your leisure;  
 I may just sniff you out a peach like this,  
 And lucky he whom fates allots the pleasure  
 To lodge her at his hearth in wedded bliss.

A bit later, after Faust has drunk the witch's potion of youth, Mephistopheles says  
 . . . soon you'll feel with exquisite enjoyment  
 Young Cupid stir and skip about in you.

## FAUST

Just one more glance before into that mirror!  
 That beauty was so fair, so fresh!

## MEPHISTOPHELES

No, no! That paragon of women, sirrah,  
 Shall soon confront you in the flesh.  
 [*aside*] No fear—with this behind your shirt  
 You'll soon see Helen of Troy in every skirt!

What Faust sees in the mirror is his own erotic ideal of the feminine. Mephistopheles is therefore lying when he says he will find her for him; instead, he is counting on the fact that once his lust is aroused, the sight of any woman will awaken the ideal through laws of association and similarity. Margaret is the next woman he sees, and he immediately seizes upon her as the one he wants.

## FAUST

God, what a lovely child! I swear  
 I've never seen the like of her.

. . .

[MEPHISTOPHELES *enters.*]

## FAUST

Here, get me that young wench—for certain!

## MEPHISTOPHELES

Which one?

## FAUST

The one that just walked past.

Mephistopheles, however, resists Faust, on the grounds that Margaret is an innocent, and “on her I have no hold at all!” The devil is, essentially, getting caught in his own trap. Having awakened Faust's lust for this ideal, which will be excited by any woman, and then having promised him he will see her, he is now faced by the dilemma of the first woman Faust sees being a woman over whom

he lacks power. Faust forces Mephistopheles to help him by threatening to abandon their pact if he does not comply.

This fourth mistake or unpublicized change in the source material once again changes the nature of the relationship at the heart of the drama. More disturbingly, it accepts, or pretends to accept, Mephistopheles's lie to Faust that the woman in the mirror is a real woman he will meet.

42. Silentio uses the German *wirtschafte*, to engage in trade.

43. In the Danish comedy *Erasmus Montanus or Rasmus Berg* (1723, performed 1747), by Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754), 1.3, the peasants of Berg's native village are discussing his return home from college. His father complains that he cannot read his son's letter due to the amount of Latin in it and therefore comes to the Deacon to discuss it. The Deacon says that although he went to school too, he does not know whether current students are really educated, unlike in his time when they had "bone in their skulls and beards on their chins." He goes on to discuss the advantages of his education, which includes the ability to devise tricks whereby he can obtain extra pay for his job at funerals, through which he has been able to "get more than any of my predecessors did." These tricks include having them pay more for certain hymns and for fine sand as opposed to garden dirt. The meaning of the analogy, then, is the use of education for the sake of devising means to trivial material ends.

44. Silentio means Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, where (Matthew 6) he recommends praying and fasting in secret rather than publicizing that one is doing so for the sake of impressing others (and becoming like the hypocrites).

45. See *Hegel's Aesthetics*, 2 vols., trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1:64–68; *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 3 vols., trans. E. S. Haldane (New York: Humanities Press, 1955), 1:398–402; and *Philosophy of Right*, §140, 180–84. With his remark that Hegel did not understand irony, Kierkegaard may also be thinking of H. G. Hotho's *Preliminary Studies for Life and Art (Vorstudien für Leben und Kunst)*; Stuttgart and Tübingen 1835), in which it is stated of Hegel: "He also enjoyed jokes and merriment, but the deepest reason for humor was partly closed to him, and the newest form of irony was so contrary to his own tendency that he almost lacked the organ to recognize its existence, let alone enjoy it" (p. 394).

46. Matthew 6:17–18.

47. For example, Kierkegaard's contemporary N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872), Danish Lutheran minister and author on a variety of theological, philosophical, literary, historical, political and other topics. In his theology, the congregation took the place ordinarily held in Protestant theology by the Bible as the highest source of authority.

48. Act 2, sc. 1. Silentio again quotes Shakespeare in German:

Wer bat für ihn? Wer kniet' in meinem Grimm  
Zu Füßen mir und bat mich überlegen?  
Wer sprach von Bruderpflicht? Wer sprach von Liebe?

Shakespeare, *King Richard the Third*, *Shakspeare's dramatische Werke*, Schlegel and Tieck, 3:278. “Hiesz” (called) has been changed to “bat” (asked) in the second line, a change that is closer to the English.

49. In the early Christian church, the phenomenon of believers suddenly speaking “in tongues” (that is, suddenly speaking in unknown languages) was common, and common enough that Paul felt he must emphasize the fact that such speaking was desirable and good if prompted by the Holy Spirit, but that it was not capable of building up others unless they understood it, so that one should wish for greater spiritual gifts, above all, the gift of love. See 1 Corinthians 12–14. Here *Silentio* may wish to emphasize Paul’s claim that speaking in tongues “builds oneself up” rather than others, since Abraham’s speaking, here, could not benefit anyone.

50. Genesis 22:8.

51. Plato (428?–348? BC), *Apology* 36a. The best current manuscripts make the number of votes 30, however, rather than 3 (probably out of 501), meaning that the vote was 280 to convict against 221 to acquit. If the lower number were to turn out to be true, then the vote would be 253 against 248. Socrates responds to the announcement—along with the announcement that the prosecution would seek the death penalty—as follows:

There are many other reasons for my not being angry with you for convicting me, men of Athens, and what happened was not unexpected. I am much more surprised at the number of votes cast on each side for I did not think the decision would be by so few votes but by a great many. As it is, a switch of only thirty votes would have acquitted me. I think myself that I have been cleared of Meletus’ charges, and not only this, but it is clear to all that, if Anytus and Lycon had not joined him in accusing me, he would have been fined a thousand drachmas for not receiving a fifth of the votes.

In Athenian law, juries vote on the sentence as well as the guilt of the defendant. Both prosecution and defense would propose a penalty, and the jury would go on to choose one of them. Socrates proposed that the appropriate “counter-penalty” would be for the city to treat him as an Olympic victor, or at least to fine him an amount so small as not to harm him. In response to this, more members of the jury vote for the death sentence than initially voted to convict him.

52. See Diogenes Laertius (Greek writer of the third century AD), *Lives of the Philosophers*, 2 vols., trans. R. D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 2:354–55.

## EPILOGUE

Once, when the price of spices became somewhat slack, the merchants sank a couple loads of cargo at sea to drive the price up. This was a forgivable, maybe a necessary deception. Is it something similar we need in the world of spirit? Are we so assured that we have come to the highest that there is nothing left except to imagine to ourselves that we have not come so far, so that we will at least have something with which to fill the time? Is it such a self-deception that the present generation needs? Should it be educated for virtuosity in these matters, or is it not rather already sufficiently perfected in the art of deceiving itself? Is what it needs not rather an honest earnestness that fearlessly and incorruptibly points to the tasks, an honest earnestness that lovingly preserves the tasks, which does not make people anxiously wish to rush to achieve the highest, but keeps the tasks young and beautiful and lovely to look upon, and inviting to all and yet, despite this, difficult and inspiring—for the noble nature is inspired only by the difficult? Whatever one generation learns from another, no generation learns from a previous one the truly human things. In this, every generation begins primitively, has no task different from those of each preceding generation, nor goes any further, unless the preceding one deserted the task and deceived itself. This—the genuinely human—is passion, in which the one generation perfectly understands the other, and understands itself. Thus, no generation has learned how to love from another; no generation gets to begin at any other point except at the beginning, no later generation has a shorter task than the preceding, and if one is not willing, as the preceding generations were, to stop and abide with loving, but goes further, then this is only empty nonsense.

But the highest passion in a human being is faith, and in this no generation begins at any other point than the preceding one, each generation begins anew, the following generation goes no further than the preceding one—provided this one was faithful to its task and did not leave it in the lurch. That this should be tiring is something the generation cannot, of course, say; for the generation does indeed have the task, and has nothing to do with the fact that the preceding generation had the same task—unless the particular generation, or the individuals in the generation, would presumptuously take the seat that belongs only to the Spirit that governs the world and has the patience not to become tired. If the generation begins with this sort of thing, then it is perverse, and what wonder then that the whole of existence seems perverse to it? For surely no one has found existence more perverse than that tailor who, according to the fairy tale, while still inhabiting this life went up to Heaven, and from this standpoint considered the world.<sup>1</sup>

Once the generation worries itself only about its task, which is the highest, it cannot become tired; for the task is always sufficient for a human lifetime. When children on a holiday have already gone through all the games before noon and now impatiently say, “Is there no one who can hit upon a new game?”—does this prove that these children are more developed and precocious than the children in the same or a previous generation who could let the familiar games stretch out for the whole day? Or does it not rather demonstrate that these children lack what I would call the lovable earnestness that belongs to play?

Faith is the highest passion in a person. There are perhaps in every generation many who do not even come to it, but no one goes further. Whether there are also many in our age who do not discover it, I will not decide; I dare call upon only myself, who does not conceal that it may be a long time coming in his case, yet without him therefore wishing to deceive himself or the great by making this into a trifling matter, into a childhood sickness from which one must wish to get over as soon as possible. But, for the one who does not come to faith, life still has tasks enough, and when he loves these honestly, then his life shall not be wasted, even if he never becomes like those who perceived and grasped the highest. But the one who came to faith (whether he be extraordinarily gifted or simpleminded makes no difference in this matter) does not come to a standstill in faith; indeed, he would be shocked if someone said that to him, just as the lover would become indignant had someone said he had come to a standstill in love. For he would answer, “I have by no means come to a standstill, I have my whole life contained within it.” Surely he goes no further, does not go on to something else, for when he discovers this, he has another explanation.

“One must go further; one must go further.” This urge to go further is old in the world. Heraclitus the Obscure, who set his thoughts in his writings and his writings in the Temple of Artemis (for his thoughts had been his armor in life, and therefore he hung this in the goddess’s temple)—Heraclitus the Obscure said, “One cannot pass through the same river twice.” Heraclitus the Obscure had a disciple who did not stop there, but went further and added: “One cannot even do it once.”<sup>†</sup> Poor Heraclitus to have such a disciple! The Heraclitean thesis was, with this “improvement,” improved into an Eleatic thesis that denied movement; and yet the disciple wished only to be a disciple of Heraclitus who went further, not back to what Heraclitus had left behind.

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\* Καὶ ποταμοῦ ῥοῆ ἀπεικάζων τὰ ὄντα λέγει ὡς δις ἐς τὸν αὐτὸν ποταμὸν οὐκ ἐμβαίης [He compares being to the stream of a river and says that you cannot go into the same river twice]. See Plato, *Cratylus*, 402. Ast., 3:158. [Ed.: See Plato, *Complete Works* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2009), 120 / Heraclitus Frag. 91 (Diels-Kranz).]

† Cf. Tennemann, *Gesch. d. Philos.*, 1:220.

## Endnote

1. See “The Tailor in Heaven,” *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, trans. Padraic Colum (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 175–77; see “Der Schneider im Himmel,” no. 35, *Kinder-und Haus-Märchen gesammelt durch die Brüder Grimm*, vols. 1–3 (2nd ed., Berlin: 1819–1822; ASKB 1425–27), 1:177–79.

# Historical Glossary of Kierkegaardian Terms

*Examples of usage translated by Alexander Jech with Troy Wellington Smith*

## I.

The need for a Kierkegaard Glossary is, at certain moments, felt by possibly every Kierkegaard reader. Terms are introduced without definitions and sometimes with the assumption that the reader already knows something when, in fact, it is quite unfamiliar. More importantly, a reader is not really in a position to say what a term like “moment” or “recollection” means without seeing how this concept is utilized by pseudonyms within the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious spheres.

The combination of these two factors—the fact that terms are rarely explicitly defined and the fact that their semantic range is only seen in light of their contested meanings—necessitates a Glossary that follows, as it were, the practices of historical lexicography as displayed in works like the *Oxford English Dictionary*. In the *OED*, quotations of usage across time allow the reader to trace the evolution of each term; here, the reader can trace the way that different life-views use and deploy a given concept, without giving any single perspective the right to say what *the* definition of any given concept is—something that Kierkegaard deliberately withheld.

## II.

How should this Glossary be used? The industrious reader will discover many possible uses for it, and more, probably, than could be listed here. I will simply mention what I consider three principle uses for it.

First, it can be used when the reader encounters a term and simply finds it too opaque, or too unclear, or simply wonders what it might mean here in a given context. Then the reader can turn to the corresponding term in the Glossary, read the Danish definition of the word and peruse some or all of the examples of usage, and obtain a degree of transparency, lucidity, some kind of answer to what this term means when Kierkegaard uses it.

Second, it can be used by a reader who wishes to perform a comparison—perhaps they see how *Silentio* uses a term like “the ethical,” and they wonder how this compares to its use by Judge Wilhelm or Johannes Climacus; then the Glossary will provide examples of how these pseudonyms use the term. For the reader who wishes to go further, the examples cite the page numbers in both the standard Danish edition of Kierkegaard’s writings (*Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*) and in the Hongs’ translation of his writings. Thus, the reader can also find those works and, using these references, move immediately to where these pseudonyms’ discussions of these terms and go deeper, if desired.



Third, it can be used to acquire a synoptic sense of the full semantic range of a term. The reader who wishes can read the entire entry and acquire a sense of this range that is incomplete but that includes sufficient major landmarks to create a rudimentary mental map of a term's full range within Kierkegaard's writings. This may be particularly useful for the reader who wants to write about a specific term in a specific work (say, "recollection" in *Philosophical Fragments*), who wants, however, to be reminded of the way the term's range is defined elsewhere, and who wants to see how these contested meanings might shed new light upon the specific use to which Johannes Climacus puts the term.

The second and third uses could of course be combined by readers who wanted to do something like work out, in a scholarly way, the meaning of some term across Kierkegaard's authorship and wanted such a roadmap precisely so that he or she could travel that map and visit the landmarks one after another, perhaps even if just for the sake of reminding themselves what Kierkegaard actually said in this or that work. Kierkegaard being Kierkegaard, one will often find little surprises this way, something I discovered in constructing the Glossary.

There are other ways the Glossary could be utilized. Readers will discover these for themselves.

### III.

This Glossary—as large as it is—is not complete. It is limited in two ways. First, it is a Glossary specifically for readers of *Fear and Trembling*; it therefore begins by taking those words a reader may puzzle over in *Fear and Trembling* and then traces the usage of these terms throughout Kierkegaard's authorship. Thus, one will not be able to trace the usage of terms that are not found in *Fear and Trembling*.

Second, although this Glossary covers all of Kierkegaard's writings, it focuses more upon the so-called "first authorship," meaning his writings from *Either/Or* through *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. The major works within this period are heavily represented. So, too, are the journals and notebooks most concerned with this period, especially the year or two leading up to *Fear and Trembling*: the greatest number of entries are drawn from Journal JJ and Notebook 8, which were written during this time, and Notebook 15, which looks back upon it retrospectively.

I want to emphasize that this focus upon the first authorship is not exclusive. Usage within the "second authorship" and within Kierkegaard's journals is also traced, although more lightly. Within these later works, usage of terms within *Works of Love* and *The Sickness unto Death* is most heavily represented. We also paid attention to how some significant terms appeared in works prior to his authorship, especially *The Concept of Irony*, if this illuminated those concepts as used in the first authorship. Usage of terms in journals preceding and following JJ is also represented, although, again, this is more of a light tracing than anything resembling a thorough sketch.

Thus, the reader who is interested in grasping the history and range of a term will be able to see, first of all, its semantic range within the first authorship, but also something of its "prehistory"—where an interesting prehistory exists—and its destiny within his later writing.

## IV.

While the general plan of the Glossary was my own, the task was large enough to require several research assistants who worked on this project over the years. I wish to acknowledge the work of these assistants here.

Megan Fritts compiled usage of terms in two works most readers leave unread, *The Concept of Irony* and *The Book on Adler*. She also provided useful comments on matters large and small, most significantly regarding how to properly translate *Anføgtelse*, an almost untranslatable term rendered “spiritual trial” by the Hongs, here classified under “Agon, Agony.”

Claire Wolford compiled hundreds of examples of usage from *Either/Or Part I* and *Part II*, the “anchor” for the entire Glossary. I only regret I could not have used more of these without making the Glossary absurdly large.

Muhammad Abu Mian, who has appeared from nowhere to help work me out of difficulties more than once, compiled entries from *Works of Love*.

Dar Treffon Reshef compiled entries from *The Sickness unto Death*; she also proofread an earlier version of the Glossary and made many cuts to bring it down to a manageable size.

Finally, Troy Wellington Smith translated approximately 38 percent of the entries, an invaluable act of assistance when I had despaired of finding time to finish the task myself.

## ANATOMY OF AN ENTRY

**Absolute** [Head-word: what you are looking up]

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Absolute*; adj., *absolut* [**Corresponding Danish term, as used by Kierkegaard**]

**Danish etymology:** from the Latin *absolutus*, perfect passive participle of *absolvere*, to loosen from, set free, detach, or untie; in judicial language, to absolve or acquit; *absolutus* therefore denoting *that which has been detached*, and often that which is unrestricted, unconditional, absolute [**An account of where the Danish term came from**]

**Danish definition:** In modern philosophical usage, describing what is valid in all respects and without limitation (Kant) or, when used substantively, referring to the ultimate, unconditioned reality (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) [**A definition of how this term is ordinarily used in Danish**, as based upon *Den Danske Ordbog*, 6 vols., ed. Ebba Hjorth and Kjeld Kristensen (Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog og Litteratureselskab 2005) and *Ordbog over det Danske Sprog*, 27 volumes, ed. Verner Dahlerup (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1982), with frequent reference to *Kierkegaard's Concepts*, ed. Steven M. Emmanuel, William McDonald, and Jon Stewart (6 volumes; Ashgate, 2014).]

**Note:** SK does not use this term in any of the discourses, but because the Hongs render *ganske* (wholly) as “absolute” there; I have included one such example here [**Rarely, an additional note is added to the entry to explain something otherwise unclear**]

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD [the official author, whether listed as SK himself or one of his pseudonyms]: *Concept of Irony* [title of the work] (SKS 1, 196 / CI, 145–46)

[the “official” mode of referring to Kierkegaard’s works: “SKS 1, 196” means *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, vol. 1, page 196; the *SKS* is the current standard Danish edition for Kierkegaard’s works. “CI, 145–46” refers to the corresponding volume in the Hongs’ *Kierkegaard’s Writings*, viz., *Concept of Irony*, pages 145 through 146; or, in the case of Kierkegaard’s journals and notebooks, this will appear as *KJN* #, #, referring to the corresponding volume and page number of *Kierkegaard’s Journals and Notebooks*; very rarely, citations of Kierkegaard’s papers will be not to *SKS* and *KJN* but to the older *Journals and Papers*, formatted as *Papers* (*JP* # # (*Pap.* # #), date (or n.d., no date), year):] “The ironist, however, is obviously very casual even with the idea; he is completely free under it, for the absolute to him is nothing.” [The sentence or paragraph providing an example of the term in use; these quotations have all been translated by either myself or Troy Wellington Smith, with an eye to making the specific term prominent to the reader.]

## I. CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF WORKS AND PSEUDONYMS

**1838**

ANONYMOUS: *From the Papers of One Still Living* (SKS 1 / CI)

**1841**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1 / CI)

**1843**

VICTOR EREMITA: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2 / EO1)

A: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2 / EO1)

CORDELIA WAHL: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2 / EO1)

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2 / EO1)

JUDGE WILHELM: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3 / EO2)

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3 / EO2)

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3 / EO2)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5 / EUD)

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4 / R)

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4 / R)

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4 / FT)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5 / EUD)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5 / EUD)

**1844**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5 / EUD)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5 / EUD)

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4 / PF)

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4 / CA)

NICOLAUS NOTABENE: *Prefaces* (SKS 4 / P)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5 / EUD)

## 1845

- SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5 / TD)  
 WILLIAM AFHAM: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 HILARIUS BOOKBINDER: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 THE YOUNG MAN: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 VICTOR EREMITA: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 THE FASHION DESIGNER: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 JUDGE WILHELM: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 QUIDAM: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 SIMON LEPROSUS: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 FRATER TACITURNUS: *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6 / SLW)  
 A: "A Cursory Observation Concerning a Detail in Don Giovanni" (SKS 14 / COR)  
 FRATER TACITURNUS: "The Activity of a Traveling Esthetician and How He Still Happened to Pay for Dinner" (SKS 14 / COR)

## 1846

- FRATER TACITURNUS: "The Dialectical Result of a Literary Police Action" (SKS 14 / COR)  
 JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7 / CUP1)  
 SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8 / TA)

## 1847

- PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15 / BA)  
 SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8 / UD)  
 SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9 / WL)

## 1848

- SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Christian Discourses* (SKS 10 / CD)  
 INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14 / C)  
 SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Armed Neutrality* [posthumous] (SKS 16 / AN)

**1849**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air* (SKS 11 / WA)

H. H.: *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* (SKS 11 / WA)

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11 / SUD)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (SKS 12 / WA)

**1850**

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12 / PC)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *An Upbuilding Discourse* (SKS 12 / WA)

**1851**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "An Open Letter Prompted by a Reference to Me by Dr. Rudelbach"  
(SKS 14 / COR)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16 / PV)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (SKS 12 / WA)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *For Self-Examination* (SKS 13 / FSE)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Judge for Yourselves!* [posthumous] (SKS 16 / JFY)

**1854–1855**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Moment* (SKS 13 / M)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *This Must Be Said; So Let It Be Said* (SKS 13 / M)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Christ's Judgment on Official Christianity* (SKS 13 / M)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Unchangeableness of God* (SKS 13 / M)

**Variable Dates**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 17–18, 20–26 / KJN 1–2, 4–10)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19 / KJN 3)

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Loose Papers* (SKS 27–28 / KJN 11:1, 11:2)

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### III. HISTORICAL GLOSSARY OF KIERKEGAARDIAN TERMS AND USAGE

#### Absolute, Absolutely

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**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Absolute*; adj., *absolut*

**Danish etymology:** from the Latin *absolutus*, perfect passive participle of *absolvere*, to loosen from, to set free, detach, or untie; in judicial language, to absolve or acquit; *absolutus* therefore denoting *that which has been detached*, and often that which is unrestricted, unconditional, absolute

**Danish definition:** In modern philosophical usage, describing what is valid in all respects and without limitation (Kant) or, when used substantively, referring to the ultimate, unconditioned reality (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel)

**Note:** SK does not use this term in any of the discourses, but because the Hongs render *ganske* (wholly) as “absolute” there; I have included one such example here

#### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 196 / *CI*, 145–46): “The ironist, however, is obviously very casual even with the idea; he is completely free under it, for to him the absolute is nothing.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 277 / *CI*, 236): “Inasmuch as Socrates continually let being-in-and-for-itself become visible, it might seem that here, at least, was his earnestness. But precisely because he only arrived at it, he had the absolute in the form of nothing. By way of the absolute, reality became nothing, but in turn the absolute was nothing.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 176 / *EO1*, 179): “But whatever the love is in its separate elements and also in its totality, a deception is a paradox that it cannot think, and yet one that it eventually wants to think. Indeed, if the egotistic or the sympathetic element is present absolutely, the paradox is canceled; that is, in the power of the absolute, the individual is beyond reflection. To be sure, he does not think the paradox in the sense that he cancels it by a reflective ‘how,’ but he is saved precisely by not thinking it; he is not concerned with reflection’s busy reports or confusions—he reposes in himself.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 205 / *EO2*, 214): “But what is it, then, that I choose—is it this or that? No, for I choose absolutely, and I choose absolutely precisely by having chosen not to choose this or that. I choose the absolute, and what is the absolute? It is myself in my eternal validity. Something other than myself I can never choose as the absolute, for if I choose something else, I choose it as something finite and consequently do not choose absolutely.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 150 / *FT*, 55–56): “Faith is precisely this paradox, that the particular individual as the single individual is higher than the

universal, is justified over and against it, not as subordinate but as superior, yet, mark this well, in such a way that it is the single individual who, after having been as the particular individual subordinate to the universal, now through the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the Absolute.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 186 / FT, 97): “The demonic has the same characteristic as the divine, insofar as the single individual can enter into an absolute relation to it. . . . It therefore has a certain likeness that can deceive.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 188 / FT, 98): “[W]hen the single individual by his guilt has left the universal, then he can come back to it only by virtue of having come, as the single individual, into an absolute relation to the absolute.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 140 / EUD, 137): “Is it not an imperfection on your part that you do not absolutely [ganske] need God and as a result do not absolutely [ganske] need his good and perfect gift, either?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 249–50 / PF, 44–45): “What, then, is the unknown? It is the frontier that is continually arrived at, and therefore when the category of motion is replaced by the category of rest it is the different, the absolutely different. . . . Defined as the absolutely different, it seems to be at the point of being disclosed, but not so, because the understanding cannot even think the absolutely different; it cannot absolutely negate itself but uses itself for that purpose and consequently thinks the difference in itself, which it thinks by itself.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 297 / PF, 99–100): “If that fact is an absolute fact . . . then it is a contradiction for time to be able to apportion the relations of people to it—that is, apportion them in a crucial sense, for whatever can be apportioned essentially by time is *eo ipso* not the absolute, because that would imply that the absolute itself is a *casus* in life, a status in relation to something else, whereas the absolute, although declinable in all the *casibus* of life, is continually the same and in its continual relation to something else is continually *status absolutus*.”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Essays* (SKS 11, 92 / WA, 94): “The genius has only immanent teleology; the apostle is absolutely teleologically positioned paradoxically.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 74 / PC, 63): “With the invitation to all ‘who labor and are burdened,’ Christianity did not come into the world as a showpiece of gentle comfort, as the preacher blubberingly and falsely introduces it—but as the absolute.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 75 / PC, 63): “In relation to the absolute, there is only one time, the present; for the person who is not contemporary with the absolute, it does not exist at all.”

## Abstraction, Abstract

**Danish term:** n., *Abstraktion*; adj., *abstrakt*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *abstractus*, perfect passive participle of *abstrahere* (to draw away from a place or person), meaning that which has been drawn away, that which lacks

concreteness; in modern philosophical usage, frequently with sense of a concept or universal that has been derived from concrete, perceptible objects

**Danish definition:** (1) That which has been created by a process of abstraction, containing only certain parts of reality; (2) that which deals with ideas and perceptions, considered without regard for their reality; (3) something incorporeal

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 107; CI, 46): “Socrates sets out from the concrete and arrives at the most abstract and there, where the investigation should now begin, he ceases.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 99–100 / EO1, 95): “[Music] does not express the particular but the universal in all its universality, and yet it expresses this universality not in the abstraction of reflection, but in the concretion of immediacy.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 136 / EO2, 138): “Romantic love remains abstract in itself, and if it can acquire no outer history then death is already lying in wait for it, because its eternity is illusory.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 236 / EO2, 247): “The mystic’s error, then, is not that he chooses himself . . . [but that] in the choice he does not become concrete either for himself or for God; he chooses himself abstractly and therefore lacks transparency.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 160 / FT, 68): “If I then in this connection say that it is my duty to love God, then I really am saying only a tautology, insofar as ‘God’ is here taken in a wholly abstract sense as the divine, viz., the universal, viz., duty.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 274–75 / CUP1, 301–2): “Precisely because abstract thinking is *sub specie aeterni*, it disregards the concrete, the temporal, coming-to-be of existence, the distress of the existing person at being composed of the eternal and the temporal while situated in existence. . . . The dubiousness of abstraction shows itself precisely in relation to all existential questions, from which abstraction removes the difficulty by leaving it out, and then boasts of having explained everything.”

**Absurd, Absurdity**

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Absurde*; n., *Absurditet*; adj., *absurd*

**Danish etymology:**

*Absurde/absurd:* From the Latin adjective *absurdus*, meaning what is discordant or out of tune; figuratively used of persons and things, meaning irrational, incongruous, senseless

*Absurditet:* From the Latin *absurditas* via the French *absurdité*

**Danish definition:** That which is unreasonable or contrary to the senses

**Note:** SK does not use this term in the discourses, but since, in translating the discourses, both Swenson and the Hongs translate *urimelighed* (unreasonableness) as “absurdity,” I have included an example of this

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 357 / EO1, 369): “I am a friend of freedom of thought, and no thought is so absurd that I lack the courage to stick to it.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 21 / EUD, 11): “He would surely be startled at these words and would perhaps think: ‘Then this faith is surely not as glorious as it is described to be, since it is acquired so easily; indeed, it would also be an absurdity [*urimelighed*].’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “[M]y courage is still not the courage of faith and is nothing to compare with it. I cannot make the movement of faith, I cannot close my eyes and plunge myself confidently into the absurd.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 40): “[I]t is wholly the earthly figure he presents, a new creation in virtue of the absurd. He resigned everything infinitely, and then grasped everything again in virtue of the absurd.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 46): “‘The absurd’ does not belong to the categories proper to the scope of the understanding. It is not identical with the improbable, the unexpected, the uncalculated.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 256 / PF, 52): “The understanding says that the paradox is the absurd, but this is only a sneering caricature, for the paradox is indeed the paradox, *quia absurdum*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 193 / CUP1, 210): “The absurd is that the eternal truth has come to be in time.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 23, 23–24, NB15:25 / KJN 7, 20–21): “[Not] every absurdity is the absurd or the paradox. The activity of reason is precisely to know the paradox negatively—but therefore no more. . . . No, the concept of the absurd is just to grasp that it cannot and must not be grasped. This is a negative conceptual definition, but is just as dialectical as any positive one.”

## Actuality, Actual

**Danish term:** n., *Virkelighed*; adjectival n., *det Virkelige*; adj., *virkelig*

**Danish etymology:** Loan word from the German *Wirklichkeit*, “actuality,” “reality;” *Wirklich*, “actual”

**Danish definition:** (1) That which exists as concrete reality, rather than in thought or as a theoretical possibility; (2) in philosophy, informed by Aristotle, where actuality is defined in relation to potentiality; something (e.g., an acorn) has the potential (dynamis) to be or become something (an oak tree), which constitutes its actuality (ἐντελέχεια or ἐνεργεία)

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 307–8 / CI, 271): “However, it was not actuality in general that [Socrates] negated, but it was the given actuality of a particular time . . . and that which his irony demanded was [the actuality] of subjectivity, of ideality.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 156; JJ:46 / KJN 2, 144): “The more significant an individual is, the lighter he will find actuality, the heavier he will find possibility. This is the expression of an ethical view. Considered aesthetically (i.e., in relation to enjoyment) he will find possibility more intensive than actuality.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 41 / EO1, 32): “That which the philosophers say about actuality is often just as disappointing as when one, in a second-hand shop, reads on a sign: Pressing Done Here. If one were to come with one’s clothes to have them pressed, then one would have been fooled; for the sign only was for sale.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 43 / EO1, 56): “When I was very young, I forgot in the Trophonean Cave how to laugh; then, when I became older, I opened my eyes and considered actuality—and I began to laugh, and since that time have not stopped laughing.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 240 / EO1, 251): “The individual then chooses himself as a complex specific concretion, and chooses himself therefore according to his continuity. This concretion is the individual’s actuality; but then if he chooses it according to his freedom, one can also say that it is his possibility, or, so as not to use such an aesthetic expression, that it is his task.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 375; Notebook 12:6a / KJN 3, 373): “In tragedy, the hero founders. This is supposed to reconcile me with actuality. Is it because this inspires me to similar heroism? that I comprehend how the greatness lies precisely in foundering in this way. But if so, then I am indeed precisely in discord with actuality; then I assume that it is suchwise that the fate of greatness that it must founder.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): “The knight will therefore, in the first place, have the power to concentrate his whole life’s content and the meaning of actuality into one single wish.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 198 / FT, 110): “But he [viz., Faust] is a doubter, and his doubt has reduced actuality to nothing for him.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 220 / EUD, 221): “[Then] the fulfillment will never come, because its possibility dies out to the same degree that the actuality of the expectation dies out.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 274 / PF, 74): “. . . the change of coming into existence is the transition from possibility to actuality.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 385 / CA, 110): “It is therefore to be understood not in a logical sense but with reference to historical freedom when Aristotle says that the transition from possibility to actuality is a κίνησις [movement].”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 413 / CA, 110): “[Sin] is an unwarranted actuality. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 275 / CUP1, 302): “[An] actual human being, composed of infinitude and finitude, has his actuality precisely in holding these together, [is] infinitely interested in existing.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 527 / CUP1, 580): “[Faith] is an entirely peculiar sphere which, paradoxically from the aesthetic and metaphysical spheres, accentuates actuality and, paradoxically from the ethical sphere, another’s actuality, not one’s own.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 152 / SUD, 36): “That is to say, it is not as the philosophers state—that necessity is the unity of possibility and actuality; no, actuality is the unity of possibility and necessity.”

## Aesthetic, Aesthetics

**Danish term:** n., *Æstetik*, adjectival n., *det Æstetiske*; adj., *æstetisk*

**Danish etymology:** Derived from the Greek αἰσθητός, meaning “perceptible,” verbal adjective formed from the Greek αἰσθάνομαι, “to sense,” via the work of Alexander Baumgarten (1714–1762), father of modern aesthetics, in his book *Aesthetica*

**Danish definition:** (1) The philosophical investigation of those qualities of art and nature that please or satisfy the senses or the mind; (2) the qualities of something that please or uplift, possibly in contrast to those qualities that serve a function

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 21 / EO1, 13): “A coherent aesthetic liveview, surely, can hardly be rendered.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 27 / EO1, 19): “What is a poet? An unhappy person who hides profound pains in his heart, but whose lips are formed in such a way that when sighs and screams pass over them, they sound like beautiful music. . . . And the reviewers step forward and say: ‘This is right, so it must be according to the laws of aesthetics.’”

A: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 298 / EO1, 308–9): “His [viz., Johannes the Seducer’s] punishment has a purely aesthetic character . . . conscience takes shape in him merely as a higher consciousness that expresses itself as a disquiet that . . . keeps him awake, allows him no rest in his sterile restlessness.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 424 / EO1, 437): “Have I not, in my relation to Cordelia, been continually faithful to my pact? That is to say, my pact with the aesthetic; for it is this which makes me strong, that I continually have the idea on my side.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 132 / EO2, 133): “There prevails, I dare say, a misunderstanding among a great many people, which confuses that which is aesthetically beautiful with that which is susceptible to being represented as aesthetically beautiful.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 215 / EO2, 225): “The aesthetic, it was said, is that in a person whereby he immediately is what he is; the ethical is that whereby a person becomes what he becomes. Now, by no means should this be taken to say that someone who lives aesthetically does not develop; but he develops himself by necessity, not by freedom, there is no metamorphosis undergone by him, no infinite movement in him whereby he comes to the point from which he becomes who he becomes.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 243 / EO2, 255): “The aesthetic as such is despair.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 389; *Notebook* 13:20 / *KJN* 3, 387): “One here sees easily that Aristotle has not comprehended this self profoundly enough; for only in an aesthetic sense does contemplative thought have an entelechy; and the bliss of the deity consists not in contemplation, but in eternal communication.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 183 / *FT*, 93): “[T]his power [viz., the religious] is the only one that can free it [viz., the aesthetic] from its struggle with the ethical.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 394 / *CUP*, 433): “[The] non-dialectical individual alters the world, but he himself remains unaltered, for the aesthetic individual never has his dialectical in himself, but outside himself, or the individual is altered in his externals, but remains himself inwardly unaltered.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 455 / *CUP*, 501): “There are three existence-spheres: the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious. To these correspond two borderlands: Irony is the borderland in between the aesthetic and the ethical; humor the borderland between the ethical and the religious.”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 94–95 / *C*, 305–6): “But now what is the reason for this inhumanity which, after all, brings about so much unfairness, yes, cruelty against women dedicated to art? What is the reason unless it is because of this, that aesthetic culture is so rare among people.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 160 / *SUD*, 45): “From this we now easily see that the aesthetic concept of spiritlessness by no means provides the criterion by which to judge what is despair and what is not—which, however, is entirely in order, because if what spirit is in truth is not susceptible to being defined aesthetically, how could the aesthetic answer a question which does not even exist for it!”

### Age (the present age, etc.)

**Danish term:** n., *Tiden*; n., *Nutiden*; n., *Vor Tid*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *tíð*, Old High German *zit*, “time”

**Danish Definition:** (1) Basic quantity measured in hours, seconds, etc.; (2) a definite duration of time considered as a unit; (3) a period of years considered as a unit, an era, or period; (4) a specific point in time, particularly the opportune time for doing something



**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 286 / CI, 247): “In saying this, the earnest efforts of the age should by no means be depreciated, but it is certainly to be wished that in its earnestness it was more earnest.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 141 / EO1, 141): “In this way, these many associations demonstrate the disintegration of the age and themselves contribute to speeding it up.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 32 / EO2, 23–24): “Or is not depression the defect of the age, is it not that which echoes even in its light-minded laughter? Is it not depression that has robbed us of the courage to command, the courage to obey, the power to act, the confidence to hope?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 102 / FT, 6): “What the ancient Greeks (who also, after all, understood a little bit about philosophy) assumed to be a lifelong task—because proficiency in doubting is not acquired in days or weeks— . . . from this point, everyone in our age begins.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 310 / CA, 4): “The age of distinctions is past, the system has vanquished it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 153 / CUP1, 165): “I do not have time to endeavor to hold back our age directly, and furthermore, I think that making a go at holding back one’s age directly is like someone who is a passenger on the train taking hold of the seat ahead of him in order to stop it: he defines himself directly in relation to his age, and yet he intends to hold it back.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 60 / TA, 61): “The age of revolution is essentially passionate, therefore it essentially has *form*. . . . The age of revolution is essentially passionate, therefore it essentially has *culture*.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 66 / TA, 68): “The present age is essentially sensible, reflecting, passionless, flying into fiery enthusiasm and prudently relaxing in indolence.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 68 / TA, 70): “In contrast to the age of revolution, which acted, the present age is an age of advertisements, an age of miscellaneous announcements.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 247; NB3:4 / KJN 4, 247): “There is no doubt that our age, that Protestantism in general, could be in need of the monastery again, or of it being there.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 292; NB4:8a / KJN 4, 292): “And in our age what is the church other than the minister’s boutique!”

**Agon, Agony, Agonize, Contest, Struggle** [Hongs have “spiritual trial”]

**Danish term:** n., *Anfægtelse*; n., *Anfægtning*; v., *anfægte*

**Danish etymology:** Derived from *fægte*, “to fight.” Cognate of the German *Anfechtung*, utilized by Luther and others in a theological context to denote a specific form of lonely spiritual combat with temptations (esp. to despair at the contradiction between the righteousness

promised in faith and wickedness experienced as currently existing reality), in which God provides the Christian with the opportunity to battle and overcome Satan; “for as soon as God’s Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his assaults will teach you to seek and love God’s Word” (*Luther’s Works*, American Edition, vol. 34, ed. Lewis W. Spitz, 285–87).

**Danish definition:** (1) In archaic usage, to challenge or contest; (2) a feeling of doubt or apprehension; (3) that which expresses one’s doubt or mistrust as to the validity or justification of something; (4) to express one’s strong doubts about the validity or justification of something

**Translation note:** Although the Hongs and others have translated this as “spiritual trial,” I have instead adopted “spiritual agon” to preserve the semantic parallels with the Greek “agon,” usually denoting a contest, struggle, trial, battle, or danger

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 239 / EO1, 245–46): “My youth, also, has been exposed to contests [*Anfægtelser*] of this kind. Yet I believe that I dare to testify on my own behalf that my resistance has been fearless.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diaries,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 345 / EO1, 356): “All struggle [*Anfægtelse*] makes a human being more beautiful. Every young girl ought to fall in love with a zephyr; for no man yet understands how to enhance her beauty the way it does when it contends with her.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 123 / EO2, 123): “Now, insofar as marriage involves outward agonies [*Anfægtelser*] of this kind, the important thing is, of course, to make them into inner ones.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 304 / EO2, 322–23): “It is because of this that all mystics, when they do not recognize actuality’s demand that one must become disclosed, encounter difficulties and agonies [*Anfægtelser*] that no one else knows anything about.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 313 / EO2, 332): “I love existence and being a human being too much to believe that the way to become an extraordinary person is easy or without agonies [*Anfægtelser*].”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): “Every time the individual, after having entered the universal, feels an impulse to assert himself as the single individual, he is in a spiritual agon from which he can work himself out only by repentantly surrendering himself as the single individual to the universal.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 150 / FT, 55): “That this paradox, for the individual, can easily be confused with a spiritual agon, is quite true, but one should not therefore hide it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 167–68 / FT, 76): “In the same way, Abraham could, every now and then, have wished that the task was to love Isaac as a father would and should, intelligible to everyone, not to be forgotten throughout

the ages; he could wish that it was the task to sacrifice Isaac to the universal, that he could inspire fathers to illustrious deeds—and he is nearly shocked by the idea that such thoughts, for him, constitute spiritual agons, and must be treated as such; for he knows it is a lonely way he is walking, and that he achieves nothing for the universal, but is only himself being tried and tested.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 170–71 / FT, 80): “A dozen sectarians take each other under arms, they are totally unacquainted with the lonely spiritual trials that await the knight of faith, and which he dare not flee precisely because it was still more frightful if he were to presumptuously force himself forward.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 252 / PF, 48): “Self-love lies at the basis of love [*Kjærligheden*], but its paradoxical passion, precisely at its highest peak, wills its own downfall. . . . Certainly, self-love has run aground, but nevertheless, it is not annihilated but is taken captive and is love’s [*Elskovens*] *spolia opima* [spoils of war]. But it can again come to life, and this becomes love’s struggle [*Anfægtelse*].”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 419 / CA, 117): “The most effective means of becoming free of struggles of the spirit [*Aandens Anfægtelse*] is to become spiritless, the sooner the better.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inward Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 91 / EUD, 95): “Every human being, in every age, does indeed have his struggle and his spiritual agony, his distress, his solitude in which he is tempted, his anxiety and powerlessness when the witness slips away.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 49 / SLW, 46): “For me, it is impossible to find the narrow way that the lovers walk along as easily as if it were the broad one, undisturbed by all the spiritual struggles which they have surely thought about, since our age, after all, has thought through everything.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 286 / SLW, 308): “It is important to hold out, and after two o’clock every thought of her is a spiritual agony, a deceit against her, for there must be some sleep to maintain passion all the way, which I intend to do.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 129 / CUP1, 138): “[World-historical importance] is the most dangerous of all spiritual contests [*Anfægtelser*], and many a glorious beginning with the overexertion of infinitude is exhausted in what there becomes for the fallen one a soft, feminine embrace.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 416–17 / CUP1, 458): “Within religious suffering lies the category *spiritual agony* [*Anfægtelse*], and it can be defined only there. . . . [One] nowadays almost never hears spiritual agony mentioned, or, insofar as it is mentioned, hears it without further ado lumped together with temptations [*Fristelser*], yes, even with hardships. As soon as one omits the relation to an absolute τέλος and allows this to empty itself into relative ends, spiritual agony ceases.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 417 / CUP1, 458): “[S]piritual agony [*Anfægtelse*] is, in the sphere of the God-relation, what temptation is in the sphere of the ethical relation.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 417 / CUP1, 459): “In temptation, it is the lower that tempts, in spiritual agony, the higher; in temptation it is the lower which wishes to lure the individual, in spiritual agony [*Anfægtelse*], it is the higher, which, as if envious of the individual, wishes to scare him back. . . . In the moment that the individual succeeds in practicing the absolute relation by the renunciation of relative ends . . . and now must relate himself absolutely to the absolute—he then discovers the boundary, and spiritual agony becomes the expression for the boundary.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 147 / WL, 145–46): “A decision in the external sphere is precisely what Christianity does not want . . . ; it will, on the contrary, by the lack of this, test the individual’s faith, test whether the individual will keep and be content with the secret of faith. The worldly always needs a decision in the external sphere, otherwise it mistrustfully believes that there is no decision. But this occasion for mistrust is precisely the spiritual contest [*Anfægtelse*] in which faith shall be tested.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 117 / PC, 109): “If I voluntarily give up everything, choose danger and hardships, then it is impossible to avoid *spiritual agony* [*Anfægtelse*] (which, in turn, is a specifically Christian category, but of course has been abolished in Christendom), which comes with the responsibility.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The High Priest,” in *Three Discourses at the Communion on Friday* (SKS 11, 256; WA 120): “Such a person, one being tempted [*Fristede*] and agonizing [*Anfægtede*], will usually complain that the one who wishes to comfort or counsel or caution him does not understand him, cannot entirely place himself in his place.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The High Priest,” in *Three Discourses at the Communion on Friday* (SKS 11, 257; WA 120): “[T]he agony [*Anfægtelse*] that surely no human being has experienced, the agony of being abandoned by God—. . . he [viz., Jesus Christ] was tempted in this way.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *An Upbuilding Discourse* (SKS 11, 272; WA 159): “The one, however, who lives many centuries after Christ, when he agonizes [*anfægtes*] over the doubt whether his sins, also, are forgiven him—he will surely find comfort in hearing, as it were, Christ say to him: Just believe it, I have laid down my life in order for you to gain your sins’ forgiveness, so just believe it, a greater certainty is impossible.”

## Anxiety, Anxious

**Danish term:** n., *Angest*; adj., *angest*

**Danish etymology:** Loan word from the Middle Low German *angest*, which is related to the Old High German *angust*; possibly either derived from or cognate with Latin *angustus* (rarely, *angustia*), denoting narrowness, straitness, as well as difficulty, distress, and perplexity

**Danish Definition:** (1) A dangerous or difficult situation; (2) a feeling of unease brought on by the thought of real or imagined danger

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 196; Not6:15 / KJN 3, 192): “My *misfortune* is entirely that during the time when I was pregnant with ideas, I was *seeding*

myself with *the ideal*; therefore I gave birth to deformities, and therefore actuality doesn't answer to my fervent longings,—and God grant that this will not also come to be true in love; for there too a secret anxiety grips me that an ideal has been confused with what is actual. God forbid! It is not *yet* so. But this anxiety that makes me so eager to know the future and yet so afraid of it!—”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 131 / *EO1*, 129): “There is an anxiety in him [viz., Don Giovanni], but this anxiety is his energy. . . . [This] anxiety is precisely the demonic zest for life.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 153 / *EO1*, 154–55): “That is to say, anxiety is a reflection, and is in that respect essentially different from sorrow. Anxiety is the organ by which the subject appropriates sorrow and assimilates it.”

CORDELIA WAHL: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 299 / *EO1*, 310): “With an indescribable but secretive, blissful, un-nameable anxiety, I listened to this music I myself had called forth and yet had not called forth; always there was harmony, always I was enraptured by him.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 304–5 / *EO1*, 314): “How this anxiety heightens your beauty! Yet anxiety is not beautiful in and for itself, it is so only when one in the same moment sees the energy that overcomes it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 95–96 / *EO2*, 93): “[All] the anxiety and torment that wishes that sin should not have come into the world has its ground in a reflection that the first love does not know.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 130 / *EO2*, 130): “[Most] people have a certain anxiety about going down a hill.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 182 / *EO2*, 188): “Even after his death Nero causes anxiety, for however corrupt he is, he is still flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and even in an inhuman monster there is still some humanity.”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 325 / *EO2*, 345): “But if you heard this, my listener, I ask you, was this then your comfort—that you said: ‘One does what one can’? Was this not precisely the reason for your disquiet, that you did not yourself know how much it is one can do, that it in one moment seems to you so infinitely much, in the next moment so sorely little? Was not your anxiety therefore so painful because you could not penetrate your consciousness?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 178–79; JJ:115 / *KJN* 2, 165–66): “Had I not honored her more highly than myself as my future wife, had I not been prouder of her honor than of mine, then I would have remained silent and fulfilled her and my wish, let myself be married to her—so many a marriage conceals little stories. I did not wish that; she would have become my concubine, and I would rather murder her.—But if I had explained myself, then I would have had to initiate her into terrible things, my relationship to Father, his depression, the eternal night which broods

innermost within me, my going astray, desires, excesses, which yet perhaps in God's eyes were not so heaven-rending, for it was, after all, anxiety which led me to go astray, and where was I to seek a foothold, when I knew or suspected that the only man I had admired for his strength and power, wavered."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 124 / FT, 27): "The one thing left out of Abraham's story is the anxiety; for to money I have no ethical obligation, but to the son the father has the highest and holiest obligation."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 201 / FT, 113): "Abraham remains silent—but he cannot speak, therein lies the distress and the anxiety."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 348 / CA, 42): "[Anxiety] is altogether different from fear and similar concepts, which refer to something definite, while anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 348 / CA, 42): "When we intend to consider the dialectical determinations in anxiety, then it appears that precisely these [determinations] have psychological ambiguity. Anxiety is a *sympathetic antipathy* and an *antipathetic sympathy*."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 350 / CA, 43): "The prohibition induces anxiety in him, because the prohibition awakens freedom's possibility in him."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 354 / CA, 49): "Anxiety is not a category of necessity, but neither is it [one] of freedom; it is entangled freedom, where freedom is not free in itself, but [is] entangled not in necessity, but in itself."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 395 / CA, 93): "Anxiety is the psychological state, which comes as near as possible, as anxiously as possible, yet without explaining sin, from which breaks forth the qualitative leap."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "Strengthening in the Inner Being," *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 97 / EUD, 91): "With anxiety he ascertains how much he is able to do."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love*: (SKS 9, 40 / WL, 32): "Consequently, only when it is a duty to love, only then is love eternally secure. This security of eternity casts out all anxiety and makes love perfect."

## Apostle

**Danish term:** n., *Apostel*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek ἀπόστολος, "messenger" or "ambassador;" in the New Testament, "one sent out by Christ," i.e., God's ambassador

**Danish Definition:** (1) The twelve disciples chosen by Christ, plus Paul; (2) any advocate of a cause or preacher of a message

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: "The Unhappiest One," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 222 / EO1, 229): "[There] he stands, the envoy from the kingdom of sighs, suffering's chosen one, the apostle of sorrow."

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 73 / EO2, 68): “Think of these beautiful words by one of the Lord’s apostles.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 155 / FT, 61): “[A] poet is not an apostle—he casts out devils by the power of the devil.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 158 / FT, 68): “Was it not a terror that this person who went among the others was God, was it not terrifying to sit down to dine with him? Was it so easy a matter to become an apostle?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 76 / EUD, 66): “And yet what was even Abraham in comparison with an apostle, what was his bold confidence in comparison with an apostle’s?”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Essays* (SKS 11, 100 / WA, 96): “[An] apostle is what he is by having divine authority.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “An Open Letter Prompted by a Reference to Me by Dr. Rudelbach” (SKS 14, 114–15 / COR, 57): “‘The apostle’ is essentially a solitary man. . . . Each is by himself individually bound to God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Unchangeableness of God* (SKS 13, 330 / M, 271): “It is merely human to . . . have the predominant tendency to wish only to speak sorrowfully about the changeability of human things; the apostle wishes all alone to speak about God’s unchangeableness.”

## Blessedness

**Danish term:** n., *Salighed*

**Danish etymology:** From the Middle Low German *salicheit*, modern German *seligkeit*

**Danish Definition:** The condition being blessed, of possessing that which fully satisfies one deepest desire or highest wish

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 186; Not5:28 / KJN 3, 182): “I am, unfortunately, too intelligent not to feel the pangs of knowledge, too unintelligent to have felt its blessedness.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / EO1, 20): “It is, generally speaking, the imperfection of everything human that it is first through its opposite one possesses the desire. . . . [Just] to remind, it is through sin that blessedness [*Hongs have* “salvation”] is first glimpsed.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 44 / EO1, 35): “To knowledge of the truth I have perhaps come; to blessedness surely not.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 113 / EO2, 112): “[Marital love] feels no urge to love more than once, but feels a blessedness in this.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 114 / FT, 18): “If Abraham had wavered, then he would have given it up. He would have said to God: ‘Since it is

not, perhaps, your will after all that it should happen, then I will give up the wish; it was my one and only wish, it was my blessedness. My soul is upright, I hide no secret grudge because you denied it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 40): “He empties in infinite resignation the deep sadness of existence, he knows the blessedness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the most precious thing one has in the world, and yet finitude tastes just as good to him as to someone who has never known anything higher.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 348 / CA, 42): “The anxiety that is posited in innocence is, in the first place, no guilt; in the second place it is no troublesome burden, no suffering that cannot be brought into harmony with the blessedness of innocence.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 22 / EUD, 12–13): “If a man said, ‘When human beings disdained me, then I went to God, he became my teacher, and this is my blessedness, my joy, my pride,’ would this be any less beautiful?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 93 / CUP1, 95): “If time and a relation to an historical phenomenon can be decisive for an eternal blessedness, then they are *eo ipso* decisive for an eternal woe [*Usalighed*]. Human thoughtfulness proceeds otherwise. An eternal blessedness, that is, is an eternal presupposition from behind, in immanence, for every individual. As eternal, the individual is higher than time and therefore always has his eternal happiness behind him; that is to say, one can think only an eternal blessedness, an eternal woe cannot be thought at all. This is, philosophically considered, entirely in order. Now Christianity comes and asserts the disjunction: either an eternal blessedness or an eternal woe; and a decision in time.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 413 / CUP1, 454): “The apostle Paul somewhere mentions religious suffering, and there one will also find that the suffering is the sign of blessedness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 240 / WL, 239): “What, namely, is the highest good and the greatest blessedness? Surely it is to love in truth; this is next, to in truth be loved.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 131 / SUD, 15): “The possibility of this sickness [of despair] is the human being’s advantage over the beast; and to be aware of this sickness is the Christian’s advantage over the natural human being; to be cured from this sickness is the Christian’s blessedness.”

## Bourgeois-Philistinism, Bourgeois

**Danish term:** n., *Spidsborgerlighed*; adj., *spidsborgerlig*; adj., *borgerlig*

**Danish etymology:** Formed from the root *borger*, derived from the Low German *borgere*, derived from the Old High German *burg*, “town, city”



**Danish definition:** (1) n., The qualities associated with the petty bourgeoisie; (2) adj., belonging to or characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie; (3) [*borgerlig*] adj., characterized by a society-preserving and conventional way of thinking and way of life whose core values are family, financial security, and education

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 350–351 / *EO1*, 362): “Now, Edward is not just a good match in the bourgeois sense, which in her eyes means nothing . . . but he has several amiable personal characteristics, which I seek to help him to set in the most advantageous light.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 145 / *FT*, 38): “The knights of infinite resignation, one recognizes easily, their gait is airy, bold. Those, on the other hand, who bear the jewel of faith easily deceive, because their exterior has a remarkable likeness to that which both infinite resignation and faith utterly disdain—bourgeois-philistinism.”

VICTOR EREMITA: *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 61 / *SLW*, 60): “In this way, bourgeois-philistinism looks most ridiculous when it, attired in ideality, it provides a fitting occasion to say with Holberg: ‘Is not the cow, too, wearing a [fashionable] gown?’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 497 / *CUP1*, 547): “Bourgeois-philistinism always lies in the use of the relative as the absolute in relation to the essential.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 156 / *SUD*, 41): “Bourgeois-philistinism is spiritlessness . . . Spiritlessness lacks every category of spirit, and is absorbed in probability, within which the possible finds its small corner.”

## Choice, Choose

**Danish term:** n., *Valg*; v., *vælg*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *val*, similar to the German *Wahl*, “choice”

**Danish definition:** The act of choosing between at least two options

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 51–52 / *EO1*, 43–44): “Something marvelous has happened to me. I was transported to the seventh heaven. There sat all the gods assembled. Through a special grace, I was granted the favor of making a wish. ‘If you wish,’ said Mercury, ‘If you wish to have youth, or beauty, or power, or long life, or the most beautiful girl, or any of the many other glorious things we have in the treasure chest, then choose it—but only one thing.’ I was for a moment bewildered, then I addressed myself to the gods as follows: ‘Esteemed contemporaries, I choose one thing: that I may always have the laughter on my side.’ There was not a god who answered a word; no, on the contrary, all of them began to laugh.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 163 / *EO2*, 167): “The

aesthetic choice is either altogether immediate and for this reason no choice, or it loses itself in multiplicity.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 203 / EO2, 211): “Choose despair, then, for despair itself is a choice, for one can doubt without choosing it, but one cannot despair without choosing it. And in despairing, one at the same time chooses again, and then what does one choose? One chooses oneself, not in one’s immediacy, not as this accidental individual, but one chooses oneself in one’s eternal validity.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 213 / EO2, 222–23): “Now, when you choose yourself absolutely, you will easily discover that this self is not an abstraction or a tautology. . . . This self contains in itself a rich concretion, a multiplicity of qualities, of characteristics—in short, it is the total aesthetic self that is chosen ethically. Therefore, the more you absorb yourself in yourself, the more you will perceive the significance even of the insignificant, not in the finite but in the infinite sense, because it is posited by you.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 239–40 / EO2, 251): “The one, on the other hand, who chooses oneself in one’s eternal validity, he chooses himself concretely as this specific individual, and he achieves this concretion because this choice is identical to the repentance which ratifies the choice.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 113 / FT, 105): “Let a man be in Sarah’s place . . . and it is surely possible that he would choose the demonic; he would withdraw within himself, and speak in the manner that a demonic nature speaks in secret.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 354 / CA, 49): “[The] possibility of freedom is not to be able to choose the good or the evil. Such a thoughtlessness is in equally little accord with scripture as with thought. The possibility is to *be able*.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 129 / EUD, 125): “Only of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was man not to eat, lest the knowledge should enter the world and bring grief with it: the pain of want and doubtful happiness of possession, the terror of separation and the difficulty of separation, the disquiet of deliberation and the worry of deliberation, the distress of choice and the decision of choice, the judgment of the law and the condemnation of the law, the possibility of perdition and the anxiety of perdition, the suffering of death and the expectation of death.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 114 / SLW, 121): “There is a category called ‘to choose oneself,’ a somewhat modernized Greek category. . . . [It] should never be applied to the erotic, as when one speaks about choosing oneself a beloved, for the beloved is the god’s [*Gudens*] gift; and just as the one choosing, who chooses himself, is presupposed to exist, so too must the beloved be presupposed to exist as the beloved if the category ‘to choose’ is to be used univocally in both connections.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 373 / CUP1, 410): “Just as in the great moment of resignation [something] was not mediated, but chosen, in the same way, the task is to acquire proficiency in repeating the choice of passion, and, existing, to express it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 163 / PC, 159): “[A] self can draw another to itself in truth only through a choice.”

## Collision, Collide

**Danish term:** n., *Collision*; n., *Anstød*; n., *Sammenstød*; v., *collidere*

### Danish etymology:

*Collision*: From the Latin *collisio*, a dashing or striking together; and Latin *collidere*, meaning (1) to clash, strike, or press together, (2) to bring into collision or hostile contact, to set at variance, (3) passive: to become hostile, contend

*Anstød*: From the Middle Low German *anstot*, German *Anstoss*, “impetus,” “offense”

*Sammenstød*: Formed by combining the preposition *sammen*, “together,” with the noun *stød*, “push, thrust, jolt”

### Danish definition:

*Collision*: (1) n.: A striking together of two things (used especially of ships and other modes of transport); (2) v.: to ram into something with violent force, possibly with resulting damage

*Anstød*: (1) Strike against or from something; (2) an obstacle one encounters; (3) an offense against something

*Sammenstød*: (1) synonym for *collision*; (2) a violent or unpleasant clash or skirmish (literal or figurative); (3) an encounter or confrontation between two or more similar or different parties

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 161 / EO1, 162): “The more sympathetic the colliding forces are—the more profound but also the more alike they are—the more momentous the collision is.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 410 / EO1, 423): “I told of a girl whose parents had cruelly forced them to break their engagement. The unhappy collision nearly brought tears to their eyes.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 167–68; JJ:87 / KJN 2, 155): “When the child is to be weaned, then the mother blackens her breast, but her eye rests just as lovingly upon the child. The child thinks that it is the breast that has changed, but the mother is unchanged. And this is why she blackened her breast, because she says it would be a shame that it should look inviting when the child must not have it.—This collision is easily resolved; for the breast is only a part of the mother herself. Fortunate the one who did not undergo more terrible collisions, who did not need to blacken himself, who did not need to travel to Hell to learn what the devil looked like so that he could depict

himself thus, and if possible in so doing save another person at least in this person's relation to God. This would be Abraham's collision."

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 18 / R, 140): "When . . . romantic love is in the idea, every movement, even every fleeting feeling is not without meaning, because the principal thing is continually present: the poetic collision."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 169 / FT, 78): "Still one more time I will illuminate the difference between the collisions of the kind set for the tragic hero and those set for the knight of faith. The tragic hero assures himself that the ethical obligation is fully present in him by transforming it into a wish. . . . [Here] we have wish and duty opposite each other. . . . The tragic hero gives up his wish in order to fulfill his duty. For the knight of faith, wish and duty are . . . identical, but what is required is that he give up both parts."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 181 / FT, 92): "Only passion against passion provides a poetic collusion, not this rummaging about within the particulars contained in the same passion."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 143 / PF, 37): "But every passion's ultimate potentiation is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although the collision, one way or another, must become its downfall."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 212 / CUP1, 259): "For the one who has had the inwardness to grasp the ethical with infinite passion, to grasp duty and the eternal validity of the universal, for him there is in Heaven and on earth and in the abyss no terror like the collision that presents itself when the ethical becomes the spiritual agon. And yet everyone faces this collision."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 113 / WL, 109): "Whatever the world, before the time of Christianity, had seen of unhappy love—seen of love's collision with the horror of events, seen of its collisions with that which within the same fundamental conception of love is the opposite of love, seen of its collisions with partially different conceptions which yet lie within the the same fundamental conception—the world had never before the time of Christianity seen that there was, in loving, a collision possible between two conceptions between which there was a difference of eternity, the divine and the merely human conception."

## Comedy, Comic

**Danish terms:** adjectival n., *det Comiske*; n., *Comedie*; adj., *comisk*

**Danish etymology:** Via the Latin *comœdia* from the Greek κωμῳδία, meaning a dramatic work with amusing character and no catastrophe at the denouement

**Danish definition:** A dramatic work meant to make the audience laugh

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 140 / EO1, 140): "If an ancient aesthete had said that what comedy

presupposes is character and situation, and that it intends to awaken laughter, then one could very well return to this again and again; but as soon as one deliberates about how different these can be, these things that can bring people to laugh, one would soon be convinced how gigantic a range this requirement had.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 124 / FT, 28): “However, if it so happened that among the listeners there was a man who suffered from insomnia, then the most frightful, the deepest tragic and comic misunderstanding lies very close.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 37 / SLW, 33): “The comic always lies in the category of contradiction.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 40 / SLW, 36): “[The] comic and the tragic are constantly connected.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/’Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 253–54 / SLW, 272): “It is a comic contradiction to speak passionately or with systematic decisiveness about something of which one is not oneself persuaded or does not even understand, but it is a tragic, a profoundly tragic contradiction that one must speak in vague expressions, in joking hints, in chatty platitudes about that which preoccupies and worries one to death.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 465–466 / CUP1, 518): “The tragic and the comic are the same insofar as both are contradiction, but *the tragic is suffering contradiction, the comic is painless contradiction.*”

## Consciousness, Conscious

**Danish term:** n., *Bevidsthed*, adj. *bevidst*

**Danish etymology:** From Danish *at vide*, to know, with the prefix *be-*, meaning “having,” and the suffix *-hed*, used to create abstract nouns (compare English *-ty* and *-ness*): having-knowing-ness, active awareness; a relatively new term in European languages and very new in Danish (perhaps no earlier than 1793), popularized through German use of *Bewusstheit* in philosophical and literary contexts

**Danish definition:** (1) That part of the psyche that can be recognized and controlled, enabling someone to perceive, understand, and be aware of surroundings; (2) knowledge of the meaning and consequence of something, awareness of something; (3) a realization gained by observation and reflection, esp. with regards to one’s own conditions or state of mind

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 93 / EO1, 88): “In the Middle Ages, [the idea of Don Juan] belongs . . . not to an individual poet, but is one of those powerful, primitive ideas which with autochthonic originality break forth from the folk consciousness.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 102 / EO1, 98): “As soon as she [viz., Zerlina] has been seduced, she is raised to a higher sphere; there is a consciousness in her that Don Juan lacks.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 173 / EO2, 177): “He does not become someone other than he was before, but he becomes himself; consciousness integrates, and he is himself.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “If there were no eternal consciousness in a person, if, as foundation for everything, there lay only a wild, fermenting force, which, writhing in dark passions, generated everything, whether great or insignificant, if a fathomless, unfillable emptiness, lay hidden under everything, what then would life be except despair?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 48): “Resigning does not require faith, for what I win in resignation is my eternal consciousness . . . for my eternal consciousness is my love for God.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 443 / CA, 143): “The most concrete content that consciousness can have is consciousness of itself, of the individual him- or herself—not pure self-consciousness, but the self-consciousness which is so concrete that no author, not the richest in words, not the mightiest in representation, has ever been able to describe such a [self-consciousness], although every single human being is such a one.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 231 / EUD, 231): “Even though this little book . . . addresses itself to a reader, to that individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, the speaker does not, however, forget that to be able to speak is an ambiguous art, and even to be able to speak the truth is a very dubious perfection. In this consciousness, then, the book goes out into the world.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 24 / CUP1, 15): “Can there be an historical point of departure for an eternal consciousness; how can such be of more than historical interest; can one build eternal blessedness upon historical knowledge?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 117 / CUP1, 121–22): “The continued striving is the expression of the existing subject’s ethical life-view. . . . [Ethically] understood, the continued striving is the consciousness of being an existing individual.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 145 / SUD, 29): “Generally speaking, consciousness—that is, self-consciousness—is decisive with regard to the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self.”

## Courage

**Danish term:** n., *Mod*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *móðr*

**Danish definition:** Mental and moral strength to act or speak in a situation in which there may be danger to oneself

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 32 / EO1, 23): “I have, I believe, the courage to doubt everything; I have, I believe, the courage to fight against everything; but I do not have the courage to acknowledge anything, nor the courage to possess, to own, anything.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 134 / EO2, 135): “Courage allows itself, quite excellently, to be concentrated into a single instant; patience does not, precisely because patience strives against time.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 218 / EO2, 228): “Yes, my young friend, it requires great ethical courage to will in earnest to have one’s life not in the differences, but in the universal.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 10 / R, 132): “It requires youthfulness to hope, youthfulness to recollect, but it requires courage to will repetition.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “I have seen the terrifying with my own eyes, I do not flee the fearsome, but I know very well that even if I advance against it with courage, my courage is still not the courage of faith and is nothing to compare with it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 164 / FT, 73): “[F]aith’s courage is the only humble courage.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of an Eternal Salvation,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 341 / EUD, 254): “Pride and cowardliness are one and the same.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 125 / SUD, 8–9): “He gained, as a Christian, a courage which the natural man does not know—this courage he gained by learning to fear something even more horrifying.”

**Dance, Dancer**

**Danish term:** n., *Dandse*, n., *Dandser*; v.; *dandse*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old French *dance*

**Danish definition:** (1) Rhythmic movement of the feet and body, most often in time to music, as a form of social interaction and artistic expression; (2) any type of movement that reminds one of dance; (3) a form of company or part at which dancing takes place

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 131 / EO1, 130): “After Mozart has had Don Giovanni come into existence this way, his life now develops for us in the dancing strains of the violin, in which he lightly, fleetingly speeds on over the abyss.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 368–69 / EO1, 380): “My relationship to her is like a dance that is supposed to be danced by two people but is danced by only one.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 143 / EO2, 145): “You show us, instead of the orchestra director’s baton, the motions of which mark time for first love’s graceful positions, duty’s unpleasant judicial cane.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 291 / EO2, 308): “She is never tired and yet never idle; it is as if what she is doing is a game, a dance, as if a game were her occupation.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 17 / R, 139): “A melancholy person I once knew went through life as a dancer and deceived everyone, myself included, until I came upon another clue through a barber.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 41): “It is supposed to be the most difficult task for a dancer to leap into a definite position in such a way that there is no instant in which he grasps for the position, but in the leap itself stands in the position. Perhaps no dancer can do this—but this knight does it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 41): “The great mass of people live lost in worldly sorrows and joys—these are the benchwarmers who do not join in the dance.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 95 / EUD, 89): “He does not labor and yet he is a Solomon in magnificence, his life is a dance.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 240 / EUD, 241): “He joins the rejoicing, and when youth has fully enjoyed itself to its heart’s content, has danced itself weary . . . then the Preacher sits in a room within the dance hall and speaks more earnestly.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 119 / CUP1, 124): “If a dancer could leap very high, we would admire him, but—even if he could leap higher than any dancer ever had before—if he wished to give the appearance that he could fly, then let laughter overtake him.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 304–5 / WL, 307): “Has the dance ceased because one of the dancers has gone away? In a certain sense. But if the other dancer still stands in the position that expresses bowing toward the one who is not seen, and if you knew nothing about what preceded, then you would say, ‘The dance will surely begin just as soon as the other one, who is awaited, arrives.’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 23, 140; NB16:65 / KJN 7, 142): “It is said of a dancer that when one looks upon him one must not see that he pants. Spiritually speaking, I have fulfilled this rule.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Would It Be Best Now to ‘Stop Ringing the Alarm?’” (SKS 14, 190 / M, 53): “What we call a teacher in Christianity . . . resembles what the New Testament understands by a teacher in Christianity no more than a chest of drawers resembles a dancer.”



## Death, Die

**Danish term:** n., *Død*; v., *dø*

**Danish etymology:** From the old Danish *doth*, Old Norse *dauðr*

**Danish definition:** (1) The cessation of life and life's functions in a living being; (2) by personification, that power which brings about the cessation of life; (3) the condition in which life functions have ceased

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / EO1, 20): "It is well-known that there are insects that die in the moment of fertilization; so it is with all joy—life's highest and most luscious moment of enjoyment is attended by death."

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 34 / EO1, 26): "No one returns from the dead, no one has entered the world without weeping; no one asks one when one wishes to enter, no one asks one when one wishes to go out."

A: "The Unhappiest One," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 214 / EO1, 220): "We, dear Συμπαρανεκρώμενοι, we, like the Roman soldiers, are not afraid of death, we know a worse misfortune, and first and last, above all—it is to live."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 242 / EO2, 253): "The reason for such a fear of death is, then, the individual's aversion to becoming transparent to himself."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 169–70; JJ:95 / KJN 2, 157): "After my death, no one shall find in my papers (this is my consolation) a single piece of information about what has *really* filled my life".

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 46): "Thus . . . the person implies thereby that no one can experience death before actually dying, which seems to me a crass materialism"

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "The Expectancy of Faith," *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 24 / EUD, 15): "[It] had separated them for all eternity in a way that death itself could not have separated them."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "Patience in Expectancy," *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 210–11 / EUD, 210): "[There] is nothing that so forms, ennobles, and sanctifies a human being as the memory of one who is dead hidden in a sincere heart."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 395 / CA, 92–93): "At the moment of death, a human being finds himself at the uttermost point of the synthesis; it is as if the spirit cannot be present. For it cannot die, and yet it must wait, for the body, after all, must die."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 82 / CUP1, 82): "The possibility of death is present at every moment. . . . If I am not, at every moment, conscious of this, then my positive trust in life is childishness."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 340 / WL, 346): “Thus, in death, life returns to childhood. In childhood, after all, the big difference was also that one person had a tree, a flower, a rock.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 134 / SUD, 18): “It is in this last sense, then, that despair is the sickness unto death, this tormenting contradiction, this sickness in the self, eternally to die, to die and yet not to die, to die death. For to die signifies that it is past, but to die death signifies to experience what it is to die; and if this is experienced for one single moment, then it is thereby experienced eternally.”

## Demonic, Demoniac

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Dæmoniske*, adj., *dæmoniske*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek δαίμων, meaning a lesser god or spirit; in the Greek of the New Testament, restricted to infernal or diabolical spirits

**Danish definition:** Diabolical, devilish, or otherwise related to demons

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 17 / EO1, 9): “It was to me as if the seducer paced like a shadow over my floor, as if he cast his eye upon my the papers, as if he fixed his demonic glance upon me.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 71 / EO1, 65): “The significance of music thereby appears in its full validity, and it appears in the stricter sense as a Christian art, or more correctly as the art Christianity posits simultaneous with excluding it from itself, as the medium for that which Christianity excludes from itself and thereby posits. In other words, music is the demonic.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 95 / EO1, 90): “Don Juan, then, is the expression for the demonic qualified as the sensuous [which Christianity excludes], Faust is the expression for the demonic qualified as the spiritual which the Christian spirit excludes.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 178 / FT, 88): “Silence is the demon’s snare, and the more that is kept silent, the more terrible the demon becomes; but silence is also the divinity’s understanding with the single individual.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 186 / FT, 97): “The demonic has the same characteristic as the divine, insofar as the single individual can enter into an absolute relation to it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 194 / FT, 106): “Natures such as Gloucester’s cannot be saved through mediating them into an idea of society. . . . Existence itself has damaged them . . . This originates either through nature or through a historical relation setting them outside of the universal, which is the beginning of the demonic, for which the individual, however, has no guilt.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 424 / CA, 123): “The demonic is anxiety about the good . . . The demonic is unfreedom which wishes to close itself off . . . The demonic is inclosing reserve and the unfreely disclosed.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 432–33 / CA, 131–32): “In this respect, the ballet master Bournonville deserves great credit for the performance that he himself gave of Mephistopheles. The horror that grips one on seeing Mephistopheles leap in through the window and remain standing in the position of the leap! . . . [His] entrance provides the effect of the demonic, which arrives more suddenly than a thief in the night.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 433, 435 / CA, 132, 134): “*The demonic is the contentless, the boring.* . . . If I would now call to mind modern philosophical terminology, then the demonic is the negative and is a nothing, like the elf maid who is hollow from behind.”

## Desire

**Danish terms:** n., *Lyst*; n., *Begjær*; n., *Begjæring*; v., *begjære*; n., *Atraa*; v., *atraae*

### Danish etymology:

*Lyst*: Related to Old Norse *losti*, German and English *lust*, and Gothic *lustus*

*Begjær*: Derived from Middle Low German *bejer* and the Old New Danish *begær*, “strong desire”

*Atraa*: Derived from Danish *at-* (to or toward) and *Traa* or *Trå*, meaning longing or yearning for something

### Danish definitions:

*Lyst*: (1) Strong or intense inclination or erotic desire, mental or physical; (2) a state of joy, happiness, satisfaction, or pleasure

*Begjær*: (1) Strong feeling, especially erotic or sexual desire; (2) the object of such feeling; (3) a powerful urge to acquire or achieve something

*Atraa*: Identical to *Begjær*, but used only in writing

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 12 / EO1, 4): “As I looked upon it, the desire [*Lyst*] awakened to seek to possess it. I sensed very well that it was a strange desire, since I had no use for this piece of furniture, that it was an extravagance for me to purchase it. Yet desire is, as is well-known, very sophisticated.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 31 / EO1, 22): “The monstrous, immense [*uhyre*] poetic power of folk-literature is expressed in, among other things, its power to desire [*begjære*].”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 86 / EO1, 79–80): “This awakening in which desire [*Attraaen*] comes awake, this jolt, separates desire and the object, and gives desire an object. . . . Only when there is the object is there desire, only when there is desire is there the object; desire and the object are twins, neither of which comes into the world even a fragment of a moment before the other.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 98 / EO1, 99): “His [*viz.*, Don Juan] desires, and this desire acts seductively.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 400–401 / *EOI*, 413): “One could with good conscience use the whole day for walking around the streets and lanes and delight oneself with the desire [*Lyst*] of the eyes.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 181 / *EO2*, 176): “[Y]our greedy eye devours it without your being filled . . . because the eye is the last to be filled, especially when one, like you, does not hunger, but merely suffers the desire [*Lyst*] of the eyes, which cannot be satisfied.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 147 / *FT*, 53): “[N]or am I afraid of awakening desire among people to be tried in like manner with Abraham.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 45 / *EUD*, 35): “With humble prayers, with burning desire [*Begjering*] you sought, as it were, to tempt God: this wish is for me so important; my joy, my peace, my future, everything depends on it, for me it is so very important, for God it is so easy; for he is, after all, almighty. But it was not fulfilled.”

## Despair

**Danish term:** n. *Fortvivelse*; v., *fortvivle*

**Danish etymology:** The Old Modern Danish (1500–1700) verb *fortvivle* is a loan word from the Middle Low German *vortwivelen*, and the modern Danish *fortvivle* corresponds to the modern German *verzweifeln*

**Etymology note:** Since *twivle* is the Danish term for “doubt,” and the *for-* prefix indicates that the action of a verb is intensified (possibly to the point of ruin), the term suggests the action of doubting to the point of ruining oneself; however, although the form may suggest this meaning to someone using the term, it is folk etymology and does not describe how the word originated

**Danish definition:** (1) A condition of deep psychic distress characterized by despondency, hopelessness, and grief; (2) desperation

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Papers* (*JP* I 739, 740 (*Pap.* II A 484, 485) n.d., 1839): “The ancient moralists show a deep insight into human nature in regarding *tristitia* [sloth, dejection] among the *septem vitia principalia* [seven capital sins].” Marginal note appended to this comment: “This is what my father called: *A quiet despair*.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 131 / *EOI*, 129): “One does not find in the overture what one ordinarily calls, without knowing what one says—despair; Don Giovanni’s life is not despair; but it is the whole power of the sensuous, which is born in anxiety.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 186 / *EO2*, 192): “Consequently, it is apparent that every aesthetic life-view is despair, and each person who lives aesthetically despairs whether he knows it or not.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 204 / EO2, 213): “[When] one has in truth chosen despair, then one has in truth chosen that which despair chooses: oneself in one’s eternal validity.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “If there were no eternal consciousness in a person, if, as foundation for everything, there lay only a wild, fermenting force, which, writhing in dark passions, generated everything, whether great or insignificant, if a fathomless, unfillable emptiness, lay hidden under everything, what then would life be except despair?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 21 / EUD, 12): “When he was close to despair . . . he said: I cannot; every other human being can, only I cannot.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 30 / CUP1, 23): “If the inquiring subject were infinitely interested in his relation to this [historical] truth, then he would straightaway despair.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 339 / CUP1, 372): “To become a Christian is then the most terrible of all decisions in a human being’s life, since the object is, through despair and faith (the Cerberus pair who guard the entry-way to becoming a Christian), to win faith.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 47 / WL, 40): “Spontaneous, immediate love has despaired in this way; but when it becomes happy, as it calls it, it is hidden from it that it has despaired; when it becomes unhappy, it is disclosed that it—had despaired.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 129 / SUD, 13): “Despair is a sickness in the spirit, in the self, and can thus take three forms: despairing not to be conscious of having a self (not strictly despair); despairing not to will to be oneself; in despair to will to be oneself.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 130 / SUD, 14): “The misrelation of despair is not a simple misrelation, but a misrelation in a relation that relates to itself and has been established by another, so that the misrelation in that relation which is for itself also reflects itself infinitely in the relation to the power by which it was established.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 134 / SUD, 18): “Yet despair is indeed a self-consuming, but an impotent self-consuming that is not capable doing what it intends to do.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 165 / SUD, 49): “No despair is entirely without defiance; indeed, defiance is also found even in the expression ‘not to will to be.’”

## Devil

**Danish term:** n., *Djævel*; n., *Fanden*; n., *Satan*

**Danish etymology:**

*Djævel*: From Old Saxon *diuwal*, from Latin *diabolus*, from Ancient Greek διάβολος, “slanderer”

*Fanden*: From Old Frisian *fandiand*, present participle of *fandian*, “to tempt”—hence meaning “the tempter”

Satan: Via Greek from Hebrew *śāṭān*, “adversary”

**Danish definition:** (1) The supreme evil spirit, Satan; (2) the personification of the highest evil; (3) a supremely evil human being; (4) a poor and miserable man (compare English “the poor devil”)

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 234; Not8:32 / *KJN* 3, 229): “The affair is now settled once and for all, and yet I will never be done with it. She does not know what an advocate she has in me. She was clever. In parting, she asked me to recollect her every now and then. She knew well that as soon as I would recollect there would be the devil [*Fanden*] to pay. Yet even without her having asked for it I would have done it.—”

A: “Rotation of Crops,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 278–79 / *EO1*, 289): “The Latin proverb *otium est pulvinar diaboli* [idleness is the devil’s pillow] is entirely right; but the devil [*Djævelen*] does not get time to lay his head on this pillow if one is not bored.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 303 / *EO2*, 321): “[The] devil [*Fanden*] is also said to laugh when he is alone.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 124 / *FT*, 28): “[I]f that speaker came to hear of it, then perhaps he went to him, gathered all his spiritual dignity and shouted: ‘You abomination, you scum of the community, which devil [*Djævel*] has so possessed you that you would murder your son?’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Need God Is a Human Being’s Highest Perfection,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 311 / *EUD*, 320): “But if he would stay on guard not to save his soul in a new vanity and drive out the devil [*Djævel*] with the devil’s [*Djævlens*] help, then he will certainly confess that he is not able to overcome himself in his innermost being.”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 70 / *SLW*, 70): “Whether I serve the devil [*Djævelen*] or I serve the god, I do not know, but I am right, and I intend to be right.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 71 / *SLW*, 71): “Esteemed drinking companions, does the devil [*Satan*] plague you? You are certainly speaking like undertakers; your eyes are red from tears and not from wine.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 215 / *SLW*, 230): “[T]he devil never reveals himself fully.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 118 / *CUP1*, 123): “If the concept of existence should actually be emphasized, then this cannot be

done simply by adding a paragraph in a system, and all direct oaths and ‘the devil take me’ only make the pedantic backwardness more and more laughable.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 249 / CUP1, 300): “They . . . do away with the disjunctive *aut* [or], fearing neither God nor the devil, since they mediate everything.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 222–223 / WL, 220): “[T]hey both, in a certain sense, become martyrs, for, as a pious man has said: The jealous person is also a martyr—but the devil’s.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 157 / SUD, 42): “The devil’s despair is the most intensive despair, for the devil is pure spirit, and so for this reason absolute consciousness and transparency; there is in the devil no obscurity that could serve as a mitigating excuse; his despair is therefore the most absolute defiance.”

## Dialectic, Dialectical

**Danish term:** n., *Dialektik*; adj., *dialektisk*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek *διαλεκτική*, meaning “the art of discussion”

**Danish definition:** (1) n.: The logical art or method by which one seeks to analyze and solve a problem through conversation; (2) adj.: of a person, the capacity to think in dialectical terms or understand the dialectical method; of a subject, the potential or necessity of its being unraveled by this method; (3) adj.: within philosophical contexts, freq. used (a) in Plato, the argumentative method of Socrates, in which he puts individual persons to question, cross-examining them and continually seeking more adequate definitions, regarded as a principle method of philosophy; (b) in Aristotle’s *Topics* and *Rhetoric*, a form of argument that begins with accepted beliefs as premises; (c) in Kant’s critical philosophy, critiquing the illusions of reason when reason attempts to move beyond possible experience; (d) the so-called “mediating” method of Hegel, which subjects concepts to critical analysis in an attempt to find their latent self-contradictions, so as to develop these until reaching a more stable and coherent conception

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 158 / EO1, 159–60): “Dialectic, one ordinarily thinks, is quite abstract—one thinks near enough only of the logical movements. Life, however, will quickly teach one that there are found many arts of dialectic, that nearly every passion has its own.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 15 / EO2, 5): “You are all too skilled in the art [of debate and discussion], ordinarily perfectly able to speak about everything without allowing it to touch on yourself personally, for me to tempt you by setting your dialectical powers in motion.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 207 / EO2, 215): “The choice here makes two dialectical movements at once: that which is chosen does not exist and comes to be by the choice, and that which is chosen exists; otherwise it was not a choice.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIU: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 25 / R, 149): “The dialectic of repetition is easy; for that which is repeated has been, or else it could not be repeated, but precisely this fact, that it has been, makes repetition into something new.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 131 / FT, 36): “Faith’s dialectic is the finest and the most extraordinary of all.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 276 / PF, 76): “[T]he historical . . . is dialectical with respect to time.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “The Activity of a Traveling Esthetician and How He Still Happened to Pay for Dinner” (SKS 14, 83 / COR, 44): “Existential dialectic, especially in the form of double-reflection, does not allow itself to be communicated directly. If it pleased me to declare that my whole production was nonsense, then the one who would be my reader must have the strength not to let himself be disturbed by this at all, but himself investigate further by reproducing the dialectical movements.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 41 / CUP1, 49): “There is always a desire, both comfortable and concerned, in a person to have something truly firm and fixed that can exclude the dialectical, but this is cowardice and fraudulence against the divine.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 189 / BA, 65–66): “[Someone] who as yet does not have other presuppositions with which to make Christianity firm except some Hegelian dialectic can easily make a mistake.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 142 / SUD, 26): “Despair, just because it is wholly dialectical, is precisely the sickness of which it holds that it is the greatest misfortune never to have had it and a true Godsend to get it, even if it is the most dangerous illness when one does not wish to be cured from it.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 21, 45; NB6:62 / KJN 5, 44): “What I have often enough said, I cannot too often repeat: I am a poet, but of an entirely peculiar kind; for the dialectical is the natural rule of my being, and the dialectical is generally, in other cases, just what is alien to the poet.”

## Doubt

**Danish term:** n., *Tvivl*; v., *tvivle*

**Danish etymology:** From the Middle Low German *twivel*

**Danish definition:** Condition of uncertainty, lack of belief in, or lack of conviction regarding whether a phenomenon, relationship, or statement is trustworthy, correct, or as it appears to be

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 17, 19; AA:12 / KJN 1, 14–15): “Thus, just as our forefathers had a goddess for longing so, in my opinion, is Faust personified doubt.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 33 / EO1, 24): “The doubter is a Μεμαστιγόμενος [one who is whipped]; he remains, like a spinning top, on the point shorter or longer in relation to the strokes of the whip; stand, he cannot, any more than the top can.”



A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 203 / *EO1*, 208–9): “Faust, then, is a doubter, but he is no vain fool who wishes to make himself significant by doubting that in which others believe; his doubt has an objective ground in him. . . . As soon as doubt is asserted against others there is an envy contained within it, which enjoys itself by wresting from them what they considered to be certain.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 203–4 / *EO2*, 211, 213): “Doubt is thought’s despair, despair is the personality’s doubt. . . . Despair is precisely an expression of the whole personality, doubt only of thought.”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 325 / *EO2*, 346): “Every more earnest doubt, every deeper worry, then, is not calmed by the words: One does what one can.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 102 / *FT*, 6): “[P]roiciency in doubting is not acquired in days and weeks.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 118 / *FT*, 22): “If Abraham, when he stood upon Mount Moriah, had doubted, if he had haltingly looked about him, if he, before he drew the knife, by chance had spotted the ram, if God had allowed him to sacrifice this instead of Isaac—then he would have gone home, everything would have been the same, he would have had Sarah, would have kept Isaac—yet how changed! For his return would have been a flight, his rescue a coincidence, his reward shame, his future perhaps perdition.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 198 / *FT*, 109): “[T]he doubter hungers just as much after life’s daily bread as after the nourishment of spirit.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 139–40 / *EUD*, 137): “If you here again would call upon doubt for help, then it shall surely, as it always does, rob from you as it gives.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 184–85 / *CUP1*, 201): “He [viz., Socrates] poses the question objectively, problematically: if there is an immortality. Was he then a doubter . . . ? By no means. Upon this ‘if’ he stakes his whole life.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 250; NB3:15 / *KJN* 4, 250): “Thus it is not really doubt [we have] in our age and in modern times, but insubordination.”

## Duty

**Danish term:** n., *Pligt*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Danish *Plict* (penalty, punishment), which is in turn from the Medieval Low German *Plicht*

**Danish definition:** Actions a person is obligated to perform for reasons of conscience, morality, religion, or one’s social position; typically within relationships marked by a requirement of obedience or debt

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 36 / EO1, 27): “[T]hey do their duty, these mercenary souls; but yet they license themselves . . . to trim the coins a little.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 144 / EO2, 146): “Love casts out fear; but if, nevertheless, love now for a moment fears for itself, for its own salvation, then duty is precisely the divine nourishment love requires, for it says: Fear not, you shall conquer; it pronounces this not in the future tense, for then it is only a hope, but in the imperative mood, and herein lies an assurance that nothing can shake.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 147 / EO2, 149): “If the individuals are in the truth, then they will see in duty only the eternal expression for the fact that the way of eternity is prepared for them, and this way they are eager to walk.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 253 / EO2, 266): “When the personality with all its energy has felt the intensity of duty, then he is ethically mature, and duty will break forth within him. . . . [T]he consciousness of it is for him the assurance of the eternal validity of his being.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 163 / FT, 72): “It is well-known that written in Luke 14:26 is a remarkable lesson about the absolute duty to God: ‘If someone comes to me and does not hate his own father, and his mother, and his wife, and his children, and his brother and his sister, yes even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple.’ This is a hard saying—who can bear to listen to it?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 364 / EUD, 380) “It is incontestable that it is always the surest thing in life to do one’s duty.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 36 / WL, 29): “‘You shall love.’ Only when it is a duty to love, only then is love eternally secured against every alteration; eternally liberated in blessed independence; eternally and happily secured against despair.”

H. H.: *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* (SKS 11, 78 / WA, 73): “[C]an the solitary human being in relation to other human beings be assumed to be in absolute possession of the truth? For, if not, it is certainly a self-contradiction to say there is an absolute duty toward that of which I do not have absolute possession.”

**Earnestness, Earnest**

**Danish term:** n., *Alvor*; adj., *alvorlig*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *alvara*, being a combination of the prefix *al-* meaning “all” and an adjective meaning “true”

**Danish definition:** An expression of one’s true opinion or sincere feeling

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 126 / EO1, 124): “The Commendatore appears only two times. . . . Already [the first time] his earnestness is too profound to be human; he is spirit before he dies. The second time he appears as spirit, and the thundering voice of Heaven sounds in his earnest, solemn voice, but just as he himself is transfigured, so his voice is transfigured into something more than a human voice; he speaks no more, he passes judgment.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 359 / EO1, 370): “With ceremonial earnestness, I began my speech to the aunt.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 51–52 / EO2, 44–45): “[W]ith an earnestness, which, however, is continually on the verge of breaking into roguishness, she prays. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 155 / EO2, 157): “Either—Or. On me these words have always made a powerful impression, and still do, especially when I say them this way plainly and without adornment; therein, you see, lies the possibility of setting the most terrifying contradictions in motion. They act upon me like an incantation, and my soul becomes exceedingly earnest.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 31 / EUD, 22): “He says: ‘This is good to hear; these are big words and well turned-out phrases, but in truth the earnestness of life teaches something else.’ What, then, did the earnestness of life teach you, you who speak this way?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 209 / FT, 122): “When children on a holiday have already gone through all the games before noon and now impatiently say, ‘Is there no one who can hit upon a new game?’—does this prove that these children are more developed and precocious than the children in the same or a previous generation who could let the familiar games stretch out for the whole day? Or does it not rather demonstrate that these children lack what I would call the lovable earnestness that belongs to play?”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 446 / CA, 146): “To give a definition here [of inwardness] is no doubt difficult. However, I will here say: it is earnestness.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 447 / CA, 147): “So far as my knowledge reaches, I am not aware that there exists one definition of what earnestness is. If this is actually so, then it would please me . . . because in relation to existential concepts it always displays a surer tact to abstain from definitions, because it is impossible one can be inclined to wish to comprehend in the form of a definition what must, in its essence, be understood otherwise, what one has oneself understood otherwise, what one has loved in an entirely different mode, when in the form of a definition it so easily becomes foreign to one and something different.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 448 / CA, 148–49): “Now, earnestness and disposition correspond to each other in such a way that earnestness is a higher, as well as the deepest, expression for what disposition is. Disposition is a

determination of immediacy, while, on the contrary, earnestness is the acquired originality of disposition, its originality preserved in the responsibility of freedom, its originality asserted in the enjoyment of blessedness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 167 / WL, 166): “[T]he earnestness lies precisely in the fact that the relationship itself will, with integrated power, fight against the imperfection, overcome the defect, remove the heterogeneity.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 117–18 / SUD, 5): “Concern is the relation to life, to personality’s actuality, and thus, in the Christian sense, earnestness. The loftiness of indifferent knowledge is, in the Christian sense, a long way from being more earnest; it is, in the Christian sense, a joke and an affectation.”

### **Either/Or, aut/aut**

**Danish term:** conj., *Enten . . . Eller*; SK occasionally uses the Latin *aut . . . aut*

**Danish etymology:** *Enten* is derived from Old Danish *enting*, from Old Norse *annattveggja*, which is compounded from *annat* (“other, either”, neuter) and *tveggja* (“two,” genitive). *Eller* is derived the Old Norse *ella*, meaning “or.”

**Danish definition:** Either . . . Or

#### **Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 47–48 / EO1, 38–39): “Marry, and you will regret it; do not marry, and you will also regret it; marry or do not marry, you will regret either one; either you marry or you don’t marry, and you will regret either one. Laugh at the world’s follies, and you will regret it; weep over them, and you will also regret it; laugh at the world’s follies or weep over them, you will regret either one; either you laugh at the world’s follies or you weep over them, and you regret either one. Trust a girl, and you will regret it; don’t trust her, and you will also regret it; trust a girl or don’t trust her, and you will regret either one; either you trust a girl or you don’t trust her, and you will regret either one. Hang yourself, and you will regret it; don’t hang yourself, and you will also regret it; hang yourself or don’t hang yourself, you will regret either one; either you hang yourself, or you don’t hang yourself, you will regret either one. This, gentlemen, is the epitome of all life wisdom.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 160–61 / EO2, 162–64): “That which is to be chosen stands in the deepest relation to the chooser, and when it is a matter of a choice that concerns the essential questions of life the individual must of course at the same time live; and for this reason the longer he puts off the choice, the easier it is to alter it, although he continually deliberates and deliberates and thereby thinks pretty well to hold the choice’s contradictory options apart. When one considers life’s either/or in this way, one is not easily tempted to joke around with it. Then one sees that the inner inclination of the personality does not have time for thought experiments, that it constantly hurries ahead and one way or another posits either the one or the other, whereby the choice in the next moment then becomes more difficult; for that which was posited must be taken back. Imagine for yourself a captain in his ship in the moment when a shift of direction

must be taken. Then he would perhaps be able to say, 'I can do either this or that;' but if he is not a mediocre caption, then he will further be conscious that the ship is, during all of this, shooting along at its customary speed, and that it is thus only a moment when it is indifferent whether he does this or that. Thus, when a person forgets to calculate this speed, there thus finally comes a moment when there is no more talk about an either/or, not because he has chosen, but because he has let things be, which also can be expressed as follows: Because others have chosen for him, because he has lost his self."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 207 / FT, 120): "Either there is, then, a paradox, that the single individual as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the absolute or Abraham is lost."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 277–80 / CUP1, 304–6): "Hegel is perfectly and absolutely right in holding that, looked at eternally, *sub specie aeterni*, in the language of abstraction, in pure thought and pure being, there is no *aut/aut*; if I take away existence (if I abstract), then there is no *aut/aut*; if I take away existence, this means I take existence away, but then I certainly do not annul it in existence. . . . Does he [viz., the speculative philosopher] exist? And if he exists, does he not then exist in the world? And if he is in the world, then does he not relate himself to the future? Does he then never relate himself thus to the future in order to act? . . . Is there then not an *aut/aut*?"

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 65 / TA, 67): "It is not uncommon to hear a person who has become bewildered regarding what he should do in a particular situation complain about the situation's exceptional nature, thinking that one could easily act if it were the sort of situation accompanying a great event, where there is only a single either/or. This is a misunderstanding and a hallucination of the understanding. Such a situation does not exist. Whether the decisive either/or is present lies within the individual's own passionate desire directed toward acting decisively, in the individual's own capacity in itself. A capable man therefore covets in every situation a single either/or because he does not wish for anything more."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Lily in the Field and the Bird of the Air* (SKS 11, 26 / WA, 21): "There is an either/or: Either God—or, yes, then the rest is unimportant; whatever else a person chooses, if he does not choose God, then he has missed the either/or, or he has entered perdition through his either/or. . . . [T]hen it is really God, who, by himself being the object of choice, tightens the decision of choice until it becomes in truth an either/or."

**Eternal:** See *Temporal / Eternal*

## Ethics, Ethical, Ethical Community

**Danish term:** n., *Ethik*; adjectival n., *det Ethiske*; adj., *ethisk*; n., *Sædelighed*; adj., *sædelig*

### Danish etymology:

*Ethik*, *det Ethiske*, and *ethisk* are derived from the Greek ἠθικός (an adjective formed from ἔθος, a noun meaning "custom" or "character"), by way of Latin *ethicus*, meaning

“moral” or “ethical” and when used substantively (*ethica* and τὰ ἠθικά) meaning ethics in the sense of moral philosophy

*Sedelighed* and *sædelig* are derived from the Old Norse *siðlig*, meaning “usual” or “customary,” but came under the influence of the German *Sittlichkeit* and *sittlich*, meaning moral or ethical. In Hegel’s philosophy, these terms acquired the technical meaning of an ethical way of life embodied within the norms, practices, and mores of a specific community, and the Danish Hegelians used the *Sedelighed* and *sædelig* to indicate this Hegelian concept

**Danish definition:**

*Ethik*, etc.: Conception or understanding of how to classify ways of thinking and acting as good or bad and right or wrong

*Sedelighed*, etc.: Good or right conduct and modes of thinking

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 356 / EO1, 367): “The ethical is just as boring in scholarship as in life. What a difference—under the aesthetic sky, everything is easy, beautiful, fleeting; when ethics comes along, then everything becomes hard, angular, infinitely *langweiligt* [boring, tedious].”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 356 / EO1, 367): “I have always had a certain respect for the ethical. Never have I given any girl a promise of marriage, not even carelessly; insofar as it could seem that I have made one here, it is only a simulated movement. I shall very likely arrange it so that it is she herself who breaks the engagement.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 145 / EO2, 147): “If you cannot bring matters to such a pass that you see the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious as the three great allies, if you do not know that to preserve the unity of the different expressions everything is given in these different spheres, then life is without meaning; then one must completely agree with your favorite theory—that one can say about everything: Do it or don’t do it, you will regret either one.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 242 / EO2, 253): “Here, I now wish to recall [*erindre*] the definition I, in the foregoing, gave to the ethical, that it is that by which a person becomes that which he becomes. It will not, then, make the individual into another person, but into himself; it does not wish to annihilate the aesthetic, but to transfigure it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 150 / FT, 55): “For if the ethical—that is, ethical community—is the highest, and there is nothing incommensurable left over in man of a kind other than that incommensurability which constitutes evil, that singularity that should be expressed in the universal, then one needs no categories other than those possessed by Greek philosophy, or those which can consistently be logically derived from those.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 177 / FT, 87): “Ethics, however, has no coincidence and no old servant at hand. The aesthetic idea contradicts itself as soon as it is carried out in actuality. Ethics therefore requires disclosure.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 323–24 / CA, 16): “Ethics is still an ideal science, and not only in the sense in which every science is ideal. It intends to bring ideality into actuality. On the other hand, its movement does not bring actuality up to ideality. Ethics displays the ideality as a task, and presupposes that the person is in possession of the condition.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 324 / CA, 16): “Either the whole of existence comes to an end in the demand of ethics, or the condition is provided and the whole of life and existence begins anew, not through an immanent continuity with the previous [existence], which is a contradiction, but through a transcendence that separates the repetition from the first existence with a chasm.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 280 / SLW, 302): “A girl may submit to a man in many things, but not in the ethical.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 439 / SLW, 477): “The ethical sphere is only a transition sphere, and therefore its highest expression is repentance as a negative action.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 117 / CUP1, 122): “Greek philosophy had a continual relation to ethics.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 125 / CUP1, 134): “Yet ethics and the ethical, by being the essential stronghold of individual existence, have an irrefutable claim upon each existing person; an irrefutable claim of such a kind that whatever else a person carries out in the world, even the most astonishing things, it is, all the same, dubious if he has not been ethically clear to himself when he chose, and ethically made his choice clear to himself.”

**Exception:** See *Universal / Exception*

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## Existence, Existential

**Danish term:** n., *Existsents*; adj., *existentiel*; n., *Tilværelse*

**Danish etymology:**

*Existsents* and *existentiel* are derived from the Latin *existentia*

*Tilværelse* is formed from the prefix *til-* meaning “to” or “toward” and *være* meaning “to be,” plus the *-else* suffix creating an abstract noun

**Danish definition:**

*Existsents* indicates the fact or state of existing; may also include the sense of “being-there”

*Tilværelse* means life or existence as it is shaped for the individual living being or especially human being

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 45 / EO1, 36): “In vain do I resist. My foot slips. My life still remains a poet-existence [*Digter-Existsents*]. Can anything unhappier

be conceived? I am predestined, fate laughs at me when it suddenly shows me how everything that I do to resist becomes an essential element in such an existence [*Tilværelse*].”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or. Part II* (SKS 3, 278 / EO2, 293): “That is to say, talent is not beautiful until it is transfigured into a calling, and existence [*Existensen*] is not beautiful until every person has a calling.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 191–92 / FT, 102): “If existence [*Tilværelse*] does not provide a person with what could have made him happy, it is still a consolation that he could have received it. But the unfathomable grief, which no amount of time can dispel, no amount of time can cure—to know that it would be no help if existence did everything!”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 229 / PF, 21): “While the Greek pathos concentrates on recollection, the pathos of our project concentrates on the moment, and no wonder, for is it not an extremely pathos-filled matter to come-to-be from not-being?”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 320 / CA, 13): “[This] impotence of the logical is logic’s transition into becoming, where existence [*Tilværelse*] and actuality come forth.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 32 / EUD, 23): “When the world begins its sharp ordeal, when existence [*Tilværelsen*], which seemed so affectionate and mild, changes into a ruthless proprietor who demands everything back, everything it gave that it can take back, then the believer probably looks with sadness and pain upon himself and his life, but he still says: ‘There is an expectation that all the world cannot take from me, which is the expectation of faith, and this is victory.’”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 439 / SLW, 477): “There are three existence-spheres [*Existents-Sphærer*]: the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious. The metaphysical is abstraction, and there is no human being who exists [*existerer*] metaphysically. The metaphysical, the ontological, is [*er*], but it does not exist [*er ikke til*], for if it exists [*er til er*] it does so in the aesthetic, in the ethical, in the religious, and when it is [*er*], it is the abstraction from or a *prius* [something prior] to the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 445 / SLW, 484): “Greece . . . fortunate first and last in its thinkers, who sought and struggled to understand themselves and themselves in existence [*Tilværelsen*], before they tried to explain the whole of existence [*Tilværelsen*].”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 183 / CUP1, 199): “[To] exist [*at existere*] is to become.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 393 / CUP1, 432): “The aesthetic pathos distances itself from existence [*Existensen*] or is in it accompanied by an illusion, whereas the existential [pathos] immerses itself in existing [*existere*].”



JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 455 / CUP1, 501–2): “There are three existence spheres [*Existents-Sphærer*]: the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious. To these answers two borderlands: Irony is the borderland between the aesthetic and the ethical; humor the borderland between the ethical and the religious.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 229 / WL, 227): “Just because existence [*Tilværelsen*] must test *you*, test *your* love, whether there is love in you, just for this reason, with the help of the understanding, it sets truth and deception before you in the equilibrium of opposite possibilities, so that, just as *you* now judge, it is also the case that you now, in judging, *choose*, and what dwells in you must become disclosed.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 433; Not15:4 / KJN 3, 431): “Already before my father died I had decided upon her. He died. I studied for the exam. During that entire time I let her existence [*Tilværelse*] entwine itself with mine.”

## Expectation, Expectancy

**Danish term:** n., *Forventning*

**Danish etymology:** Compounded from verb, *forvente* (itself compounded from *for-*, meaning “for,” and *vente*, “wait,” meaning “wait for”), and suffix *-ning*, creating an abstract noun

**Danish definition:** (1) The state of waiting for something, especially with a presumption of how something will happen or proceed; (2) a conception of how one expects the future will impact one’s hopes or fears

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 387–88 / EO1, 400): “An alteration has taken place and is taking place in her. . . . Her glance betrays it at once. It is bold, almost reckless in expectations, as if each moment it demanded and was prepared to see the extraordinary.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 105 / FT, 9): “There was once a man who as a child had heard that beautiful story of how God tested Abraham, how he stood the test, kept the faith, and received once again a son against expectation.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 26 / EUD, 16–17): “Yet one thing that all people who are expecting something indeed have in common is that they expect something in the future; for expectancy and the future are inseparable thoughts.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 209 / EUD, 209): “She was a widow, her life was finished, her expectancy disappointed; she, who had expected to live a long time with her husband, to die remembered by a family and lineage.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 26 / CUP1, 16): “The five foolish maidens had lost expectancy’s infinite passion.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 250 / WL, 250): “So we must define more accurately what it is to hope. In ordinary speech we often call something

hope that is not hope at all but a wish, a longing, a longing expectation now of one thing, now of another, in short, an expectant person's relationship to the possibility of multiplicity. When hope is understood in that way (when hope actually means only expectation), it is easy enough for the youth and the child to hope, because the youth and the child themselves are still a possibility."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 310 / WL, 312): "But when restlessness, as in the case the merely temporal expectancy, swings between fulfillment and non-fulfillment in such a way that the movement becomes swifter in time because of the vanishing of time, the fact that time is passing, restlessness accelerates, then of course the fulfillment, if it does not come in time, cannot come at all—when this is the case, expectancy corrodes."

## External, Externality, Outer / Internal, Inner

### Danish terms:

External, Externality, Outer: n., *Udvortes*; adj., *udvortes*; n., *Udvorteshed*; n., *Ydre*; adj., *ydre*

Internal, Inner: n., *Indvortes*; adj., *indvortes*; n., *Indre*; adj., *indre*

### Danish etymology:

*Udvortes*, et al.: Derived from the Middle Low German *utwordes*

*Indvortes*, *indvortes*: Derived from the Middle Low German *inwordes*

*Indre*, *indre*: Comparative form of *ind*, meaning "in," derived from the Old Norse *innri* and English *inner*

*Ydre*, *ydre*: Comparative form of *ud*, meaning "out," derived from the Old Norse *ytri*

**Danish definition:** That which is found on the outside or belongs to the exterior of something, especially the human body

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 295 / CI, 257): "[I]rony . . . maintains the contradiction between essence and phenomenon, between the internal and the external."

A: "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 159 / EO1, 161): "[B]ut for the Greek Antigone, the father's guilt and suffering is an external fact, an unshakeable fact, and so her sorrow does not move (*quod non volvit in pectore* [something she does not turn over in her heart]); and insofar as she herself personally suffers as a natural consequence on the basis of her father's guilt, so too, this is again in her wholly external facticity."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 243 / EO2, 255): "If one views the ethical as outside of the personality and in an external relation to this, then one has given up everything, then one has despaired."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 161 / FT, 69): "For the ethical view of life, it is then the individual's task to disclose himself from the qualification of inwardness and express this in something external."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 203–4 / FT, 116): “If his life’s significance rests in an external deed, then he has nothing to say, then everything that he says is essentially chatter, where he only weakens the impression he makes, whereas the tragic conventions bid him to complete his task in silence, whether it consists in a deed or in a suffering.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 70 / EUD, 60): “[A person’s] inwardness, then, determines what a person discovers, and what he hides.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 103 / EUD, 97): “He did not seek his peace and rest in the external, and yet his heart continued to be troubled.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 348 / CUP1, 382): “[A]ll analogies will confirm the rightness of the statement: the less externality, the more inwardness—if it is truly there; but, in addition, the less externality, the greater the possibility that the inwardness will be entirely absent.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 170 / SUD, 55): “[H]e has no consciousness of a self that is won by infinite abstraction from every externality, this—in contradiction to immediacy’s fully dressed [self]—naked, abstract self, which is the infinite self’s first form, and the progression in the whole process whereby a self infinitely takes possession of its actual self with its difficulties and advantages.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “An Open Letter Prompted by a Reference to Me by Dr. Rudelbach” (SKS 14, 112 / COR, 53): “I have from the beginning understood that Christianity is inwardness, and the inward deepening of Christianity to be my task.”

## Faith, Faithful, Believe

**Danish term:** n., *Tro*; adj., *trofast*; v., *tro*

### Danish etymology:

*Tro, tro*: From the Old Norse *trúa*, meaning “assurance” or “belief”; compare Middle English “troth” and modern English “true” and “trust”

*trofast*: From the Old Norse *trúfastr*, “faithful”; *-fast* has the meaning of “that which cannot be moved,” compare English “to make something fast”

### Danish definition:

*Tro*: (1) Belief that a person is trustworthy and to be relied upon; (2) the conviction that a person will fulfill one’s expectations; (3) conviction of truth or correctness about something; (4) subjective state of certainty; (5) a religious conviction about supernatural phenomena; (6) creed or faith

*tro*: (1) Think that something, which could become certain, is probable; (2) have a subjective opinion or conjecture regarding something; (3) be personally persuaded of something; (4) trust that something is right or true

*trofast*: Loyal, affectionate, and trustworthy; unwaveringly loyal

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 231; Not8:20 / *KJN* 3, 226): “My sin is that I did not have faith, faith that for God all things are possible, but where is the

borderline between that and tempting God?—Yet my sin has never been that I didn't love her."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 373 / EO1, 385): "Do I love Cordelia! Yes! Honestly? Yes! Faithfully? Yes! In the aesthetic sense, and that still means something. What good would it do this girl if she were to fall into the hands of a clod of a faithful husband? What would become of her? Nothing. It is said that one needs a little more than honesty to get by in the world; I would say that one needs a little more than honesty to love such a girl. That something more, I have—it is deception. And yet I love her faithfully. Strictly and abstemiously I watch over myself, so that everything resting in her, all that divinely rich nature in her, can come to fulfillment."

A: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 193 / EO2, 200): "Do I not believe? I believe that in the innermost interior of the forest's lonesome silence, where the trees mirror themselves in the dark waters, in the forest's dark secretness, where even at midday it is dusk, there lives a creature, a nymph, a girl; I believe she is more beautiful than anything imagined; I believe that in the morning she weaves a garland, at midday she bathes in the cool waters, that in the evening she sorrowfully plucks the leaves from the garland; I believe that I would be happy, the only person who has deserved to be called that, if I could capture her and possess her; I believe that there is a longing in my soul that ransacks the world; I believe that I would be happy if this longing were satisfied; above all, I believe that there is meaning in the world, if only I could find it—now don't say that I am not strong in faith or fervent in spirit."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 261 [262 sks.dk] / EO2, 276): "Ordinarily, I am not much inclined to fight [*stride*], at least not with anyone other than myself, but of this you can be certain: For this faith in the victory of the beautiful, I will fight in life and in death, and nothing in the world shall deprive me of it."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 177; JJ:115 / KJN 2, 164): "If I had had faith, then I would have stayed with Regine. Thanks and praise be to God that now I have recognized that."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 116 / FT, 20): "Yet Abraham believed, and he believed for this life. Yes, if his faith had been only for the one to come, then he would have surely more easily thrown everything away, so as to hasten out of this world to which he did not belong. But Abraham's faith was not of such a kind; for this is not really faith, but the furthest, most distant, most remote possibility of faith, which spies its object on the outermost horizon, yet is separated from it by a yawning abyss in which despair plays its tricks."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 47): "Faith is therefore no aesthetic emotion, but something far higher, precisely because it presupposes resignation. It is not the heart's immediate inclination, but the paradox of existence."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 149 / FT, 55): “Faith is precisely this paradox, that the particular individual as the single individual is higher than the universal, is justified over and against it, not as subordinate but as superior, yet, mark this well, in such a way that it is the single individual who, after having been as the particular individual subordinate to the universal, now through the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the Absolute.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 161 / FT, 69): “Prior to faith there is an infinite movement, and only then does faith enter, *nec opinatè* [unexpectedly], in virtue of the absurd.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 261 / PF, 59): “How, then, does the learner come to an understanding with this paradox, for we do not say that he is supposed to understand the paradox but is only to understand that this is the paradox. We have already shown how this occurs. It occurs when the understanding and the paradox happily encounter each other in the moment, when the understanding steps aside and the paradox gives itself, and the third something, the something in which this occurs (for it does not occur through the understanding, which is discharged, or through the paradox, which gives itself—consequently in something), is that happy passion to which we shall now give a name, although for us it is not a matter of the name. We shall call it *faith*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 285–86 / PF, 87): “Eternally understood, one does not believe that the god exists, even if one assumes that he exists. That is a mistaken use of language. Socrates did not believe that the god existed. What he knew about the god he reached by recollection . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 304 / PF, 87): “Faith is always struggling, but as long as a struggle remains, there is the possibility of defeat; and thus, in respect to faith, one should never celebrate before one’s time, i.e., never in time, for where is there time to compose victory songs or the occasion to sing them?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 22 / EUD, 12): “A person can do much for another person, but cannot give them faith.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 554–55 / CUP1, 611): “Faith is that objective uncertainty with the repulsion of the absurd, held firmly in the passion of inwardness, which is precisely the relation of inwardness potentiated to its utmost.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 164 / SUD, 49): “But the opposite of being in despair is to believe; therefore, what was stated above is also completely correct; the description of a condition in which there is no despair at all, this is also the same as the formula for believing: In relating to oneself and in willing to be oneself, the self grounds itself transparently in the power that established it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 181 / SUD, 67): “This despair that is the passage to faith is also by help of the eternal; by help of the eternal, the self has courage to lose itself in order to win itself.”

## Fate

**Danish term:** n., *Skjebne*

**Danish etymology:** From Old Norse *skæpna*, “that which has been determined,” related to the verb *skabe*, to create

**Danish definition:** (1) A higher power that is thought to intervene in and control human life; (2) the totality of events and experiences that shape the life of someone without their influence; (3) any person, event, or other factor that intervenes in a crucial and catastrophic way in a person’s life

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 42 / EOI, 33): “There is a great naivete in believing that it would help to shout and scream at the world, as if one’s fate would thereby be changed. One should take it as it is offered, and refrain from all prolixities.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 154–55 / EOI, 156): “What offers tragic interest in the Greek sense is that in the brother’s unfortunate death, in the sister’s collision with a single human prohibition, the sorrowful fate of Oedipus resounds; Oedipus’ tragic fate is just like after-pains that branch off into each shoot of his family. This totality renders the viewer’s sorrow so infinitely deep. It is not an individual who goes under, but a little world; it is objective sorrow, which, set loose, now steps forth in its own terrible consistency like a force of nature, and Antigone’s sorrowful fate is like a reverberation of the father’s, a potentiated sorrow.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 158–59 / EOI, 160): “If the individual is isolated, they are absolutely the architect of their own fate, and then there is nothing tragic, but only evilness—for it is not even tragic that the individual blinded or prejudiced themselves, for that is their own work—or individuals are merely modifications of the eternal substance of existence, and then the tragic is gone, once again.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 174 / FT, 84): “In Greek tragedy, the hiddenness (and as a result thereby, the recognition) is an epic remnant, which has its ground in a fate in which the dramatic action disappears, from which this has its dark, mysterious origin.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 399 / CA, 96): “Fate relates to spirit as something external; it is a relation between spirit and something else that is not spirit, and which yet is supposed to stand in a spiritual relation to spirit.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 400 / CA, 97): “The one who would explain fate must be just as equivocal as fate.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 381 / EUD, 400): “It is an honor to owe nothing to fortune, but all to God; to owe nothing to fate, but all to providence; to owe nothing to a whim, but all to fatherliness.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 395 / CUP, 433): “Fortune, misfortune, fate, immediate enthusiasm, despair—these are what the aesthetic life-view has at its disposal.”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Treatises* (SKS 11, 76 / WA, 71): “I am therefore imagining a person who has just as much reflection as courage and enthusiasm. When they begin, such a person should be clear on what this can lead to. They must themselves understand that if it should be their—no, not their *fate*, for it’s not that; if they are killed for the truth, it is their *choice*.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 155 / SUD, 40): “The fatalist’s worship of God, therefore, is at most an interjection, and it is essentially muteness, mute subjugation; he cannot pray.”

## Finitude, Finite / Infinitude, Infinity, Infinite

**Danish term:** n., *Endelighed / Uendelighed*; det *Endelige / det Uendelige*; adj., *endelig / uendelig*

**Danish etymology:** *Endelig* is derived from the Old Norse *endaligr*. *Endelighed* is derived from the verb *ende*, to end. *Uendelig* comes from the Old Norse *uendaligr*. The Danish *u-* prefix indicates negation; compare English *un-* (unfortunate, unstated) and *in-* (indelicate, infinite)

### Danish definition:

*Endelig / Endelighed:* (1) In literary contexts, that which is final; (2) in philosophical contexts, often refers to that which has definite or specific limits in duration or size; (3) in a legal context, it refers to limitation of reasons or conditions; or possibly a limitation on the amount of time permitted for deliberation; (4) may also signify what has a high degree of desirability or necessity.

*Uendelig / Uendelighed:* (1) That which is without limitation or is not bound by time, space, or length; what is “non-final” in time; (2) what is absolute, immense, divine; (3) esp. in philosophical contexts, refers to what is non-mortal and exists without limit; (4) what is indefinite and without interruption, incessant, absolute, unconditional

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 260 / CI, 217): “The three Socratic schools agree precisely in abstract universality, however differently they otherwise conceive of this. But this has that very equivocality in itself that, on one hand, it can polemically take aim at the finite; on the other hand, it can be an incentive for the infinite.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 343 / CI, 311): “All of finitude must be negated, the observing subject, too; well, it is really already negated in this contemplation.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Papers* (JP I 907 (Pap. IV A 213) n.d., 1843): “To be able to become history, to get a history—that is the meaning of finitude and temporality.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 379 / EO1, 391): “Her soul must be moved, agitated in all possible directions—not, however, piece by piece or by gusts of wind. She must discover the infinite, experience that this is what is closest to a person.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 214 / EO2, 223): “As I think, I am also infinitizing myself, but not absolutely, for I vanish into the absolute.”

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235 / EO2, 246): “[N]o human being can bear seeing the infinite.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 293 / EO2, 310): “In general, Woman has an inborn talent and a natural gift, an absolute virtuosity, for explaining [*forklare*] the finite.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 161; JJ:67 / KJN 2, 149): “All infinite knowledge is negative (even ‘always to be in the wrong’ is an infinite relationship), and yet the negative is higher than the positive.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 40): “He empties in infinite resignation the deep sadness of existence, he knows the blessedness of infinity, he has felt the pain of renouncing everything, the most precious thing one has in the world, and yet finitude tastes just as good to him as to someone who has never known anything higher, for his remaining in finitude would have no trace of some timid, anxious routine, and yet he has this security to enjoy himself with it as if it were the surest thing of all.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 156 / FT, 63): “[The] outcome (inasmuch as it is finitude’s answer to the infinite question) is, in its dialectic, altogether heterogeneous with the hero’s existence.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 185 / FT, 95): “But Agnes was no quiet girl, she enjoyed the roar of the sea, and the melancholy sighs of the waves pleased her, only because then the roaring within her grew even stronger. She wishes to be away, away, to storm wildly out into the infinite with the merman whom she loves— . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 197 / FT, 109): “[S]omeone who has made a movement in the world of spirit, consequently an infinite movement, can straightaway sense through the reply whether it is a man who has been tested who speaks or a Münchhausen.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 456 / CA, 157): “When the discoveries of possibility are administered properly, then possibility will discover all finitudes but idealize them in the figure of infinitude, overwhelming the individual with anxiety until he once more conquers them in the anticipation of faith. . . . If the individual defrauds possibility, by which he is supposed to be educated, then he will never come to faith, then his faith becomes the prudence of finitude, just as his school was that of finitude.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 246 / EUD, 247): “Maybe he chose the guidance of thought, and, in order not to owe something to anyone, he had this seed sow itself, and the one thought develop out of the other, until finally the infinite appeared



before him, and made him dizzy. The more he stared at it, the more his eye lost the strength to lead him back to finitude.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 75 / *SLW*, 76): “On the other hand, the idea of Woman is a universality that is not exhausted in any woman. . . . Therefore, Woman does not allow herself to be exhausted by some formula, but is an infinity of finitudes. To imagine her idea is like staring into a sea of fog-images that are constantly reshaping themselves. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 89–90 / *CUP1*, 90): “Thus, to pray is the highest pathos of infinity, precisely because, in its inwardness, it is incommensurable with every external expression. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 90–91 / *CUP1*, 92): “Existence itself, to exist, is striving, and it is just as passionate [*pathetisk*] as comic; passionate because the striving is infinite, directed towards the infinite, that is; it is an infinitizing, which is the highest pathos; comic because the striving is a self-contradiction. . . . Life . . . is a synthesis of the finite and the infinite.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 246 / *BA*, 83): “In civic relations—in general, in the world of finitude—it is frequently possible for a man, even more than once, to start afresh. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 183 / *WL*, 183): “With comparison, all is lost, love is finitized, the debt to repay—entirely like every other debt; while the debt of honor has the quality that one first and foremost, sooner rather than later, must see to getting out of it, the debt of love has the quality that it is infinite.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 185 / *WL*, 185): “We would warn anyone standing on a ship that is racing on with the speed of the storm not to look at the waves, for then they will become dizzy; thus does comparison between infinitude and finitude make a person dizzy.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 146 / *SUD*, 29–30): “The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude that is relating to itself, whose purpose is to become itself, which can only be done through the relationship to God.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 146 / *SUD*, 30): “[E]very human existence that presumably has become or merely wills to be infinite—yes, every moment in which a human existence has become or merely wills to be infinite—is despair. For the self is the synthesis where the finite is the restricting, the infinite, the expanding. The despair of infinitude, therefore, is the fantastical, the unbounded.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 182 / *SUD*, 68): “To despairingly will to be oneself, there must be consciousness of an infinite self. This infinite self, however, is really only the most abstract form, the most abstract possibility of the self. And it is this self he despairingly wills to be, tearing the self away from every relation to a power that has established it, or tearing it away from the notion that such a power exists. By the help of this infinite form, the self will despairingly rule over itself, or form itself, make itself into the self he will be, determine what he will bring along in his concrete self, and what he

will not. His concrete self or his concretion certainly has necessity and boundaries, is this completely determined entity with these powers, aptitudes, etc., in this concretion of the relations, etc. But by help of the infinite form, the negative self, he will first undertake to remodel the whole thing, in order to get a self out of it like he wants, produced by the help of the infinite form of the negative self—and then he will be himself.”

## Freedom

**Danish term:** n., *Frihed*; adj., *fri*

**Danish etymology:** Derived from the Middle Low German *vriheit* and the High German *Freiheit*, meaning “freedom”

**Danish definition:** (1) The condition in which the human will can freely choose among different possibilities, things, and circumstances; (2) the power to choose to do either good or evil; (3) the capacity to either obey or disobey; (4) in the debate over “the freedom of the will,” it denotes that the will is not subject to the law of causation, i.e., it is a cause without being a strictly necessitated effect

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 223 / CI, 176): “In this way, he [viz., Socrates] certainly freed the individual from every presupposition, freed him in this way, as he himself was free; but this freedom he himself enjoyed in ironic satisfaction, the others could not enjoy, and it developed longing and yearning in them.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / EO1, 19–20): “People are really unreasonable. They never use those freedoms they have, but demand those they do not have. They have freedom of thought; they demand freedom of speech.”

A: “Rotation of Crops,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 286 / EO1, 297): “You must always beware of contracting a life relationship by which you will become several. Therefore, friendship is already dangerous, marriage even more so. . . . When you are several, you have lost your freedom and cannot get your traveling boots when you want them; you cannot roam about inconstantly.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 316 / EO1, 326–27): “Damned chance! Never have I cursed you because you have shown yourself; I curse you because you don’t show yourself at all. Or shall this perhaps be a fresh invention by you, you incomprehensible creature, barren mother to everything, the only remnant remaining from that time when necessity gave birth to freedom, when freedom was tricked back into the womb again?”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 331 / EO1, 342): “No, if one can bring it to where a girl has only one single task for her freedom, that of surrendering herself, that she feels all of her blissfulness in this, that she nearly pleads for this surrender and yet is free—then there is the first enjoyment, but that always depends on intellectual influence.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 169 / EO2, 173): “For thought,

the contradiction does not endure; the one goes over into the other and then they go together in a higher unity. For Freedom, the contradiction endures, for it excludes it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 173 / EO2, 178): “I am no ethical rigorist, filled with enthusiasm for a formal, abstract freedom.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 205 / EO2, 214): “But what, then, is this, my self? If I were to talk of a first moment, a first expression of it, then my answer would be: it is the most abstract of all, which yet in itself is also the most concrete of all—it is freedom.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 221–22 / EO2, 232): “The mistake lies in not having chosen himself in the right way, not just in that sense that he is supposed not to have had an eye for his failings in the least, but he has seen himself under the determinations of necessity. . . . But he has not seen himself in his freedom, has not chosen himself in this. Were he to do this, then, in the same moment he chose himself, he would be in motion; however concrete his self is, he has still chosen himself according to his possibility; he has redeemed himself in repentance in order to remain in his freedom, but he can only remain in his freedom by constantly realizing it. Therefore, the one who has chosen himself is *eo ipso* one who acts.”

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235 / EO2, 246): “A suicide is the negative expression for infinite freedom. . . . Lucky is the one who finds the positive.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 142 / FT, 47): “I can see, therefore, that it requires power and energy and freedom of the spirit to make resignation’s infinite movement.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 350 / CA, 44): “The prohibition makes him anxious because the prohibition awakens the possibility of freedom in him. That which walked past innocence as the nothing of anxiety has now entered into him, and here once more is a nothing, the anxious possibility of *being able*.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 365 / CA, 61): “Thus, anxiety is the dizzy swoon of freedom that arises as spirit intends to establish the synthesis; and now freedom peers down into its own possibility, and then grasps finitude to hold itself fast. In this swoon, freedom falls to its knees.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 410 / CA, 108): “When freedom is understood like this, it has its opposite in necessity, which shows that freedom has been understood in a category of reflection. No, the opposite of freedom is guilt, and what is most elevated in freedom is that it constantly has to do with itself; . . . and . . . if one is not aware of this, then one has spiritually confused freedom with something completely different, with *force*.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 414–15 / CA, 112): “Freedom is infinite and comes forth from nothing.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 69 / EUD, 60): “Everything spiritual is only appropriated by freedom; but what is appropriated by freedom is generated by it, too.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 326 / SLW, 351): “Here I am sensible of freedom only when in necessity I surrender myself and in the surrender forget it.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 149 / WL, 147): “And this heart, free as it is, shall then find complete freedom in giving itself away.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 145 / SUD, 29): “The self is formed from infinitude and finitude. But this synthesis is a relation, and a relation that—although derived—is relating to itself, which is freedom. The self is freedom. But freedom is the dialectical in the categories of possibility and necessity.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 151 / SUD, 35): “The self should of course freely become itself.”

## Genius

**Danish term:** n., *Geni*

**Danish etymology:** Derived from the Latin *genius*, meaning an innate ability or inclination in the person who possesses it; modern usage in Danish (as in other European languages) was subsequently heavily influenced by Immanuel Kant, who defined genius as “the innate mental aptitude . . . through which nature gives the rule to art” (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith [London: Oxford University Press, 1952], 168)

**Danish definition:** The highest and most distinctive expression of a human being’s mental abilities or natural gifts

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

ANONYMOUS: *From the Papers of One Still Living* (SKS 1, 36 / CI, 79): “[Hans Christian] Andersen really seems to consider such a natural [*oprindeligt*] passivity to be characteristic of genius. . . . That is a quite particular sort of genius; even in the classicism of the antique world, they leapt in full armor out of Jupiter’s head.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 30 / EO1, 22): “That is why [Adam Oehlenschläger’s] *Aladdin* is so invigorating, since this piece has the boldness of a child or a genius in the most far-flung wishes. How many are there in our time who truly dare to wish, dare to desire, dare to address nature neither with a polite child’s *bitte*, *bitte*, or with the ravings of a lost individual? How many are there who—sensing what is chattered about so much in our time, that the human being is made in God’s image—have the true voice of command?”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 57 / EO1, 50): “On the contrary, to wish properly is a great art, or rather, it is a gift. It is the inexplicability and mysteriousness of genius.”

A: “Rotation of Crops,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 289 / EO1, 300): “Yet even the most detailed theory is only poverty in comparison to what genius, in its ubiquity, easily discovers.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 112 / EO2, 111): “And truly, if you open the door to finitudes first, then it is just as dumb and just as laughable if you want to be loved because you are the best brain, the greatest talent, the artist most endowed with genius in one’s age, or because you keep the most beautiful goatee on your chin.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “The poet or orator . . . is recollection’s genius.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 40): “And yet he [viz., the knight of faith] is no genius, for I have sought in vain to spy out the incommensurability of genius in him. In the evening, he smokes his pipe; seeing him, one would swear it was the butcher across the way vegetating in the gloaming.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 195 / FT, 106–7): “What is said here, as occasioned by Sarah, chiefly with reference to the poetic presentation and therefore with an imaginary presupposition, has its full significance if one with psychological interest contemplates the meaning of the old saying: *nullum unquam existitit magnum ingenium sine aliqua dementia* [great genius has never existed without some madness]. For this madness is the suffering of genius in the world, is the expression for, if I dare to speak so, divine envy, while the aspect of genius is the expression of preferment. Thus, from the beginning the genius is disoriented in relation to the universal, and brought into realization to the paradox, whether he, in despair over his limits—which in his eyes transform his omnipotence into impotence—seeks a demonic reassurance, and therefore is unwilling to admit it to either God or other people, or whether he reassures himself religiously in love for God.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 401 / CA, 98): “Genius, considered immediately, is chiefly subjectivity. . . . As immediate, it can be spirit (here is what is deceptive, as if its extraordinary gifts were spirit established as spirit), but then it has something outside itself that is not spirit, and even is in an external relation to spirit. Therefore, the genius is constantly discovering fate, and the deeper the genius, the more deeply it discovers fate.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 402 / CA, 99): “The genius is an omnipotent *an sich* [in itself], which, as such, would shake the whole world. . . . Therefore, the existence of a genius is always like a fairytale, if he does not, in the deepest sense, turn inwardly to himself.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 212 / BA, 86): “We would speak of the primitivity of genius, of its originality, but these qualifications or this qualification are indeed still not identical with having had a revelation, by which the Redeemer communicated a teaching to the one who is called!”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 97 / C, 309): “In order to define it a little more precisely, her indefinable property further signifies youthfulness . . . what one really could call the fresh, rich unrest of youthfulness. . . . One can soon have had enough of unrest, if it is understood as the spectacle of finitude,

but unrest in the pregnant sense, the unrest of infinitude—the joyous, fresh originality that stirs the waters, rejuvenating, freshening, healing—is a great rarity, and in this sense she is unrest. Yet this unrest once again signifies something, and something quite great; it signifies the first mettle of an essential genius.”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Treatises* (SKS 11, 110 / WA, 106): “[A] genius . . . has only an immanent teleology; he develops himself, and as he develops himself, he projects his self-development as his effect. . . . [H]e himself is not teleologically positioned in relation to the world and others. A genius lives in himself; and he can humorously live in a withdrawn self-satisfaction.”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Treatises* (SKS 11, 110 / WA, 107): “The dialectic of genius will be particularly offensive in our age, in which the crowd, the masses, the public, and other such abstractions . . . want the genius to declare that he exists for its or for their sake; the highly honored public . . . sees merely the one side of the dialectic of genius, is offended by the pride, and does not sense that this is also humility and modesty.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Moment*, no. 6 (SKS 13, 259 / M, 204): “Geniuses are like thunder; they go against the wind, terrify people, and purify the air.”

## God

**Danish term:** n., *Gud*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *goð*

**Danish definition:** Supernatural being with power over human beings and nature

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 226; Not8:8 / KJN 3, 222): “Yet it is beneficial once in a while to feel that you are in God’s hands, and not always and eternally sneaking around in a well-known town’s odd nooks and corners, where you always know a way out.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 35 / EO1, 26): “I study myself; when I am tired of that, then I smoke a cigar to pass the time and think: God knows what our Lord really had in mind with me, or what he wants to make of me.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 43–44 / EO1, 34–35): “In grammar school, when I was fifteen years old, I wrote with great unction on the proofs for the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, on the concept of faith, on the meaning of the miracle. . . . Alas, alas, alas! Long ago I threw away this treatise.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 149–50 / EO1, 150–51): “When it is said of Jehovah that he is a jealous God, that he visits the faults of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, or when you hear those terrible curses in the Old Testament, then you might easily be tempted to look here for tragic material. But Judaism is too ethically advanced for that; Jehovah’s curses, however terrifying, are still also righteous punishments. In Greece, it was not like this; the wrath of the gods has no ethical character, only aesthetical ambiguity.”

A: "The First Love," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 231 / EO1, 238): "[J]ust as God mocks the greatness of humanity by forging them into the law of the occasion, so also, by making the occasion into everything and the next instant into folly, whereby God then becomes superfluous and the conception of a wise Providence becomes a piece of folly, and the occasion becomes a trickster who makes fun just as much of God as of humanity, the whole of existence ends in a jest, a joke, a charade."

A: "The Rotation Method," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 279 / EO1, 238): "The gods of Olympus were not bored; they lived happily in happy idleness."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 416 / EO1, 429): "Let God, then, keep heaven, if I may keep her."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 417 / EO1, 430): "This also explains why God, when he created Eve, let a deep sleep fall upon Adam, for woman is the dream of man."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 430 / EO1, 443): "What! Fear? If we stick together, then we are strong, stronger than the world, stronger even than the gods themselves."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 19 / EO2, 9–10): "[B]ut there is one thing for which I thank God with my entire soul, and it is that she is the only one I have loved, the first; and there is one thing I pray to God with my whole heart, that he will give me strength to never wish to love someone else. . . . [F]or God has not become so supramundane for me that he should not concern himself with the pact he himself has founded between man and woman, and I have not become so spiritual that the worldly side of life should not have its meaning for me."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 50 / EO2, 43): "A religiously developed individual is indeed accustomed to attributing everything to God, with the thought of God penetrating and permeating every finite relation and thereby consecrating and improving it."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 51 / EO2, 44): "Now, one must certainly remember that however abstract the God of Judaism was otherwise, he was nonetheless so close to the Jewish people and particularly their chosen ones in all life-relations; and even if he was spirit, he was yet not so very spiritual that he should not concern himself with the earthly."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 114 / EO2, 113–14): "Woman is just as strong as man, perhaps stronger. And are you, then, really handling her with love, if you humiliate her like this? . . . [D]o you have permission to sneak her through the world? And from where do you have your power? Is she not just as close to God as you are? Will you rob her of the opportunity to find God in the deepest and most fervent way—through pain and suffering?"

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 124 / EO2, 124): "Now, it shall by no means be denied—what your clever mind will probably also soon detect—that precisely this, to change the external trial into an inward

one, can make it even more difficult, but the gods do not sell the great for nothing, either; and therein lies precisely the educative, the idealizing in marriage.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 207–8 / EO2, 216–17): “What, though, is a human being without love? But there are many types of love; I love a father differently than a mother, my wife differently once more, and each different love has its different expression, but there is also a love with which I love God, and this has only one expression in the language; it is repentance. If I do not love him like this, then I do not love him absolutely, not from my innermost being; every other love for the absolute is a misunderstanding; for, to take what one otherwise prizes so highly, and I what I myself honor, when thought clings to the absolute by all of its love, then it is not the absolute I love; I do not love absolutely, for I love by necessity; as soon as I love freely and love God, then I am repenting. And should no other reason exist [for the fact] that the expression of my love for God was repentance, then it is that he has loved me first. And yet this is an imperfect designation; for only if I choose myself as guilty, do I choose myself absolutely, if I shall choose myself in such a way that it is not identical with forming myself; and if it were the father’s guilt that is inherited by the son, he repents this along with it; for only in this way can he choose himself, choose himself absolutely, and if the tears would nearly wipe out everything for him, he continues to repent; for only in this way does he choose himself. His self is outside of him, as it were, and it shall be acquired, and repentance is his love of this because he chooses it absolutely, from the hand of the eternal God.”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 322 / EO2, 342): “What the people had violated, this family had to suffer for; what this family had violated, every generation of the family had to suffer for. Shall, then, the just suffer with the unjust? Is this the jealousy of God, that he visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, so that he does not punish the fathers but the children?”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 330 / EO2, 352): “Only in an infinite relation to God could the doubt be put to rest; only in an infinitely free relation to God could his worry be transformed to joy. He is in an infinite relation to God when he recognizes that God is always in the right, in an infinitely free relation when he recognizes that he is always in the wrong.”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 332 / EO2, 353): “Against God we are always in the wrong; this thought, then, stops doubt and puts its worry to rest; it encourages and inspires action.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 37 / EUD, 29): “[I]t is the same God who, after having led us through the world by his hand, draws it back and opens his arms in order to receive the longing soul. Amen!”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 17–18 / R, 140): “I actually suffered greatly with the young man, who withered away from one day to the next. And yet I by no means regretted participating in his suffering, for in his love [*Kjærlighed*] the idea was indeed in motion. (And though one such love is seen—Thank God!—sometimes



in life, it is sought in vain in the novel and the short story.) Only where this is the case does love [*Elskoven*] have significance. . . .”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 18 / R, 141): “If it was possible for me, I attended these nightly devotions, where he with wild screams got exercise for the whole day, for he used the day to enchant the girl. Just as Prometheus, nailed to the cliff while the vulture pecked at his liver, fascinates the gods with his prophecy, so did he fascinate the beloved.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 55–56 / R, 185): “The girl has an enormous importance; he will never be able to forget her, but her importance is not in herself, but in the relation to him. She is just like the boundary for his being, but such a relation is not erotic. Religiously speaking, one could say that it is as if God himself used this girl to capture him, and yet the girl herself is not some actuality, but just like those lace-winged flies one sets upon a hook. I am particularly convinced that he does not know the least thing about the girl, except that he has been tied to her, and since that time she probably has never been out of his thoughts. She is the girl, full stop. . . .”

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 67 / R, 198): “Compliment! The Lord does not fear; he can certainly defend himself; but how should he be able to defend himself, if no one dares to complain, as it befits a human being. Speak, uplift your voice, speak loudly. God can certainly speak more loudly; he has the thunder, of course—but that, too, is a reply, an explanation: reliable, faithful, original, an answer from God himself, which, even if it crushed a human being, is more magnificent than gossip and rumors about the righteousness of providence, invented by human wisdom, circulated by hags and eunuchs.”

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 76 / R, 208): “Job also holds fast to his claim, so that in him is seen that love and trust that is certain that God can surely explain everything if one can only see him.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 107 / FT, 11): “Then Abraham turned away from him a moment—but when Isaac saw Abraham’s countenance once again, it was changed; his gaze was wild, his appearance a terror. He grabbed Isaac by the chest, threw him to the ground, and said: ‘Stupid boy, do you believe that I am your father? I am an idolater. Do you believe that this is God’s decree? No, it is my desire.’ Then Isaac shuddered, and cried out in his anguish: ‘God in Heaven, have mercy on me, God of Abraham, have mercy on me, I have no father on Earth, may you therefore be my father!’ But Abraham said, softly and to himself: ‘Lord in Heaven, I thank you; it is surely better that he believe I am an inhuman monster than that he should lose faith in you.’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 113 / FT, 16): “[T]he one who struggled with the world became great through overcoming the world, and the one who struggled with himself became great through overcoming himself; but the one who struggled with God became greater than all.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 123 / FT, 27): “The one who will not work does not get the bread, but becomes deceived, as the gods deceived Orpheus with an airy figure in place of the beloved; deceived him because he was soft, not courageous; deceived him because he was a Zither player, not a man.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “I am convinced that God is love; this thought has for me an original lyrical validity.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 132 / FT, 37): “If it did not stand so with Abraham, then he would perhaps have loved God, but would not have believed; for the one who loves God without faith reflects upon himself, but the one who loves God believing reflects on God.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 160 / FT, 68): “The ethical is the universal, and as such also the divine. One can therefore rightly say that every duty, in its ground, is duty to God; but if one cannot say more, then one says, in addition, that I really have no duty toward God. The duty becomes duty by being referred to God, but in the duty itself I do not enter into a relation with God.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 168 / FT, 77–78): “[T]hen perhaps he shall glimpse the marvelous glory that this knight achieves—that he becomes God’s confidant, the Lord’s friend, that—to speak purely humanly—he says ‘You’ to God in Heaven, while even the tragic hero addresses him only in the third person.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 105 / EUD, 100): “Then you have sensed that it is not because you have a father, or because human beings have fathers, that it is not why God is called Father in heaven, but that it is like the apostle says: All fatherliness is named after him in heaven and on earth.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Gain One’s Soul in Patience,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 170 / EUD, 172): “In patience, the soul resigns itself to all of its owners: to the life of the world, from which the soul acquires itself in suffering; to God, from whom the soul receives itself in suffering; and to itself, as the soul itself keeps what it at the same time releases to both [the life of the world and God], without anyone being able to take this from it: patience.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 220 / EUD, 221): “Only the true expectation, as it demands patience, also trains in patience. But the true expectation is such that it concerns a person essentially, and which does not demand his own power to effect the fulfillment. Therefore everyone who is truly in expectation is in relation to God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “He Must Increase; I Must Decrease,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 275 / EUD, 282): “People know well that much in life is vain, but how often does the individual make an exception? And yet even the highest mission in the world of the spirit is only an errand, and the one who is equipped for that with all of the gifts of spirit, he is only on an errand; but why is the mission of the angels so beautiful? Because they turn back to God’s throne again so quickly that they don’t have time to be tempted by the thought of looking after their own affairs!”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 217 / PF, 7): “I have been training and training, always to be able to dance lightly in the service of thought, as much as possible for the honor of the god and for my own enjoyment, giving up the

domestic bliss and civic respect, the *communio bonorum* and the harmony of joys that it is to have an opinion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 224 / PF, 15): “The teacher, then, is the god himself, who, operating as occasion, occasions the learner’s being reminded that he is untruth, and is so by his own fault.

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 232 / PF, 25): “The god must decide to do this out of love; but, as his love is the reason, so also must love be the goal.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 244–45 / PF, 39): “But what, then, is this unknown, against which the understanding, in its paradoxical passion, collides, and which even disturbs the self-knowledge of the human being? It is the unknown. But of course, it is still not some person, insofar as he would recognize this, or some other thing that he would recognize. So, let us then call this unknown *the god*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 258 / PF, 55): “[T]he god will not be able to send anyone in his place.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 353 / CA, 48): “I am no friend of witticism, and shall *volente deo* resist the temptations of the serpent, who, just as it tempted Adam and Eve at the beginning of time, tempted writers in the course of time—to be witty.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 376 / CA, 72): “What scripture teaches, that God visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, life announces loudly enough.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 409 / CA, 107): “Just as the immediate genius had fate, he gets guilt as that figure that follows him. Turning towards himself, he turns *eo ipso* towards God, and there is a ceremonial ordinance that if the finite spirit wants to see God, then it must start as guilty.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 412 / CA, 109–10): “[T]he greatness of the human being depends simply and solely on the energy of the God-relation in him. . . .”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 413 / CA, 111): “[T]hat God does not know of it, cannot know of it, and will not know of it, is the absolute punishment of evil.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 423 / CA, 121): “[I]f it were to go that far with me, then I wish to God that there was a church that would not give up on me, but would use all of its power.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 440–441 / CA, 140): “With what industrious zeal, with what a sacrifice of time, hard work, and writing materials have the speculants in our time worked on finishing a complete proof for the existence of God. But to the same degree that the excellence of the proof waxes, the certainty seems to wane.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 441 / CA, 140): “The demonstration of God’s existence is something one learnedly and metaphysically only

occupies oneself with on occasion, but the thought of God will impose itself at every occasion.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 447 / CA, 147): “The one who lives in daily and yet festive association with the idea that a God exists could hardly wish to corrupt this for himself, or to see it corrupted, because he himself pieced together a definition of what God is.”

NICHOLAS NOTABENE: *Prefaces* (SKS 4, 474 / P, 10): “[M]arriage is a special duty, a ‘specific’ duty, and . . . all duties could be divided into the general and the specific, and are duties towards God, towards us ourselves, and towards the neighbor. . . .”

NICHOLAS NOTABENE: *Prefaces* (SKS 4, 504 / P, 43): “God only knows what he has really figured out. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 380 / EUD, 399): “Now, who was it that triumphed? It was God, for God did not give the explanation the one in prayer desired, and did not give it as the one in struggle desired. But the one in struggle also triumphed. Or it was not a triumph that he, instead of getting an explanation from God, became transfigured in God; what his transfiguration is is to reproduce God’s image.”

HILARIUS BOOKBINDER: “Lectori Benevolo!” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 11 / SLW, 3): “And so it goes as the German says: *Heute roth morgen todt* [Today red, tomorrow dead]; and as the priest says: Death recognizes neither rank nor age; and as my blessed wife said: That way we all shall go, but Our Lord knows best when it is suitable, and so it probably happens with God’s help; and so it goes, as even the best people must go from here, so was the *Literatus* dead in the meantime, and his heirs, who were abroad, received the books through the probate court, and through that same court I received payment for my work.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 31 / SLW, 25): “I demand a waitstaff, select and handsome, as if I sat at the table of the gods. . . .”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 41 / SLW, 35): “Is it not as I say, that love [*Elskov*] makes a human being laughable, even if not in the eyes of others, then in the eyes of the gods?”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 54 / SLW, 52): “The ideality that a little maiden has in the moment of fantasy is really found neither with gods nor with men, but it is all the more amusing to believe her and to fan the flames.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 60 / SLW, 58): “So, I thank the gods, then, that I became a man and not a woman. And yet what am I not giving up! From the drinking song to the tragedy, poetry is indeed an idolization of woman.”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 71 / SLW, 71): “Everything in life is fashion; fear of God is fashion, and love and whale bone corsets and a ring in the nose.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 71 / SLW, 75): “They are said to live more voluptuously than the gods, for they constantly eat

only what is more precious than ambrosia and drink what is more delicious than nectar; they are said to eat the most seductive ideas of the gods' most ingenious thoughts—they eat only the bait. . . .”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 79 / SLW, 80): “Thus the pleasure of breaking off got its due—this imperial pleasure, which is shorter than any other yet more liberating than any other. With a libation enjoyment ought to begin, but this libation with which one slings the glass into destruction and oblivion, and, as if in mortal danger, passionately tears oneself away from every recollection; this libation is to the gods of the underworld.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 81 / SLW, 82): “Oh, my God, it is indeed Judge Wilhelm and his wife.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 96 / SLW, 100): “In paganism, there was a god for love [*Elskoven*], and none for marriage; in Christianity, there is, if I dare to say so, a god for marriage, and none for love [*Elskov*].”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 115 / SLW, 122): “As soon as God is before the consciousness, the wonder is there, for otherwise God cannot be there. The Jews expressed this in this way: that the one who saw God must die.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 186 / SLW, 198): “Oh, that she still might not die! Oh, that she still might not wither away! If it were possible, God in heaven, you know, after all, it was and is of course my only wish—if it were really possible, and then it was too late!”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 189 / SLW, 201): “[I]f one is struggling with God and with oneself whether to *dare* to take the hint of infatuation, whether to dare to grab at that desire that is the lust of the eye and the demand of the heart, then one is safe from running wild in this way.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 326 / SLW, 351): “Only religiously can I now become understandable to myself before God; in relation to people, misunderstanding is the foreign language I am speaking.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 381 / SLW, 411): “God help poetry; it has been put on bread and water by the help of politics!”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 415 / SLW, 411): “This occupies me in a purely Greek way. I imagine the blissful gods creating such a human being in order to have from it the pleasure of dialectical joy. They give him powers in proportion to reality, so he triumphs there, but then an inwardness in which even he runs wild.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?” *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 432 / SLW, 468): “Although the talk is religious, the individual is seen only in an external relation to God, not in an inward relation to themselves. The talk is nearly this: Our Lord can certainly bring danger and wretchedness to your house; he can indeed take your

fortune, your beloved, your children, and he will probably do it when it is profitable for you—ergo, since he has not done it, then there is no danger. This is aesthetics with inauthentic religious gilding.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 127 / CUP1, 136): “God can demand everything from every human being, everything and for nothing, for every human being is a useless servant, and the one who is ethically inspired is different from others only in that he knows it, that he hates and detests every deception.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 128 / CUP1, 137): “A king, a philosopher, understood in the finite sense, can perhaps be served by a shrewd and talented person, who secures the king’s power and asserts the philosopher’s theory, and binds all in obedience under the king and philosopher, while he himself is neither a good subject nor a true follower. But, in relation to God, this is rather stupid.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 542 / CUP1, 596): “If one wants to speak of God, then one is supposed to say: God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 101 / TA, 107): “While in the older formations . . . those of excellence . . . were recognizable . . . [.] now, just like secret agents . . . they are unrecognizable . . . because of having apprehended the universal in equality before God, and because of having apprehended the responsibility for this at every moment.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing,” *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 225 / UD, 125): “The presence of God is what is decisive, that which changes everything. As soon as God is present, every person has the task of paying heed themselves before God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 12 / WL, 3–4): “How should one rightfully speak of love if you were forgotten, you God of love, from whom comes all love in heaven and on earth; you, who spared nothing, but gave everything away in love; you who are love, so that one who loves is only what he is by being in you! How should one rightfully speak of love if you were forgotten, you who made what love is manifest, our Savior and Redeemer, who gave yourself away in order to save all! How should one rightfully speak of love if you were forgotten, you spirit of love, you who take nothing of your own, but remind us of that sacrifice of love, remind the believer to love as he is loved, and his neighbor as himself?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 26 / WL, 18): “Just as Jacob limped after having struggled with God, so shall self-love be broken if it has struggled with this saying, which still will not teach a person that he should not love himself, but, on the contrary, teaches him precisely the right self-love.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 84 / WL, 78): “But if you go with God, you will stick together only with him; and, in everything you understand, God is understood. Then you will discover—Shall I say to your own detriment?—Then you will discover the neighbor; then God compels you to love him—Shall I say to your own detriment?—For to love the neighbor is a thankless labor.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 111 / WL, 107): “Worldly wisdom thinks that love is a relationship between person and person; Christianity teaches

that love is a relationship between: person—God—person, that is, that God is the middle term.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 151 / WL, 150): “For if the deathbed is prepared for you, if you have gone to bed, nevermore to get up, and it is expected that you shall only turn over to the other side in order to die, and silence grows around you—If then those close to you have gradually gone away, and the silence grows because only the closest relations remain, while death approaches you; if then the closest relations go quietly away, and the silence grows because only the immediate family remains; and if then the last one has bowed over you for the last time and turns away, for you are turning now to the side of death; yet there still remains one on that side, he, the last one at the deathbed, he, who was the first: God, the living God—if your heart was indeed pure, it became so only by loving him.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 332 / WL, 336): “It is indeed God in heaven who by the Apostle says, ‘Be ye reconciled’; it is not human beings who say to God, ‘forgive us.’ No, God loved us first; and again, another time, when it concerned the Atonement, God was the one who came first—although, in the sense of righteousness, he was still the one who had the furthest to go.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Cares of the Pagans,” *Christian Discourses* (SKS 10, 96 / CD, 88–89): “To choose God is certainly the most decisive and the highest choice; but. . . . God is not like something bought at a secondhand shop, or like a piece of property which one assures oneself to be worth buying if it has been cleverly and carefully tested and measured and calculated. Just this ungodly calmness, with which the irresolute one will begin in relation to God (he will indeed begin with doubt), just this is insubordination; for by this God is thrust down from the throne . . . one has really already chosen another master, willfulness, and then becomes the thrall of irresolution.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “States of Mind in the Strife of Suffering,” *Christian Discourses* (SKS 10, 138 / CD, 127): “If God were only the omnipotent one, then there would be no mutual relationship, since, for the omnipotent one, the creature is nothing. But it is something for love.”

H. H.: *Two Ethico-Religious Essays* (SKS 11, 63 / WA, 57): “He then lived on year after year. He associated only with himself and God and this image—but he did not understand himself. . . . At last, there awakened a doubt in his soul, a doubt in which he did not understand himself: whether **a human being** has permission to let themselves be killed for the truth.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 21, 355; NB10:190 / KJN 5, 367): “Worldly-wise, one asks, ‘Who’s preaching today?’ Religiously, one shouldn’t ask about such a thing. For here, in the house of God, whether the minister preaches or the deacon, whether the most famous minister or the obscurest student, there [is] always one who preaches, and always the one and the same: God in Heaven. That God is present, that is the sermon, and that you are before God is the contents of the sermon.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 148 / SUD, 32): “For a human being, it is as though it were unbearable to exist before God because the human being precisely cannot come back to themselves, become themselves.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 155 / SUD, 40): “[F]or the one who does not have a God has no self, either.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 155 / SUD, 40): “Precisely just as everything for God is possible, so God is this: that everything is possible.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 194 / SUD, 80): “But God is not something external in the sense like a policeman.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 238 / SUD, 127): “[A]s a Greek has already said so beautifully: From human beings, a human being learns to speak, from the gods, to be silent.”

## Good

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Gode*; n., *Godhed*; adj., *god*

**Danish etymology:** From Old Norse *góðr*, by way of Old Danish and Early Modern Danish *godh*

**Danish definition:** (1) As nominalized adjective, *det Gode*, “benefit” or “boon”; (2) as abstract noun, *Godhed*, the characteristic of being good, right or true, exhibiting ethical character, integrity, or uprightness

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 243 / CI, 197): “But yet we have in Socrates the real, not the apparent, height of irony because Socrates first came to the idea of the good, the beautiful, the true as boundary. . . .”

A: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 296 / EO1, 306): “He [viz., Johannes] did not belong to reality and yet he had much to do with it. He was constantly running over it, but even when he gave the most of himself away, he was out over it. But it was not the good that beckoned him away, nor was it really the evil; I dare not say that about him even at this moment. He has suffered from an *exacerbatio cerebri*, for which reality did not have enough stimulus. . . . This he was conscious of himself in the moment of stimulus, and in this consciousness lay the evil.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 114 / EO2, 113): “Or have you not promised to share the good and the bad with her? Is it not unfair to her, then, if you will not initiate her in the bad?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): “A person can still, in this last moment, collect his whole soul into one single glance toward Heaven from which all good gifts come, and this glance shall be understandable to him and to the one whom it seeks that he yet keep his love faithfully.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 413 / CA, 111): “That problem: What is the good? is a problem that more and more closely approaches our age because it has decisive importance for the question of the relation between church and state and communal morality [*det Sædelige*]. In answering, one must, however, be careful. Up until now, the true has, in a strange way, had preference, as one has understood and represented that trilogy—the beautiful, the good, the true—in the true (in cognition).



The good does not allow itself to be defined at all. The good is freedom. The difference between good and evil is only for freedom or in freedom, and this difference is never *in abstracto*, but only *in concreto*.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 415 / CA, 113): “[O]nly in the good is there unity of condition and transition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 20 / EUD, 10): “So, then, faith is of a different nature; it is not merely the highest good, but it is a good in which all can become involved; and the one who rejoices in the possession of it, he also rejoices over the countless generations of the human race.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing,” *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 138 / UD, 24): “The one who in truth only wills one thing, *he can only will the good*, and the one who only wills one thing, if he wills the good, *he can only will the good in truth*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 354 / CUP1, 389): “The corresponding, adequate pathos to an eternal salvation is the conversion by which the one existing, in existing, changes everything in their existence in relation to that highest good.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 390 / CUP1, 429): “If a pagan has caught only a glimpse of the absolute good, then Christianity has helped—by the absurd.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 22, 113; NB11:188 / KJN 6, 110): “That is an acute remark by Tersteegen . . . which he himself still does not seem to have properly understood, that it is not said of Mary that she has chosen the best part—but the good part, i.e., the best part, without any comparison.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 213 / SUD, 101): “Qualified indifferently-dialectically, the majority of people’s lives are so far from the good (faith), that it is nearly too spiritless to be called sin—in fact, nearly too spiritless to be called despair.”

## Grace, Favor

**Danish term:** n., *Naade*; n. *Benaade*

### Danish etymology:

*Naade*: Derived from the Old Norse *Naad* and Old Danish *nathæ* and *nath*

*Benaade*: Derived from the Middle Low German *benaden*

**Danish definition:** (1) An especially kindly or generous demeanor of a person; (2) theologically, the loving disposition of God toward undeserving creatures, esp. toward the sinner, or the benefits conveyed by this disposition

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

VICTOR EREMIAS: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 18–19 / EO1, 11): “When B supposes that out of a hundred people who go astray in the world ninety-nine are saved

by women and one by divine grace, it is easy to see that he is not very good in mathematics, insofar as he gives no place to those who are actually lost. I could easily have made a little change in the numbers, but to me there is something much more beautiful in B's miscalculation."

A: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 51–52 / EO1, 43–44): "Something marvelous has happened to me. I was transported to the seventh heaven. There sat all the gods assembled. Through a special grace, I was granted the favor of making a wish. 'If you wish,' said Mercury, 'If you wish to have youth, or beauty, or power, or long life, or the most beautiful girl, or any of the many other glorious things we have in the treasure chest, then choose it—but only one thing.' I was for a moment bewildered, then I addressed myself to the gods as follows: 'Esteemed contemporaries, I choose one thing: that I may always have the laughter on my side.' There was not a god who answered a word; no, on the contrary, all of them began to laugh."

A: "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 145 / EO1, 145–46): "The tragic contains an infinite gentleness; in relation to human life, it is really, in aesthetic terms, what divine grace and mercy are; it is even softer, and therefore I will say: it is a motherly love [*Kjærlighed*] that lulls the troubled one. The ethical is strenuous and hard."

JUDGE WILHELM: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 123 / EO2, 123): "And when we read in the holy scriptures of the many gifts of grace, then I would really reckon among them this: that cheerfulness, that trust, that faith in reality, and in that eternal necessity, whereby the beautiful triumphs; and in that salvation which lies in freedom, with which the individual comes to the aid of God."

JUDGE WILHELM: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 228 / EO2, 238): "I do not want something in the world to trick me out of what I have received from God's hand as a gift of grace."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 157; JJ:54 / KJN 2, 146): "There was a young man, as fortunately gifted as an Alcibiades. He lost his way in the world. In his want, he looked around for a Socrates, but he found no one among his contemporaries. Then he prayed to the gods to change him into one himself. And look! He who had been so proud of being an Alcibiades, he became so ashamed and humiliated by the grace of the gods that he—when he had gotten just what he could be proud of—felt poorer than everyone."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 157 / FT, 64–65): "Who was as great in the world as that favored woman, the Mother of God, the Virgin Mary? And yet how does one speak of her? That she was favored among women does not make her great, and if it did not happen so strangely that those who listen could think just as inhumanly as those who speak, then perhaps every young girl would ask: 'Why was not I also the favored one?' And if I had nothing else to say, I should not at all brush aside such a question as dumb; for with regard to a favor, abstractly considered, every human being is equally entitled. One leaves out the distress, the anxiety, the paradox."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "To Need God Is a Human Being's Highest Perfection," *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 294 / EUD, 300): "Indeed, the grace of God is the most wonderful of all."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 221 / SUD, 109–10): “[I]t is a true remark by Mephistopheles (in *Faust*) that nothing is more wretched than a devil who despairs; for here to despair must be understood as wishing to be weak enough to hear something of repentance and grace. . . . It is an attempt to give sin position and interest as a power by determining eternally that nothing will be heard of repentance, and nothing of grace.

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 237 / SUD, 126): “God and humanity are two qualities, between which there is an infinite difference of qualities. Any doctrine that overlooks this difference is—humanly speaking—insane; divinely understood, it is blasphemy. In paganism, the human being made God into a human being (the man-god); in Christianity, God makes himself into a human being (the god-man)—but in this, the infinite love of his merciful grace, he still makes one condition: He cannot do otherwise. Precisely this is the sorrow in Christ: ‘He cannot do otherwise;’ he can debase himself, take on the figure of a servant, suffer, die for humankind, invite all to come to him, sacrifice every day of his life, and every hour of the day, and sacrifice his life—but he cannot take away the possibility of offense.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 79 / PC, 67): “‘And what does this all mean?’ It means that everyone individually, in quiet inwardness before God, shall humble themselves under what it still means to be a Christian in the strongest sense, before God to sincerely confess where he is, that he still might worthily receive the grace offered to every imperfect person—that is, to everyone.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *For Self-Examination* (SKS 13, 46 / FSE, 17): “The demand of Christianity is: As strenuously as possible, your life should express works; then there is one thing more demanded, that you humble yourself and confess: But it is nevertheless grace that I am saved.”

## Happiness, Happy

**Danish term:** n., *Lykke*; adj., *lykkelig*; adj., *glad*

### Danish etymology:

*Lykke, lykkelig*: From Middle Low German *Luckel/Gelucke*, shares the same root at the English “luck” and bears some of the same connotations of good fortune

*glad*: From the Old Norse *glāðr*, English *glad*, originally meaning “bright, smooth”

### Danish definition:

*Lykke*: (1) A feeling of joy and satisfaction over one’s life-situation; (2) good fortune and favorable fate

*lykkelig*: (1) Feeling deep joy and satisfaction; (2) meeting good fortune; (3) auspicious

*glad*: (1) In a light, joyful frame of mind; (2) persistently finding pleasure in something; (3) in a good mood because of what is happening or has happened; (4) satisfied or relieved because of what is happening or has happened

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 148; JJ:15 / KJN 138): “Solon’s proposition that no one dares to count himself happy so long as he lives implies a deep pain over

life; for it really means that no one is happy before the moment in which he has been so, and then he is indeed unhappy in a way because he knows his happiness as something past.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 233; Not8:27 / KJN 3, 228): “I enjoy no pleasures anymore; I do not abandon myself to them with all of that infinitude, as in the old days; I do not want to be happy when she is sad.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 49–50 / EO1, 41): “This is my misfortune: beside me there always walks an angel of death, and I do not sprinkle blood on the door of the chosen as a sign that he is to pass by; no, it is precisely their door he enters; for only recollection’s love [*Kjærlighed*] is happy.”

A: “The Unhappiest One,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 214 / EO1, 221): “[H]appy the one who died in his old age; happier the one who died in his youth; happiest the one who died as he was being born; happiest of all the one who never was born. But it is not like this; death is the common fortune [*Lykke*] of all people, and insofar as the unhappiest one has not been found, he must then be sought within this boundary.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 46–47 / EO2, 39–40): “For those, however, for whom ‘the first [love]’ has acquired meaning, there are two ways. Either the first contains the promise of the future, is the motivating, the infinite impulse. These are the happy individuals for whom the first is nothing but the present, but the present as the continually unfolding and rejuvenating first. Or the first does not motivate the individual within the individual; the power that is in the first does not become the propelling but the repelling power within the individual, becomes that which pushes away. These are the unhappy individualities who continually distance themselves more and more from ‘the first.’ The latter, of course, can never occur totally absent the individual’s own fault.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 150 / EO2, 153): “[B]ut I have not been afraid of duty; it has not appeared to me as an enemy that would disturb the fragment of happiness and joy that I had hoped to rescue in life, but it has appeared to me as a friend, our love’s first and only confidant.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “The latter [the poet or orator] can do nothing of what the former does, he can only admire, love, be delighted at, and rejoice over the hero. Thus he too is happy, no less than the other; for the hero is, as it were, his better nature, with which he is in love, yet is pleased that the other is not himself, that his love can be admiration.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): “I can still save my soul if, otherwise, it is to me more important to act so that my love for God prevails in me than my earthly happiness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “On the Occasion of a Wedding,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 431 / TD, 56): “And thus marriage, in the strict upbringing of the resolution, will take away fancies and illusions, and provide love that sure fastness within the impregnable fortification of duty, and give new enthusiasm to the one resolved, and in time daily wonder over his happiness.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 99 / SLW, 103): “[Aladdin] implores [the genie] to answer

honestly, and in this word *honestly* is heard, as it were, immediacy's anxiety over its own happiness."

FRATER TACITURNUS: "Letter to the Reader," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 376 / *SLW*, 405): "The later period has the common fault of limping on both sides: neither believing in love as absolute passion or choosing impediments of *prima* quality. One negotiates with the creditors, and they let themselves be persuaded—and the article of unhappy love goes out, and instead there is one article: the somewhat happy love; there is equality and 'eens Bier' [one beer] for all."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 26 / *CUP1*, 18): "[H]ow can I, Johannes Climacus, take part in the blessedness Christianity promises?" [NB: Although the Hongs render this question with "eternal happiness," the term "happiness" (*Lykke*) does not appear; "blessedness" or "salvation" (*Salighed*) does]

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 38–39 / *WL*, 31): "Even if it was not changed, it can still be changed, for it is indeed that happy thing; but if what is true for that happy thing is true for happiness—which, when one thinks of the eternal, cannot be thought of without melancholy, just as it is said with a shudder: 'Happiness is when it has been.'"

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 435; Not15:4f / *KJN* 3, 433): "Still, she sensed a little bit how it was going for me. For this line was often dropped: But you will never be happy [*glad*], so, after all, it makes no difference to you whether I am permitted to stay with you."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 141 / *SUD*, 25): "[H]appiness is no determination of spirit, and far, far inside, farthest inside in the most hidden secret place, there, too, dwells anxiety, which is despair."

## Hero, Heroine, Heroism, Heroic

**Danish term:** n., *Helt*; n., *Heros*; n., *Heltinde*; n., *Heroisme*

### Danish etymology:

*Helt* (masculine form), *Heltinde* (feminine form): From the Middle Low German *helt*, "Hero"

*Heros*, *Heroisme*: From the Greek ἦρωσ, "hero"

### Danish definition:

*Helt*: (1) A warrior who exhibits bravery through risking his life for a lofty cause; (2) the protagonist of a play, poem, or story; (3) any individual who distinguishes themselves above others in such a way as to become a prototype

*Heros*: A man who demonstrates excellence in moral and physical virtues

*Heroisme*: Heroic and noble character, especially with regard to courage

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 255 / *CI*, 211): "Now here I hope that it shall appear both that irony has a world-historical validity, and that Socrates will not be belittled by my conception, but that he quite actually becomes a hero. . . ."

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 121 / EO1, 119): “As the hero of the opera, Don Giovanni . . . gives it its name, as usual, but he is more; he is, if I may say so, the common denominator.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 143 / EO1, 143–44): “[M]odern tragedy has no epic foreground, no epic legacy. The hero stands and falls completely on his own deeds.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 150 / EO1, 151): “The Greek hero rests in his fate; his fate is immutable; there can be no talk about it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 226 / EO2, 236): “The entire spiritual disposition of the unhappy individuality has that about it, that he cannot be happy or glad; a fate broods over him, and likewise over the tragic hero.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 227 / EO2, 237): “Yes, I assure you that if my life, through no fault of my own, were interwoven with sorrows and sufferings, so that I could call myself the greatest tragic hero, divert myself with my pain, and terrify the world by mentioning it, my choice is made; I divest myself of the hero’s garb and the pathos of tragedy; I am not the tormented one who can be proud of his sufferings, I am the humbled one who feels my transgression; I have only one expression for what I suffer—guilt; one expression for my pain—regret; one hope before my eyes—forgiveness.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 282 / EO2, 298): “One person can conquer kingdoms and countries without being a hero; another can prove themselves to be a hero by controlling their temper.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “[J]ust as God created man and woman, so too he formed the hero and the poet or orator.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 128 / FT, 33): “I am not unfamiliar with those things in the world that have been admired as great and magnanimous; my soul feels its kinship with them and is, in all humility, assured that it was also my case for which the hero fought, and in the moment of contemplation, I cry out to myself: *iam tua res agitur* [now your cause is at stake]. I think myself into the hero; I cannot think myself into Abraham.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 153–54 / FT, 60): “He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite—he is secure enough; the tragic hero gives up what is sure for that which is still surer, and the observer’s eye rests confidently on him.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 158 / FT, 65–66): “She [Mary] needs no worldly admiration, just as little as Abraham needs tears, for she was no heroine, and he was no hero; but by no means did both of them become greater than these by being exempt from the distress, the torment, and the paradox; instead they became this through them.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 159 / FT, 65–66): “A person can become a tragic hero by his own power, but not a knight of faith.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 419 / SLW, 454): “If he is religiously constructed, the misgivings are very interesting because these assure us that he is a religious hero.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 419 / SLW, 454): “At times, one has a completely external concept of a religious hero. For example, in Catholicism, particularly in the Middle Ages, there have perhaps been many who were enthusiastic for the Church just like a Roman was for his native land, and became a tragic hero for the sake of the Church, just like the Roman did for his native land. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 242 / CUP1, 266): “Ethically and religiously, one does not become a hero by being a fresh fellow who can take everything lightly, but, on the contrary, by taking life heavily, infinitely so. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 353 / CUP1, 388): “To sing of a hero of faith is just as fully an aesthetic task as to sing of a war hero. If the religious is truly the religious, has passed through the ethical and has it in itself, then it cannot forget that religiously the pathos lies not in singing and singing or writing song-books, but in existing oneself. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 83 / TA, 87): “No single man (the one distinguished in the direction of eminence and the dialectic of fate) will be able to stop the abstraction of leveling, for it is a negative superiority, and the time of heroes is past.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 88 / WL, 82): “But let them just laugh; they also laughed at Tobit; for willing to love the neighbor is always exposed to double danger, as we see from the example of Tobit. The ruler had forbidden the burial of the dead, punishable by death; but Tobit feared God more than the ruler, loved the deceased more than life—he buried them. This was the first danger. And so then Tobit dared to do this heroic deed—then ‘his neighbors laughed at him’ (Tobit 2:8). That was the other danger.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 117 / SUD, 5): “That is Christian heroism, and truly, it is rarely seen, to be sure: to dare entirely to become oneself, an individual person, this particular individual person, alone right before God, alone in this enormous exertion and this enormous responsibility. . . .”

**Hiddenness, Hidden:** See *Secrecy, Secret, Hiddenness*

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## Hope

**Danish term:** n., *Haab*; v., *haabe*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *hop*, corresponding to the English “hope”

**Danish definition:** An expectation of something good, right, or fortunate from the future

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 230; Not8:20 / KJN 3, 226): “I had placed the last thing I hoped for in life in her, and I must rob myself of it.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 27 / EO1, 19): “I would rather talk to children because with them one still dares to hope that they can become rational beings; but those who have become so—Jiminy!”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 45 / EO1, 36): “I can portray hope so vividly that every individual who hopes will acknowledge my picture; and yet it is a *falsum* [forgery]; for while I am describing it, I am thinking of the recollection.”

A: “Rotation of Crops,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 282 / EO1, 292–93): “When one has thrown hope overboard, only then does one begin to live artistically; as long as one is hoping, one cannot limit themselves. It is truly beautiful to see a person put out to sea with hope’s fair wind; one can use the occasion to have themselves taken in tow, but one ought never to have hope itself onboard their craft, least of all as a pilot; for it is a faithless captain. . . . The one who runs aground with the speed of hope will recollect like he is not able to forget.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 140 / EO2, 142): “The true individual lives both in hope and in recollection at once, and by that his life first gets true, substantial continuity. So he has hope, and therefore he does not, like the individuals who merely live off of recollection, want to go back in time. So what does recollection do for him? For it must have some influence, mustn’t it? It puts a sharp on the note of the moment; the further it goes back, the more frequent the repetition, the more sharps.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 10 / R, 132): “Hope is a new garment, stiff and tight and brilliant; yet you have never tried it on, and therefore does not know how it will suit you, or how it will fit. . . . Hope is a lovely girl who slips through one’s fingers.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 118 / FT, 22): “And he stood there, the old man with his only hope! But he did not doubt. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 184 / FT, 95): “The merman gathers his courage, he approaches Agnes, he wins her love, he hopes for his salvation.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 30 / EUD, 21): “Yes, it is probably more than the happiest hope of youth. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Preserve One’s Soul in Patience,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 198 / EUD, 195): “What is hope? A pushy nuisance one cannot be rid of.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 223 / WL, 221): “‘Love hopes all things,’ but to hope all things, indeed—although they are not seen, yes, although the opposite is seen—that is to presuppose that love is still present at bottom, and that it will still turn up in the mistaken, in the misguided, even in the lost.”



ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 133–34 / SUD, 18): “Thus, to be sick unto death is not being able to die, though not as if there were hope of life; no, it is the hopelessness that even the last hope, death, is not there. When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when you get to know that even more terrible danger, you hope for death. So when the danger is so great that death has become the hope, then despair is that hopelessness of not even being able to die.”

## Humility, Humble

**Danish term:** n., *Ydmyghed*; adj., *ydmyg*; v., *ydmyge*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *auðmjúkr* (“willing,” “humble”), a compound of *auð-*, meaning “easy,” and *mjúkr*, “soft”

**Danish definition:** (1) The quality of showing reverence, respect, and deference to others; (2) that which is not flashy, magnificent, or conspicuous in calling attention to itself

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 200 / EO1, 204): “Margrete. We know this girl from Goethe’s *Faust*. . . . What we especially love about this girl is the lovely simplicity and humility of her pure soul.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 71 / EO2, 66): “[N]aturally, he misses out on the great working capital of love and that humility that the religious in marriage gives.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 184 / EO2, 189): “If he looks at this properly . . . it . . . will teach him to bow in true humility under the eternal power.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “[F]aith is convinced that God is concerned with the least matter. I am pleased in this life to give myself to the left hand; faith is humble enough to claim the right—for that it is humility I do not deny and shall never deny.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 164 / FT, 73): “But . . . he must . . . not explain this lack of courage as humility, when, on the contrary, it is pride, while faith’s courage is the only humble courage.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “He Must Increase; I Must Decrease,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 274 / EUD, 281): “But John held fast to what he had understood of himself: his humble deed and his humble relation to the one to come; the council did not disturb him.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “He Must Increase; I Must Decrease,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 278 / EUD, 285): “But that humble self-denial remains true to itself and remains, as John did, in understanding with the one who ought to increase; for his sun indeed went down with that testimony, and yet, when was he greater than in this moment?”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 70 / SLW, 70): “If for once I discover such a girl, who is modest and humble and not corrupted by indecent social intercourse with women, nonetheless, she shall fall.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/’Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 228 / SLW, 244): “In truth, I had never dreamt that I should ever humble myself like this before a human being. Now, of course, it is certainly not before her that I am humbling myself; it is the relationship and the ethical task. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 445–46 / CUP1, 492): “But since there is an absolute difference between God and the human being, how then does the equality of love express itself? By the absolute difference. And what is the form of absolute love? Humility. Which humility? That which wholly admits its human inferiority with humble cheerfulness before God as the one who certainly knows this better than the human being themselves.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 375–76; NB5:11 / KJN 4, 375–76): “The extraordinary [*Overordentlige*] is: humbled under God by even [the] idea of how his mercy and love overpower one, thanking and thanking again—and so as one turns to human beings, to see that [one] is laughed at and mocked for exactly that, so that one, in a way, is really thanking God for being mocked and laughed at. The extraordinary, to take one of the greatest examples, is found in the Virgin Mary. Never satisfying her heart’s desire to thank God for the grace he showed her, never, never herself satisfied with her thanksgiving, but constantly seeing herself as ungrateful in comparison with God’s goodness—and then, just for being the extraordinary, to be shunned by the other girls, regarded as a woman of easy virtue, suspected by her husband. See, this would perhaps have been enough for many girls, and merely one such thing would drive them crazy or make them kill themselves—but what is even crazier is that nonetheless Mary could never thank God enough.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 177 / SUD, 62): “Like when a father disinherits a son, so will the self not recognize itself after having been so weak. In despair, it cannot forget this weakness; in a way, it hates itself; it will not humble itself under its weakness in faith, so as to reclaim itself. . . .”

## Humor, Humorist, Humorous

**Danish term:** n., *Humor*; n., *Humorist*; adj., *humoristisk*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *humor*, “fluid” or “moisture,” via either German *humor* or English *humour*; used in the ancient medical theory of the four bodily humors, but after the Renaissance, applied to mood and temperament, and then to those who affected or dissimulated a particular mood or “humor,” before finally becoming linked to comedy and the comic and associated (joyful, ludicrous, etc.) moods

**Danish definition:** Capacity or trait in virtue of which a person can perceive the comical or funny aspects of a situation or of life in general

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 176–77; JJ:113 / KJN 2, 163–64): “Really, the only one I have ever lewdly spoken with is that old China Sea captain, with whom I converse in Mini’s Café, and who thinks that I am 40 years old. Yet this conversation is more humorous. When he begins to relate how in Manilla everyone has a hussy or about

the fun he has had in his youth with the hussies (that is his favorite expression) in London, as you treat them to a glass of grog—‘For they like that so much.’—the situation is humorous enough; an old China Sea [ca]ptain (74 years old) is talking with me about this in this way. Otherwise, he probably has not taken part very much himself; for there is still a purity in him, which testifies for him; his expressions are therefore more humorous than lewd.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 145 / FT, 51): “Irony and humor also involve self-reflection and belong therefore to the sphere of infinite resignation. Their elasticity lies in the fact that the individual is incommensurable with actuality.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 120–21 / SLW, 128): “I assume that it is a poor husband who does not become a humorist by his marriage, in the same sense as it is a poor lover who does not become a poet; and every husband, I assume, becomes somewhat humorous, gets a touch of it, just as every lover becomes somewhat poetic.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 398 / CA, 95): “Is it not remarkable that the only ironist and the greatest humorist were united in saying what seems simplest of all, that one must distinguish between what one understands and what one does not understand. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 245 / CUP1, 270): “The humorous appears when one answers the problem of the *Fragments* (‘Can there be a historical point of departure for an eternal blessedness’) not with the *no* or *yes* of the verdict, but with a melancholy smile (this is the lyrical in humor), which means that both the geriatric’s 70 years and the half hour of life of the nearly stillborn is too little to be a verdict for an eternity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 457 / CUP1, 504): “The hidden inwardness of religiosity in the incognito of humor avoids attention by being like the others, only there is the background noise of the humorous in the plain reply, and a flourish of it in everyday manners, but it still takes an observer to notice this. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 458 / CUP1, 505): “Constantly (not in the sense of the pastor’s ‘always,’ but at every time of the day, wherever he is, and whatever he thinks or undertakes) the humorist puts together the idea of God with something else, and brings forth the contradiction—but even he does not relate to God in religious passion (*stricte sic dictus* [strictly speaking]). . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 504 / CUP1, 554): “Humor puts the eternal recollecting of guilt together with everything, but does not relate itself in this recollecting to an eternal blessedness.”

## Ideal, Ideality

**Danish term:** n., *Ideal*; adj., *ideal*; n., *Idealitet*

**Danish etymology:** From the neo-Latin *ideal*, based on the Greek *idéa*

**Danish definition:** (1) A conception of how something should be to be worth striving for; (2) a person or object that provides a model or perfect representation of a particular category

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 55 / EO1, 47): “From the moment my soul was astonished for the first time and humbly bowed in admiration to Mozart’s music, it has often been a dear and refreshing occupation for me to contemplate how that joyous Greek reflection on the world, which therefore calls this world κόσμος [cosmos] because it appears as a well-ordered whole, like a tasteful, transparent ornament for that spirit working through it, how that joyous reflection is repeated in a higher order of things, in the world of ideals, how there is again a governing wisdom here, worthy of admiration, especially in uniting what belongs together: Axel with Valborg, Homer with the Trojan War, Raphael with Catholicism, Mozart with Don Juan.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 403 / EO1, 415): “I do believe that a young girl would rather be completely alone with her ideal—that is to say, at particular moments, and precisely in those moments when it acts the strongest on her mind. Even if her ideal has found a quite perfect expression in a certain beloved object, there are still moments when she feels that there is an abundance in the ideal that reality does not have.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 76 / EO2, 71): “He perhaps has a vague notion of how beautiful it would be to be able to tell the children about their grandfather, who is long since dead, to strengthen their life with such an ideal image, which only belongs to recollection, to fill them with enthusiasm for everything noble and great with this idea.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 134 / EO2, 135): “This is essential to humility, that it is constantly becoming [or remaining; *bliver*]; and if one shows him it in its ideal moment, then he misses something because he feels that its true ideality does not consist in being ideal in the moment, but that it is so continuously.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 37 / R, 162): “A wit has said that one could divide humanity into officers, servant girls, and chimney sweeps. To my mind, this remark is not only witty, but also profound, and it would take a great speculative talent to give a better classification. If a classification does not ideally exhaust its object, then the accidental is preferred in all cases because it sets the imagination in motion. A somewhat true classification cannot satisfy the understanding if it is not for the imagination, and for that reason it is to be rejected, even if it enjoys great honor for daily use, owing to the fact that, on one hand, people are very stupid and, on the other, they have very little imagination.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 37 / R, 162): “If one wants to have a representation of a person in a theater, then one must either demand a concrete creation carried out absolutely in ideality, or the accidental.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 136 / FT, 41): “A lad falls in love with a princess, and the whole of his life’s content lies in this love, and yet

the relationship is such that it is impossible for it to be realized, impossible for it to be translated from ideality into reality.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 179 / FT, 89): “The family gains ideal significance only to the extent that it is drawn into the dialectic of the hero.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 198 / FT, 110): “[H]is doubt has reduced actuality to nothing for him, for my Faust is too ideal to belong among those learned doubters who doubt for one hour each semester at the lectern.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 293 / CUP1, 325): “[A]esthetically and intellectually, ideality is possibility (the restoration *ab esse ad posse*). Ethically, ideality is the reality in the individual themselves. Reality is interiority, infinitely interested in existing, which the ethical individual is for themselves.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 93 / TA, 98): “[Ideality] is the equilibrium of opposites.”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 105 / C, 319–20): “[T]ime takes something from the simple youthfulness, precisely making the genius more evident in ideality’s completely aesthetic relation to the idea. . . . She is really now a proper subject for an essential critique, since now for a second time and to a second potentiation she is coming to relate to the same idea or, expressed more exactly, precisely because it is the second time, she is coming to ideally relate to the idea completely.

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 206 / SUD, 93): “In pure ideality, where there is no talk of the single, actual person, there the transition is necessary (in the system, of course, everything goes on with necessity), or there is no difficulty at all connected with the transition from understanding to doing. This is Hellenism. . . . And the whole of modern philosophy’s secret is really completely the same.”

## Ignorance, Ignorant

**Danish term:** n., *Uvidenbed*

**Danish etymology:** Negation, *u-*, prefixed to *Viden*, “knowledge,” with suffix *-bed* indicating abstract noun

**Danish definition:** (1) Condition of lacking knowledge of something; (2) condition of lacking general or common knowledge

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 159 / EO1, 161): “But she knows everything; yet, within this knowledge, there is still an ignorance that can always keep the sorrow in motion, always transform it into pain.”

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235 / EO2, 246): “Ignorance is precisely the negative expression for infinite knowledge.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 164; JJ:76 / *KJN* 2, 152): “[B]ut now this ignorance is precisely the disquiet in his torment.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / *FT*, 43): “Even to make the familiar Socratic distinction between what one knows and what one does not know requires passion, and even more obviously passion is required to make the genuinely Socratic movement, ignorance.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 161 / *FT*, 69): “Socrates . . . has, in an intellectual respect, made infinity’s movement. His ignorance is the infinite resignation. This task is already suitable for human powers, even if those of our age reject it.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 343 / *CA*, 37): “Innocence is ignorance. It is by no means the pure being of the immediate, but it is ignorance. If ignorance is considered from the outside, that we see it defined with reference to knowledge is something that does not concern ignorance at all.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 83–84 / *CUP1*, 84): “Socrates, on the contrary, has perhaps at the same time held a little tryst with his idea, with ignorance. If he has understood the infinite in the form of ignorance, then he must have had this with him everywhere, indeed. That sort of thing does not trouble the assistant professor; he does it once a year with pathos in § 14. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 185 / *CUP1*, 202): “Socratic ignorance was thus the expression held fast with the entire passion of inwardness that the eternal truth relates to an existing person, and therefore must remain a paradox for him, so long as he exists. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 310 / *CUP1*, 339): “If, for example, someone were to call sin ‘ignorance,’ and now within this definition interpreted individual sins, then this is entirely illusory; for, within the total definition that sin is ignorance, every definition becomes essentially frivolous because the total definition is frivolousness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 101 / *WL*, 96): “That simple sage of old who, in the service of knowledge, passed judgment on paganism, he understood the art of questioning, of trapping with a question everyone who answered in ignorance; but the Christianness that does not relate to perceiving, but to acting, has the peculiarity of answering and with the answer trapping everyone in the task.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 159 / *SUD*, 44): “[T]hat the one who is in despair is ignorant of the fact that his condition is despair makes no difference; he is in despair all the same. If despair is delirium, then the fact that one is ignorant of it simply adds an error.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 159 / *SUD*, 44): “Ignorance’s relation to despair is like its relation to anxiety. . . . The spiritlessness of anxiety is known precisely by that spiritless confidence. But anxiety is at bottom all the same; thus, despair is also at bottom, and when the spell of illusion is broken, when existence begins to totter, then despair immediately appears as that which was at bottom, too.”

## Imagination

**Danish term:** n., *Indbildning*; n., *Indbildningskraft*; n., *Phantasie*

### Danish etymology:

*Indbildning*: A calque (i.e., a borrowing from another language through word-for-word translation) from the German *Einbildung*; both are compounded from the prefix meaning “in” plus a verb meaning “to form”

*Indbildningskraft*: Based on the above, with a focus on the imagination as a power or faculty

*Phantasie*: Derived from the Greek φαντασία, from the verb φαντάζειν, meaning “to make visible”

**Danish definition:** (1) The capacity to form images or representations of objects that are not currently presented to the senses; (2) the images or representations produced by this capacity

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 326–27 / CI, 292): “Who would be such a brute that he should not be able to rejoice in the free play of the imagination?”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 252 / EO1, 260): “In her imagination, she has painted a picture of Charles that can fit everyone. . . .”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 330 / EO1, 341): “She is proud; what delights other young girls, she mocks, as it should be. This is a falsity from which I shall be able to profit. Frills and frippery do not please her in the same sense as the other young girls; she is a little polemical, but this is necessary for a young girl with her romanticism. She lives in the world of the imagination.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 379 / EO1, 391): “She must discover the infinite . . . not by way of thought, which is a wrong way for her, but . . . by the easy way of the imagination and the heart. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 222–23 / EO2, 233): “You open yourself only for her, but so cautiously that she still never really comes to know anything more; you leave it to her imagination to paint the deep melancholy that you hide deep within.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 105 / FT, 9): “His wish was to be present in that moment when Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw Mount Moriah in the distance, the moment when he left the ass behind and went along with Isaac up the mountain—for it was this that occupied him: not the artful weaving of the imagination but the shudder of the thought.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 33): “[M]y memory is a faithful wife and my imagination is what I myself am not, a busy little maid who sits all day with her work and in the evening knows how to talk prettily with me so that I must see that which she describes—though it is not just landscapes, flowers, or pastoral idylls that she paints.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 30 / R, 154): “There is probably no young person with any imagination who has not once felt captivated by the enchantment of the theater and wished to be swept along into that artificial reality, to see and hear himself like a *Doppelgänger*, to divide himself into every possible dissimilarity from himself, but in such a way that every dissimilarity is still himself.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 399 / CA, 96): “[J]ust as the figure of anxiety—if one would allow the imagination to form one of these—is terrible to look upon, so would its figure terrify still even more if it finds it necessary to disguise itself in order not to appear as what it is. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 146 / EUD, 144): “Yet every such deliberation that flirts with the conditions and presuppositions of life, like a game for the imagination, serves only to bring the power of freedom to a halt and to distress the spirit in crackpot hankering and pain.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 363 / SLW, 391): “What is my sickness? Melancholy. Where does this sickness have its seat? In the imagination, and possibility is its sustenance.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 18 / TA, 15): “The poet knows the imagination’s way out; this author knows that of reality; the religious one knows that of the religious.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 151 / SUD, 35): “As a synthesis of finitude and infinitude, the self is posited, is *κατὰ δύναμιν* [potential], and, in order to now become itself, it reflects itself in the medium of the imagination, and thereby the infinite possibility shows itself.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 187 / PC, 186): “The imagination is . . . in itself more perfect than the suffering of reality; timeless, beyond the suffering of reality, it can superbly reproduce perfection; it has all of the magnificent colors to portray that; but, on the other hand, the imagination cannot reproduce suffering without doing so in a perfected (idealized)—i.e., a mitigated, faded, foreshortened—reproduction.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 189 / PC, 190): “In a certain sense, the youth’s imagination has deceived him . . . [;] it has deceived him into the true; through a deception, as it were, God has played him into His hands.”

## Immediacy, Immediate

**Danish term:** n., *Umiddelbarhed*; adj., *umiddelbar*

**Danish etymology:** From the German *unmittelbar*, meaning “immediate” or “direct”

**Danish definition:** (1) A direct, “unmediated” spatial or temporal relationship between two relata; (2) in philosophical usage, indicates a direct relationship, with no intermediary factors, between subject and object; (3) also in philosophical usage, principally pertaining to logic, epistemology, and psychology, indicating something is “not mediated” and is not accessible through a medium



**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 112 / CI, 52): “Just as it takes a high degree of healthiness to be sick, and yet one does not notice the healthiness in the positive fullness, but in the vitality that constantly nourishes the sickness, so is it also the case with the ironist and the positive fullness in him.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 71 / EO1, 64): “If sensual-erotic genius demands an expression in all of its immediacy, then the question becomes which medium is suited for that. . . . It can only be expressed in its immediacy in music.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 37 / EO2, 29–30): “The question becomes whether or not the immediate, the first love, by being taken up in a higher concentric immediacy, was secured against this skepticism, so that marital love did not need to plow under the beautiful hopes of the first love, but marital love was itself the first love with an addition of determinations that do not reduce but ennoble it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 109–10 / EO2, 108): “You continually clung to an immediacy as such, to a determination of nature, and dared not let it transfigure itself into a common consciousness. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 182 / EO2, 188): “[It] is there that the child’s whole immediacy—unaltered, unclarified—manifests itself.”

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 77 / R, 210): “Job is not the hero of faith; he does not give birth to the category of ‘trial’ through monstrous sufferings, precisely because he is so developed that he does not have it [the category] in childlike immediacy.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 172 / FT, 82): “[F]aith is not the first immediacy, but a later one. The first immediacy is the aesthetic.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 188 / FT, 98): “Sin is not the first immediacy, sin is a later immediacy.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 318 / CA, 10): “What, then, is correct considered from the standpoint of logic—that the immediate *eo ipso* is canceled—becomes idle talk in dogmatics, for who could intend to remain standing at the immediate (without further determination), since, indeed, it is *aufgehoben* at precisely the same moment it is mentioned, just as a sleepwalker awakes at the same moment his name is mentioned.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 341 / CA, 35): “The concept of immediacy belongs in logic, but the concept of innocence belongs in ethics. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 412 / CUP1, 453): “The immediate one is not essentially existing, for he is, as immediate, the happy unity of the finite and the infinite, which correspond to happiness and unhappiness as coming from the outside, as was shown.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 63 / TA, 65): “The immediacy of the age of revolution is a restoration of natural relationships in contrast to a fossilized

formalism, which, having lost the originality of the ethical, had become a withered decrepitude, a hard-hearted custom and use.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 366 / WL, 373): “What, then, is understood by ‘the beautiful’? ‘The beautiful’ is the immediate and direct object for immediate love, the choice of inclination and passion.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 141 / SUD, 25): “In spite of its illusory security and calm, all immediacy is anxiety, and therefore, quite consistently, is most anxious of nothing.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 165 / SUD, 51): “The immediate person (insofar as immediacy can appear in reality entirely without any reflection) is merely psychically determined; his self—and himself—a something within the compass of temporality and secularity, in immediate connection with the other (το ετερον), has only a illusory appearance that there was something eternal in it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 168 / SUD, 53): “Immediacy actually has no self.”

Umiddelbarheden har egentligen intet Selv. . . .

“Immediacy really has no self. . . .”

## Inclosing Reserve

**Danish term:** n., *Indesluttedhed*; in verb form, various locutions are used, such as *lukke inde i sig selv*, *slutte sig inde med sig selv*, etc.

**Danish etymology:** From the prefix *inde-*, inside, and the verb *slutte*, to close, conclude, or finish, and the suffix *-hed*, indicating an abstract noun

**Danish definition:** (1) To keep one’s thoughts and feelings to oneself; (2) to isolate oneself from the outside world and avoid contact with others

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 167 / EO1, 169): “Happiness is communicative, sociably openhearted, wants to express itself; sorrow is inclosingly reserved, silent, solitary, and seeks to return to itself.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 117–118 / EO2, 117): “Whether there are such secrets, whether that inclosing reserve—the lock of which not even love can pick—has truth, I will not decide; I am merely carrying through my principle, and as for me, I keep no secrets from my wife.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 193 / FT, 104–105): “Let a man be in Sarah’s place, let him know that if he should love a girl, then an infernal spirit will come and murder his beloved on their wedding night, and it is surely possible that he would choose the demonic; he would withdraw within himself, and say in the manner that a demonic nature speaks in secret: “Thanks, but I am no friend of ceremonies and long-winded details; I ask not at all for love’s desire, I can indeed become a Bluebeard who has his delight in seeing girls drop dead on their wedding night.””

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 424 / CA, 123): “The demonic is *the inclosingly reserved* and *the involuntarily revealed*.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 425 / CA, 124): “Now, if freedom touches inclosing reserve, it then becomes anxious.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 427–428 / CA, 126–127): “The demonic is the inclosingly reserved; the demonic is anxiety of the good. Let us have inclosing reserve be  $x$ , and its content be  $x$ ; it is to be the most terrible and the most insignificant, the most horrific, whose existence in life many perhaps do not dream of, and that bagatelle no one respects; what does the good as  $x$  mean? It means disclosure.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 435 / CA, 134): [I]t was Socrates who led irony into the world and gave the child its name, that his irony was precisely inclosing reserve, which began with closing himself off from the people, by closing himself in with himself, in order to be extended into the divine, began with closing his door and making sport of those who stood outside, in order to speak in secret . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Against Cowardliness,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 338 / EUD, 351): [D]on’t you know . . . that this witness is you yourself, that the day of judgment will compel you to be your own informant: unable to hide the most covert counsel or to forget the most fleeting thought; or unable to reserve a single thought for yourself so secretly that the conscience would not know how to prize open your inclosing reserve, or the involuntary confession would not know how to wrest it [the thought] from you.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 177 / SLW, 189): “The box was locked and when I opened it by force, the key was lying inside of it; inclosing reserve is always turned inward like this.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 215 / SLW, 231): “Inclosing reserve, silence (the teleological suspension of the duty to speak the truth) is a purely formal determination, and can therefore just as well be a form of the good as that of evil.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 396 / SLW, 428): “He can therefore exist exceptionally well in actuality, and is considered to have done so, but inclosing reserve is and remains the intimation of a higher life.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 57 / TA, 57–58): “A romantic inclosing reserve cleaves to a youth’s soul like this. The compulsion of youth for fellowship is not felt because he is already recollection. . . .”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 180 / SUD, 66): “If this inclosing reserve is preserved absolutely, *omnibus numeris absoluta*, then suicide will become the danger lying closest to him. Naturally, the majority of people have no idea of what one such encapsulated person is able to bear; if they were to learn that, they would be astounded.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 186 / SUD, 73): “[T]he more spiritual despair becomes, the more attentive it is to holding despair inclosingly reserved in inclosing reserve with demonic ingenuity. . . .”

## Individual

**Danish term:** n., *den Enkelt*; *Individ*; adj., *enkelt*

**Danish etymology:** *Enkelt* is derived from the Middle Low German *enkel*, “simple”; *Individ* is derived from the Latin *individuus*, meaning “undivided” or “indivisible”

**Danish definition:** A single specific (or non-specific) person or individual; though largely synonymous, SK uses *den Enkelt* much more commonly than *Individ*

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 96–97 / *EO1*, 92): “Faust is an idea, but an idea that is essentially also an individual [*Individ*]. . . . Don Juan is constantly hovering between being an idea—i.e., power, life—and being an individual [*Individ*].”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 241 / *EO2*, 253): “It, then, will not make the individual [*Individ*] into someone else, but into themselves; it will not destroy the aesthetic, but clarify it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 149–50 / *FT*, 55–56): “Faith is precisely this paradox, that the particular individual [*den Enkelte*] as the single individual [*den Enkelte*] is higher than the universal, is justified over and against it, not as subordinate but as superior, yet, mark this well, in such a way that it is the single individual who, after having been as the particular individual subordinate to the universal, now through the universal becomes the single individual who as the single individual stands in an absolute relation to the Absolute.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 13 / *EUD*, 5): “Although this little book . . . wishes to be what it is, a superfluity, and only desires to remain hidden, as it came into being in concealment, I still have not parted with it without a nearly crackbrained hope. Insofar as it is starting a journey, in a figurative sense, by being published, I let my eye follow it for a little while. I then saw how it drifted along down solitary roads or solitarily down the public highways. After one and another little misunderstanding, as it was betrayed by a passing resemblance, it finally met that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader; that individual whom it seeks, towards whom it stretched out its arms (as it were); that individual [*hiin Enkelte*], who is well-disposed enough to let themselves be found, well-disposed enough to receive it, whether in the moment of the encounter it met him joyous and cheerful or ‘weary and pensive.’—On the other hand, insofar as it remains in silence in the proper sense of the word by being published, without getting away, I let my eye rest on it for a little while. It then stood there like an unimportant little flower, hidden by the great forest, neither sought on account of its magnificence, nor for its fragrance or fruit. But then I really saw—or believed I saw—how that bird, whom I call my reader, suddenly spotted it [*viz.*, the flower], took wing, plucked it out, and took it with itself. And when I had seen this, I saw no more.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 13 / *EUD*, 53): “Although this little book . . . is a trifle that easily could be trod underfoot or perish

in the great world when it ventures out, or be snapped up by a bird of prey and never reach its destination, I still cheerfully closed my door in the moment of departure without fear, without any agitation of the anxious mind. Small as it is, it will probably slip through when it shifts for itself and drifts along and minds its errand and recognizes its mysterious way—until it finds that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader—until it finds what it seeks, that well-disposed person who reads aloud for themselves what I write in silence. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 80 / EUD, 72): “What horror, then, if it [love] did not also understand how to interpret itself for itself, to be understandable for the individual [*den Enkelte*], even if not another soul understood it.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 113 / EUD, 107): “It [viz., this little book] goes out a little later; it is only different from the earlier ones in that. What was not found at the second or third hour would perhaps be found at the fourth, or what was found would perhaps again be found at the fourth: what it seeks, that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader; that well-disposed person who receives the book and gives it a good place; that well-disposed person who, by receiving it, does for it by themselves and by their acceptance what the temple box did for widow’s mite: consecrates the gift, gives it meaning, and transforms it into plenty.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 183 / EUD, 179): “Although this little book . . . has left out something, it still has forgotten nothing; although it is not without hope in the world, it still wholeheartedly renounces every hope in the uncertain or about the uncertain. . . . Even if it won the tacit permission of the masses with an authoritative word, its desire is give thanks, to dare to drift along unnoticed in order to find what it seeks: that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader, who with the right hand receives what is offered with the right; that individual [*hiin Enkelte*], who in that opportune hour takes out what he received, and hides what he took out, until he takes it out again; and in this way, by his good will, his wisdom sets aside the meager gift at interest for the benefit and joy of the one who constantly wishes only to be out-of-town.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 231 / EUD, 231): “Even if this little book . . . communicates with a reader, to that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader, the speaker does not forget, though, that being able to speak is an equivocal art, and even being able to speak the truth is a highly dubious perfection. In this consciousness, then, the book goes out into the world; inclosingly reserved in itself, it does not heed the weather; does not ask after the wind; does not look after the clouds; is not mistaken about anything, but seeks and looks after only that well-disposed person who takes on the seeker; gives what is gentle an opportunity; and if the cold thoughts burn again, the talk transforms into a conversation, whose genuine familiarity is not disturbed by any recollection of the one who constantly wishes only to be forgotten; and it would be precisely the best and most preferable if the recipient perfected that great thing by letting the talk’s transitoriness rise up to incorruptibility.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 289 / EUD, 295): “Although this little book . . . is now going out into the world again, it fears even less that it should draw some delaying attention to itself than it did when it ventured forth for the first time; on the contrary, it hopes that those passing by would—on account of the repetition—hardly notice it, or just let it fend for itself. Thus, a messenger at times will go his accustomed way at certain hours; soon he is recognized, recognized so that the one passing by hardly sees him, much less looks after him—and thus this little book goes out as a messenger, but unlike a messenger it does not turn back again. It seeks that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, in order to visit him, yes, in order to stay with him, for the one whom we love, we come to him and dwell with him and stay with him, if it is granted. That is to say, as soon as he has received it, then it ceases to be. It is nothing for itself and by itself, but everything that it is, it is only for him and by him. And although the trail continually leads on to *my* reader, not back, and although the previous messenger never turns home, and although the one who sends it out never learns anything of its fate; so the next messenger still goes free and easy through death to life, confidently drifting along in order to disappear, happy to never have to turn home again—and this is precisely the joy of the one who sends it out, who constantly only comes to his reader in order to depart, and now departs for the last time.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 389 / TD, 5): “Although this little book . . . is without any invitation . . . it is still not without hope and above all not without cheerfulness. It seeks that individual [*hiin Enkelte*], whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, or it does not even seek him. Ignorant of the time and the hour, it waits in silence for that rightful reader to come like the bridegroom and bring the occasion with himself. May each do its own, the reader, therefore, the most. The meaning lies in appropriation. Hence, *the book’s joyful self-gift* [*Hengivelse*]. Here there is no worldly mine and yours, which separate, and forbid the appropriation of what is the neighbor’s. . . . [T]o see properly and not to want to forget what the mirror’s impotence is unable to bring about, i.e., appropriation, and appropriation is *the reader’s* even greater, triumphant *self-giving* [*Hengivelse*].”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 54 / CUP1, 49): “[I]t is Christianity itself that lays an enormous weight on the individual [*enkelte*] subject; it will only involve itself with him, him, him alone, and thus with each one individually.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 100–101 / TA, 106): “Not until the particular individual [*enkelte Individ*] has won an ethical attitude in spite of the whole world can there then be any talk of uniting in truth.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 120 / UD, 4): “This little pamphlet is dedicated to ‘that individual [*Hiin Enkelte*].’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 121 / UD, 5): “Although this little book . . . in relation to reality is like a fancy, and similar to a daydream, it is still not without confidence and not without hope of fulfillment. It seeks that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] to whom it completely gives itself, by whom it wishes to be received as if it had emerged in his own heart; that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with

joy and gratitude call *my* reader; that individual who willingly reads slowly, reads repeatedly, and who reads out loud—for his own sake. If it [viz., the book] finds him, then the understanding is perfected in the distance of separation, if he keeps it [viz., the book] and the understanding for himself in the inwardness of appropriation.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 257 / UD, 157): “Although this little book is without the *authority* of the teacher, *superfluous*, *insignificant*, like the lily and the bird—Oh, that it were so!—it still hopes that by finding the one thing it seeks, a good place, to find *the significance of appropriation* for that individual [*hiin Enkelte*] whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 92 / WL, 86): “Each individual [*Enkelte*] of these countless other ones is, through his difference, something specific; he represents something specific, but essentially he is something else.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 281–82; NB3:77 / KJN 4, 281–82): “The individual [*Den Enkelte*]; in a decisive manner, this category has only been used dialectically one time before (its first time) by Socrates in dissolving paganism. In Christianity, it will be used in just the opposite way the second time—to make people (the Christians) into Christians.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 194 / SUD, 80): “Not until a self, as this specific individual [*bestemte enkelte*], is conscious of existing before God, only then is it the infinite self; and this self thus sins before God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 95 / PV, 115): “The dialectic of ‘the individual’ [*den Enkelte*] is used throughout this passage] is constantly made equivocal in its double-movement. In every one of the pseudonymous writings, this thing about the individual appears in one way or another; but there the individual is predominantly the one who, defined aesthetically, is an individual in an eminent sense, the excellent one, and the like. In every one of my upbuilding writings this thing about ‘that individual’ appears, and as officially as possible, but there that individual is what every person is or can be. . . . But this doubleness is precisely the dialectic of ‘the individual.’ ‘The individual’ can signify only one out of all, and ‘the individual’ can signify everyone.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 21, 354; NB10:185 / KJN 363): “It is too much, to now suddenly want to take possession of this enormous productivity as a single thought—although I quite well see that it is that. But still, this vanity has not made up my mind in the least. . . . *Either/Or*, especially ‘The Seducer’s Diary,’ I wrote for her sake, in order to get her out of the relationship. Above all, this is exactly a sign of the genius in me, that what occupied me personally, Providence makes into something widely far-reaching. I am thinking here of what a pseudonym has written about Socrates: ‘His entire life was a personal preoccupation with himself, and then Providence comes along and adds world-historical significance to it.’ So, to take another example . . . from early on, I understood that about ‘that individual’ [*hiin Enkelte*]. But still, when I wrote it for the first time (in *Two Upbuilding Discourses*), I thought especially about this: *my* reader, for this book contained a little hint to her, and especially, for some time to come, it was enormously personally true for me, that I only sought a single [*enkelt*] reader. So,

this thought has afterwards been taken over. But here again the part of Providence is infinite.”

**Infinite, Infinity, Infinite:** See *Finitude, Finite / Infinitude, Infinity, Infinite*

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## Innocence

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**Danish term:** n., *Uskyldighed*

**Danish etymology:** Prefix *u-*, indicating negation, combined with *Skyld*, meaning guilt or debt, derived from the Old Norse *skuld* and Old English *scyld*, meaning guilt, debt, or something to which one should have or does have a duty or obligation

**Danish definition:** (1) The condition of not having committed any offense or violation of moral, religious, or other law; (2) the condition of not possessing any evil, cunning, or cynical traits—hence, extended to mean lack of life-experience

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 34 / EO1, 25): “And now life’s innocent pleasures. You’ve got to give it to them, they have only one fault, that they are so innocent. Into the bargain, they have to be enjoyed in moderation. If my doctor prescribes me a diet, that is within reason; I abstain for a certain time from certain foods; but to be dietetic in keeping a diet—that is really too much to ask.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 432 / EO1, 445): “[W]ith man, innocence is a negative moment [*Moment*]; with woman, it is the content of her being.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 56 / EO2, 49): “The first love has the moment [*Moment*] of beauty in itself, and the joy and fullness that is in the sensuous in its innocence can very well be received into Christianity.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 47): “She is assured in all her childlike naiveté and innocence, and this assurance also ennoble her being and gives her a supernatural strength, so that she, like a wonder-worker, can conjure the finite powers of existence and even make the stones weep on her behalf.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 186 / FT, 95): “It is therefore very stupid, or it is even a rumor that has been spread by mermen, that so-called culture secures a girl against seduction. No, existence is more just and equitable, there is only one help, which is innocence.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 347 / CA, 41): “This is the profound secret of innocence, that it is at the same time anxiety. Dreaming, spirit projects its own actuality, but this actuality is nothing, and innocence constantly sees this nothing outside of itself.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 90 / EUD, 83): “[O]ffense is probably never closer than when truth is cowed down, when innocence suffers. . . .”



JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 537 / CUP1, 592): “[T]he sentimental conception of the child’s innocence forgets that Christianity recognizes nothing like that in the fallen generation. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 27 / TA, 25): “[W]hat leafy bowers and rustic silence are for the innocent, or at least for the pardonably mistaken coming-into-existence of love [*Elskov*], the diversion of great events is for the continuation of forbidden love.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 157 / SUD, 42): “The minimum of despair is a condition that—well, in human terms—one could be tempted to say that it, in a sort of innocence, does not even know that it is despair.”

## Interest

**Danish term:** n., *Interesse*, adj. *interesseret*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *interesse*, “to be or lie between” (prefix *inter-* meaning “among” plus *esse*, “to be”)

**Danish definition:** (1) That which spontaneously arouses a person’s attention and preoccupation; (2) enthusiasm, commitment; (3) matters that are of importance or benefit to someone

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 41 / EO1, 32): “A recollected life-relationship has already passed into eternity and has no temporal interest anymore.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 148 / EO1, 149): “[Repentance] is the most bitter pain because it has the complete transparency of total guilt, but precisely on the grounds of this transparency, it does not interest aesthetically.”

A: “Rotation of Crops,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 288 / EO1, 299): “It is extremely beneficial to let the realities of life be undifferentiated in this way in an arbitrary interest like that.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 387 / EO1, 399): “It would really interest me if it were possible to quite accurately reproduce these conversations I conduct with Cordelia.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 224 / EO2, 234): “. . . I will not deny that you often have a real interest in the one who is sorrowing, that it is important to you to heal him, to win him for joy.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 136 / FT, 43): “It follows, as a matter of course, that any other interest whatsoever in which an individual has concentrated the whole reality of actuality for himself can, when it is seen to be unrealizable, provide the occasion for the movement of resignation.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 221 / PF, 12): “Nor can it interest me other than historically that Socrates’ or Prodikos’ teachings were this or that, for the truth in which I rest was in me and emerged from me. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 29 / CUP, 21): “Now, the investigating subject must be in one of two instances: Either they must be convinced in faith of the truth of Christianity and of their relation to it, in which case everything else cannot possibly be of infinite interest, since faith is precisely the infinite interest in Christianity, and every other interest easily becomes a temptation; or the subject is not in faith, but exist objectively, in observation [*men objektivt i Betragtningen*], and thus is not infinitely interested in settling the question.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 30 / CUP, 23): “Since, on the other hand, the investigating subject is merely historically interested (whether it be that he as a believer also in infinitely interested in the truth of Christianity, whereby his whole striving could easily entangle him in various contradictions; or that he, though without some impassioned negative decision like an unbeliever, is standing outside), he begins the work, the enormous studies, to which he himself provides new contributions, until his seventieth year. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 275 / CUP, 302): “It [abstraction] is disinterested, but the difficulty of existence is the interest of the one who exists, and the one who exists is infinitely interested in existing.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 182 / SUD, 69): “[L]ike the fire Prometheus stole from the Gods—so this is to steal from God that thought which is earnestness: that God is watching one—instead of which the despairing self is content with watching itself, which should now grant his undertakings infinite interest and importance, but this just makes them into experiments.”

## Interesting

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Interessante*; adj., *interessant*

**Danish etymology:** From the French *interessant*, present participle of *intresser*

**Danish definition:** A concept used in German aesthetics, esp. German romantic aesthetics, with an unstable semantic range; can often refer to stimulating artistic effects that are fascinating or exciting rather than beautiful or sublime, often referring to what displays individuality, force, tension, etc.; in Denmark associated with Johan Ludvig Heiberg, who took it to refer specifically to dramatic “character development” (Johan Ludvig Heiberg, “Review of Oehlen-schläger’s *Dina*,” in *Intelligensblade*, vol. 2, nos. 16–17, November 15, 1842, 80) and the modern aesthetic emphasis on portraying reflective subjectivity

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 171 / EO1, 9): “[T]he analogy to Don Giovanni must be a reflective seducer in the category of the interesting, where the question therefore becomes not how many he seduces, but how.”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 232 / EO1, 238): “[T]he occasion is . . . the most amusing, the most interesting, the wittiest of all categories.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 329 / EO1, 339): “[T]he interesting always contains a reflection upon oneself, so art, therefore, always yields the artist along with it.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 334–35 / EO1, 345): “[T]his pride makes her interesting; it shines through her being with a heightened glow. . . .”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 354 / EO1, 365): “It must emerge gradually that there was still something surprising implicit in it. Really, this is forever the law for the interesting.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 361 / EO1, 372): “It is precisely this infinite possibility that is the interesting.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 20 / EO2, 11): “Your life dissolves into nothing but interesting details such as these.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 223 / EO1, 233): “Since you have hardened your mind in order to comprehend all of existence in aesthetic categories, it is a matter of course that sorrow has not eluded your attention, for it is in and of itself as interesting as joy. That adamance, with which you hold fast to the interesting everywhere it appears continually occasions those around you to misunderstand you. . . .”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 23–24 / R, 147): “If a man has run wild in the interesting, who should redeem him then, if not a girl?”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 24 / R, 147): “[T]he interesting can never be repeated. . . .”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 25 / R, 148): “A girl who wishes for the interesting becomes the snare in which she herself is caught.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 173 / FT, 83): “The interesting . . . is a *confinium* [border category] between the Aesthetic and the Ethical. Accordingly, this inquiry must continually graze upon the territory of the Ethical, while in order to have significance it must grasp the problem with aesthetic feeling and desire.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 70 / PV, 91): “Of course, I see it very well; I hereby lose that which, from a Christian standpoint, must be considered a loss to possess: every worldly form of the interesting. . . . I lose the interesting, to be a riddle. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 73 / PV, 94): “The movement is not from the simple to the interesting, but from the interesting to the simple.”

## Inwardness, Inward Deepening

**Danish term:** n., *Inderlighed*; n., *Inderliggjørelse*

**Danish etymology:** Formed from the adjective *inderlig*, from the Old Norse *innarliga*, meaning “the inner side”; parallel to the German *innerlich*; the word was heavily influenced by German medieval mysticism, revived in the Pietist tradition following the Reformation

**Danish definition:** (1) Deep and fervent feeling; (2) the inner spiritual life; sincere religiosity

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

VICTOR EREMITA: "Preface," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 11 / EOI, 3): "[H]earing . . . became the dearest sense for me; for just as the voice is the revelation of that inwardness that is incommensurable for the outer, so the ear is that instrument by which this inwardness is perceived. . . ."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 150 / EOI, 152): "[A]s I hold fast to the inwardness of duty in love, I do not do it with that wild anxiety, as it sometimes happens with people whose prosaic understanding has first destroyed the immediate, and who now in their later years have made an attempt at duty—people who in their blindness do not know to scoff strongly enough at the purely natural, nor are stupid enough to sing the praises of duty. . . ."

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 22 / R, 146): "If the young man had believed in repetition, what could he not have produced? What inwardness would he have achieved in life?"

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 177 / FT, 88): "Despite the stringency with which ethics requires disclosure, it still cannot be denied that silence and secrecy really do make a human being great, precisely because they are qualifications of inwardness."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 181 / FT, 91): On the whole, poetry would, if it is attentive to the religious and the individual's inwardness, obtain far more meaningful tasks than those with which it now busies itself."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 439 / CA, 138): "Certainty, inwardness . . . can only be achieved by action and exist only in action. . . ."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 441 / CA, 141): "If that 'pious' person is in an unfree relation to his piety, i.e., he lacks inwardness, then he is comical from a purely aesthetic perspective."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious," *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 369 / EUD, 386): "[I]nwardness . . . cannot straight away penetrate the outward. . . ."

QUIDAM: "'Guilty?'/ 'Not Guilty?,'" *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 327 / SLW, 351): "My idea was to ethically set my life fast in my innermost being and to conceal this inwardness in the form of deception. Now I am forced even further back into myself; my life is religiously set fast so far back in inwardness that I have difficulty in making my way to actuality."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 192–93 [sks. dk 7, 192] / CUP1, 210): "[H]ere is the certainty that—viewed objectively—it is the absurd, and this absurd held fast in the passion of inwardness is faith."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 236 / CUP1, 260): "[T]he reception of inwardness is not the direct reproduction of what is communicated, for this is an echo. But the repetition of inwardness is the resonance in which what is said gets lost, as with Mary when she *hid* the words in her heart."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 48–49 / TA, 59): "You know, it is probably true that inwardness is the life of falling in love, and that inwardness in itself

is what falling in love is; that inwardness, for example, can be the same, whether someone steps out onto the balcony and beholds the starry night, or it is a lifer who steals a glance at that single star through a crack—the inwardness of the latter is perhaps even greater; but really, falling in love is just like a person's birth—that the circumstances, the surroundings, along with the psychological disposition have a great influence on what is born.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 138 / WL, 136): “[T]here are certain things—among them the secrets of inwardness, in particular—that would lose something by being published, and which are completely lost if the publication has become the most important thing for one. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 139 / WL, 137): “[A]nd what is Christianity other than inwardness?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 443; Not15:14 / KJN 3, 443): “Delightful was she when I saw her the first time, lovely in truth, lovely in her devotion, moving, moving in her sorrow in a noble sense, not without dignity in the final moment of the separation, childlike from start to finish; and one thing I always found with her, one thing that would be enough for me for that eternal eulogy: silence and inwardness; and one power had she: a worshipful gaze when she pleaded that could move stones; and blissful it was to enchant life for her, blissful to see her indescribable bliss.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 172 / SUD, 57): “Then there is a moment in their lives—ah, this is their best time—when they really begin to turn inward.”

## Irony

**Danish term:** n., *Ironi*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek εἰρωνεία, meaning dissimulation, from εἶρων, a deceiver

**Danish definition:** (1) The expression of something that the speaker does not mean and, often, the opposite of what he means; (2) in the context of German Romanticism, the freedom of fantasy over reality; (3) in a philosophical context, often the state of mind of placing the finite in comparison with the infinite, thereby negating its significance; (4) the dissimulation and assumed ignorance practiced by Socrates

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 258 / CI, 213): “For irony, just like the law, is a demand, and irony is an enormous demand, for it scorns reality and demands ideality. . . . And just as irony reminds one of the law, so the Sophists should remind one of the Pharisees, who in the realm of the will operated in utterly the same manner as the Sophists in the realm of knowledge.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 258 / CI, 213): “[P]recisely because this demand for that age in world history was true, Socrates’ irony is world-historically empowered, and does not have the sickliness and the egotism that it has in a far later age. . . .”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 123 / EO1, 120): “[I]rony is . . . the disciplinarian of immediate life.”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 265 / EO1, 273): “When the curtain falls [on *The First Love*], . . . the only thing we hear is laughter, which, like a natural sound, does not come from a single person, but is the language of a global force, and this force is irony.”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 270 / EO1, 278): “Without irony, an artist can never sketch. . . .”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 343 / EO1, 353): “Cordelia always notices the irony; that is just what I want.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 129 / EO1, 129): “When you see a married couple whose connection, as it seems to you, drags on in the most ghastly boredom, . . . you are indeed justified if you let the lightning of irony hit them, or the thunder of anger terrify them.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 199 / FT, 111): “There even appear places in the New Testament that praise irony, so long as it is used to hide the better part. This movement is, however, just as much one of irony as it is anything else that is based on subjectivity’s being higher than actuality.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 435 / CA, 134): “Irony has been explained as the negative. The first discoverer of this explanation was Hegel, who—strangely enough—did not understand much about irony.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 456 / CUP1, 503): “Irony is the unity of ethical passion that in inwardness infinitely accentuates one’s own I in relation to the ethical demand—and the unity of culture that in outwardness infinitely abstracts from one’s own I as a finitude along with all the other finitudes and particulars. . . . The mass of people lives the other way around. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 457 / CUP1, 503): “Irony is an existence-determination, and nothing, then, is more laughable than if one believes that it is a form of speech, or if an author counts himself lucky to have expressed himself ironically once in a while. The one who essentially has irony has it all day long, and is not bound to some form because it is the infinite in him.”

## Joy

**Danish term:** n., *Glæde*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *glæði*

**Danish definition:** (1) Feeling of contentment or happiness, esp. in relation to some object, generally deeper than pleasure; (2) that which evokes the feeling of joy

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 11 / EO1, 3): “Perhaps you yourself have concealed a secret that you felt, in your joy or in your pain, was too dear to you to initiate others in.”

A: “Disapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / EO1, 20): “It is well-known that there are insects that die in the moment of fertilization; so it is with all joy—life’s highest and most luscious moment of enjoyment is attended by death.”

A: “Disapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 39 / EO1, 30): “So it is to you, you unfortunate pair of artists, that I owe this joy.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 197 / EO2, 204–5): “This joy you now have chosen, this laughter of despair.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 201 / EO2, 209): “If it is guilt and offense, a troubled conscience, that bring a person to despair, then he will perhaps have difficulty winning back his joy.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 225 / EO2, 235): “Someone who says that sorrow is the meaning of life has joy outside of himself in the same way that someone who wishes to be happy has sorrow outside of himself. Joy can then take him unawares in entirely the same way that sorrow can take the other. . . . Time consumes the children of time, and such a sorrow is a child of time, and the eternity it dissembles to own is a deception.”

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235 / EO2, 246): “When you receive these lines, I will be no more. Should anyone ask you the reason, then you can say that once upon a time there was a princess named Morning Glory or something like that; for I would answer like that myself if I could have the joy of surviving myself.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 29 / R, 153–54): “What if a man came to Rome, fell in love with a little part of the city that was an inexhaustible source of joy for him, and left Rome without having seen a single wonder!”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 107 / FT, 10): “But Isaac could not understand him; his soul could not be uplifted. He gripped Abraham’s knees, pleading at his feet, begging for his young life, for his fair hope; he reminded him of the joy in Abraham’s house, he recalled the sorrow and the loneliness.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 109 / FT, 12): “Upon that day Abraham grew old; he could not escape the thought that God had demanded this of him. Isaac thrived as formerly; but Abraham’s eyes were darkened and he saw joy no more.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 110 / FT, 13): “Sarah kissed Isaac, her delight, her joy at all times.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 131 / FT, 36): “He then . . . received Isaac with more joy than the first time.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): “I shall not become some biting grumbler, but find joy and peace and rest in my pain. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 154 / FT, 60–61): “He suffers all the tragic hero’s pain, he annihilates his joy in the world, he renounces everything, and perhaps he, in the very same moment, barricades himself off from the exalted joy that is so precious to him that he would buy it for any price. Him, the observer cannot understand in the slightest, nor indeed can he rest his eye confidently on him.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 22 / EUD, 12–13): “If a man said, ‘When human beings disdained me, then I went to God, he became my teacher, and this is my blessedness, my joy, my pride,’ would this be any less beautiful?”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 164 / SLW, 176): “The joy of existence, which he thinks the others enjoy, becomes a burden to him. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 202 / CUP1, 221): “He dupes the listener; he calls the joy inexpressible—and then a new surprise, a truly surprising surprise; he states it.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 62 / TA, 63): “Instead of joy a certain dubious, distinguished, discontent appears. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 258 / WL, 259): “[W]hat joy for the lover that he always dares to hope; what joy for him that eternity vouches that there is always hope.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 58 / PV, 79): “[M]y only joy from nearly as far back as I can remember was that no one could discover how unhappy I felt. . . .”

## Knight, Knighthood, Knightly

**Danish term:** n., *Ridder*

**Danish etymology:** From the Middle Low German *ridder*

**Danish definition:** (1) Freeborn man who was obligated to perform military service on horseback; (2) a member of the class that developed from this warrior class, or of the various knightly orders that developed from it; (3) a person whom a head of state has enrolled in an order of knighthood; (4) a person acting with the character of a knight, or to the demands made upon knights in codes of chivalry; (5) someone who seeks to demonstrate superiority in a light-hearted way by making merry of something or someone

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 29; EE:71a / KJN 2, 25): “And however different knights and scholastics were, they still had this in common: that they went on adventures; for thought also has a certain adventurousness that is just as refreshing, just as noble, just as heavenly as that of the knights.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 29; EE:71c / KJN 2, 25): “While the clergy showed the uttermost point of indifference towards women in celibacy, the other



side reached its ideal in chivalry—and yet there was a likeness, as we can indeed also see that if the knight demanded it, he could be buried as a priest.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 92 / *EO1*, 87–88): “[T]he Middle Ages is on the whole the time of representation, partly conscious, partly unconscious; the totality is represented in a single individual, though in such a way that it only is a single side that is determined as the totality and which now turns up in a single individual, who therefore is both more and less than an individual. Then by the side of this individual stands another individual, who just as completely represents another side of life’s content, such as the knight and the scholastic, the priest and the layman.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 93 / *EO1*, 88): “[T]he quarrelsome, misunderstood anticipation of the erotic, which turned up in the knight. . . .”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 172 / *EO1*, 175): “[T]he sympathetic knight of sorrow rejoices in having found what he sought, for we would not seek the present but the past; not joy, for it is always present, but sorrow, for its essence is to pass by. . . .”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 190 / *EO1*, 194): “Involuntarily, I turned around; it was a knight who was rushing past me. How handsome he was—his gait so light and yet so powerful, so regal and yet so quick; he turned his head around to look back—his countenance so prepossessing and yet his gaze so restless. It was Don Giovanni. Is he rushing to a tryst or coming from one?”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 309 / *EO1*, 319): “. . . I am a good-natured person who, like a knight, comes to the rescue of a young girl, and I can also clasp your hand in no less than a good-natured manner.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 352 / *EO1*, 363): “[T]he knight spreads out his cape so red and bids the beautiful maiden to sit upon it.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 428–29 / *EO1*, 441–42): “It is therefore completely in order that *Gretchen* in *Faust* conducts a little examination of him, since Faust has used that indiscretion to reveal the knight in him, and a girl is always armed against such an attack.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 64 / *EO2*, 59): “So let Don Juan keep the leafy bower, the knight the nocturnal heaven and stars, if he sees nothing above that. Marriage has its heaven even higher.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 119 / *EO2*, 119): “[I]f the knight has the right to say that the one who does not defy the whole world to save his beloved does not know the knightly love, then the married man has permission to say the same.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 172–73 / *EO2*, 177): “When

the soul has seen the highest, what no mortal eye can see, and which can never be forgotten, then the personality receives that order of knighthood that ennobles it for an eternity. He does not become another than he was before, but he remains himself [*blive sig selv*]. . . .”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 22–23 / R, 146): “My intention was merely to represent the first moment when it became clear that the young man in a broad sense was the sorrowful knight of recollection’s sole happy love.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 133 / FT, 38): “The knights of infinite resignation, one recognizes easily, their gait is airy, bold.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 136 / FT, 42): “The knight of infinite resignation . . . does not give up the love, not even for all the world’s glory.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 139 / FT, 45): “If, however, the princess is likeminded, . . . she will then initiate herself into that order of knighthood into which one is not admitted by ballot, but of which everyone is a member who has courage to enroll themselves; this knightly order, in which someone proves their immortality, makes no distinction between man and woman.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 49–50): “By my own power I can give up the princess, and I shall not become some biting grumbler, but find joy and peace and rest in my pain; but by my own power I cannot get her again, for I expend everything in order to resign. ‘But by faith,’ says that miraculous knight, ‘by faith you shall get her, in virtue of the absurd.’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 144 / FT, 50): “And yet it must be glorious to get the princess; yet, faith’s knight is the only happy person, the heir of the finite, while resignation’s knight is a stranger and a foreigner.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 170 / FT, 79–80): “The true knight of faith is always in absolute isolation, whereas the spurious one is sectarian.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of an Eternal Salvation,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 252 / EUD, 255): “[I]mprovident, like that Romantic knight of thought. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Against Cowardliness,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 340 / EUD, 353): “The one God does not knight with his mighty hand, he is and remains cowardly in the depths of his soul, if for no other reason than that he was too proud to endure the order of knighthood, since it, like every order, demands the confession of one’s own unworthiness.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 60–61 / SLW, 59): “[A] girl has inspired many a man and made a knight of him; but have you heard of anyone who became valiant because of his wife?”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 98 / SLW, 103): “When one is speaking of that immediate infatuation, it cannot be decided in the least if it is a knight or a seducer who is speaking; for the next moment decides this.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 116 / SLW, 122): “The doleful knight of reflection goes further; he will fathom the synthesis that lies in love [*Elskov*].”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 185 / SLW, 198): “[H]e . . . has hopes for that honor that the Middle Ages granted the scholastic when he died: to be buried as a knight.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 206 / SLW, 220): “What am I then? A fool, a fantasist, a highly strung knight who takes a young girl’s words greatly to heart.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 383 / SLW, 413): “I express myself quite dubitively and do not have that passion, like my knight. . . .”

## Knowledge

**Danish term:** n., *Viden*; n., *Erkjendelse*; n., *Kundskab*

### Danish etymology:

*Viden*: From Old Norse *vita*, cognate with German *nowle*; thought to ultimately derive from the perfect form of the Proto-Indo-European verb *weyd-* (“see”)

*Erkjendelse*: From the German *erkennen*, “recognize, see”

*Kundskab*: From Middle Low German *kuntschap*, from *kund* “known”

### Danish definition:

*Viden*: (1) Everything a person has learned about a topic through either teaching or experience; (2) familiarity or acquaintance with something, initiation into something; (3) the active condition of knowing or experiencing something

*Erkjendelse*: (1) Understanding and (reluctant) acceptance, especially in matters about which one holds doubts or disagreements; (2) knowledge gained through thinking, research, or experience

*Kundskab*: (1) Knowledge, insight, or understanding gained through experience or education; (2) knowledge or information about a particular case

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 107 / CI, 46): “[K]nowledge [*Erkjendelse*] could also be led back to a completely negative concept by defining it as appropriation, acquisition. . . .”

A: “Disapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 44 / EO1, 35): “To a knowledge of the truth, I perhaps have come; to blessedness [or salvation; *Salighed*], assuredly not.”

UNNAMED JUTLAND PASTOR: “Ultimatum,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 328 / EO2, 349): “If, on the other hand, it was God you loved . . . then there is no contradiction between your knowledge [*Viden*] and your wish.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 37 / R, 162–63): “. . . Socrates, who was, after all, especially strong in knowledge of human nature and self-knowledge

[*Menneskekundskab og Selverkjendelse*], ‘did not know with certainty whether he was a person or a still more mutable animal than Typhon.’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 178 / FT, 88): “Lessing was not just one of the most comprehensive minds Germany has had; he was not merely in possession of an entirely rare precision in his knowledge, because of which one can safely rely upon him and his autopsies without fear of being deceived by loose, undocumented quotations, half understood phrases fetched from unreliable compendia, or of being disoriented by a stupid trumpeting of “novelties” that the ancients had better stated—but he had beyond this a most unusual gift for explaining what he himself has understood. There he stopped, while in our age one goes further, and one explains more than one has oneself understood.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 71 / EUD, 62): “[W]ouldn’t such a knowledge [*Viden*] be an inhuman knowledge?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 36 / CUP1, 30): “If all the angels lumped themselves together, they could still only bring about an approximation because in relation to historical knowledge [*Viden*] an approximation is the only certainty.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 79 / CUP1, 79): “Wherever the subject is of importance in knowledge [*Erkjendelse*], appropriation is really what is essential. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 81 / CUP1, 81): “Sensuous certainty is deceit (cf. Greek skepticism and the whole account in modern philosophy, from which one can learn very much); historical knowledge is a sense illusion (since it is approximation-knowledge [*Approximations-Viden*]); and the speculative result is a delusion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 150 / CUP1, 162): “As it is told, he [Socrates] is supposed to have discovered a disposition for all evil in himself. . . . His ethical knowledge [*Viden*] has probably helped him to make that discovery.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 184 / CUP1, 200–201): “[W]hile object knowledge strolls down approximation’s long road, not even urged on by passion, for subjective knowledge [*Viden*] every stop could be fatal, and the decision is so infinitely important that it is immediately pressing, as if the opportunity had already passed by unused.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 217 / WL, 215): “That is why knowledge [*Kundskab*] puffs itself up. And yet knowledge and the communication of knowledge can indeed also be upbuilding; but if they are that, that is because love is there.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 229 / WL, 227): “What exactly is the shrewd secret of mistrust? It is a misuse of knowledge [*Viden*], a misuse that, without further ado, will attach its *ergo* in one breath to what as knowledge is completely true,

and finally becomes something completely different. . . . The secret and the falsity lies in that it now without further ado turns this knowledge into a belief [*en Troen*], as if it were nothing. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 232 / WL, 230): “[K]nowledge [*Viden*] as such is impersonal and should be communicated impersonally. Knowledge puts everything in possibility and is really outside of the reality of existence in possibility. . . .”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 163 / SUD, 48): “In all darkness and ignorance, there is a dialectical interplay between knowledge [*Erkjendelse*] and will, and one can err in perceiving a person by only accentuating knowledge or by only accentuating the will.”

## Leap

**Danish term:** n., *Spring*; v., *springe*

**Danish etymology:** Derived from the Old Norse *springa*, “to well up,” “to swell up,” “to break forth,” “to burst forth”

**Danish definition:** (1) The sudden movement of a living being from one place to another; (2) a movement from one position to another that glides or hovers over something, either from a standing start or a powerful approach; (3) a sudden transition to a new, significant, and possibly risky venture

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

v. J.: *The Battle between the Old and the New Soap-Cellars* (SKS 17, 294 / EPW, 121): “[I]n its locomotion, the common animal always goes simply just after its nose, whereas the noble bird of prey, the worthy predator fish, the proud beast of prey, are seen seizing their prey in a leap. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 90 / CI, 28–29): “[H]istory’s repeated run-up to this infinite leap also has its truth. . . .”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 379–80 / EO1, 391–92): “Everywhere a young girl turns, she has the infinite around her, and the transition is a leap, but—note well—a feminine one, not a manly one. How clumsy men really are in general! If they are supposed to leap, then they take a run-up, make long preparations, measure the distance with their eyes, run up to it several times, become shy and turn back again. At long last, they would leap and fall in. A young girl leaps in a different manner. In mountainous regions, one often encounters two jutting peaks. A yawning chasm separates them, terrifying to look down into. No man will dare this leap. A young girl, on the other hand, so the inhabitants of the region would relate, has dared it, and it is called the maiden-leap. . . . And yet such a leap for a young girl is only a hop, while the man’s leap always becomes laughable. . . . And now the leap—who here would dare once more to be graceless enough to separate what belongs together! Her leap is a hovering.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 107 / EO2, 106): “Now I will not pursue your bold steps any further, if you leap from one peak to another like a chamois hunter.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 14 / R, 136): “As he is beginning, he takes such a tremendous step that he leaps over life.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 44 / R, 170): “That little dancer, who had enchanted me last time with a charm that—so to speak—was poised to leap, she had made the leap. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / FT, 41): “It is supposed to be the most difficult task for a dancer to leap into a definite position in such a way that there is no instant in which he grasps for the position, but in the leap itself stands in the position. Perhaps no dancer can do this—but this knight does it. . . . [T]o be able to fall in such a way that it seems in the same instant one stands and one walks, that transforms the leap of life into a gait, to absolutely express the sublime in the pedestrian—only this knight can do that, and this is the only miracle.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): “Every movement of infinity happens with passion, and no reflection can produce a movement. This is the perpetual leap into existence that explains the movement.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 324 / CA, 16): “[T]his ideality breaks out in the dialectical leap and in that positive feeling: Behold, all things are become new—and the negative feeling that is the passion of the absurd, which the concept ‘repetition’ matches.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 337 / CA, 30): “The new quality comes to light with the first, with the leap, with the suddenness of the enigmatic.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 338 / CA, 32): “Sin, then, comes in as the sudden, i.e., by the leap; but this leap also establishes the quality. Yet while the quality is established, in the same moment [*Øieblik*] the leap turns into the quality and is presupposed by the quality. and the quality by the leap.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 415 / CA, 113): “Every state is established by a leap.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 432–33 / CA, 131–32): “[T]he balletmaster Bournonville deserves great credit for the presentation he himself gives of Mephistopheles. That *horreur* that seizes us upon seeing Mephistopheles leap in through the window and remain standing in the leap’s position! This jolt in the leap—which reminds us of the leap of the bird or beast of prey and is doubly terrifying, since in general it breaks forth from a perfectly stationary stance—is infinitely effective. Mephistopheles must therefore walk as little as possible; for walking [*Gang*] itself is a sort of transition [*Overgang*] to the leap, and contains a presentiment of the possibility of the leap. Mephistopheles’ first appearance in the ballet *Faust* is, therefore, not a theatrical coup, but a highly profound thought.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 368 / EUD, 385): “The child leaps over the difficult: death.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 96–97 / CUP1, 98): “[T]he transition whereby something historical and the relationship to this

something becomes decisive for an eternal blessedness is a μεταβασις εις αλλο γενοσ (Lessing even says that if this transition is not a μεταβασις εις αλλο γενοσ [transformation into another genus], then I do not know what Aristotle understood by that word, pg. 82), a leap both for the contemporary and for the latecomer.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 97 / CUP1, 99): “[T]o have been quite close to making the leap is nothing at all, precisely because the leap is the category of decision.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 100 / CUP1, 103): “If one is disinclined to leaping, so disinclined that this passion makes ‘the ditch infinitely broad,’ then that ingeniously invented springboard does not help one at all. Lessing perceives quite well that the leap—as that which is decisive—is qualitatively dialectical, and permits no approximating transition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 103 / TA, 108–9): “But if it was the most trusted of the unrecognizable, and if it was that woman who had borne him under her heart, and if it was that girl he would gladly have sacrificed his life for, he shall not dare and could not help them; they must make the leap for themselves, and the deity’s infinite love shall not become a relationship at second hand for them.”

## Love

**Danish term:** n., *Elskov*; v., *elske*; n., *Kjærlighed* or *Kjærlighed* (SK uses both spellings: *Kjærlighed* is much more common in the period spanning *From the Papers of One Still Living* through *Stages on Life’s Way*, whereas *Kjærlighed*, previously restricted mostly to the upbuilding discourses—in which he uses both spellings—becomes more common starting with *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*)

**Note:** These words are also frequently used in compounds, such as *Forelskelse* (“being in love”), *Faderkjærlighed* (“fatherly love”), *Moderkjærlighed* (“motherly love”), etc.

### Danish etymology:

*Elskov* and *elske* are derived from the Old Norse *elskhugi*, “having love on the mind”

*Kjærlighed* is derived from the Old Norse *karleikr*, “warm inner feeling for a person”

**Danish definition:** Care and concern for another person, generally in connection with feelings of strong inner warmth, perceptions of high value (goodness, beauty, etc.), and feelings of intense joy; there is a tendency, but a tendency only, for *Elskov* to refer specifically to erotic or romantic attachments (compare Greek ἔρωσ, Latin *amor*), and *Kjærlighed* for all other types of attachment, but both terms can and often are used to any type of loving concern

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 225; Not8:2 / KJN 3, 221): “You say: ‘What have I lost or rather robbed myself of?’ What I have lost, ah, how should you know or understand it? If there is talk of this, you would do best to keep quiet—and how should anyone know that better than I, who made the whole of my tremendously reflected soul into such a tasteful setting for her pure, deep—and my dark—thoughts, my melancholic dreams, my glimmering hopes, and above all, my whole inconstancy; in

short, everything glimmering at the side of her depth. And if I then swooned by looking down into her infinite devotion, for nothing is ever so infinite as love [*Kjærlighed*]<sup>1</sup>—or if her feelings did not sink down into the deep, but danced over it in love’s [*Kjærlighedens*] easy game — — —

“What have I lost? The only one I loved. What have I lost? In people’s eyes, my chivalrous word. What have I lost? That on which I have always and always shall set my honor, my joy, my pride: to be faithful. . . . Yet my soul is as restless as my body at the moment I am writing this—in a cabin, shaken by the double-movements of a steamship.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 29 / EO1, 20–21): “My melancholy is the most faithful mistress I have ever known; no wonder, then, that I love her back.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 33 / EO1, 24): “The most beautiful time is really the first period of falling in love [*Forelskelsens*], when with every meeting, with every glance, one brings home something new to rejoice over.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 49–50 / EO1, 41): “This is my misfortune: beside me there always walks an angel of death, and I do not sprinkle blood on the door of the chosen as a sign that he is to pass by; no, it is precisely their door he enters; for only recollection’s love [*Kjærlighed*] is happy.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 51 / EO1, 42): “This calls to mind my youth and my first love [*Kjærlighed*]<sup>2</sup>—then I longed, now I only long after my first longing. What is youth? A dream. What is love [*Kjærligheden*]? The content of the dream.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 67 / EO1, 60): “What one has loved with youthful infatuation, what one has admired with youthful enthusiasm, what one has, in the soul’s inwardness, maintained a secretive, mysterious intercourse with; what one has hidden in one’s heart—this one will always approach with a certain shyness, with mixed feelings, if you know that your intent is to understand it.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 88–89 / EO1, 83): “Ethically qualified love [*Kjærlighed*] or marital love [*Kjærlighed*] is set as the goal of the development, and therein lies the piece’s fundamental flaw; for whatever such love might be, ecclesiastically or secularly speaking, one thing it is not: It is not musical—yes, it is absolutely unmusical.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 99 / EO1, 95): “Psychical love [*Elskov*] is the continuance in time; sensual [love], disappearance in time. . . .”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 356–57 / EO1, 368): “I am an aesthete, an eroticist, who has comprehended the essence of love [*Kjærlighedens*] and the point of it, who believes in love [*Kjærligheden*] and knows it from the ground up, and only reserve for myself the private opinion that every love affair [*Kjærlighedshistorie*] lasts for half a year at the most, and that every relationship is over as soon as the last thing has been enjoyed.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 369 / EO1, 381): “[Y]et I know quite well that love [*Elskoven*], especially as long as



passion is not set in motion, demands of its object that he not offend aesthetically against morality.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 376 / EO1, 388): “Love [*Elskov*] loves secrecy—an engagement is a disclosure; it loves silence—an engagement is a public announcement; it loves whispering—an engagement is a loud proclamation.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 406 / EO1, 418): “Love [*Elskoven*] is all too substantial to be contented with chatter, the erotic situations all too meaningful to be filled with chatter. They are silent, still, in fixed outlines, and yet eloquent, just like the music of the Colossus of Memnon.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 38 / EO2, 30–31): “Christianity holds firmly to marriage. If marital love [*Kjærlighed*] really cannot contain all of the first love’s [*Kjærligheds*] eroticism in itself, then Christianity is not the highest development of the human race, and it is assuredly a secret anxiety about such a discrepancy that is largely to blame for the despair with which the modern lyric resounds in both poetry and prose.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 99 / EO2, 96): “[M]arital love [*Kjærlighed*] is not only just as beautiful as the first love but even more beautiful because, in its immediacy, it contains a unity of several opposites.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 136 / EO2, 138): “Romantic love [*Kjærlighed*] continually remains abstract in itself, and if it cannot get an external history, then death is already lying in wait for it because its eternity is illusory.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 12 / R, 134): “Say what you will, a young person deeply in love [*forelsket*] is something so beautiful that if you catch sight of that, you will forget the observation out of joy at the sight.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 14 / R, 136): “He was deeply and fervently in love [*forelsket*], that was clear, and yet he was able to immediately recollect his love [*Kjærlighed*] a few days later. At bottom, he was finished with the whole relationship.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 22 / R, 145): “Only the one who can really love, only he is a man; only the one who can give his love [*Kjærlighed*] any expression whatsoever, only he is an artist.”

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 70 / R, 202): “When I saw her joy in being loved, I subjected myself and everything she pointed to under the magic power of love [*Elskovens*]. Is it blameworthy that I was able to do this, or blameworthy that I did it?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 107 / FT, 10): “And God tested Abraham and said, Take Isaac, your only son, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on the mountain that I will show you.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 113 / FT, 16): “No one shall be forgotten who was great in the world; but each was great in his own way, and each in relation to the greatness of what he loved. For the one who loved himself became

great by himself, and the one who loved other human beings became great through his devotion, but the one who loved God became greater than all.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 128 / FT, 32): “[L]ove has its priests in the poets.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “God’s love is, to me, both in the direct and the converse sense, incommensurable with the whole of actuality.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 447 / CA, 147): “The one who really loves can hardly find joy, satisfaction, not to mention growth, by fiddling with a definition of what love [*Elskov*] really is.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 19 / EUD, 9): “What others do easily and without trouble seems hard and difficult for this person; what he himself does easily towards others seems difficult for him in relation to the one he loves the most, and the difficulty becomes greater the more he loves.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 74 / EUD, 64): “Love [*Kjerligheden*] could forgive 70 by 7 times, and sin became tired more quickly of deserving forgiveness than love [*Kjerligheden*] did by forgiving.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 83 / EUD, 75): “But in order to love a person like this, one must have courage to will [*vil*] to love; for this is the secret of earthly love [*Kjerlighed*], that it has a stamp of God’s love [*Kjerligheden*] on it, without which it would become an act of folly, or an insipid flattery, as if the one person was thus perfect in relation to the other, that the one could awaken this anxiety or indeed be able to take away everything from the other.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 390 / SLW, 421): “Love [*Kjerligheden*] itself has an ethical and an aesthetic moment. She says she loves, and has the aesthetic and understands it aesthetically; he says that he loves, and understands it ethically. Thus, they both love and love each other, but it is still a misunderstanding.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 535 / CUP1, 589): “If it happened that a father, even the most loving and careful one, just at the moment he wanted to do the best for his child, did the worst, did the worst thing that perhaps disturbed the child’s whole life, should the son therefore drown piety in the oblivion of indifference, or transform it into anger, if he is reminded of the circumstances? Well, let wretched souls who only could love God and people when everything goes their way, let them hate and defy in spite; a faithful son will love, unchanged. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 49 / TA, 50): “But according to an ancient author, it makes a difference whether it is morning or evening dew; thus, it also makes a difference whether the authentic individuality of falling in love [*Forelskelsens*] was formed by hope or by recollection.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 20 / WL, 12): “It is said in relation to certain plants that they must grow a heart; in this way, it may be said of a person’s love [*Kjerlighed*]: If it shall really bear fruit, and consequently be known by the fruit, then it must first *establish a heart*.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 51 / WL, 44): “[C]hristianity has pushed love [*Elskov*] and friendship from the throne, the love [*Kjerlighed*] of drive and inclination, partiality [*Forkjerligheden*], in order to set in their place the love [*Kjerlighed*] of the spirit, that for ‘the neighbor,’ a love [*Kjerlighed*] that in truth and earnestness is more tender than love [*Elskov*] in fervor.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 149 / WL, 147): “Love [*Kjerlighed*] is a matter of conscience, and must therefore be from a pure heart and an unfeigned faith.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 442; Not15:13 / *KJN* 3, 442): “In a way, I gave her the bow in her hand; I put the arrow on the bowstring myself, showed her how she should aim—my thought was—and it was love [*Kjerlighed*—either I become yours, or you shall have permission to wound me so deeply, wound me in my melancholy and in my God-relation, so deeply that I, though separated from you, still remain yours.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 160 / *SUD*, 45): “[T]his distinction is just as deceptive as that which paganism and the natural man make between love [*Kjerlighed*] and self-love [*Selvkerlighed*], as if all of this love [*Kjerlighed*] were not essentially self-love [*Selvkerlighed*].”

## Lyric, Lyrical

**Danish term:** n., *Lyrik*; adj., *lyrisk*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *lyricus*, itself derived from the Greek *λυρικός*, “for the lyre”

**Danish definition:** (1) Genre of poetry that expresses strong feelings and moods; (2) in Hegel’s and German aesthetics generally, a form of a poetry devoted to “self-expression” of “the individual person and . . . all the details of his situation and concerns” in contrast to epic poetry, which presents “an independent and self-complete totality” outside of any subject.<sup>1</sup>

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *From the Papers of One Still Living* (SKS 1, 25–26 / *EPW*, 70): “[I]n his lyric poetry, he [Andersen] does not stand marked as a *choragus* authorized by a deep temperament for a greater totality, or as a full-toned organ for a folk-consciousness, or finally as a personality sharply pronounced by nature, who has no other right to his bizarre outbursts and bizarre demands of the world than the *imprimatur* of nature, which history so often does not accept—but he stands rather as a possibility of a personality moving through an elegiac twelve-tone scale of notes that rise just as easily as they fall, and without much reverberation, snared in one such web of random moods. . . .”

1. *Hegel’s Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1113.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 17; EE:37 / KJN 2, 14): “The lyrical poetry of our time is different from that of the Middle Ages in this: that while in our age the accidental individual leaps about in their own accidentalness, for which reason the lyrical poetry of the one is incomprehensible for the other; in the Middle Ages, on the other hand, lyrical poetry has an entire objectivity for itself—it is not the individual; it is the person (Adam, i.e., humanity); every feature is world-historical, this word understood in its ideal sense.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 77 / EOI, 71): “Sensuous genius is absolutely lyrical, and in music it breaks out in all its lyrical impatience. . . . Now, if I were to denote this lyricism with a single predicate, then I would have to say: It resounds; and with this I have again returned to the sensuous genius as that which appears musically.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 375; Not12:6 / KJN 3, 373): “How does ideality arise for the lyric poet—The epic [poet] has the material and the muse; for the lyric [poet] the muse herself is the material; the epic [poet] conjures the muse, the lyric [poet] is in love with the muse, whether it is a happy love or not.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 377; Not12:14 / KJN 3, 375): “The epical lies in continuity, the lyrical in difference.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTINUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 34 / R, 159): “In general, farce moves in the lower spheres of life, and therefore the gallery and second tier recognize themselves straight away, and their noise and bravos are not an aesthetic appraisal of the individual artist, but a purely lyrical outburst from their well-being. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 34): “I am convinced that God is love; this thought has for me an original lyrical validity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 101–2 / CUP1, 104): “Incidentally, Mendelsohn . . . has quite correctly given the lyrical culmination of thinking in the leap. Namely, as thinking lyrically tries to get out of itself, it is willing to discover that paradox.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 62 / TA, 64): “[O]ne might think that the lyric had to be rather free-and-easy, and yet it is precisely the one that is bound speech; and verse itself is not an invention of a squeezing understanding, but, on the contrary, is the lyric’s own happy invention.”

## Mediation

**Danish term:** n., *Mediation*

**Danish etymology:** From Medieval Latin *mediatio*

**Danish definition:** (1) Acting as an intermediary between two or more parties with the aim of bringing about agreement or reconciliation; (2) in philosophical usage, referring especially to Hegelian “speculative philosophy,” which attempts to resolve contradictory philosophies or positions by uniting these in “higher” concepts that unify conflicts among the original, conflicting or contradictory concepts

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: "Silhouettes," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 185 / EO1, 188): "When she then, from time to time, wishes to tear herself away from all this, wishes to reduce it to nothing, this is again only a mood, a momentary passion, and reflection continually goes on being the victor. Mediation is impossible; if she wishes to begin so that this beginning in one way or another is a result of the operations of reflection, then at the same moment she is swept away."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 166–67 / EO2, 170): "You are mediating contradictions into a higher madness, philosophy into a higher unity. . . . Philosophy turns towards the bygone time, towards the whole of world history that has been experienced; philosophy shows how the discursive moments [*Momentær*] go together in a higher unity; it mediates and mediates. However, I don't think that that answers in the least what I am asking; for I am asking about the time to come."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 169 / EO2, 173): "It is, however, still easy to perceive . . . that the absolute mediation does not become possible until history is finished—in other words, that the system is in a constant state of becoming."

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 25 / R, 149): "It is unbelievable how much fuss there is made of mediation in the Hegelian philosophy, and how much foolish talk has enjoyed glory and honor under that firm. One should sooner seek to think through mediation, and then do the Greeks a little justice. The Greek development of the theory of being and nothing, the development of 'the moment,' 'non-being,' etc. trumps Hegel."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): "[M]ediation is a chimera which, as Hegel would have it, would explain everything, and which, in addition, is the one thing he never has sought to explain."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 150 / FT, 56): "[A]ll mediation occurs precisely in virtue of the universal."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 176 / CUP1, 192): "[C]an mediation in fact help the existing person, as long as he exists, to become mediation himself, which is of course *sub specie æterni*, while the poor existing person is existing?"

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 344–45 / CUP1, 379): "Here it is not being asked whether Christianity is right, but about what Christianity is. Speculation leaves out this provisional arrangement; therefore, it succeeds with mediation. Before it mediates, it has already mediated, i.e., transformed Christianity into a philosophical theory. However, as soon as the arrangement sets Christianity in contrast to speculation, then mediation is *eo ipso* impossible, for all mediation is within speculation. If Christianity is the opposite of speculation, then it is also the opposite of mediation, since mediation is speculation's idea; what would it then mean to mediate it? But what is the opposite of mediation? It is the absolute paradox."

## Miracle, Miraculous, Marvel, Marvelous, Wonder, Wondrous, Wonderful

**Danish terms:** n., *Mirakel*; n., *Under*; n., *Undergerning*; n., *Vidunder*; n., *det Vidunderlige*; n., *det Mirakeløse*; n, *Vidunderlighed*

### Danish etymology:

*Mirakel, Mirakeløse:* From the Latin *miraculum*, “a wonderful, strange, or marvelous thing”

*Under, Undergerning, Vidunder, Vidunderlige, Vidunderlighed:* From the Old Norse *undr* and Old English *wundor*

**Danish definition:** The meanings of the four terms generally overlap: (1) Unusual and wonderful event that occurs contrary to expectation; (2) event, especially one contravening natural laws, attributable to divine or supernatural power; (3) a unique or amazing person, thing, or event

**Notes:** Within the Danish language, there are several connotations specific to particular terms but which need not be emphasized here (e.g., using *Mirakel* to refer to a child prodigy, *Vidunder* to refer to a unique talent, event, or thing, and *Vidunderlig* to describe that which arouses great joy); SK does show a preference for certain terms in certain works, but across his authorship he uses all of the terms with no clear distinction made among them

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 43 / EO1, 34): “When I was 15 years old, I wrote with much unction in the grammar school about the proofs for God’s existence and the immortality of the soul, about the concept of faith, about the meaning of miracles.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 379–80 / EO1, 391): “I believe in everything, I believe in the wonderful, and I am astonished by it only in order to believe; as the only thing that has astonished me in the world is a young girl; it is the first and will remain the last.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 99 / EO2, 97): “[T]he litany of all of its [the first love’s] miracles is not its history; on the other hand, the appropriation of faith in personal life is faith’s history.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 115 / FT, 18): “In outward respects the marvel lies in the fact that it happened according to their expectation; in a deeper sense the marvel of faith lies in the fact that Abraham and Sarah were still young enough to wish, and that faith had preserved their wish, and, with it, their youth.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 131 / FT, 36): “[T]hat someone could lose his understanding and thereby the whole of finitude, whose stockbroker it is, and then in virtue of the absurd win precisely the same finitude—this horrifies my soul; but I will not therefore say that it is something slight, since it is, on the contrary, the only miracle.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 132 / FT, 37): “[O]ur time does not stand with faith, not with its miracle, which makes water into wine, but goes further: it makes wine into water.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 131–32 / EUD, 128): “[I]s this not doubt’s trick that it makes a person believe that one can overcome oneself by oneself, as if one were able to do the miraculous, which never is heard of in heaven or on earth or under the earth: that something in conflict with itself can be stronger than itself in this conflict!”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 138 / EUD, 135): “Is not wonder the hereditary enemy of doubt, with which it never stays together?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 242 / EUD, 243): “There was a thinker whose remembrance is admiration; he thought that the miracle was a peculiarity of the Jewish people, that they, in a peculiar way, leaped over the intervening causes in order to reach God. But if we were to point to young people who did not grow up in that nation, I wonder then if the miracle’s marvelousness would not appear here once again?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Need God Is a Human Being’s Highest Perfection,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 299 / EUD, 306): “[S]o it is with every miracle of the truth just as it was with that miracle at the wedding at Cana; truth serves the bad wine first and saves the best for last, whereas the deceitful world serves the best wine first.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 451–52 / CUP1, 498): “. . . I admire the fervent feat of religiousness; I admire it as the greatest miracle, but will also plainly admit that I will not succeed in being able to enjoy myself at the Deer Park from and with the highest idea of God and his eternal salvation.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 523 / CUP1, 576): “[B]ecoming a Christian begins with the miracle of creation. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 292 / WL, 295): “[W]hen love forgives, then the miracle of faith happens (and every miracle is then that of faith—what wonder, then, that with faith miracles have been phased out): that what is seen is yet not seen by being forgiven.”

## Moment, Momentary

**Danish terms:** n., *Øieblik*; n., *Moment*

### Danish etymology:

*Øieblik*: From *Øie*, the Danish word for “eye,” and *Blik*, “a glance, a look, a glint or twinkle in the eye”

*Moment*: From the Latin *movere* via French *moment*

### Danish Definitions:

*Øieblik*: A very short instant of time

*Moment*: (1) Something with the power to move (cf. English *momentum*); (2) a relationship or circumstance of great importance (cf. English *momentous*); (3) a turning point in a development with decisive importance (cf. archaic English *to moment*, meaning “to

invest with importance”); (4) a brief instant in time; (5) in Hegelian philosophy, a phase, stage, or element within a larger totality that both preserves and subsumes these moments

**Note:** In SK’s authorship, these terms are reversed; *Øieblik* inherits most of the extra meanings of *Moment* (the power to move, what is of great importance, the decisive moment), whereas *Moment* means either merely a brief instant of time or the Hegelian meaning of a phase or element within a larger totality. We have, like most translators, translated *Øieblik* as “moment” because the English term “moment” likewise contains all these meanings, while translating *Moment* as “instant,” for the sake of readability to the average English reader

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 228; Not8:13 / *KJN* 3, 224): “And in spite of it being imprudent for my equanimity, I still cannot help imagining that indescribable moment when I come back to her.”

A: “Disapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / *EOI*, 20): “It is well-known that there are insects that die in the moment of fertilization; so it is with all joy—life’s highest and most luscious moment of enjoyment is attended by death.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 1, 420 / *EOI*, 433): “To understand the moment is not such an easy matter, and the one who misunderstands it naturally gets much boredom for their whole life. The moment is everything; and, in the moment, the woman is everything—the consequences I do not understand. Among them is that consequence of having children.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 112 / *EO2*, 112): “[M]arital love, just like the first love, knows full well that it conquered all of these hindrances in the infinite moment of love, but it also knows—and this is precisely the historical in it—that this triumph will be gained, and that this gain is not merely a game, but also a struggle; not merely a struggle, but also a game. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 141 / *EOI*, 142): “At the wedding, hope has the same effect as recollection at the last anniversary. Hope floats above it as a hope for eternity, which fills the instant [*Moment*].”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 115 / *FT*, 19): “Now all the frightfulness of the struggle is gathered together in a single moment.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / *FT*, 40): “[T]his person has made, and makes every moment, the movement of infinity.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 136 / *FT*, 42): “He feels a blissful pleasure in allowing love to thrill along every nerve, and yet his soul is as solemn as the one who has emptied the poisoned chalice and feels the deadly juice saturate every drop of blood. This moment is life and death.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 228 / *PF*, 19): “If the moment, then, is to have decisive importance, and without this we would only be talking Socratically . . . then the break has occurred, and the person cannot return, and will not find it desirable to recollect what the vestige will bring him in recollection, and still less shall he be able to once more draw the God over to his side by his own power.”



JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 255 / PF, 51): “[A]ll offense is in essence a misunderstanding of *the moment*. . . .”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 384/ CA, 81): “[A]nxiety was the moment in the individual life.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 392 / CA, 89): “The moment is that ambiguous thing in which time and eternity touch one another, and with this the concept of *temporality* is posited, where time continually intersects eternity, and eternity continually pervades time.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 83 / EUD, 74): “How should that eye [Øie] that loves also get time to look after what lies behind it? Then it would have to let go of its object for that moment [Øieblik], after all!”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 93 / EUD, 86): “Not until that moment when that worry awakens in his soul—what the world must mean for him and him for world; what everything that is in him (by means of which he himself belongs to the world) must mean for him, and therein he for the world—only then does the inner man announce itself in this worry.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 111 / CUP1, 114): “. . . I do not begin with nothing precisely because I do not abstract from everything at the moment of the beginning.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 180 / CUP1, 197): “Only instantaneously can the single, existing individual be in a unity of infinitude and finitude, which is beyond what it is to exist. This instant is the moment of passion.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 50 / TA, 50): “As is the case with all passion, so it is the case with love [Elskov]: that the one who receives the initiation [Indvielsen] stands free in the consecrated [indviede] moment of falling in love [Forelskelsens], free on the reckless peak of the illusion, free and infinitely surveying all the world; there must be no frivolous sympathy, but no teasing crowd, either, which would keep the lightly armed from ascending the dizzy height, and momentarily hinder the freestanding from catching the sight. It must, if everything is to become so very good, be granted this protected moment, when the everything of existence obeys each hint as if enchanted, when nothing, nothing diminishes love’s boundless abandonment in illusion, which occurs *privatissime*, and is something other than all the caresses of the lovers, since it is the precondition, the precipitator, the advance payment on infinity, off of which these lovers shall live for the many or few years that unite them.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 131 / SUD, 16): “Not being in despair has to mean the destroyed possibility of being able to be in despair; if it is to be true that a person is not in despair, he must destroy the possibility at every moment.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 132 / SUD, 17): “[E]very real moment of despair can be traced back to possibility; every moment he is in despair, he is *bringing* it upon himself. . . .”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 134 / SUD, 18): “Therefore, to die means that it is over, but to die the death is to experience dying; and if this is experienced for a single moment, then with that it has been experienced forever.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Judge for Yourself!* (SKS 16, 199 / JFY, 147): “Lord Jesus Christ, you said the words, ‘No man can serve two masters’ [Matthew 6:24]. . . . Oh Redeemer, you have given satisfaction for everything and for everything by your sacred suffering and death; eternal salvation neither can nor shall be earned—it has been earned. Yet you left footprints behind you, you sacred ideal of the human race and every individual, so that those saved by your Atonement at every moment might find the trust and openness to strive to follow you.”

## Monasticism, Monastery, Monastic Movement

**Danish terms:** n., *Munkevesen*; n., *Kloster*

### Danish etymology:

*Munkevesen*: *Munk* is derived from the Greek μοναχός, one who lives alone, via English “monk” or German “Mönch”; *vesen*, the basic characteristics or essence of a concept, institution, etc.

*Kloster*: From the Latin *claustrum*, “closed room,” from the perfect passive participle of *claudere* “to close”

### Danish definition:

*Munkevesen*: Everything related to monks’ lives, communities, etc.

*Kloster*: (1) The building complex where monks or nuns live in seclusion from the outside world; (2) a community of monks or nuns

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 190 / EO1, 193): “As I wound my way through a deep mountain pass, my eyes fell on a cloister that stood high up on the top of the mountain, up to which a footpath led with many bends. My mind lingered on it—there it lies, I thought, like a house of God firmly grounded on the rock.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 335 / EO1, 345): “I shall now find out whether there might be such a lover in secret who does not have the courage to storm the house, a chicken thief who sees no opportunity in such a cloister-like house.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 309 / EO2, 328): “In our time, monastic life has fallen in price. Surely, you more seldomly see a person break with the whole of existence at once, with the whole of the universally human. If, however, you know something more about people, then you will sometimes find a false doctrine with a single individual that vividly calls to mind the monastic theory.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 187 / FT, 98): “This is surely how the Middle Ages would make the movement; for the merman will obviously, according to its conception, revert to the monastery.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 189 / FT, 100): “It is everyone’s opinion—and insofar as I dare allow myself to judge thereof it is my opinion also—that it is not the highest to enter the monastery; but it is not at all therefore my opinion that in our age, when no one enters the monastery, everyone is greater than the profound and earnest souls who found rest in a monastery.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 190 / FT, 101): “And what higher movement has the age discovered, now that entering the monastery has been abandoned?”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 374–75 / CA, 70): “In Christianity, the religious has suspended the erotic, not merely . . . as the sinful, but as the indifferent because in spirit there is no difference between man and woman. . . . This is one side of the monastic view, whether this is now more precisely determined as ethical rigorism or as deliberating contemplation.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 377 [sks.dk 7, 379] / CUP1, 416): “The monastery candidate considered it the greatest danger not to relate himself absolutely to the absolute *τελος* at every moment.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 429–30 / CUP1, 473): “[T]he Middle Ages made a tremendous attempt at thinking God and finitude together while existing, but it turned out that that could not be done, and the expression for that is the monastery.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 446 / CUP1, 491): “The monastic movement is an attempt at wanting to be more than human, an enthusiastic, perhaps pious attempt at wanting to resemble God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 141; NB2:9 / KJN 4, 139): “If I had lived in the Middle Ages, I probably would have entered the monastery and devoted myself to penance.”

## Mood, Mood-Piece, Prelude

**Danish term:** n., *Stemning*

**Danish etymology:** Verbal substantive from *stemme*, “to express oneself in sound; to tune (a musical instrument); to agree,” derived from Middle Low German *stemme*, “voice”

**Danish definition:** (1) Mood, including (a) harmonious atmosphere of a place, (b) attitude and feelings of a group and its perception of a situation, (c) features of something causing a certain feeling in people, (d) temporary state of mind characterized by a given feeling or inclination, and (e) a small artwork—painting, musical composition, poem, etc.—reproducing or evoking a mood; (2) tuning a musical instrument; (3) in German Romanticism, used as equivalent to German *Stimmung*, meaning a subjective condition or disposition evoked by the structural unity a subject, as mediated by the artist through the work of art

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 16 / EO1, 8): “That these individual expressions often contradict one another, I found to be absolutely right, for just this

belongs essentially to the mood. To group them so that the contradictions became less striking, I did not think worth the trouble.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 40 / EO1, 31): “I seem determined to have to suffer through all possible moods, to have to have experience in all directions.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 119–20 / EO1, 117): “In a drama . . . the dramatist will only succeed in this to the same degree as nothing incommensurable remains behind, nothing of that mood from which the drama emerges—i.e., nothing of that mood *qua* mood, but everything is converted into the sacred dramatic coin: action and situation. To the degree that the dramatist succeeds in this, to the same degree will that total impression his work leaves behind also be less a mood than a thought, an idea.”

CORDELIA WAHL: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 299 / EO1, 310): “He was the quintessence of all feelings and moods. . . .”

A: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 303 / EO1, 313): “Her mood is clearly stamped on each of the letters, even if, to a certain degree, she has lacked clarity in presentation.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 219–20 / EO2, 229): “The one who lives aesthetically seeks, as far as possible, to be completely absorbed in mood. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 220 / EO2, 230): “The mood of one who lives ethically is centralized; he is not in the mood, he is not mood, but he has mood and has the mood in himself. What he is working for is continuity, and this is always the master of mood. His life does not lack mood—indeed, it has a total mood, but this is acquired; it is what could be called *aequale temperamentum*, but this is no aesthetic mood, and no person has this mood by nature or immediately.”

THE YOUNG MAN: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 59 / R, 189): “Or is it not a sort of madness to have subjected to this degree every passion, every movement of the heart, every mood, to the cold regime of reflection?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 104 / FT, 9): “Prelude: There was once a man who as a child had heard that beautiful story of how God tested Abraham, how he stood the test, kept the faith, and received once again a son against expectation.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 126–27 / FT, 31): “If one makes love into a flighty mood, a sensual feeling in a person, then one only lays snares for the weak when one would speak of love’s accomplishments.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 322 / CA, 14–15): “If sin is drawn into aesthetics like this, then the mood either becomes frivolous or depressed; for the category in which sin lies is contradiction, and this is either comic or tragic. Consequently, the mood is altered; for the mood corresponding to sin is earnestness.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 322 / CA, 15): “That science, really just as much as poetry and art, presupposes a mood both with the one producing and the one receiving, and that an error in modulation is just as disturbing as an error in the development of thought, has been completely forgotten in our time, when inwardness has been completely forgotten. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “On the Occasion of a Wedding,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 419 / TD, 43): “Unexplained moods are said to rest with the beautiful certainty of love in the depths of the soul. Now the organ’s tones have died away; only the resonance once more stirs the soul in mood and will transfigure the beautiful certainty into a sacred mood—now it is time for speaking!”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “At a Graveside,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 461 / TD, 92): “But even if such a life went through all of the possible moods by contemplating the strangeness of death, is, therefore, the contemplation earnestness?”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 27 / SLW, 21): “Mood and what belongs under mood alone is the object of recollection.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 216 / CUP1, 237): “For mood is like the Niger River in Africa. No one knows its source; no one knows its outflow; only its distance is known!”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 167 / PC, 163): “Understanding a declaration by a person requires not merely understanding what was said, but also, as was explained, getting to know who the speaker is, and, if his life is tried in decisive ups and downs, then in which period—and then there is one thing more still required: in which mood he has said these words.”

## Movement

**Danish term:** n., *Bevægelse*; v., *bevæge*

**Danish etymology:** From the Middle Low German *bewegen*

**Danish definition:** (1) To set something in motion; (2) to move oneself, to be in motion; (3) to make an impression upon a person; (4) to set a person’s feelings in a particular direction; (4) a group of individuals uniting to promote a common cause

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 277 / CI, 236): “Just as Charon set people over on the shadowland of the underworld from the fullness of life, . . . so did Socrates also ship over individuals from reality to ideality; and the ideal infinite, as the infinite negativity, was the nothing in which he let the whole of reality’s multiplicity disappear. . . . [I]n order to be able to keep him at this point, in order never to forget that the content of his life was to make this movement at every instant, one must recall his importance as *divine missionary*.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or, Part I* (SKS 2, 168 / EO1, 178): “As it now searches for, then finally finds an enclosure, an innermost place, where it thinks it can remain, and now

it begins its monotonous movement. Like the pendulum in the watch, it thus swings back and forth and cannot find rest.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 426–27 / EO1, 440): “There is a melancholy in autumn that corresponds completely to the movement with which the thought of a wish’s fulfillment streams through you.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 112 / EO2, 111): “First love can wish with supernatural pathos, but this wishing easily turns into a contentless ‘if.’ . . . Marital love knows better; its movements are not outward, but inward. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 231 / EO2, 242): “A movement can be desultory to the degree that it can be doubtful whether you would dare to call it a development. Thus, if the movement consists in that an instant returns again and again, then you undeniably have a movement; yes, you can perhaps discover a law for the movement, but you have no development.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 128 / FT, 32): “I by no means have faith. I am by nature a shrewd head, and every such person always has great difficulties making the movement of faith.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 132 / FT, 37): “[T]he movement of faith must continually be made in virtue of the absurd—and yet, mark well, in such a way that one does not lose finitude, but wins it whole and entire.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 320 / CA, 13): “In logic, no movement may *become*; for logic is, and everything logical only *is*. . . . Every movement, insofar as one will use this expression for a moment, is an immanent movement, which in a deeper sense is no movement. . . .”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 385 / CA, 83): “Therefore, it is not to be understood logically, but in the direction of historical freedom, when Aristotle says that the transition from possibility to reality is a κίνησις.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 415 / CA, 113): “The individual life’s history continues in a movement from state to state. Every state is established by a leap.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Gain One’s Soul in Patience,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 164–65 / EUD, 165): “But at the same moment, he is different from the whole world, and he senses a reluctance that does not follow the movements of the life-world.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 112 / SLW, 118): “The movements of falling in love are light, like the dance over a meadow. . . .”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 280–81 / SLW, 302): “If she is first beginning to venture down that narrow road to a religious movement, then she is lost to me.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 383 / *SLW*, 414): “In order to adhere to the task, you must constantly make double movements.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 39 / *CUP*, 34): “An observer . . . has at no point any infinite need for a decision, and sees it at no point. This is objectivity’s *falsum* and mediation’s significance as a passageway in the continued process, in which nothing endures, and in which nothing is ever decided, either, since the movement returns to itself, and once more returns, and the movement itself is a chimera, and speculation is all the wiser afterwards.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 95 / *BA*, 9): “Then the movement of the age is gradually transformed into an unhealthy ferment, just like when the ill person does not digest and assimilate the food but merely causes it to ferment.”

### Necessity, Necessary / Possibility, Possible / Impossibility, Impossible

**Danish terms:** n., *Nødvendighed*; adj., *nødvendig*; n., *Mulighed*; adj., *mulig*

#### Danish etymology:

*Nødvendighed*, *nødvendig*: From the German *notwendig*

*Mulighed*, *mulig*: From the Middle Low German *mogelik*, from *mogen*, meaning “could, might”

*Umulighed*, *umulig*: Prefix *u-*, indicating negation, added to *Mulighed/mulig*, possible

#### Danish definition:

*Nødvendighed*: (1) That which contains the ground of its own existence and whose opposite is an impossibility or contradicts itself; (2) an indispensable condition or precondition; (3) that which cannot be otherwise

*Mulighed*: (1) The condition in which something can be realized, possibly only under certain circumstances; (2) that which is conceivable or imaginable; (3) that which could be the case (often in the sense of a concession)

*Umulighed*: (1) Something that cannot be done or realized; (2) the fact that something cannot be done or realized; (3) the fact of a task being hopeless or impossible

#### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 50 / *EOI*, 41): “My soul has lost possibility. If I were to wish for something, I would not wish for wealth or power, but for the passion of possibility—that eye which, eternally young, eternally fervent, sees possibility everywhere.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 177 / *EOI*, 180): “An engagement is a possibility, not a reality, but, precisely because it is only a possibility, it can seem that it does have such a powerful effect upon being broken, that it becomes far easier for the individual to bear this blow. That, too, can certainly sometimes be the case; but, on the other hand, the fact that it is only a possibility that was destroyed coaxes out much more reflection. . . . If a possibility is broken, then the momentary pain is perhaps not so great,

but it . . . also then . . . becomes a constant occasion for continued pain. The destroyed possibility appears transfigured in a higher possibility.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 25 / EO2, 16): “[E]verything is possible for you, and you can surprise yourself and others with this possibility; but it is unhealthy, and for the sake of your own peace of mind, I beg you to take care that what is an advantage for you does not end up becoming a curse.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 221 / EO2, 230–31): “If a man were to express himself like this, then one would easily see that he . . . had chosen himself according to his necessity, not in his freedom. . . .”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 31 / R, 155): “[T]he individual’s possibility loses its way in its own possibility, now discovering one thing, now another. But the individual’s possibility will not merely be heard; it is not like the mere passing of the weather; it is also *gestaltende* [structuring], and therefore will be seen at the same time.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 44 / R, 170): “The only thing that repeated itself was the impossibility of a repetition.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 114 / FT, 17): “Time passed, the possibility was there—Abraham believed; time passed, it became unreasonable—Abraham believed.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 44): “Fools and young people go on about how everything is possible for a person. This, however, is a great delusion. In a spiritual sense, everything is possible, but in the world of finitude there is much that is not possible.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 45): “[W]hen a person would think that a cold, barren necessity must necessarily be present, the person implies thereby that no one can experience death before actually dying, which seems to me a crass materialism.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 47): “He [the knight of faith] therefore acknowledges the impossibility and in the same moment believes the absurd; for if, without declaring with all his soul’s passion and with his whole heart the love’s impossibility, he imagines himself to have faith, he deceives himself. His testimony is groundless if he has not even arrived at infinite resignation.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 324 / CA, 16): “In the sphere of nature, repetition exists in its unshakeable necessity.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 329 / CA, 21): “[A] becoming by necessity is a condition, like the entire history of a plant is a condition, for example. . . .”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 329 / CA, 22) “That human nature must be such that it makes sin possible is—psychologically speaking—quite true, but to let the possibility of this sin become its reality shocks ethics and sounds like a blasphemy to dogmatics; for freedom is never possible; as soon as it is, it is real, in



the same sense as one said, in an older philosophy, if God's existence is possible, then it is necessary."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "The Expectancy of Faith," *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 19 / EUD, 8): "As thought now becomes absorbed in the future, it loses its way in its restless striving to force or elicit an explanation from the enigmatic; scouting, it hastens from one possibility to another, but in vain. . . ."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "In Vino Veritas," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 74 / SLW, 75): "[N]ecessity teaches even the gods to outdo themselves in inventiveness."

SIMON LEPROSUS: "'Guilty?'/ 'Not Guilty?,'" *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 218 / SLW, 234): "So, then, seek in vain compassion in the city and with the fortunate; seek it out here in the desert. . . . I bear my fate voluntarily, freely suffering the necessity."

QUIDAM: "'Guilty?'/ 'Not Guilty?,'" *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 236 / SLW, 253): "I do this nothing and this everything because it is the highest passion of my freedom and the deepest necessity of my being."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 145 / CUP1, 156–57): "Viewed world-historically, a proposition becomes untrue that, ethically considered, is true and the life-force of the ethical: the possibility-relation every existing individual has with God."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 183 / CUP1, 200): "[I]f the dialectical contradiction brings passion to despair, and helps to encompass God with 'the category of despair' (faith) so that the postulate, far from being arbitrary, is, on the contrary, self-defense, then God is not a postulate but the fact that the existing person postulates God—a necessity."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 529 / CUP1, 582): "In Religiousness A, there is thus a continual possibility of taking existence back into the eternity behind it."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 532 / CUP1, 585): "For the believer, offense is at the beginning, and its possibility is the perpetual fear and trembling in his existence."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 145 / SUD, 29): "[F]reedom is the dialectical element in the determinations of possibility and necessity."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 151 / SUD, 35): "Insofar as it [the self] is itself, it is the necessary, and insofar as it shall become itself, it is a possibility."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 153 / SUD, 37): "If running wild in possibility were to be compared with the vocalizations of the child, then to lack possibility is as if to be mute. The necessary is like sheer consonants, but to express them there must be possibility."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 153 / SUD, 38): "What is decisive is that for God everything is possible."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 155 / SUD, 40): "To lack possibility means either that everything has become necessary for one, or that everything has become trivial."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 157 / SUD, 42): “Crushed tight by despair, the one for whom everything has become necessary overstrains themselves in existence.”

## Newspapers, the Press

**Danish term:** n., *Avis*; n., *Blad* [may also appear as *dagblad*, *ukeblad*, etc., denoting frequency of publication; cf. Engl. “dailies,” “weeklies”]; n., *Presse*

### Danish etymology:

*Avis*: From Latin *ad-* (“to, toward”) and *visum* (“sight”), meaning “view, sight of,” via French *avis*

*Blad*: From the Old Norse *blað*, German *Blatt*; related to a root meaning “to swell, break forth”

*Presse*: Combined from the French *presse*, referring to the news media, esp. newspapers, and the German *Presse*, referring to the action of pressing and the technology of printing; both from the medieval Latin *pressa*

### Danish definition:

*Avis*: Printed matter, published regularly and addressing a broad audience, providing information about events, advertisements, etc.

*Blad*: (1) The flat, thin green growth upon a plant where photosynthesis occurs; (2) a regularly published magazine, pamphlet, or newspaper

*Presse*: (1) News media, including newspapers; (2) journalists and those working in news media; (3) a machine or tool used for printing text

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 234 / EO1, 241): “Thus passed my beautiful, poetic life, until [*da*] one day I saw in the newspaper that a play was to be performed, entitled *The First Love*.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 400 / EO1, 413): “A serving girl should not look like a lady—in this *Politivennen* is right, but the reasons this esteemed newspaper gives are entirely fallacious.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 2, 49 / EO2, 42): “[S]uch Philistines, who think that they have now just about entered that time of life when it would be suitable to have a look around or to ask about (perhaps even in a newspaper) for a feminine life partner [*Livsledsagerinde*], have one and for all shut themselves out from the first love.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 155–56 / FT, 63): “They do not fear that such events can be repeated, or else what would the police and the newspapers say?”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 450 / SLW, 489): “One does not read about it in newspapers.”

A: “A Cursory Observation Concerning a Detail in Don Giovanni” (SKS 14, 69 / COR, 28): “[T]he theater criticism in the newspapers always requires the utmost modesty of me and an ascetic abstinence from every conclusion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 324 / CUP1, 355): “One fears that, by becoming an individual existing human being, one will vanish without a trace, so that not even newspapers, still less the critical journals, and even less the world historical speculative thinkers, will be able to catch sight of one.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 481 / CUP1, 530): “The snag is, however, that it is simply unethical to have one’s life in the comparative, the relative, in the external, and to have the police court, the conciliation board, a newspaper or some of Copenhagen’s dignitaries, or the urban riffraff, to have the final say [*have . . . til sidste Instants*] with regard to oneself.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 289; JJ:445 / KJN 2, 267): “Eventually, newspaper criticism will come to spread itself to objects that one least thinks of. The other day, it was in one of the provincial newspapers that a man had been executed by executioner ABC, who did it with great precision; executioner DEF, who was present to flog someone, did it satisfactorily.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 13; NB:6 / KJN 4, 9): “One has too many newspapers to root around in, just as students have too many books; therefore one does not read well.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 125 / WL, 122): “You can, for that matter, advertise in the newspaper that you seek a friend—if you just add the condition, and with special emphasis, ‘that it is not for the sake of advantage.’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 24, 167; NB22:124 / KJN 8, 165): “The newspapers and the whole of public life did everything to drag everyone out into political interests—and the clergy neither thought of, nor were fit to, put up resistance.”

## Objectivity, Objective, Object / Subjectivity, Subjective, Subject

**Danish terms:** n., *Objektivitet*; adj., *objektiv* [or, *objectiv*]; n., *Objekt*; n., *Subjektivitet*; adj., *subjektiv* [or, *subjectiv*]; n., *Subjekt*

**Danish etymology:** *Objekt* from the Latin *objectus* (perfect passive participle of *objicere*, “to throw before or towards, to offer, to present,” hence “that which is thrown, offered, presented”) via the German *Objekt*; *Objektivitet* and *objektiv* from this form. *Subjekt* from the Latin *subiectus* (perfect passive participle of *subicere*, “to throw, lay, or place under,” hence “that which is thrown or placed under, or—here especially—that which lies under”) via the German *Subjekt*; *Subjektivitet* and *subjektiv* from this form

### Danish definition:

*Objekt*: (1) A physical object that one does not care to, or cannot, describe in more detail; (2) that which is subjected to the influence of action; (3) in philosophical usage, that which is thought, in distinction to that which thinks; *Objektivitet*: (1) The state of being independent of a subject; (2) the condition of being impartial; *objektiv*: various adjectival forms based on the above senses of *Objekt* and *Objektivitet*

*Subjekt*: (1) A person considered as a knowing and acting individual, a bearer of consciousness and intentionality; (2) a wretched, scorned, and despised person; (3) that being which performs an action; (4) in philosophical usage, the unchanging reality taken

to lie under the properties that form the object of experience (that to which predicates are applied, but which is not predicated of anything else); *Subjektivitet*: (1) The state of being a subject; (2) the nature of a knowing, conscious, intentional subject; *subjektiv*: various adjectival forms based on the above senses of *Subjekt* and *Subjektivitet*

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 99 / CI, 37): “To ask questions—that is, about the abstract relation between the subjective and the objective—ultimately became the principal matter for him [viz., Socrates].”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 212 / CI, 163): “Socrates’ standpoint, then, was that of subjectivity, of inwardness, which reflects upon itself and in its relation with itself loosens and volatilizes [*forflygtiger*] that which happens to exist [*det Bestaaende*] in the waves of thought that surge over it and carry it away, while it itself sinks again in thought.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 143 / EO1, 143): “The tragic hero is subjectively reflected in himself, and this reflection has not only reflected him out of every immediate relation to state, kindred, and fate, but often even reflected him out of his own life prior to this point [*foregaaende Liv*].”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 150 / EO1, 151): “In Greek tragedy . . . there still reigns a high degree of objectivity.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 332 / EO1, 343): “She has imagination, soul, passion, in short, everything substantial, but not subjectively reflected.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 357 / EO1, 369): “[O]ne can fear that he will, like a sleepwalker, suddenly rise up and . . . confess his love from such an objective viewpoint. . . .”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 165 / EO2, 169): “It is certainly high time that someone warns against the magnanimous, gallant objectivity whereby many thinkers think on behalf of others, and not on their own behalf.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 204 / EO2, 212): “Their thought is calm, the objective, logical thought has been brought to rest in its corresponding objectivity, and yet they are in despair, even though they diverted themselves in objective thinking, for a person can divert himself in many ways.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 215 / EO2, 224): “This by no means diminishes or lowers the categories of good and evil to merely subjective categories.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 199 / FT, 111): “There even appear places in the New Testament that praise irony, so long as it is used to hide the better part. This movement is, however, just as much one of irony as it is anything else that is based on subjectivity’s being higher than actuality.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 396 / *SLW*, 428): “His inwardness is precisely, neither more nor less, than the condensed anticipation of the religious subjectivity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 57 / *CUP1*, 53): “If, now, Christianity is essentially something objective, then it holds that the observe should be objective; but if Christianity is essentially subjective, then it is a mistake if the observer is objective.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 60 / *CUP1*, 56–57): “Objectively, Christianity cannot be observed, precisely because it intends to bring subjectivity to its utmost point.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 73 / *CUP1*, 73): “While the objective thinker invests everything in the result, and assists all human-kind to cheat by copying and reciting the results and answers, subjective thinking invests everything in becoming.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 76 / *CUP1*, 75): “Objective thinking is altogether indifferent to subjectivity and thereby to inwardness and appropriation; its communication is therefore direct.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 79 / *CUP1*, 79): “[W]herever the subjective is of importance in knowledge, and appropriation is thus the principal matter, communication is a work of art; it is doubly reflected, and its first form is precisely the subtlety that the subjective individuals must hold themselves devoutly back from each other and not coagulatingly run together in objectivity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 320 / *CUP1*, 350): “The subjective thinker is a dialectician oriented to the existential.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 321 / *CUP1*, 351): “The subjective thinker’s task is to understand himself in existence.”

## Occasion

**Danish term:** n., *Anledning*

**Danish etymology:** From the German *Anleitung*, “guidance” or “instructions”

**Danish definition:** (1) The external cause of something happening; (2) favorable or opportune circumstances for doing something; (3) a special occasion

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 227 / *EO1*, 233): “Everyone who has ever had a propensity for productivity has certainly also noticed that it is a little accidental, external circumstance that becomes the occasion for genuinely bringing anything forth [*den egentlige Frembringelse*].”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 228–29 / *EO1*, 235): “The occasion often altogether plays the master; it makes the outcome, makes the product and the producer into something or nothing, everything as it wishes.”

A: "The First Love," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 230 / EO1, 237): "A creation is something brought forth from nothing, but, on the other hand, the occasion is the nothing that allows everything to come forth."

A: "The First Love," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 231–32 / EO1, 238): "The occasion, then, is at once the most significant and the most insignificant. . . . The occasion is the last category, the genuine category of transition from the sphere of the idea to actuality."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 22/ EO1, 12): "You told how this gave you occasion to deliberate whether the altogether accidental fulfillment of such an accidentally uttered wish would not bring a person to despair, because thereby the reality of life was negated as its deepest root."

LUDVIG BLACKFELDT: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235 / EO2, 246): "Should someone ask you the occasion, you can say that it was on the occasion of the great fire."

COSTANTINE CONSANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 15 / R, 136): "The young girl was not his beloved, she was the occasion that awakened the poetic in him and make him into a poet."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 125 / FT, 27): "He said to himself and his wife, 'I am an orator; what was lacking has been the occasion.'"

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 43): "However, he [the knight of resignation] needs no finite occasion for its [his love's] growth."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 220 / PF, 11): "Viewed Socratically, every point of departure in time is *eo ipso* an accident, a vanishing point, an occasion."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 231 / PF, 24): "Between one human being and another human being, this is the highest: the disciple is the occasion for the teacher to understand himself, the teacher is the occasion for the disciple to understand himself."

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 412 / CA, 107): "[Guilt] never has an external occasion, and the one who falls to temptation [*Fristelsen*] is himself guilty of the temptation [*Fristelsen*]."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "Strengthening in the Inner Being," *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 98 / EUD, 98): "But when in the stillness of the night it is called out: 'Make an accounting of your stewardship,' then he knows what this summons has to signify, he knows how where he has the balance sheet, and even if there is something lacking in it, he is cheerful as he leaves the world of thoughts and accomplishments, in which he still had not had his soul, leaves the elaborately developed and far reaching labor that had been, for him, from day to day, occasion for strengthening in the inner being."

WILLIAM AFHAM: "In Vino Veritas," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 22 / SLW, 15): "The occasion for jotting them down is that I now feel myself to be in the mood to seek [*at ville*] to redeem an event I experienced for recollection."

QUIDAM: "'Guilty?'/ 'Not Guilty?,'" *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 282–83 / SLW, 304): "I would disappear like an atom in her eyes, as an occasion, like the sale of Joseph, for her gaining the eternal."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 353 / CUP, 387): “Actuality, for the poet, is only the occasion [*Anledning*] that occasions [*foranledning*] him to abandon actuality in order to seek the ideality of possibility.”

**Ordeal:** See *Temptation*

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## Paganism, Pagan

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**Danish term:** n., *Hedenskab*; n., *Hedningen*; adj., *hedensk*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Danish *hetenskab*, *bedbenskab*, *hethernskap*, “pagan”

**Danish definition:** (1) Condition of not belonging to Judaism, Christianity, or Islam; (2) pertaining to non-Christian people and their religion, idolatry, or mores; (3) rarely, relating to “freethought” and atheism

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 17, 259, DD:128 / *KJN* 1, 249): “In our Christian times, Christianity is close to becoming paganism—it has at least abandoned the metropolitan areas.”

Epigram: *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 9 / *EO1*, 2):

“Is reason alone, then, baptized,  
are the passions pagans?”  
Young<sup>2</sup>

JUDGE WILHELM: *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 20 / *EO2*, 10): “And all the beauty that lies in the erotic of paganism has its validity in Christianity, insofar as it can be combined with marriage.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 119 / *FT*, 24): “[Y]ou . . . first knew this supreme passion, the holy, pure, humble expression for the divine madness that was admired by the pagans. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 149 / *FT*, 55): “It is surely in order to say that paganism did not have faith, but if one would say something thereby, then one must be a little clearer concerning what one understands by “faith,” as otherwise one falls back into such hackneyed phrases.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 399 / *CA*, 96): “But then what does the nothing of anxiety signify more particularly in paganism? It is fate.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 75 / *EUD*, 65): “An elderly pagan, who was in paganism named and acclaimed as a sage [Bias, one of the ‘seven sages’ of Greece], was sailing with an ungodly man upon the same ship. When the ship was in distress at sea, the ungodly man lifted up his voice to pray; but the sage said to him, ‘Remain silent, dear fellow, if Heaven discovers that you are on board, then the ship will go under.’”

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2. [Edward] Young, *Night Thoughts*, “Night the Fourth: The Christian Triumph,” 2:629–30.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Need God Is a Human Being’s Highest Perfection,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 296–97 / EUD, 303): “[A] pagan, who knew only how to speak about the earthly, has said that the deity was blessed because he needs nothing, [and] next to him the sage, because he needs little.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 102 / SLW, 106): “In paganism, one set a penalty for bachelors, [and] rewarded those who produced many children; in the Middle Ages, it was a perfection not to be married.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 391 / SLW, 422): “Paganism culminates in the spiritual fortitude [*Aandsstyrke*] to simultaneously see the comic and the tragic in the same thing.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 48 / CUP1, 43): “[S]omeone who has an objective Christianity and nothing else is *eo ipso* a pagan; for Christianity is precisely a matter of spirit, of subjectivity, and of inwardness.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 393 / CUP1, 586): “The existence-sphere of paganism is the aesthetic, and therefore it is entirely in order that this is reflected in its conception of God, when it proclaims that he, himself unchanged, changes all.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 343 / WL, 349): “Repayment in relation to love can be quite varied. One can, for that matter, have direct profit and gain; and this is indeed always the ordinary way, this ‘pagan’ way of ‘loving those who can make repayment.’”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 161 / SUD, 46): “The pagan lacked spirit’s definition of a self.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 161–62 / SUD, 46–47): “Paganism did lack spirit, but nonetheless it was defined in the direction of spirit, while paganism in Christendom lacks spirit in departure from spirit, or by a falling away, and therefore in the stricter sense is spiritlessness.”

## Paradox

**Danish term:** n., *Paradox*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek παράδοξος, contrary to opinion, contrary to expectation, unbelievable

**Danish definition:** A (true) statement that appears contradictory or absurd

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 176 / EO1, 179): “For love [*Kjærligheden*], a betrayal is indeed an absolute paradox, and therein lies the necessity of a reflective sorrow.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 112 / EO2, 111–12): “Yes, it [marital love] has boldness enough to outbid you in paradoxes . . . for it has the courage to resolve them.”



JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 128 / FT, 33): “When . . . it is time to turn my thought to Abraham, it is as if I were annihilated. In every moment I have my eye on the gigantic paradox that is contained by Abraham’s life, in every moment I am repelled, and my thought cannot, despite all its passion, penetrate it, cannot get a hair’s breadth further.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 47): “Faith is therefore no aesthetic emotion, but something far higher, precisely because it presupposes resignation. It is not the heart’s immediate inclination, but the paradox of existence.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 242–43; PF, 37): “However, one must not think badly of the paradox; for the paradox is thought’s passion, and the thinker who is without the paradox is just like a lover who is without passion: a mediocre fellow.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 253; PF, 49): “If the paradox and the understanding met together in the common understanding of their difference, then it would be a happy encounter, like love’s [*Elskovens*] understanding. . . . If the encounter is not in understanding, then the relation is unhappy, and the understanding’s unhappy love [*Kjærlighed*]—if I dare call it so—we could term *offense*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 484 / CUP1, 532): “If the break is to establish itself, then the eternal itself must define itself as a temporality, as in time, as historical, whereby the existing person and the eternal in time have eternity between them. This is the paradox.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 541 / CUP1, 596): “Such a childish orthodoxy has also managed to draw decisive attention to the fact that Christ by his birth was wrapped in rags and laid in a manger, in short, to the humiliation that lies in the fact that he came in the humble form of a servant, and believes that this is the paradox in contrast to his coming in glory. . . . The paradox lies principally in the fact that God, the eternal, has come to be in time as a particular individual.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 542 / CUP1, 597): “The paradox is that Christ came into the world *in order to suffer*. Take this away, and without further ado, a mobilized militia force of analogies storms the paradox’s impregnable fortress.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 160 / BA, 40): “That which is Christian has no history, for that which is Christian is this paradox, that God once came into existence in time.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 148–49 / BA, 162): “Therefore, Christianity had to become foolishness to the Greeks; for the fact that the God disclosed himself in suffering was precisely the paradox.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 149 / BA, 162): “Christ is

himself the sphere of the paradox and the chosen one is a derivative who bears the mark of belonging to this sphere.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 215 / BA, 175): “All thinking draws its breath in immanence, whereas the paradox and faith form a [distinct] qualitative sphere for themselves.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 88–89; NB:125 / KJN 4, 88): “Kant’s theory of radical evil has just one flaw, that he does not rightly and firmly determine that the inexplicable is a category, that the paradox is a category. . . . Human knowledge is usually busy with understanding and understanding, but if it would in addition make the effort to understand itself, then it must straightaway establish the paradox. The paradox is not a concession, but a category, an ontological determination that expresses the relationship between an existing, knowing spirit and the eternal truth.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 210 / SUD, 98): “I continually hold fast to the Christian teaching that sin is a position—yet not as if it could be grasped, but as a paradox which must be believed.”

## Passion, Pathos, Passionate

**Danish term:** n., *Lidenskab*; n., *Lidelse*; n., *Pathos*; adj., *pathetisk*

### Danish etymology:

*Lidenskab, Lidelse:* From the Low German *Leiden*, “to suffer”

*Pathos, pathetisk:* From the Greek πάθος, “that which befalls someone; passion, emotions especially those that arise from without”; and παθητικός, “subject to feeling; impassioned”

### Danish definition:

*Lidenskab:* Strong or violent feeling, such as a strong predilection for something or a powerful erotic attachment; *Lidelse:* (1) Going through physical or mental pain; (2) a condition that causes pain; *Pathos:* Expressing oneself with solemn feeling in speech, writing, music, etc. *Pathetisk:* (1) Performed with or characterized by strong emotions; (2) that which arouses pity

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 237; Not8:39 / KJN 3, 231): “Passion is the main thing after all; it is the genuine measure of human strength. Thus, our age is so wretched because it has no passions.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 112 / EO1, 109): “As soon as passion is represented as being denied the means to its satisfaction, either a tragic or a comic turn can be produced.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 207 / EO2, 205): “When the passion of freedom awakens in him—and it is awakened in the choice, just as it presupposes itself in the choice—he chooses himself and struggles for this possession as

for his salvation [or, his blessedness: *Salighed*], and it is his salvation [or, his blessedness: *Salighed*].”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 158; JJ:55 / KJN 2, 146): “That is what I wish to see in a person, what a Stoic uses in a bad sense: εὐκαταφορία εἰς πάθος.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): “Every movement of infinity happens with passion, and no reflection can produce a movement.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 159 / FT, 67): “For that in which all human beings share is passion, and faith is a passion.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 189 / FT, 100): “The conclusions of passion are the only dependable ones, i.e., the only convincing ones.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 198–99 / FT, 110): “Someone who does not have an infinite passion is not ideal, and someone who has an infinite passion has forever saved his soul from all such nonsense.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 215 / EUD, 215): “The error of the one who doubts and the one who despairs . . . lies in the will, which suddenly ceases to will, while however it wishes to make the indeterminate into a passionate decision.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 53 / SLW, 50): “The woman has the whole pathos of tragedy on her side if she is betrayed by the man.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 143 / SLW, 152): “What one certainly misses most in Goethe is pathos.”

A: “A Cursory Observation Concerning a Detail in Don Giovanni” (SKS 14, 69 / COR, 29): “When the singer has voice and joins it with mood, then he has artistic passion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 26 / CUP1, 16–17): “[In] a spiritual sense, they [the five foolish maidens] had become unrecognizable by having lost the infinite passion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 42 / CUP1, 35–36): “The laughable thing about the zealot lies in the fact that his infinite passion cast itself upon a wrong object (an approximation object), but the good in him was that he did have passion.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 352 / CUP1, 386): “The essential existential pathos in relation to an eternal blessedness is bought so dearly that, in a finite sense, it must patently seem like madness to purchase it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 353 / CUP1, 387): “If the absolute τέλος, by relating to an individual’s existence, does not absolutely transform it, then the individual does not relate himself to it with existential pathos, but with aesthetic pathos.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 356 / CUP1, 390): “The pathos of marriage is therefore to act, the pathos of poetry to fall in love.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 95–96 / *TA*, 101): “The passionless life is not a self-unveiling and unfolding principle; on the contrary, this person’s inner life is a hasty something that is repeatedly on the move and hunting after something to do ‘on principle.’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 23, 177; NB17:21 / *KJN* 7, 180): “Johannes de silentio is correct in saying that in order to show the various psychological standpoints passionate concentration is required.”

## Patience, Patient

**Danish term:** n., *Taalmod*; n., *Taalmodighed*; adj., *taalmodig*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Danish *tolmodh* and *tholmodughet*, *tolmodighed*

**Danish definition:** The virtue consists in the ability to wait for something over a significant period of time, possibly through interruptions and inconveniences, without giving up

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 33 / *EO1*, 25): “I altogether lack the patience to live. I cannot see the grass grow, but if I cannot do that, then I’d rather not look at all.”

CORDELIA WAHL: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 302 / *EO1*, 313): “Have patience with my love [*Kjærlighed*], forgive me for continuing to love you.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 383 / *EO1*, 395): “My longing is an eternal impatience.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 134–35 / *EO2*, 135–36): “Courage can be admirably concentrated in the moment [*Momentet*], patience cannot, precisely because patience contends against time.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 209 / *FT*, 122): “[T]he generation does indeed have the task and has nothing to do with the fact that the preceding generation had the same task—unless the particular generation, or the individuals in the generation, would presumptuously take the seat that belongs only to the Spirit that governs the world and has the patience not to become tired.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Gain One’s Soul in Patience,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 167 / *EUD*, 168): “In the external, patience is some third element that comes to take part, and humanly speaking, it would indeed be better if it were not needed.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Preserve One’s Soul in Patience,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 195 / *EUD*, 187): “To preserve one’s soul in patience—that is, to keep the soul bound together in patience so that it does not go beyond this [preserving what must be preserved, not seeking to preserve what need not be preserved] and thus become lost when he must begin the long battle with an untiring enemy, time, and with a manifold enemy, the world.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 219 / *EUD*, 220): “[Patience] and expectation correspond to each other.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 53 / SLW, 51): “[I]f a man is deceived, one has a little sympathy and a little patience so long as he is present, so as to laugh when he has gone.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 134 / SLW, 142): “[Y]et she [viz., Desdemona] is greater by her angelic patience.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 201 / SLW, 214): “She can prepare her soul in patience, can with intact conscience take the veil of sorrow—what can I do?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 563 / CUP1, 621): “He understands one at once and piece by piece, he has the patience not to leap over the intermediate clauses and . . . he can hold out just as long as the writer.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 223 / WL, 219): “For patience endures all things and remains silent. . . . But love endures all things, patiently remains silent—but presupposes in all its silence that love is nonetheless certainly present in the other person.”

## Perdition, Lost, Damned

**Danish term:** n., *Fortabelse*; adj., *fortabt*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *fyrirtapa*, composed of prefix *for-* and *tape*, to lose, “to make lost”

**Danish definition:** (1) Social, moral, or spiritual ruin; (2) to forfeit the right to something; (3) to become immersed in something (cf. English “he lost himself in his studies,” etc.)

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 30 / EO1, 22): “Really, how many are there are in our time who truly dare to wish, dare to desire, dare to address nature neither with a well-behaved child’s *bitte, bitte* [please, please] nor with the fury of one damned [*fortabt*]?”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 230–31 / EO1, 237): “The aesthete who considers aesthetics his profession, and in this profession in turn sees the genuine occasion, is *eo ipso* lost [*fortabt*]. He is too much a Pelagian autocrat to be able, in childlike wonder, to rejoice over . . . inspiration and the occasion.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 306 / EO1, 316): “Her head is a Madonna head, purity and innocence its air; she bows down just like a Madonna, but she is not lost [*fortabt*] in contemplation of the One.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 421–22 / EO1, 434): “I imagine her to myself, then, as healthy, blooming, amply developed; she holds a child in her arms, upon whom her whole attention is turned, in whose contemplation she is lost [*fortabt*]. This is a picture which may be called the loveliest that human life has to display; it is a nature myth, which therefore must be seen only in artistic portrayal, not in life.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 168 / EO2, 172): “I see a crowd of young people, of which it is however impossible that all could have philosophical minds, lost [*fortabte*] in our age’s favorite philosophy.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 180 / EO2, 185): “Yes, one can say that everyone who does not go his whole life like a child comes to a moment when he faintly senses, even if in the distance, this perdition.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 118 / FT, 22): “If Abraham, when he stood upon Mt. Moriah, . . . his return would have been a flight, his rescue a coincidence, his reward shame, his future perhaps perdition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 92 / EUD, 85): “How sorrowful is such a perdition that not even think it is living thoughtlessly, but rather that it understands everything and in its heart’s aberration thinks that it turns everything to its advantage.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Preserve One’s Soul in Patience,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 189–90 / EUD, 186): “But if a person by being lost [*fortabes*] himself had lost [*tabt*] his soul, then he could not flee recollection; for the loss [*Tabet*] would be continually present with him through time and eternity in perdition [*Fortabelse*].”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 246 / EUD, 247–48): “—Perhaps it was sin and perdition that lay between him and youth’s thought of God, separating them, and the wrath of separation seemed to make an understanding impossible.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 417–18 / CA, 115): “It is lost, its judgment is pronounced, its condemnation certain, and the intensification of judgment is that the individual must be dragged through life to the place of execution.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4 / CA, 156): “So when such a person graduates from the school of possibility and knows what it means better than a child knows its ABC’s that he can demand absolutely nothing of life, and that terror, perdition, and annihilation live next door to every person . . . he will praise actuality, and even when it rests heavily upon him, he will be mindful that it is still far, far lighter than possibility was.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 101 / SLW, 106): “To settle for being comfortable, being happy, etc., is perdition if this happiness is based on thoughtlessness, or cowardice, or a worldly mentality’s wretched idolization of existence.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 52 / CUP1, 47): “The reliability of eighteen centuries, the fact that Christianity has permeated all relations of life, reshaped the world, etc., this reliability is, to be precise, a beguilement whereby the resolving and choosing subject is imprisoned and goes into the perdition of the parenthesis.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 271 / CUP1, 298): “Johannes the Seducer is perdition in frigidity, a ‘marked man’ and extinct individuality.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing,” *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 133 / UD, 18): “Neither is it a gain that guilt is entirely forgotten, it is, in the contrary, loss [*Tab*] and perdition [*Fortabelse*]; but it is a gain to gain inwardness so as to, more and more inwardly, repent of [*fortryde*] the guilt.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 195 / WL, 196): “Christianity discovered such a danger, which is called eternal perdition. This danger seemed laughable to the world.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 243 / WL, 242): “[It] is the just punishment upon him [the deceiver] that his deception is successful—and precisely through this, his perdition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 256 / WL, 257): “If, therefore, someone cannot understand what the loving person understands . . . it must be because there is something which weighs him down and gives him a tendency to expect the other person’s discouragement, downfall, perdition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Cares of the Pagans,” *Christian Discourses* (SKS 10, 77–78 / CD, 69): “The greatest distance, greater than that from the most distant star to the earth, greater than that which human skill can measure, is [the distance] from God’s grace to God’s wrath, from the Christian to the pagan, from being blessedly saved in grace to ‘an eternal perdition away from the face of God,’ from seeing God to seeing, from the abyss, that one has lost [*tabt*] God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 22, 92; NB11:155 / KJN 88): “If one takes away the terror of eternity (either eternal blessedness or eternal perdition) then wishing to follow Jesus becomes essentially [*i Gruden*] fantasy. For only this earnestness of eternity can obligate but also move a person to venture so decisively and justify someone in doing so.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 252 / PC, 261–62): “We pray for those who have need of conversion, that you would draw them to yourself from the way of perdition onto that of truth; for those who have turned to you and found the way, we pray that they might make progress on the way, drawn to you.”

## Philosophy, Philosopher, Philosophical

**Danish term:** n., *Philosophi(e)*; n., *Philosoph*; adj., *philosophisk*

**Danish etymology:** From the Greek φιλοσοφία, “love of wisdom”

**Danish definition:** (1) Love of wisdom; (2) the scholarly discipline that encompasses human existence and fundamental categories of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, logic, etc.; (3) a rigorously articulated view of the world or of the basic elements of a particular subject

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 187; Not5:32 / KJN 3, 183): “That philosophy must begin with a presupposition must not be regarded as a fault,

but as a blessing; therefore this *an sich* is also a curse from which it can never become free.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 49 / EO1, 40): “The philosopher, then, is continually *aeterno modo* and does not have, as did the blessed Sinenis, only particular hours that are lived for eternity.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 167 / EO2, 171): “Even if I was the most brilliant philosophical mind who ever lived on Earth, there must be something more I have to do besides sitting and contemplating past times.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 170 / EO2, 174): “The spheres which philosophy genuinely has to do, the spheres which genuinely belong to thought, are logic, nature, and history. Here necessity reigns, and therefore mediation has its validity . . . With what one could call the inward act philosophy has nothing at all to do; but this inward act is the true life of freedom.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 25 / R, 148): “If one knows anything about modern philosophy, and is not entirely ignorant of Greek philosophy, then one will easily see that this category [of repetition] precisely explains the relationship between the Eleatics and Heraclitus, and that genuine repetition is that which some have by mistake called ‘mediation.’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / FT, 33): “Philosophy cannot and should not give faith, but it should understand itself and know what it offers and take nothing away, and least of all cheat people out of something by treating it as if it were nothing.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 149 / FT, 55): “For if the ethical . . . is the highest, . . . then one needs no categories other than those possessed by Greek philosophy, or those which can consistently be logically derived from those.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 142 / SLW, 152): “[T]he latest philosophy has made it a term of abuse to speak of Kant’s ‘honest way.’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 302 / CUP1, 331): “In Greece, as in philosophy’s youth as a whole, the difficulty was to achieve the abstract, to abandon existence, which continually yields the particular; now there is the reverse difficulty, to attain existence. . . . To philosophize in Greece was an action, the person philosophizing was therefore an existing person. He knew only a little, but he knew it thoroughly because early and late he occupied himself with the same thing.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 302 / CUP1, 331): “What is it nowadays to philosophize, and what it is that a philosopher nowadays is genuinely informed about? . . . The philosophical thesis of the identity of thinking and being is exactly the opposite of what it seems; it expresses that thinking has completely abandoned existence.”



ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 91 / PC, 81): “The whole of modern philosophy, from both an ethical and a Christian perspective, is based upon frivolousness.”

## Physical, Sensate / Psychical

**Danish term:** adj., *sandselig*; adjectival n., *det Sandselige*; adj., *legemlig*; adjectival n., *det Legemlige*; adj., *sjælelig*; adj., *sjælelig*; n., adjectival *det Sjælelige*; adj., *psychisk*; adjectival n., *det Psychiske*

### Danish etymology:

*Sandselige, sandselig*: Abstract noun and adjective formed from the Danish *Sans*, “sense,” which is derived via French from the Latin *sensus*, “the faculty or power of perceiving”

*Legemlige, legemlig*: From the Old Norse *líkami*, Old English *lichama*, “body,” “container”

*Sjælelige, sjælelig, sjelig*: From the Old Saxon *siala*, of unknown origin

*Psychiske, psychisk*: From the Greek *ψυχικός*, of or relating to the soul or life; the New Testament (1 Cor. 2:14 and 15:44, 46) uses *ψυχικός* to describe human mental life in contrast to *πνευματικός*, spiritual, mental life, a distinction those seeking to translate the Bible into both English and Danish struggle to represent

### Danish definition:

*Sandselige, sandselig*: (1) In philosophical usage, the capacity for perception through the senses; (2) in ordinary usage, enjoyment of the erotic

*Legemlige, legemlig*: (1) n., That which relates to a person’s body; (2) relating to a person’s body

*Sjælelige, sjælelig, sjelig*: (1) n., A human being’s thoughts, feelings, and will considered as a whole; (2) that which relates to a human being’s thoughts, feelings, and will as a whole

*Psychiske, psychisk*: relating to the life of the soul or human consciousness

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 69 / EO1, 62): “Sensuality, then, had certainly existed in the world before [Christianity], but it was not spiritually defined. Then how did it exist? It had been psychically [*sjælelig*] defined. Thus it was in paganism, and if one wishes to seek its perfect expression, it was in Greece. But sensuality mentally [*sjælelig*] defined is not contradiction, exclusion, but harmony and consonance.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 99 / EO1, 95): “Psychical [*sjælelig*] love is continuance in time, the sensual [love] is disappearance in time.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 66/ EO2, 60–61): “All this marriage has also; it is sensual [*sandselig*] and yet spiritual. But it is more; for the word ‘spiritual’ applied to the first love is closest to saying that it is psychical [*sjælelig*], that it is sensuality permeated by spirit.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): “Immediately qualified as a sensate and psychical being, the single individual is the particular individual who has his τέλος in the universal, and this is his ethical task, to continually annul his particularity in order to become the universal.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 82): “The individual, qualified immediately as a sensuous and psychical being, is the hidden. His ethical task is then this, to strip himself of his hiddenness and become disclosed in the universal.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 384 / CA, 122): “The human being is a synthesis of mind [Sjel] and body [Legeme], which is constituted and sustained by spirit.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 43 / SLW, 39): “The highest form of the psychical [Sjelelige] finds its expression in the uttermost opposite, and the sensual [Sandselige] wishes to signify the highest form of the psychical [Sjelelige].”

JUDGE WILHELM: *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 96 / SLW, 100): “The difficulty is that as soon as one thinks of God as spirit, then the individual’s relationship to him becomes so spiritual that the sensate-psychical [sandselige-sjelelige] synthesis that is Eros’ potency easily disappears, as if one were to say that marriage is a duty, that to get married is a duty, that this, then, was a higher expression than falling in love, because duty is a spiritual relation to a God who is spirit.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 317 / CUP1, 346): “It may be entirely right, scientifically speaking . . . to ascend abstractly-dialectically in psychological categories from the psychic-somatic [psychisk-somatiske] to the psychical [Psychiske], to the pneumatic [Pneumatiske], but this scientific expression must not intrude or interfere with existence.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 63 / WL, 56): “In love [Elskov] the *I* is defined as sensate-psychical-spiritual [sandselig-sjelelig-aandelig], the beloved is a sensate-psychical-spiritual [sandselig-sjelelig-aandelig] specification; in friendship, the *I* is defined as psychical-spiritual [sjelelig-aandelig], the friend is a psychical-spiritual [sjelelig-aandelig] specification; only in love of the neighbor is the self who loves purely spiritually defined as spirit, and the neighbor is a purely spiritual specification.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 159 / SUD, 43): “Every human being is a mental-physical [sjelelig-legemlige] synthesis innately directed toward being [anlagt til at være] spirit.”

## Poetry, Poet, Poetic

**Danish term:** n., *Poesi*; n., *Digter*; adj., *poetisk*

### Danish etymology:

*Poesi, poetisk:* From the Greek ποιήσις, “that which is created,” noun formed from the verb ποιέειν, “to make, to create”

*Digter:* From the Latin *dictare*, “to compose or write”

**Danish definition:**

*Poesi*: Poems in verse, but also literary creation of all kinds

*poetisk*: (1) Relating to or characteristic of poetry; (2) characterized by a romantic atmosphere or an emotional and evocative expression

*Digter*: A writer of verse, but also a literary author in general

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 353 / CI, 324): “The irony therefore simultaneously makes the poem and the poet free. But in order for it to be possible for this to happen, the poet himself must be master over the irony.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 234; Not8:30 / KJN 3, 229): “Yes—if it were she who had broken up with me, then, however much I loved her . . . I would have dared to crowd sail in order to forget; I would have dared to poeticize her—but now I cannot persuade myself to do so.”

A: “Disapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 27 / EO1, 19): “What is a poet? An unhappy person who hides profound anguish in their heart, but whose lips are formed in such a way that as sighs and cries flow through them, they sound like beautiful music.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 132 / EO2, 133): “The way of history, however, just like the way of law, is long and difficult. So art and poetry step in to shorten the way for us and delight us with the moment of consummation; they concentrate the extensive in the intensive.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 202 / EO2, 210): “The poet sees the ideals, but he must flee away from the world in order to delight in them.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 260 / EO2, 273): “[Poetry] and art . . . provide only an imperfect reconciliation with life.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 375, Not12:6 / KJN 3, 373): “How does ideality arise for the lyric poet—The epic [poet] has the material and the muse; for the lyric [poet] the muse herself is the material; the epic [poet] conjures the muse, the lyric [poet] is in love with the muse, whether it is a happy love or not.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 112 / FT, 15): “[T]he poet or orator . . . can do nothing of what the former [the hero] does, he can only admire, love, be delighted at, and rejoice over the hero. Thus he too is happy, no less than the other; for the hero is, as it were, his better nature, with which he is in love, yet is pleased that the other is not himself, that his love can be admiration. He is recollection’s genius.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 128 / FT, 32): “[L]ove has its priests in the poets.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 155 / FT, 61): “[T]he poet buys this power of the word to express everyone else’s heavy secrets at the cost of a little secret that he cannot express, and a poet is not an apostle—he casts out devils by the power of the devil.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 181 / FT, 92): “Only passion against passion provides a poetic collision, not this rummaging about within the particulars contained in the same passion.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 212 / EUD, 209): “She [the prophetess Anna] is the object of our contemplation, and there are things in life in which we should not seek to poeticize our thoughts, but from which we ourselves should learn; there are things in life over which we should not weep, but from which we should learn to weep over ourselves.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 60 / SLW, 58): “Poetry is the idolization of woman.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 100 / SLW, 105): “Poetry cannot use a married man. The poet’s enthusiasm is for the immediate; the poet is great through his faith in the immediate and its power to force its way through and prevail.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 375 / SLW, 404): “In unhappy love, poetry has had, from time out of mind, the object of its happy love.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 233 / CUP1, 257): “The difference between the poet and the upbuilding speaker [is] that the poet has no other τέλος than psychological truth and the art of presentation, while the speaker in addition has the principal goal of carrying everything across into the upbuilding.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 396–97 / CUP1, 436): “[For] immediacy, poetry is the transfiguration of life, but for religiousness, poetry is a beautiful and lovely jest, whose consolation religiousness nevertheless refuses, because it is precisely in suffering that the religious breathes.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 399 / CUP1, 439): “Poetically, the task is precisely the enlargement of the imagination.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 415 / CUP1, 457): “Poetry is the illusion before understanding, religiousness the illusion after understanding. Between poetry and religiousness, worldly wisdom performs its vaudeville. Every individual who does not live either poetically or religiously is obtuse.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 527–28 / CUP1, 580): “Therefore a religious poet is a doubtful category in relation to the paradoxical religious, because, aesthetically, possibility is higher than actuality, and the poetic lies precisely in the ideality of imaginative perception.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 18 / TA, 14): “[Poetry] does not essentially reconcile with actuality; through the imagination, it reconciles with the ideality of the imagination, but this reconciliation is—in the actual individual—precisely the new split with actuality.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 70 / WL, 63): “For the poet certainly does love solitude, he loves it—in order to discover, in solitude, the missing

happiness of love [*Elskov*] and friendship, just as someone seeks out a dark place where they might with wonder observe the stars.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 22, 235; NB12:147 / *KJN* 6, 237): “Oh, once I am dead, *Fear and Trembling* alone will be enough for an immortal name as an author. Then it will be read and translated into foreign languages as well. One will nearly shudder at the frightful pathos there is in the book. But when it was being written, when the one who was considered to be the author went about in the incognito of an idler, seeming to be flippancy, wittiness, and irresponsibility itself—then no one could rightly grasp its earnestness. Oh, you fools, the book was never so earnest as at that time. Just that was the true expression of its horror. Had the author seemed to be in earnest, then the horror would have been diminished. The reduplication is what is monstrous in the horror.

“But when I am dead, then one will form an imaginary character from me, a dark character—and then the book will be terrifying.

“But the true word has already been said when the difference between the poet and the hero was brought up. There is a predominating strain of the poetic in me, and yet the mystification was just that *Fear and Trembling* really reproduced my own life.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 191–192 / *SUD*, 77): “Such a poet can have very profound religious longing, and the conception of God is taken up into his despair. He loves God more than anything, God who is for him his only consolation in his secret anguish, and yet he loves his anguish, which he will not give up.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (SKS 12, 281 / *WA*, 165): “An authorship that advanced step by step, which took its beginning with *Either/Or*, seeks here its decisive resting point, at the foot of the altar, where the author, personally most conscious of his imperfection and even guilt, by no means calling himself a truth-witness, but only a poet and thinker of his own kind, who, ‘without authority,’ had nothing new to bring, but wished to read through once again the ur-text of individual human existence-relationships, the old, familiar text handed down from the fathers, if possible in a more inward way.”

## Position

**Danish term:** n., *Stilling*; n., *Position*

### Danish etymology:

*Stilling*: Partly borrowed from the Low German *stellinge*, partly from the German *Stellung*; in Danish, forms the verbal noun from the verb *stille*, “to place or set”

*Position*: From Latin *positio*, “to place or set”

### Danish definition:

*Stilling*: (1) The posture in which someone stands, sits, or is posed; (2) the condition or constitution of something; (3) the way a plurality of objects are organized relative to one another; (4) how someone is related to a particular question; (5) paid and permanent job with an employer; (6) military deployment of troops in a particular place; (7) in

dance, a posture, or mode of organizing the body so as to make particular movements possible or graceful

*Position*: (1) The position or place that something occupies; (2) the special positions used in dance or fencing from which to make certain movements possible, graceful, easy, or effective; (3) in military usage, the placement of troops; (4) in nautical usage, the place where a ship is located; (5) in sport, the positions from which a competitor is placed to start, e.g., in a race; (6) the placement of a person or group of persons in accordance with reputation or social regard, especially in terms of positive regard, influence, and power

NB: *Stilling* in sense (6) is used frequently by SK, but these uses are straightforward and are not recorded here.

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 181 / *EO1*, 184): “Just as someone who has been standing or sitting for a long time in a forced position stretches [*retter*] their body with pleasure, just as a branch, which has been bent for a long time by force, when the bond is broken, joyfully takes again its natural position, so too does she find rejuvenation.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 367 / *EO1*, 378): “She is sitting on the sofa by the tea table; I am on a chair by her side. This position [*Stilling*] has a confidentiality and yet also a dignity that distances. A great deal depends on the position [*Stillingen*], that is, for the one who has eyes for it. Love has many positions [*Positioner*], this is the first.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 143 / *EO2*, 145): “You show us, instead of the orchestra director’s baton, the motions of which mark time for first love’s graceful positions, duty’s unpleasant judicial cane.”

Title Page: *Fear and Trembling* drafts (SKS K4, 79 / *FT*, 243): Written on the margin of an alternative title page: “Movements and Positions”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 135 / *FT*, 41): “It is supposed to be the most difficult task for a dancer to leap into a definite position in such a way that there is no instant in which he grasps for the position, but in the leap itself stands in the position. Perhaps no dancer can do this—but this knight does it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / *FT*, 46): “It would however not be difficult to write a whole book were I to examine the various misunderstandings, the awkward positions, the shoddy movements I have encountered just in my little practice.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / *FT*, 46): “If someone who wanted to learn to dance were to say: For centuries, one generation after the other has learned the positions, and it is high time that I take advantage of this and promptly begin with the quadrille—people would presumably laugh a little at him, but in the world of spirit this is very plausible.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 236 / *SLW*, 253): “If Simon Stylites in any way was able to bring the thought of God in relation to standing on a tall pillar and bending himself into the most difficult positions and frightening away sleep and searching after terror in the crises of balance, then in my opinion he did well to

do it. His mistake was that he did it in the eyes of men, that he was still a ballerina—that he, like her as she bends in the most difficult positions on the floor, is still seeking after public applause. This I have never done, but I am certainly doing as he did, I am frightening away sleep and twisting my soul.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 20 / CUP1, 11): “As for the sequel, on the other hand, I am convinced that . . . every theological candidate will be capable of writing it—if he is capable of imitating the fearless dialectical positions and movements.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 239–40 / CUP1, 264): “If a man were to stand on one leg, or, in an odd dancing position, swing his hat, and in this pose recite something true, then his few listeners would divide into two classes, and he would not have many of them. . . . Thus it is also with his experiment [Constantius’s imaginary construction].”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 403 / CUP1, 443): “Just as resignation saw to it that the individual had the absolute orientation toward the absolute τέλος, so too the persistence of suffering is the security that the individual is in position and remains in position.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 90 / WL, 85): “Therefore, everyone . . . is first and foremost to place himself upon the point [*Punkt*; Hongs have *in the position*] where Providence can use him if it so pleases Providence. That point [*Punkt*; Hongs have *the position*] is just this, to love the neighbor or to exist essentially equally for every human being.” [Included because the Hongs’ translation creates the false appearance that SK is employing the psychological sense of *Stilling* in this passage.]

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 304–5 / WL, 307): “Has the dance ceased because one of the dancers has gone away? In a certain sense. But if the other dancer still stands in the position that expresses bowing toward the one who is not seen, and if you knew nothing about what preceded, then you would say, ‘The dance will surely begin just as soon as the other one, who is awaited, arrives.’”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 209 / SUD, 96): “Sin is not a negation, but a position.”

**Possibility:** See *Necessity/Possibility*

## Prayer, Pray

**Danish term:** n., *Bøn*; v., *bede*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *bæn* and Old English *ben*, a root meaning “speech”

**Danish definition:** (1) An urgent and humble request; (2) an urgent and humble, concentrated addresser to a deity, possibly following a ritualized form

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 233–34; Not8:28 / *KJN* 3, 228): “Every such a thought occurs to me, and it normally happens many times a day), then I

transform it into prayer for her, that it may in truth be the best for her, which is what I wish.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 388 / EO1, 400): “She seeks for the marvelous outside of herself, she will pray that it may appear to her, as if it were not in her own power to summon it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 19 / EO2, 9): “[T]here is one thing for which I thank God with my whole soul, and it is that she is the only one whom I have loved, the first; and there is one thing I pray to God with my whole heart, that he will give me the strength to never wish to love another.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 232 / EO2, 243): “[T]he more ethically a person lives, the more the person’s prayer has the character of purpose.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 12 / R, 134): “If one were to witness a person praying right from his whole soul, who could then be so inhuman that he would stand and observe, who would not rather feel himself pierced through by the outpouring of the praying one’s devotion?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 110 / FT, 13): “[H]e threw himself on his face, he begged God to forgive him his sin.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 117 / FT, 21): “But Abraham believed. He did not pray for himself that he might move the Lord; it was only when righteous punishment fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah that Abraham stepped forward with his prayers.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 222 / EUD, 223): “*With prayer and fasting*, but the one who prays and fasts indeed accomplishes nothing; for prayer is idle talk on earth, even though it ‘is working in heaven,’ and fasting consumes earthly energy, and does not strengthen one to endure in expectancy. Yet impatience is an evil spirit ‘that is driven out only by prayer and much fasting.’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 366 / EUD, 382): “To struggle in prayer—what a contradiction! . . . [F]or prayer is not a weapon of war, but on the contrary the quiet occupation of peace; prayer is not his who attacks another, not his who defends himself, but his who yields.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 216 / SLW, 232): “Do not think that I wish to escape my sufferings; that is not my prayer.”

SIMON LEPROSUS: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 218–19 / SLW, 234): “God of Father Abraham, give them wine and corn in abundance and happy times. . . . Hear the prayer of one whose body is infected and impure, an abomination to the priests, a horror to the people, a snare for the happy; hear him if his heart is still not infected.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 323 / SLW, 347): “It is supposed to be a duty to pray, it is supposed to be beneficial to pray. . . . [I]t would perhaps be better, especially with regard to the educated (for it is easier for the poor, the



wretched, and the simple to pray) if one introduced the requirement that it cost something to receive permission to pray, then there would perhaps be great demand for it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 89–90 / CUP1, 91): “Thus, to pray is the highest pathos of the infinite, and yet it is comic, precisely because it is, in its inwardness, incommensurable with every external expression.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 571 / CUP1, 627): “My wish, my prayer, is therefore that if it should occur to someone to wish to quote a particular passage from the books, that he would do me the kindness of quoting the respective pseudonymous author’s name, not mine.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 58 / WL, 51): “[S]hut the door and pray to God—for God is indeed the highest . . . [a]nd when you open it and go out, then the first person you meet is ‘the neighbor,’ whom you *shall* love.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 156 / SUD, 41): “That God’s will is the possible makes it so that I can pray; if there is only necessity, then a person is essentially just as inarticulate as the animal.”

## Pride

**Danish term:** n. *Stolthed*; adj., *stolt*

**Danish etymology:** From the Low German *stolt*, “stiff, upright”

**Danish definition:** (1) Happiness with an achievement, quality, or object one either possesses or (directly or indirectly) is the cause of; (2) the quality of being stately, magnificent, and impressive; (3) a strong sense of one’s own worth and dignity

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 233; Not8:26 / KJN 3, 228): “But how it humbles my pride that I cannot go back to her. I had set all my pride in remaining faithful to her, and yet I dare not.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 179 / EO1, 182): “Her pride breaks forth in hate.”

A: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 298 / EO1, 309): “It was her pride that covered the unusual.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 131 / EO2, 131): “To conquer requires pride, to possess, humility.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Expectancy of Faith,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 22 / EUD, 12–13): “If a man said, ‘When human beings disdained me, then I went to God, he became my teacher, and this is my blessedness, my joy, my pride,’ would this be any less beautiful?”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 16 / R, 139): “[Now] he had spoiled everything, even the joy of preserving her pride and making her into a goddess.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 139 / FT, 45): “No girl who is not so proud really understands love, but all the world’s cunning and shrewdness cannot defraud she who has this pride.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 164 / FT, 73): “But . . . he must not speak of this lack of courage as humility, since, on the contrary, it is pride, whereas the courage of faith is the one and only humble courage.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 199 / FT, 111): “How are you going to be sure that your resolution was not prompted by cryptic pride?”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 186/ SLW, 198): “My honor, my pride order me to believe her.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 314 / SLW, 339): “While he was in the midst of his story, I got up, heartily embraced him, and said with emotion: ‘Now I understand you! . . . No, I cannot do it, to tell the truth, my pride has too much power over me.’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 260 / CUP1, 285): “Socrates set his honor and pride on one thing: continually to say the same thing and about the same thing.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 89 / WL, 84): “To wish to exist openly for other people only with respect to one’s advantages of earthly dissimilarity is pride and arrogance; but the sagacious invention of not wishing to exist for others at all in order to secretly enjoy the advantages of one’s dissimilarity in alliance with one’s peers is cowardly pride.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 270 / WL, 271): “What is small-mindedness? . . . Small-mindedness is . . . neither truly proud nor truly humble (for humility before God is the true pride). . . . The small-minded person has never had the courage for this God-pleasing daring of humility and pride: before God to be oneself.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 179 / SUD, 65): “If it were possible for someone to become a confidant in his inclosing reserve, and this person were to say to him, ‘It is pride, you are really proud of yourself,’ then he would probably be unlikely to make the confession to anyone else. When he was alone with himself, he would perhaps confess that there was something to it, but the passionateness with which his self had come to understand his weakness would soon deceive him once again into thinking that it could not possibly be pride when it was precisely his weakness over which he despaired—just as if it were not pride that lay so monstrous a weight upon the weakness, just as if it were not because he wished to be proud of himself that he could not bear this consciousness of weakness.”

**Psychical:** See *Physical, Sensate/Psychical*

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## Public

**Danish term:** n., *Publicum*; n., *Publikum*; adjectival n., *det Offentlige*; n., *Offentlighed*; adj., *offentlig*

**Danish etymology:**

*Publicum, Publikum:* From the Latin *publicum*, “public”

*Offentlige, Offentlighed, offentlig*: From the German *öffentlich*, derived from *offen*, “open”

**Danish definition:**

*Publicum, Publikum*: (1) A gathering of spectators at a cultural or sporting event; (2) the expected buyers and consumers of a product or service; (3) the presence of others

*offentlig*: (1) That which belongs to, emanates from, or is handled by state, municipal, etc. authority; (2) that which concerns the public or the greater part of the population; (3) that which is open to all to participate in or witness, or is known to all; (4) that which is “official” in relation to a professional, legal, etc. context

*Det Offentlige, Offentlighed*: (1) The state, municipality, etc.; (2) the population or society represented by state, municipality, etc.

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 12 / EO1, 4): “It was just such unexpected good fortune that in a most curious manner put me in possession of the papers I hereby have the honor to present to the reading public.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 95 / EO1, 90–91): “So it goes; while every would-be assistant professor or professor thinks he will be accredited as intellectually mature by the reading public through the publication of a book about *Faust*, in which he faithfully repeats what all the other graduates and scholarly confirmands have already said, he thinks he dares to ignore such an insignificant little folk book.

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 103 / EO2, 101): “When I stand up firmly for the congregation, I do not identify this with an ‘esteemed public’ . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 103 / FT, 8): “He [the author] easily foresees his fate in an age that has cast off passion to serve scholarship—in an age when a writer who would have readers must be careful to write in such a way that his writing may be comfortably perused during the after-dinner nap, and be careful to fashion his outer appearance in conformity with that polite gardener’s apprentice in *The Advertiser*, who with hat in hand and a good reference from his last employer, recommends himself to an esteemed public.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 243 / EUD, 244): “When one grows older and very sensible, then an utterly strange thing follows; then one goes beyond an earlier thinker, names oneself after a later thinker, or gives others a name, and does other similar things that pertain to neither God nor to oneself, but only the judgment of the world.” [Hongs: “public opinion” here; however, *publikum, publicum, offentlig, det Offentlige* actually do not occur in the discourses.]

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 22 / SLW, 15): “Even if many people are interested in what is the object of the recollecting one’s recollection, he is still alone with his recollection—the seeming public [*Offentlighed*] character is simply illusory.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 237 / CUP1, 260): “For God is not like a king in some difficulty, who says to the highly trusted Minister of the Interior: ‘You must do everything; you must achieve the atmosphere [*Stemning*] for our proposal, and win public [*offentlige*] opinion to our side; you can do it, use your sagacity. If I cannot depend on you, I have no one.’”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 86 / TA, 90–91): “For genuine leveling to come about, a phantom must first be raised, the spirit of leveling, a monstrous abstraction, an all-encompassing something that is nothing, a mirage—this phantom is *the public*.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 87 / TA, 91): “Only when there no strong common life to give the concretion substance will the press form this abstraction, ‘the public,’ which consists of unsubstantial individuals who are never united and never can be united in the simultaneity of any situation or organization, and yet are maintained to be a whole.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 88 / TA, 92–93): “The public is not a people, not a generation, not one’s age, not a congregation, not an association, not these definite people, for all of these are what they are only by concretion.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 90 / TA, 95): “In the same way, then, the public keeps for itself a dog, just for fun. This dog is the contemptible part of the literary world. If a better sort of person now appears, perhaps even a person of distinction, then the dog is provoked, and the fun begins.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 290–291; JJ:459 / KJN 2, 270): “What is written [now] is not [written] so that someone can learn something from it; oh, God forbid such effrontery, the reading public [*Læseverdenen*] knows everything. It is not the reader who has need of the writer (as the patient of the doctor), no, it is the writer who has need of the reader. A writer, in short, is therefore a man in financial difficulties; so he writes, and this is to be up for an exam where the reading public [*Læseverdenen*], who knows everything, gives the grades.”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 95 / C, 307): “The public is strange; when time in the course of ten years, for example, has taken for itself the liberty of making its declared favorite [actress] ten years older, then the public becomes angry—with the favorite.”

## Recollection, Recollect

**Danish term:** n., *Erindring*; v., *erindre*

**Danish etymology:** *Erindring* is the verbal noun formed from *erindre* and is derived from the Older New Danish (c. 1500–1700) *erindring* and the German *Erinnerung*

**Danish definition:** (1) A representation in the mind of something previously experienced; (2) the seat of memory in the mind; (3) the ability to evoke representations of the past, i.e., to remind (*erindre*) someone of something; (4) a person’s written description of his or her past experiences; (5) in the work of Plato, a conception of truth and learning (first acquired in prenatal existence in which *a priori* philosophical and mathematical knowledge was acquired)

wherein truth is available to each individual and awaits only the occasion of an encounter with a suitable reminder for learning

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 41 / EO1, 32): “For me, nothing is more dangerous than to recollect. . . . To live in recollection is the most perfect life that can be conceived; recollection is more richly satisfying than all actuality, and it has a security that no actuality possesses. A recollected life-relationship has already gone into eternity and has no temporal interest any longer.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 1, 26 / EO1, 42): “Everything that I have experienced, I immerse in a baptism of oblivion unto an eternity of recollection. Everything finite and fortuitous is forgotten and effaced.”

A: “The First Love,” *Either / Or, Part I*: (SKS 1, 264 / EO1, 272): “[He] wants to assure himself that it is he that she loves, not the recollection of Charles.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 1, 333 / EO1, 343): “Recollection is not just a means of conservation, but also of augmenting, and what has been permeated by recollection has a double effect.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 1, 385 / EO1, 397–98): “How far distant should an event be from us in time for us to recollect it; how far so that recollection’s longing can no longer grasp it? In this respect, most people have a limit; what lies too near them in time they cannot recollect, nor what lies too distant. I recognize no limit.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 2, 25 / EO2, 16): “The time is also coming for you . . . when recollection alone is left, recollection, but not in the sense that you love so much, this mixture of poetry and truth, but the earnest and faithful recollection of conscience.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 2, 140 / EO2, 142): “The healthy individual lives simultaneously both in hope and in recollection, and only thereby does his life obtain true, substantial continuity.”

CONSTANTINE CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 10 / R, 131): “Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forwards.”

CONSTANTINE CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 10 / R, 132): “Recollection is a discarded garment, however beautiful it is, still does not fit, for one has outgrown it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 43): “The knight, then, will remember everything; but this recollection is precisely the pain. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 218 / PF, 9): “Socrates thinks through this difficulty by means of the idea that all learning and seeking are only recollection.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 222 / PF, 14): “If the teacher is to be the occasion that reminds the learner, then he certainly cannot assist him in recollecting that he really knows the truth, for the learner is indeed untruth. The teacher then can become an occasion for him to recollect what he is, that he is untruth.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 223 / PF, 14): “If the learner himself were the condition for understanding the truth, then he certainly just needs to recollect.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Preserve One’s Soul in Patience,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 198 / EUD, 195): “What is recollection? A troublesome comforter, a knave who wounds from behind; a shadow that one cannot be rid of, even if one would pay for it.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 17 / SLW, 9): “The bottling of recollection must have preserved the fragrance of experience before it is sealed.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 17–18 / SLW, 9): “To recollect is by no means the same as to remember. . . . Through memory, the experience presents itself to receive the consecration of recollection.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 18 / SLW, 10): “Recollection intends to assert for a person the eternal continuity of his life, and to assure him that his earthly existence is *uno tenore*, one breath, and expressible in one breath.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 19 / SLW, 10): “In recollection, a person draws upon the eternal.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 19 / SLW, 11): “One can genuinely recollect only the eternal.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 91 / SLW, 93): “Whether these titles and positions of honor . . . fill out an eternal consciousness in recollection, I do not know.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 209 / SLW, 224): “But the girl . . . sits and grieves, she is occupied with every little recollection, she listens for a footstep.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 325 / SLW, 350): “But I dare not; for me there is no change of the seasons, just as for me there is no change; recollection does not blossom in my hands, it is like a judgment hanging over my head, or a mysterious sign the meaning of which I do not know. Indeed, did Adam dare to recollect Eden; did he dare, when he saw thistles and thorns at his feet, did he dare to say to Eve: No! It was not like this in Eden, in Eden, oh!”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 188 / CUP1, 206): “For Socrates, therefore, the idea that all knowledge is a recollecting, . . . has a double meaning: (1) that the knower is essentially *integer* [whole, uncorrupted] . . .; (2) that existence in temporality does not have any decisive significance, because there is continually the possibility of recollecting in order to take oneself back into eternity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 485 / CUP1, 533–534): “[T]herefore, rather call this eternal recollection of guilt a harness, and say of the prisoner: he will never be unharnessed.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 491 / CUP1, 540): “Thus, every conception of guilt is lower which does not, through an eternal

recollection, join guilt together with the relation to an eternal blessedness, but through memory joins it together with something lower, something comparative (the person's own accidentality, or that of others), and allows forgetfulness to step in between the particularities of guilt."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 347 / WL, 354): "[T]he loving recollection of the dead has to . . . defend its freedom to recollect against that which would compel one to forget."

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 106 / C, 323): "Only in recollection is there absolute tranquility, and therefore the calm fire of the eternal, its imperishable glow. . . . This pure, calmed, and rejuvenated recollection will, like an idealizing light, completely illuminate the whole performance, which, in this light, will be completely transparent."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 173 / SUD, 58): "[I]llusion essentially has two forms: That of hope and that of recollection. Youthfulness has the illusion of hope, the old that of recollection; . . . they both lie or poeticize."

## Reflection, Reflective, Reflect

**Danish term:** n., *Reflexion*; adj., *reflateret*; v., *reflectere*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *reflexio*, light or an image sent back from a mirror

**Danish definition:** (1) In physics, the throwing back of radiation or waves; (2) thinking something through, pondering or considering something

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 294 / EO1, 304): "The more developed reflection is, the more quickly it can collect itself; it becomes like a passport officer with foreign travelers, so familiar with seeing the most fabulous characters that it does not easily let itself become disconcerted."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 53 / EO2, 46): "May I now remind you that it is a mistake to assume that reflection only annihilates, that it rescues just as much."

YOUNG MAN: "In Vino Veritas," *Repetition* (SKS 4, 59 / R, 189): "Or is it not a kind of mental disorder to have subjugated to this degree every passion, every feeling of the heart, every mood, under the cold regimentation of reflection!"

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): "[N]o reflection can produce a movement. . . . But what our age lacks is not reflection, but passion."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "To Preserve One's Soul in Patience," *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 185 / EUD, 181): "[How] quickly presence of mind assuredly chose the right thing as if it were the fruit of the most careful deliberation [*Overlæg*]." [Included here because the Hongs have "most mature reflection," but in the Danish, none of the discourses from any period include *reflexion*, *reflateret*, or *reflectere*.]

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 290 / PF, 93): “[Yet] Divinity is not an immediate qualification, and the teacher must first develop the most profound self-reflection in the learner, [must develop] the consciousness of sin as a condition for understanding.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 20 / SLW, 12): “Memory is immediate and is aided immediately, recollection only reflectively.”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 67 / SLW, 67): “[Woman] has reflection to an incomprehensible degree, for there is nothing so sacred that [she] does not right away find it suitable for adornment.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 150 / SLW, 160): “A resolution is always reflective; if one disregards this, then language is confused, and resolution is identified with an immediate impulse.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 216 / SLW, 231): “Perhaps I have not loved her at all, perhaps I am on the whole too reflective to be able to love?”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 73–74 / CUP1, 73): “The reflection of inwardness is the double-reflection of the subjective thinker. In thinking, he thinks the universal, but as existing in this thinking, as acquiring this in his inwardness, he becomes more and more subjectively isolated.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 110 / CUP1, 112–13): “How do I bring reflection to a halt, which was set in motion in order to reach that beginning? Reflection has the notable property of being infinite. But that it is infinite will, at any rate, mean it cannot come to a halt by itself.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 67 / TA, 69): “The single individual [*enkelte Individ*] . . . has not fomented enough passion in himself to tear himself out of the web of reflection and the seductive ambiguity of reflection.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (Section not included in SKS / BA, 32): “In the final consequence of reflection, he would then transform the revelation-fact itself into his life’s deepest secret, which in the silence of the grave would become the law of his existence, but which he would never communicate directly.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 142 / SUD, 26): “[R]eflection never captures so securely as when it forms its snare out of nothing, and reflection is never so much itself as when it is—nothing.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 147 / SUD, 30–31): “The self is reflection, and imagination is reflection, is the rendition of the self, which is the self’s possibility. The imagination is the possibility of all reflection; and this intensity of the medium is the possibility of the self’s intensity.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 169 / SUD, 54): “With this certain degree of reflection begins the act of separation whereby the self becomes aware of itself as essentially different from the environment and external events and their influence upon it.”



## Religious, Religiousness

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Religiøse*; adjectival n., *det Religiøse*; n., *Religiositet*; n., *Religiositet*

**Danish etymology:** All four terms are derived from the Latin *religio*, meaning devotion to the sacred, by way of the French *religieux*

**Danish definition:** The four terms are not identical, but cover overlapping territory generally the same as “the religious” in English: (1) Related to religion or to a particular religion; (2) being preoccupied with religious questions and phenomena; (3) personal religious belief

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 145/ EO1, 146): “The religious is the expression for fatherly love, for it has the ethical in itself, but it is mitigated; and by what means? None other but the very same means that gave the tragic its gentleness, by continuity. But while the aesthetic gives this rest before the profound division of sin is asserted, the religious does not give it until after this division is seen in all its frightfulness.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 235–36 / EO2, 246–47): “The religious has a tendency to isolate the individual. . . . Have you not taken note that although one in a certain sense receives the impression of a congregation, individuals still feel themselves isolated; everyone becomes strangers to one another, and it is only by way of a long detour, as it were, that they are again reunited. And from what does this come except from the fact that the individual feels his God-relationship so powerfully in all its inwardness that beside it his earthly relationships lose their significance?”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 56 / R, 185): “Religiously speaking, one could say that it is as if God himself used this girl to capture him, and yet the girl herself is not some actuality, but just like those lace-winged flies one sets upon a hook.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 57 / R, 187): “A religious movement I cannot make, it is against my nature.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 126 / FT, 30): “The ethical expression for what Abraham did is that he intended to murder Isaac; the religious expression is that he intended to sacrifice Isaac; but in precisely this contradiction lies the anxiety that surely can make a person sleepless, and indeed, Abraham is not who he is without the anxiety.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 43): “The love for the princess became for him the expression of an eternal love, assumed a religious character, became clarified as a love for the Eternal Being, who perhaps had denied the fulfillment but yet brought him peace in the consciousness of its validity in an eternal form such as none could deprive him of.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 183 / FT, 93): “[T]he religious . . . this power is the only one that can free it [viz., the aesthetic] from its struggle with the ethical.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "Against Cowardliness," *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 343 / EUD, 356): "Only a religious view can speak rightly about and against such a thing, because the religious point of view recognizes the one thing needful and knows that it is the one thing needful, and therefore it is not busy with the multifarious, nor does it become seductive in portraying the differences."

JUDGE WILHELM: "Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 152 / SLW, 162): "The immediacy of falling in love recognizes only one immediacy which is of equal standing [*ebenbürtig*], which is a religious immediacy; falling in love is too virginal to recognize any confidant except God. But the religious is a new immediacy and has reflection in between."

QUIDAM: "'Guilty?'/ 'Not Guilty?,'" *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 281–82 / SLW, 303): "Only when she has begun to sorrow religiously does the wish vanish like the setting sun when the moon's glory begins to shine, or like the light of the moon before the break of day."

FRATER TACITURNUS: "Letter to the Reader," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 411 / SLW, 444): "Spiritual existence, especially the religious, is not easy; the believer continually lies out upon the deep, has 70,000 fathoms of water beneath him. However long he lies out there, this still does not mean that little by little he comes to lie down and stretch himself out upon the land."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 244 / CUP1, 268–69): "Sin is decisive for a whole existence-sphere, the religious in the strictest sense."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 459 / CUP1, 505): "The religious person does the same [as the humorist], he joints the conception of God together with everything and sees the contradiction, but in his innermost being he relates himself to God."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 505 / CUP1, 556): "Religiousness *A* is by no means undialectical, but it is not paradoxically dialectical. Religiousness *A* is the dialectic of inward deepening; it is the relation to an eternal blessedness not conditioned by a something, but is dialectical inward deepening of the relation. . . . Religiousness *B*, on the other hand . . . , or the paradoxical religiousness, . . . makes conditions in such a way that the conditions are not the dialectical concentrations of inward deepening, but a definite something, which qualifies eternal blessedness more definitely . . . not by more specifically qualifying the individual's appropriation of this, but by more specifically qualifying eternal blessedness, yet not as a task for thought, but on the contrary, paradoxically as repelling toward a new pathos."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Armed Neutrality* [published posthumously] (SKS 16, 112 / AN, 130): "[A]n established order as the true arena for religiousness gives all Christian qualifications an unchristian, conciliatory perspective within the finite, in place of the true Christian perspective for every Christian qualification, which is polemical within or away from finitude toward the eternal."

## Repentance, Repent, Remorse

**Danish term:** n., *Anger*; v., *angre*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Danish and Old Norse *angr*

**Danish definition:** The ordinary Danish definition of *Anger* is dominated by: (1) A sense of sorrow, pain, or grief especially with regards to what one has done; in virtue of which the term seems to mean *remorse* rather than repentance; yet in SK's writing, it frequently refers to the theological concept; (2) an internal movement in which a person, motivated by remorse over sin or wrong action, turns away from sin and toward God

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 298 / EO1, 308): "Such a person is not always what one would call a criminal; he is even often failed by his own schemes, and yet a more terrible punishment befalls him than the criminal; for what is even the pain of remorse in comparison with this conscious madness?"

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 208 / EO2, 216–17): "[B]ut there is also a love whereby I love God, and this has only one expression in language, which is—repentance. . . . [For] only when I choose myself as guilty do I choose myself absolutely, if I am at all to choose myself absolutely in such a way that is not identical with creating myself."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 237 / EO2, 248–49): "To this definition, that choosing oneself is identical with repenting oneself, I cannot return often enough. . . . Ethical repentance has only two movements: either it annuls its object or it bears it. These two movements imply also a concrete relation between the repenting individual and that which is the object of his repentance, whereas to flee from it expresses an abstract relation."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "Every Good and Perfect Gift Is from Above," *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 53 / EUD, 46): "It is the love born of repentance that is more beautiful than all other love; for in it you love God! It is more faithful and more inward than all other love; for in repentance it is God who loves you. In repentance, you receive everything from God, even the thanksgiving that you bring to him."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): "Every time the individual, after having entered the universal, feels an impulse to assert himself as the single individual, he is in a spiritual agon from which he can work himself out only by repentantly surrendering himself as the single individual to the universal."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 189 / FT, 96): "Now, if remorse grasps the merman and he becomes hidden, then he will surely make Agnes unhappy; for Agnes loved him in all innocence. . . . Meanwhile, the merman himself, in his passion, becomes even more unhappy; for he loved Agnes with a multiplicity of passions and had in addition a new guilt to bear. The demonic element in remorse will certainly explain to him that precisely this is his punishment, and the more it torments him, the better."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 84 / EUD, 75): “As she wept, she eventually forgot what she wept over at the beginning; tears of remorse became tears of adoration.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Thorn in the Flesh,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 327 / EUD, 338): “[H]e understands, however, what bitter experiences have only all too unforgettably impressed upon him, the self-accusation which, if the past possesses such a demand upon his soul, no repentance can entirely redeem, not trust in God and entirely wipe out—but only God himself in the inexpressible silence of beatitude.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 21 / SLW, 14): “Repentance, then, is a recollection of guilt. . . . It requires great ideality to actually repent and particularly to repent immediately; for nature can also help a person, and delayed repentance, which in regard to remembering is insignificant, is often the hardest and the deepest.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 168 / SLW, 181): “[The] pain does not cease, except so that remorse can swing its whip over him.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 280 / SLW, 301): “[What] kinship is there between repentance and an aesthetic sorrow over life?”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 315 / SLW, 339): “Repentance is generally known by one thing: that it acts.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 476 / CUP1, 524): “Repentance, however, viewed religiously, will not have its day and then be past, the uncertainty of faith will not have its day and then be past, the consciousness of sin will not have its day and then be past: for then we return to the aesthetic.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Purity of Heart Is to Will One Thing,” *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits* (SKS 8, 250 / UD, 154): “[M]ay you give through repentance the cheerful confidence to will one thing.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 174 / SUD, 59): “But if repentance is to arise, then there must first be thorough despair, complete despair, so that the life of the spirit may break through from the ground upward.”

## Resignation, Resigned, Resign

**Danish term:** n., *Resignation*; v., *resignere*

**Danish etymology:** From the Latin *resignare*, meaning “to remove a seal,” as from a document

**Danish definition:** (1) Abandonment of demands, goals, or hopes, and accepting a situation one believes there is no possibility of altering; (2) the feeling associated with resigning oneself to an unalterable situation

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 245 / EO1, 252): “He has not entirely lost his faith that there are in life as in novels noble feminine souls whose sublime resignation can only wring forth ones tears.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 67/ EO2, 61): “Intention is resignation in its richest form, where what is looked at is not what shall be lost, but what shall be won by being held fast.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 136 / FT, 45): “It follows, as a matter of course, that any . . . interest whatsoever in which an individual has concentrated the whole reality of actuality for himself can, when it is seen to be unrealizable, provide the occasion for the movement of resignation.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 133 / FT, 38): “The knights of infinite resignation, one recognizes easily, their gait is airy, bold.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 45): “In infinite resignation there is peace and rest; every person who wills it, who has not degraded himself with what is still more terrible than to be too proud—self-belittlement—can discipline himself to make this movement, which in its pain reconciles one with existence.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 46): “[I]n infinite resignation, for the first time, I prepare my self in my eternal validity.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 193 / SLW, 206): “[U]pon resignation’s shortcut, a person is no doubt closest to God, but this shortcut is a whole journey around existence.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 401 / SLW, 436): “Despite the partiality with which he otherwise comprehends her, he does nevertheless in a way do wrong by her, by saying that there is not a trace of resignation in her.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 236 / CUP1, 260): “[W]hen the relationship is between human being and human being . . . inwardness is when that which is said belongs to the recipient as if it were his own—and indeed now it is his own. To communicate in that way is resigned inwardness’s most beautiful triumph.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 364 / CUP1, 400): “It is not true, either, that the absolute τέλος becomes concrete in the relative ends, for the absolute distinction of resignation will at every moment secure the absolute τέλος from all fraternizing.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 184 / SUD, 70–71): “The dialectic of resignation is essentially this: to will to be one’s eternal self, and then in relation to something specific in which the self suffers, not to will to be oneself, consoling oneself with the fact that it still may fall away in eternity, and therefore thinking oneself justified in not taking possession of it in time; although suffering under it, still [the person] will not make the admission that it belongs to the self, still will not in faith humble itself under it.”

## Romanticism, Romantic, Romanticize

**Danish term:** n., *Romantik*; adj., *romantisk*; adj., *eventyrlig*; adj., *sværmerisk*; v., *fable*

**Danish etymology:**

*Romantik, romantisk*: From the German *Romantik*

*eventyrlig*: Adjective formed from *eventyr*, “fairy tale, adventure,” via Low German *eventure* and French *aventure*, ultimately derived from Latin *adventura*, the future active participle of *advenire*, “to happen, to arrive”

*sværmerisk*: Adjective formed from *sværme*, “to flock or swarm together,” or, of lovers, “to stroll together while completely absorbed with one another,” from Old Norse *svarmr*, “swarm”

*fable*: From the Latin *fabula*, “story”

**Danish definition:**

*Romantik*: (1) Events or situations that stimulate fantasy and feeling; (2) a mood characterized by feeling and longing or unrealistic fantasizing; (3) a movement in art, music, poetry, and philosophy occurring principally in the first half of the nineteenth century preoccupied with such situations and moods

*romantisk, eventyrlig*: (1) That which rises above the everyday and trivial, especially in being wonderful or amazing; (2) (*romantisk* only): related to erotic love; (3) (*eventyrlig* only) associated with hardship, tension, and danger

*sværmerisk*: (1) Poetically inclined, romantic, sentimental; (2) especially in earlier usage, overpowered, exalted

*fable*: To speak incoherently or dreamily about something unrealistic and unattainable

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Loose Papers* (SKS 27, 144; *Papir* 175 / *KJN* 11, 147): “Why does the music of an organ grinder so often appeal to us—it is surely on the grounds of the romanticism that lies in the mode of its appearance. . . . One does not expect music at all, and suddenly he begins to play.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 14 / *EO1*, 6): “I now sought out a romantic spot in the forest where I was as well as possible secure against a surprise, and there I took out the documents.”

A: “The First Love,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 247 / *EO1*, 254): “When a widower and a widow throw in their lots together, when each brings five children with them, they still nevertheless assure one another on their wedding day that this love is their first love. Emmaline would in her romantic orthodoxy see such a union with detestation; it would be to her a mendacious detestableness, which was to her just as abominable as a marriage between a monk and a nun was to the Middle Ages.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 97 / *EO2*, 94–95): “But marriage is precisely that immediacy which has mediacy within itself, that infinitude which has finitude within itself, that eternity which has temporality within itself. Thus marriage shows itself to be ideal in a double sense, both in the classical and the romantic meaning.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 85 / *R*, 218): “My friend is a poet, and this romantic faith in woman belongs essentially to a poet.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): “The one whose soul lacks this romanticism has sold his soul, whether he now gets a kingdom for it, or a paltry silver penny.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 54 / SLW, 52): “In an erotic sense, one believes absolutely all those outbursts from an indestructible romanticism.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 156 / SLW, 167): “Feminine romanticism is, in the next moment, the religious.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 221 / SLW, 237): “[He] is religiously constructed, his romanticism has the magnitude of infinity, where God is a mighty God, and 70 years is a stroke of the pen, and one’s whole earthly existence a time of probation, and the loss of one’s one and only wish something one must be prepared for if one intends to become involved with him; for he, as the Eternal, has a round conception of time and says to one who seeks him: ‘Yes, it is still not the moment, wait a little bit.’ ‘How long?’ ‘Ahh! Seventy years.’ ‘My God! A human being could die ten times in the meanwhile.’ ‘That must certainly be left up to me.’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 42 / CUP1, 35): “[For] wherever there is passion, there is also romanticism.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 76 / WL, 70): “Christianity is too earnest to romanticize about pure humanity; it wishes only to make human beings pure.”

## Sacrifice

**Danish term:** n., *Offer*; v., *offre*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Danish *ofer* and Old Norse *offr* via the Middle Low German and Old Saxon *offer*

**Danish definition:** (1) The slaughter of an animal, or destruction of property, as an offering to a deity; (2) to give something up selflessly or to abandon something for the sake of something else

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 299 / CI, 261): “The ironist is also a sacrifice that the world process demands, not as if the ironist always needed in the strictest sense to fall as a sacrifice, but his zeal in the service of the world spirit consumes him.”

CORDELIA WAHL: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 302 / EO1, 312): “[Then] desire beckoned you, and you sacrificed the little I possessed; of your own you could sacrifice nothing.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 166 / EO2, 170): “I sacrifice myself for my work, my wife, my children, or, rather, I do not sacrifice myself for them, but I find my satisfaction and joy in them.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 17–18 / R, 140): “Only when this is so [the idea is in motion] does romantic love have meaning, and if someone is not enthusiastically assured that the idea is the life principle in romantic love, and that one must, when it is demanded, sacrifice one’s life for it—yes, what is more, sacrifice romantic love itself, even though actuality very greatly favored it—then he is excluded from poetry.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 118 / FT, 22): “He knew it was God the Almighty who tested [*provede*] him, he knew it was the hardest sacrifice that could be required of him; but he knew also that no sacrifice was too hard when God required it—and he drew the knife.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 201 / FT, 113): “The genuine tragic hero sacrifices himself and everything he has for the universal; his deed and every feeling in him belongs to the universal; he is disclosed, and in this disclosure he becomes ethics’ beloved son.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Patience in Expectancy,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 221 / EUD, 222): “The true expectant person . . . does not consume his soul in impatience, but in patience he brings forth his expectancy, and in patience he sacrifices it by submitting it to God.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 42 / SLW, 38): “The reason why I become . . . either a tragic or comic sacrifice, is indeed disclosed: wishing to think about everything I do.”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 70 / SLW, 71): “I bring her into my snare; now she stands upon the sacrificial altar, that is, in my boutique.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 129–30 / SLW, 136): “Motherly love wishes to sacrifice its life for the child.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 159–60 / SLW, 171): “It then could be that he wished to sacrifice himself entirely for the state, and therefore he did not marry. But this is a vain contradiction.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 187 / SLW, 199): “But not a moment before, so that my death would not give her an explanation that I would certainly sacrifice my life to keep from her.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 211 / SLW, 226): “Now I suppose I shall consider her love as a sacrifice she makes.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 381 / SLW, 410): “It is a contradiction to wish to sacrifice one’s life for a finite purpose.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 111 / WL, 107): “Love is after all devotion and sacrifice.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 134 / WL, 131): “One wishes to sacrifice this or that and everything, but one still hopes to be understood, and thereby to



remain in connection with the opinions of human beings who then must recognize and rejoice in one's sacrifices. . . . The movement of sacrifice then becomes a mere appearance; it makes a show of forsaking the world, but it still remains within the world."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 237–38 / SUD, 126–27): "But when he then discovered that precisely this, his sacrifice of love, that it was possible that it could become for another person, the beloved, the greatest unhappiness—what then? . . . [In] the joy of love (as love is always joyful, particularly when it sacrifices everything) still there was a profound sorrow—for it was indeed possible! Therefore, he would complete this, his work of love, he would bring the sacrifice . . . but not without tears."

### Secrecy, Secret, Hiddenness, Hidden

**Danish term:** n., *Hemmelighed*; adj., *hemmelig*; n., *Skjulthed*

#### Danish etymology:

*Hemmelighed*, *hemmelig*: From the Middle Low German *heimelik*, meaning "belong to the home"

*Skjulthed*: Old Norse *skjla*, "protection" or "shelter," via Old Danish *skyla*

**Danish definition:** (1) That which is hidden from all those uninitiated into it, or kept within an inner circle; (2) that which is deliberately kept hidden from the outside world or the public

#### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 17, 258, DD:126 / KJN 1, 249):

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My father died on Wednesday, the 8th, at 2 a.m. I had fervently wished that he should have lived a few years more, and I consider his death as his last sacrifice his love made for me; for he did not die from me, but died for me, so that if possible something might still come from me. From all that I have inherited from him, his memory, his transfigured image, transfigured not by my imagination's poeticizing (for it doesn't need it), but transfigured by many particular features which I am now learning about—this is most dear to me, and I will see that it is kept most secret from the world.

VICTOR EREMITA: "Preface," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 11 / EOI, 3): "It may at times have occurred to you, dear reader, to doubt somewhat the accuracy of that familiar philosophical thesis that the outer is the inner and the inner is the outer. You have perhaps yourself kept hidden a secret that in its joy or in its pain you felt was too intimate to share with others."

A: "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 156 / EOI, 158): "[S]he carries her secret under her heart, hidden and secreted away. She is silence precisely because she is secretive, but this turning back into oneself implicit in silence gives her a preternatural bearing."

A: "Silhouettes," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 172 / EOI, 174): "The exterior, therefore, certainly does have significance for us, but not as an expression of the interior, rather as a telegraphic report that there is something hidden deep within."

A: "The First Love," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 243 / EO1, 250): "In illusion, the individual is hidden from himself; in mystification, he is hidden from others—but both conditions are the consequences of being brought up on romantic novels."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 376 / EO1, 388): "Love [*Elskov*] loves secrecy—an engagement is a disclosure."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 113 / EO2, 112): "However, it is not uncommon for one to see marriages in which the secrecy system is being carried out. I have never seen a happy marriage where it was the case."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 159–60; JJ:62 / KJN 2, 148): "Real brooding over an idea should be hidden from every profane science, and from foreign involvement—thus the bird will not brood its eggs if someone has touched it."

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 56–57 / R, 186): "But perhaps I do not wholly understand him, perhaps he is hiding something, perhaps he does truly love her after all."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 155 / FT, 61): "[T]he poet buys this power of the word to express everyone else's heavy secrets at the cost of a little secret that he cannot express."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 177 / FT, 88): "Despite the stringency with which ethics requires disclosure, it still cannot be denied that silence and secrecy really do make a human being great, precisely because they are qualifications of inwardness. When Eros takes leave of Psyche, he says to her: 'You shall bear a child who will be a divine child if you remain silent, but a human being if you betray the secret.'"

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: "The Thorn in the Flesh," *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 328 / EUD, 339): "And yet this improbability, as always with the improbable, is the beginning of the highest life and is the unsearchable secret."

WILLIAM AFHAM: "In Vino Veritas," *Stages on Life's Way* (SKS 6, 22 / SLW, 14): "[Every] recollection is a secret."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 430–31 / CUP1, 475): "Hidden inwardness is the true religiousness."

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 452 / CUP1, 499): "When we take a religious person, the knight of hidden inwardness, and put him in the existence-medium, then, as he relates himself to the surrounding world, a contradiction will come to light, and he himself must become conscious of this. The contradiction does not lie in the fact that he is different from all the others . . . but the contradiction is that he, with all this hidden inwardness in him, with this pregnancy of suffering and benediction in his inner being, looks entirely like other people."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 186 / SUD, 73): "Just as the troll in the fairy tale disappears through a crevice which no one can see, so it is with despair; the more spiritual it is, the more urgent it is to live in an externality, behind which no one would ordinarily happen to seek for it. This hiddenness is itself something spiritual, and one of the safeguards to be sure of having, behind actuality as it were, an

*in*-closure, a world *ex*-clusively for itself, a world where the despairing self restlessly and tormented is employed with willing to be itself.”

## Self

**Danish term:** n., *Selv*

**Danish etymology:** Substantivized form of the Danish pronoun *selv*, which is derived from the Old Norse *sjalfr*, the Old English *self* or *seolf*

**Danish definition:** A person’s personality and perception of his or her own identity

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 389 / EO1, 401): “[Your] eye has taught me to find my self [*mig selv*] in myself [*mig selv*]; I allow forgetfulness to consume everything that does not concern you, and then I discover an ancient, a divinely young primitive text; then I discover you, that my love for you is just as old as I myself [*jeg selv*] am.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 392 / EO1, 404): “I love myself [*mig selv*] because this ‘I’ of mine belongs to you.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 124–25 / EO2, 125): “Certainly, everyone should, even if he stands alone, attend to himself [*sig selv*]; but only the one who loves has the correct conception of what he is and what he is capable of.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 205 / EO2, 214): “But what is this self of mine? If I were to speak of a first moment, [*Øieblik*] a first expression for it, then my answer is: it is the most abstract of all, which however in itself is in addition the most concrete of all—it is freedom.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 206 / EO2, 215): “However, the reason why it can seem this way to an individual, as if he could continually be changed and yet be the same, as if his inner essence was an algebraic symbol which could signify whatever it is supposed to be, lies in the fact that he is improperly positioned [*stillet*], that he has not chosen himself [*sig selv*], does not have a conception of [his self].”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 206–7 / EO2, 215): “The one, on the other hand, who is rightly positioned—for him things go otherwise. He chooses himself [*sig selv*], not in a finite sense, for then this ‘self’ would indeed be a finite object that be counted among other finite objects, but in an absolute sense, and yet he indeed chooses himself and not another. This self that he chooses is infinitely concrete, for it is himself [*ham selv*], and yet it is absolutely different from his previous self, for he has chosen it absolutely. This ‘Self’ has not existed before, for it came to be through his choice, and yet it has existed, for it was indeed ‘himself’ [*ham selv*].”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 246–47 / EO2, 258–59): “When the individual knows himself [*sig selv*] . . . this knowledge is fertile to a high degree, and from this knowledge the true individual comes forth. . . . The self that the individual knows is at once the actual self and the ideal self, which the individual has outside himself as the portrait in whose likeness he shall form himself, and which, on the other hand, he has in himself, since it is himself.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 46): “Infinite resignation is the last stage preceding faith; thus, everyone who has not made this movement does not have faith; for in infinite resignation, for the first time, I prepare my self in my eternal validity; and only then can there be talk of seizing existence in virtue of faith.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 60 / WL, 56): “In romantic love [*Elskov*] and friendship’s highest point, the two actually become one self [*et Selv*], one *I* [*et Jeg*]. This is only explainable because there is, contained in preferential love, a natural determinant (drive—inclination) and self-love, which can selfishly unite two in a new, selfish self. . . . Neither of them, as of yet, is spirit’s definition of ‘self,’ neither of them, as of yet, has learned to love himself [*sig selv*] Christianly.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 129 / SUD, 13): “A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates to itself, or is the relation’s relating to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation, but that the relation relates to itself.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 129 / SUD, 13): “A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity; in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered this way, a human being is still not a self. . . . However, if the relation relates to itself, then this relation is the positive third, and this is the self.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 137 / SUD, 21): “[T]o have a self, to be a self, is the greatest, an infinite, concession made to man, but it is also eternity’s claim upon him.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 146 / SUD, 30): “[T]o become oneself is to become concrete.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 146 / SUD, 30): “Yet a self is, in each moment it exists, in a process of becoming, for the self κατὰ δύναμιν [in potentiality] does not actually exist, it is just that which should come to exist.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 169 / SUD, 54): “For just as no human body is perfect, so no self is perfect.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 176 / SUD, 62): “[T]o despair of the eternal is, then, impossible without having a conception of the self such that there is something eternal in it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 179 / SUD, 65): “The self must be broken to become itself.”

**Sensate:** See *Physical, Sensate/Psychical*

## Sensuality, Sensual, Sensuousness, Sensuous

**Danish term:** n., *Sandselighed*; n., *det Sandselige*; adj., *sandselig*

**Danish etymology:** Adjective and abstract noun formed from the Danish *Sans*, “sense,” which is derived via French from the Latin *sensus*, “the faculty or power of perceiving”

**Danish definition:** (1) In philosophical usage, the capacity for perception through the senses; (2) in ordinary usage, enjoyment of the erotic

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 64 / *EO1*, 56): “The most abstract idea that one can conceive is the sensual in its elemental originality [*Genialitet*]. But through which medium can it be represented? Through music alone.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 68 / *EO1*, 61): “Christianity is spirit, and spirit is the positive principle that it has brought into the world. But when sensuality is seen as defined by spirit, then its significance is seen to be that it is something that shall be excluded; but precisely thereby—that it shall be excluded—is it defined as a principle, as a power.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 77 / *EO1*, 71): “The sensuous in its elemental originality [*Genialitet*] is absolutely lyrical, and in music it erupts in all its lyrical impatience; that is, it is spiritually defined, and is therefore power, life, movement, continuous unrest, continuous succession, but this unrest, this succession does not enrich it, it continually remains the same, it does not unfold itself, but rushes forward unbrokenly as if in one breath.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 102–3 / *EO1*, 99): “It is sensuality’s own power that deceives the seduced, and it is, if anything, a kind of nemesis.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 31 / *EO2*, 22): “[The] sensuous is the momentary. The sensuous seeks momentary satisfaction, and indeed the more refined it is, the more it knows how to make the moment of enjoyment a little eternity. The true eternity in love . . . therefore actually rescues it first out of the sensuous.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 126–27 / *FT*, 31): “If one makes love into a flighty mood, a sensual feeling in a person, then one only lays snares for the weak when one would speak of love’s accomplishments.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 72 / *SLW*, 72): “Gallantry is sensuality’s [*Sandelighedens*] and pleasure’s [*Vellystens*] freemasonry between man and woman.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 168 / *SLW*, 180): “Faust . . . precisely by willing to be sheer spirit, finally succumbs to the wild revolt of sensuality.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 324 / CUP1, 355): “Every age has its own [specific immorality]; our age’s is perhaps not lust and pleasure and sensuality, but rather a pantheistic, dissipated contempt for individual human beings.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 59 / WL, 52): “No, precisely because Christianity in truth is spirit, it understands by ‘the sensual’ something other than what one simply calls the sensual, and it has as little wished to forbid human beings to eat and drink as it has been scandalized by a drive that after all human beings have not given to themselves. By ‘the sensual,’ ‘the flesh’ Christianity understands selfishness; there can be no conflict between spirit and flesh, unless there is a rebellious spirit on the side of the flesh, with which spirit then contends.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 20 / PV, 35): “I was so deeply shaken that I came to a profound understanding that it could not possibly succeed for me to hit upon the comfortable, secure middle in which the majority of human beings have their lives: I must either throw myself into despair and sensuality, or choose the religious absolutely as the only thing—either the world in a measure that would be awful, or the monastery.”

## Silence, Silent

**Danish term:** n., *Stilhed*; n., *Tausbed*; adj., *taus*; adj., *lydløs*; v., *tie*

### Danish etymology:

*Stilhed*: From the Middle High German *Stillheit*, “silence”

*Tausbed*, *taus*: From the Older New Danish *tavs*, “silent”

*lydløs*: *Lyd*, “sound” (from the Old Norse *hljóð*, Gothic *hliuþ*), plus *-løs*, suffix equivalent to English “-less”

*tie*: From the Old Norse *þegja*, Old High German *dagen*; probably cognate with Latin *tacere*, “to remain silent”

### Danish definitions:

*Stilhed*: (1) Cessation of movement, stillness; (2) the cessation of all noises and sound

*Tausbed*, *taus*: (1) n.: Condition of being silent; (2) adj.: to be silent

*lydløs*: Not producing any sound

*tie*: (1) To refrain from saying something; (2) to stop making any sound, to be quiet

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 40/ EO1, 31): “All will be acquired in silence and made divine in silence. It is not just concerning Psyche’s expected child that it holds that its future depends upon her silence.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 119 / EO2, 119): “Yes, Goethe’s *Elective Affinities* gives proof of what secretiveness leads to. That love [*Kjarlighed*] would not have gained the power if it had not been given leave to grow in silence. Had he had the courage to disclose himself to his wife, then it would

have been prevented, and the whole story would have been a *divertissement* in the drama of the marriage.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 22 / R, 145): “Only the one who remains silent becomes anything.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 176 / FT, 86): “When the hero, caught in the aesthetic illusion, thinks by his silence to save another person, then it requires this silence and rewards it. When, however, the hero by his act encroaches disruptively on another person’s life, it then requires disclosure.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 178 / FT, 88): “Silence is the demon’s snare, and the more that is kept silent, the more terrible the demon becomes; but silence is also the divinity’s understanding with the single individual.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Against Cowardliness,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 358 / EUD, 373): “For silence and lightmindedness [*Letsind*] can indeed also conceal a depression [*Tungsind*, heavy-mind] that gloomily [*tungsindigt*] loves the good.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 24–25 / SLW, 18): “And what is the intoxicating content of a cup but only a drop in comparison with the infinite sea of silence from which I drink!”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 178 / SLW, 188): “Undeniably the hiding place was well chosen, and Søborg Lake is more reliable than the most solemn declaration: perfect silence is promised—for it does not even once give this declaration.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 196 / SLW, 210): “When the castle gate has not been opened for many years, then it is not opened soundlessly like a communicating door that turns with springs! When the door of silence has long been shut, then the word does not come out like the hello and farewell of a quick tongue.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 67 / CUP1, 66): “Truly, no father confessor who received a secret to keep, no girl who had pledged herself and her love to silence, and become immortal by keeping her pledge, no one who took every shred of information with him to the grave: no one could conduct himself more discreetly than Lessing with the more difficult task: also to speak.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 92 / TA, 97): “Silence is inwardness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 93 / TA, 98): “[Chattering] dreads the moment of silence, which would disclose the emptiness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 94 / TA, 99): “The introspection [*Indadvendthed*] of silence is the condition for cultured conversation; the outwardly turned mockery of inwardness is chattering.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 287 / WL, 289): “Say not, ‘A multitude of sins still remains just as great whether it is kept secret or related, since silence certainly not take anything away, because one can only keep silent about what exists’;

rather, answer the question: Does not someone who relates his neighbor's faults and sins increase the multitude of sins?"

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 16; NB:7 / KJN 4, 13): "I still wish all the same that I could make myself understandable to a single human being, to my reader. But I do not dare it because then I would defraud the idea. Precisely when I have prevailed . . . I dare not say it. . . . I have to remain silent."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *This Must Be Said; So Let It Be Said* (SKS 13, 116 / M, 73): "[One] can also lose by remaining silent."

## Sin, Sinner, Sinful

**Danish term:** n., *Synd*; n., *Synder*; adj., *syndig*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old English *syn*, "sin," possibly related to Latin *sons*, "guilty"

**Danish definition:**

*Synd*: A thought, utterance, or deed that violates God's will

*Synder*: Person who rebels against God's will in thought or deed

*syndig*: (1) Someone who has committed a sin; (2) that which is characterized by or expresses sin

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 27 / EO1, 19): "What must baby have? The answer is: Da-da [In Danish, 'da-da' designates both 'Daddy' and 'spanking']. And with such observations life begins, and yet one denies hereditary sin [*Arvesynden*]."

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 28 / EO1, 20): "The imperfection with everything human is altogether that, only through opposites does one acquire what one desires. I will not talk about the multitude of formations which can give the psychologist plenty enough to do (the melancholy has the best sense of the comic, the most opulent often the best sense of the rustic, the dissolute often the best sense of the moral, the doubter often the best sense of the religious), but just call to mind that it is through sin that salvation [*Saligheden*, blessedness] is first seen."

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 36 / EO1, 28): "Therefore, my soul always turns back to the Old Testament and Shakespeare. There one still feels that it is human beings who speak; there one hates, there one loves, murders one's enemy, curse his offspring through all generations, there one sins."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 373 / EO1, 385): "Is it sinful of me that instead of looking at the minister I fasten my eyes upon that beautiful embroidered handkerchief you hold in your hand? Is it sinful of you that you hold it just so?"

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 96 / EO2, 93): "To wish that sin may not have come into the world is to lead humankind back to the more imperfect. Sin has come in, and but when the individuals have humbled themselves under this, they stand higher than they stood before."



JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 229 / EO2, 240): “The Christian point of view . . . claims everything is subjected to sin, something the philosophers are too aesthetic to have the ethical courage to do.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): “As soon as the individual intends to assert himself in his particularity over and against the universal, he sins.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 155 / FT, 62): “But now when the ethical has thus been teleologically suspended, how then does the individual exist in whom it has been suspended? He exists as the single individual in contradiction with the universal. Then is he in sin? For this is the form of sin, as seen in the idea—just as, even though the child does not sin, because it is not conscious of its existence as such, yet its existence, seen under the idea, is sin, and the ethical requires itself of the child at each moment.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 188 / FT, 98): “Sin is not the first immediacy, sin is a later immediacy.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 70 / EUD, 61): “When barrenness lives in the heart, when one gives with one eye and with seven eyes looks to what one gets in return (Sirach 20:14), then one discovers the multitude of sins.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 224 / PF, 15): “But this condition, to be untruth and to be this through one’s own fault, what could we call it? Let us call it *sin*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 251 / PF, 46–47): “But if the god is to be absolutely different from a human being, this can have its basis not in that which man owes to the god (for to that extent they are akin) but in that which he owes to himself or in that which he himself has committed. What, then, is the difference? Indeed, what else but sin. . . .”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 251–52 / PF, 47): “The man well-versed in knowledge of humanity became nearly perplexed over himself . . . he no longer knew whether he was a more outlandish monster than Typhon, or whether there was something divine in him. What did he lack, then? Consciousness of sin.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 329 / CA, 21): “The concept of sin, then, does not genuinely belong to any science; only the second ethics can treat its disclosure, not its coming into existence.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 329 / CA, 21–22): “That which can occupy the psychologist and with which it can occupy itself is how sin can come into existence, not that it comes into existence.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 271 / SLW, 292): “But the one who is slovenly in one thing is slovenly in all, and the one who sins in one thing sins in all.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 191 / CUP1, 208): “Let us now call the individual’s untruth *sin*. Viewed eternally, he cannot be sin or be presupposed eternally to have been in sin. Therefore, by coming into existence (for the beginning was indeed that subjectivity is untruth), he becomes a sinner. He is not born as a sinner in the sense that he is presupposed as a sinner before he is born, but he is born in sin and as a sinner. This we could indeed call *hereditary sin*.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 531 / CUP1, 584): “The individual therefore cannot gain the consciousness of sin by himself. . . . [The] consciousness of guilt is a change of the subject within the subject himself; the consciousness of sin, on the contrary, is a change of the subject himself, which shows that, outside of the individual, there must be the power that enlightens him that he has, by coming to be, come to be someone other than he was, has become a sinner. This power is the god in time.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 532 / CUP1, 585): “Sin, that is to say, is no teaching or doctrine for thinkers; then it all becomes nothing. It is an existence-category and simply cannot be thought.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 282 / WL, 284): “In this way, sin and evil have one more power over human beings than one ordinarily thinks of: that it is so embarrassing to be good, so myopic to believe in the good, so small-town-ish to betray ignorance or that one is an uninitiated person—a person uninitiated into the innermost secrets of sin.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 294 / WL, 297): “The occasion can take many forms. Scripture says that sin takes its occasion from the commandment or the prohibition.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 295 / WL, 298): “But there is one environment that unconditionally does not give occasion to sin—that is love.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11 / SUD, 81): “Sin is: before God in despair not to will to be oneself, or before God in despair to will to be oneself.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 196 / SUD, 82): “For sin is not the wildness of flesh and blood, but the spirit’s consent to it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11 / SUD, 95): “There must be a revelation from God for a human being to learn what sin is, that sin does not lie in the fact that the person has not understood what is right, but in the fact that he does not wish [*vil*] to understand it, and in the fact that he does not will [*vil*] it.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 209 / SUD, 96): “Sin is not a negation, but a position.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Discourses at the Communion on Fridays* (SKS 12, 286 / WA, 170): “There is no one at the altar who retains the least of your sins against you, no one—if you yourself do not do it.”

## Sorrow, Sorrowful

Danish term: n., *Sorg*; adj., *sorgfuld*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *sorg*, German *Sorge*, “concern, worry,” from a root whose meaning is “to worry about; to be sick”

**Danish definition:** Deep, lasting feeling of loss, especially after the death of a loved one

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 30 / EO1, 21): I say of my sorrow what the Englishman says of his house: My sorrow is my castle. Many people consider having sorrow to be one of life’s conveniences.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 167 / EO1, 169): “Sorrow is self-inclosed, silent, solitary and seeks to return into itself.”

A: “Silhouettes,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 168 / EO1, 170): “As [reflective sorrow] withdraws inward in this way, it finally finds an enclosure, an innermost place where it thinks it can remain, and now it begins its uniform movement. Like the pendulum in a clock, it swings back and forth and cannot find rest. It continually begins again from the top and deliberates again, interrogates witnesses, compares and tests the various statements, which it has already done a hundred times, but it is never finished.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 225 / EO2, 235–36): “Someone who says that sorrow is the meaning of life has joy outside of himself in the same way that someone who wishes to be happy has sorrow outside of himself. Joy can then take him by surprise in entirely the same way that sorrow can take the other. . . . Time consumes the children of time, and such a sorrow is a child of time, and the eternity it dissembles to own is a deception.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 226 / EO2, 236): “Let me answer you as you deserve. First and foremost: you are not sorrowing.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 227 / EO2, 237): “No, I know that it is beautiful to sorrow, and that there is substance in tears. But I also know that one must not sorrow like one who has no hope.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 161–62; JJ:71 / KJN 2, 150): “Sorrow in life can certainly oppress consciousness, but if the sorrow begins only during a more mature age, it does not have time to assume the form of the person’s natural character; it becomes an historical moment [*Moment*], not something that extends, as it were, beyond consciousness itself.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 110 / FT, 13): “When the child must be weaned, then the mother too is not without sorrow that she and the child are more and more separated, that the child, who first lay under her heart, then later rested upon her breast, shall no long be so close. Thus they mourn together this brief sorrow. Fortunate the one who kept the child so close, and did not need to sorrow more!”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 114 / FT, 17): “It is human to sorrow, it is human to sorrow with those who sorrow, but it is greater to believe, more blessed to contemplate those who believe.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 131 / FT, 36): “That sorrow can make a person lose their mind is plain to see. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 44 / EUD, 35): “So they sat there in silent sorrow, they did not harden themselves . . . they were humble enough to acknowledge that life is a dark saying.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “On the Occasion of a Confession,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 408 / TD, 29): “That which comes with sin, leaves with sorrow: this certainly also applies to sin itself. . . . The more profound the sorrow is, the more the human being feels that he is nothing, as less than nothing, and this is simply because the sorrowing one is the seeker who is beginning to become aware of God.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “At a Graveside,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 444 / TD, 72–73): “When the house is no longer visibly a house of sorrow . . . then the name over the door will signify to the two that they also have one work more: to recollect the one who is dead.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 185 / SLW, 197): “With all of the heroes who hover in my imagination, it is indeed more or less the case that they carry a profound and secret sorrow, which they cannot or will not initiate anyone into.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 251 / SLW, 270): “The secret sorrow must itself discover and produce the reflection-possibility; then it is seductive for sorrow to hold onto it. And this is the earnest money of madness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 48 / WL, 41): “And indeed, is such a pitiful sagacity, which ‘has ceased to sorrow,’ any less despair than the lover’s despair; is it not rather an even worse kind of despair!”

## Spirit, Spiritual

**Danish term:** n., *Aand*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *önd* (to breathe) and Old Norse *andi* (spirit); related to Latin *animus* (spirit) and *anima* (breath, soul), Greek *ἄνεμος*, wind

**Danish definition:** (1) Human consciousness; (2) a supernatural being; (3) the essence of a person or concept; (4) prevailing mood, mental climate

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 71 / EO1, 65): “The concept of a human being is spirit, and one should not let oneself be confused by the fact that he incidentally also can walk on two feet.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 94 / EO1, 89): “While spirit, defined solely as spirit, renounces this world, feels that this is not only not its home but not even its stage, withdraws into the higher realms, it leaves the worldly behind as the playground for the power it has always lived in conflict with, and

to which it now gives ground. Then, as spirit sets itself loose from earth, sensuality shows itself in all its power.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 79 / EO2, 74): “But the world of spirit is not subjected to the law of vanity; if one has found the tree, then it blossoms continually.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 140 / FT, 46): “A person generally trusts very little in spirit, and yet it belongs precisely to spirit to make this movement. . . .”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 196 / FT, 108): “He [viz., Faust] then knows that it is a spirit that upholds existence, but he knows also that the security and joy in which people live is not grounded in the power of spirit, but is easily explainable as an unreflected bliss.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 198 / FT, 109): “Someone who has a conception of what it means to say that a person lives on spirit will also know what the hunger of doubt means, and that the doubter hungers just as much after life’s daily bread as after the nourishment of spirit.”

THE FASHION DESIGNER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 67 / SLW, 67): “Woman has spirit, but it is invested just as well as the prodigal son’s funds.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 95–96 / SLW, 100): “[But] a God of spirit, who is the object of a spiritual faith, is indeed in a certain sense infinitely distant from the concretion of falling in love.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/‘Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 231 / SLW, 248): “For what is it to have spirit except to have will, and what is it to have will except to have it beyond all measure, since someone who does not have it beyond all measure, but only to a certain degree, does not have it at all.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 39 / CUP1, 34): “Christianity is spirit, spirit is inwardness, inwardness is subjectivity, subjectivity is in its essential nature passion, at its maximum infinite, personally interested passion for one’s eternal blessedness.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 44 / CUP1, 37): “If truth is spirit, then truth is inward deepening, and it is not an immediate and quite uninhibited relation of an immediate *Geist* [German: spirit, mind] to a sum total of propositions.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 129 / SUD, 13): “A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 159–60 / SUD, 44–45): “A human being ignorant of being in despair is furthest from being conscious of himself as spirit. But precisely this, not being conscious of oneself as spirit, is despair, which is spiritlessness.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 173 / SUD, 58–59): “[A] human being, spiritually understood, does not, with the passing of years, arrive at

anything as a matter of course; this category is precisely the uttermost opposite of spirit.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 23, 140; NB16:65 / KJN 7, 142): “*Spirit* always negates immediacy—therefore only *spirit* can become attentive to *spirit*.”

**Spiritual Trial:** See *Agon, Agony, Agonize, Contest, Struggle*

**Subjectivity, Subjective:** See *Objectivity, Objective, Object / Subjectivity, Subjective, Subject*

## Task

**Danish term:** n., *Opgave*

**Danish etymology:** Formed from the German *Aufgabe*, “task”

**Danish definition:** (1) Work, effort, or activity aimed at solving a specific problem, addressing a major challenge, etc.; (2) precisely defined problem that requires a precise solution or answer

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS, 65 / EO1, 58): “To demonstrate that *Don Giovanni* is a classic work is, in the strictest sense, a task for thought.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 139 / EO2, 141): “However you twist and turn on this point, you must confess that the task is preserving love in time. If this is impossible, then love is impossible.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 102 / FT, 6): “What the ancient Greeks (who also, after all, understood a little bit about philosophy) assumed to be a lifelong task—because proficiency in doubting is not acquired in days or weeks— . . . from this point, everyone in our age begins.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 102 / FT, 7): “In our age, no one stands still at faith, but goes further. . . . In those ancient days it was otherwise; then, faith was a task for the whole life, and one took it for granted that proficiency in faith is not acquired in days or weeks.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): “Immediately qualified as a sensate and psychical being, the single individual is the particular individual who has his *τέλος* in the universal, and this is his ethical task, to continually annul his particularity in order to become the universal.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 335 / CA, 28–29): “In every moment the individual is both himself and the race in this way. This is the human being’s perfection, viewed as a state. It is also a contradiction; but a contradiction is always the expression of a task.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 97 / SLW, 102): “The principal thing is that marriage is a *τέλος*, yet not for nature’s striving—so that we touch on the meaning of the *τέλος* in the

mysteries—but for the individuality. But if it is a τέλος, then it is not something immediate, but an act of freedom, and, belonging under freedom, the task is actualized only through a resolution.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 346 / SLW, 373): “[And] I dare to testify on my behalf that I, with an upright will, entered into the relationship, convinced that I knew wherein the task stood, perhaps a little proud that I could accomplish it—and behold! I am shipwrecked precisely upon this, not in such a way that I can do it, but in such a way that it is not that which is the task.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “The Activity of a Traveling Aesthete and How He Still Happened to Pay for Dinner” (SKS 14, 83 /COR, 44): “A writer who is aware of his task’s dialectical difficulty and strenuousness expects, of course, only few readers, and he wishes for it to be this way also.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 148 / CUP1, 158–59): “If, however, becoming subjective is the highest task that is assigned to a human being, then . . . it first follows from this that he indeed has nothing to do with world history, but in this connection leaves everything to the royal poet; and, next . . . even though individuals are as innumerable as the sand of the sea, the task of becoming subjective is indeed assigned to each one.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 57 / WL, 51): “Love [*Elskov*] and friendship, as the poet understands them, contain therefore no ethical [*sædelig*] task. Love and friendship are good fortune.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 62 / WL, 54): “Self-denial’s task is therefore twofold, corresponding to the difference between these two preferential loves. In relation to the faithless self-love, which wishes to shirk, the task is: devote yourself; in relation to the devoted self-love the task is: give up this devotion.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 146 / SUD, 29–30): “The self is the conscious synthesis of infinitude and finitude, which relates to itself, whose task is to become itself, which can only be done through the relationship with God.”

## Teacher

**Danish terms:** n., *Lærer*

**Danish etymology:** From Middle Low German *leren*, “teach”

**Danish definition:** Person who instructs others, especially within a school

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 13 / EUD, 5): “The speaker by no means claims to be a teacher.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 171 / FT, 80): “The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “The Lord Gave, and the Lord Took Away,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 115 / EUD, 109): “Not only do we call someone a teacher of humankind who, by a particularly propitious stroke of good fortune, makes

a discovery, or by untiring toil and thoroughgoing perseverance fathoms some truth or other, and then left this acquisition as a doctrine which the following generations strive to understand and in this understanding to appropriate for themselves; but we also call someone—perhaps in an even stricter sense—a teacher of humankind who had no teaching to hand over to others, but left behind only himself to the human race, as an example [*Forbillede*], his life as a guide for every human being, his name as a security for many, his work as an encouragement for those who are being tried.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 223 / PF, 14): “The teacher is only an occasion, whoever he may be, even if he is a god; for my own untruth I can discover only by myself, since only when I discover it is it discovered, even though the whole world knew it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 224 / PF, 15): “The teacher, then, is the god himself, who, acting as the occasion, occasions the learner being reminded that he is untruth, and this by his own fault.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 226 / PF, 17): “Now, what should we call such a teacher who gives him the condition again and with it the truth? Let us call him a *savior*, for he does indeed save the learner from unfreedom, saves him from himself.”

VIGILIUS HAUFNIENSIS: *The Concept of Anxiety* (SKS 4, 374 / CA, 70): “When one comes on too heavily as a moralist, then one awakens the listener and tempts the pupil, almost against his will, to become ironical toward the teacher.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “On the Occasion of a Wedding,” *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* (SKS 5, 433 / TD, 58): “Now, it is certainly true that there is a longing in every human being’s soul that is like the love [*Elskov*] which the poets celebrate, so also there is in everyone a longing, a wish that craves what one might call a guide, a teacher in life, the tested man upon whom one can rely, the wise person who knows how to counsel, the noble person who encourages by their own example, the gifted person who has the power of eloquence and the substance of conviction, the earnest person who secures the appropriation.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 319 / SLW, 343): “It comforts me that, in my relationship with her, I have never imagined myself to be a teacher.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 84 / CUP1, 85): “But the genuine subjective existing thinker is . . . never a teacher but a learner, and if he is continually just as negative as positive, he is continually striving.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 220 / CUP1, 242): “Let the teacher, in relation to essential truth (for indeed otherwise the direct relation between teacher and learn is entirely in order) has much inwardness and would willingly proclaim his teaching, as one says, day in and day out: if he assumes that there is a direct relationship between him and the learned, then his inwardness is not inwardness, but a spontaneous [*umiddelbar*, usu. *immediate*] outpouring.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Lily of the Field and the Bird of the Air* (SKS 11, 40 / WA, 36): “So let us then consider the lily and the bird, these joyful master teachers. ‘The



joyful master teachers,' yes, for you know that joy is communicative; and therefore no one instructs better in joy than someone who themselves is joyful."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 12, 128–29 / PC, 123–24): "In a loss of meaning, it is forgotten that the teacher here is more important than the teaching. . . . And if now the teacher, who is separated from and more essential than the teaching, is a paradox, then all direct communication is impossible. But in our time one makes everything abstract and abolishes everything personal; one takes Christ's teaching—and abolishes Christ. . . . [F]or Christ is a person and the teacher who is more important than the teaching."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 35 / PV, 55): "[Formally], I can very well call Socrates my teacher—while I have only believed in one person, the Lord Jesus Christ."

## Teleology, Teleological, τέλος

**Danish terms:** n., *Teleologi*; adj., *teleologisk*

**Danish etymology:** Both the noun and the adjective are formed from the Greek word τέλος, "end, purpose, or goal," combined with the Greek λόγος, "word, speech, discourse, reason"

**Danish definition:** (1) In ordinary Danish, refers to the view that there is an order or purpose to the world or cosmos; (2) in philosophical usage, can also refer to (a) a philosophical view in which human beings (and perhaps other beings) have a natural end or purpose or (b) a specific ordering of goods, duties, or values according to which some are more fundamental than others, which are derivative from, or less important than, those higher in the teleological ranking

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 417 / EO1, 430): "This category she has now been assigned to along with all of nature, with everything feminine in general. The whole of nature is thus just for another, not in a teleological sense (in such a way that this particular segment of nature is for another particular segment), but the whole of nature is for another—is for spirit."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 261 / EO2, 274): "The individual has his teleological within himself, has inner teleology, is himself his teleology; his 'self' is then the goal towards which he strives. This, his self, is however not an abstraction, but absolutely concrete."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): "It [viz., the ethical] rests immanently in itself, has nothing outside itself that is its τέλος,<sup>1</sup> but is itself τέλος for everything that it has outside itself."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): "If this is the highest that may be said about man and his existence, then the ethical has the same nature as man's eternal blessedness, which in all eternity and in each moment is his τέλος, as it would be a contradiction that this should be capable of being given up (that is, teleologically suspended), since it, as soon as it were to be suspended, would be forfeited, while

that which is suspended is not forfeited, but precisely preserved in something higher, that which is its τέλος.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 152 / FT, 59): “The tragic hero is still within the ethical. He allows one expression of the ethical to have its τέλος in a higher expression of the ethical; he demotes the ethical relation between father and son or daughter and father to a sentiment, which has its dialectic in its relation to the idea of ethical community. There can, then, be here no discussion of a teleological suspension of the ethical itself.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 97 / SLW, 101): “Marriage I regard, then, as the highest τέλος of an individual existence, so that someone who evades it, with a single stroke, strikes out the whole of earthly existence and keeps only eternal and spiritual interests.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 361 / CUP1, 397): “[It] would be foolish [*ufornuftigt*] to relate absolutely to a relative τέλος.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 361 / CUP1, 397): “The absolute τέλος is present only when the individual relates absolutely to it, and as an eternal blessedness relating to an existing person, they cannot possibly have each other or in tranquility belong to each other in existence, that is, in temporality.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 361–62 / CUP1, 397): “In relation to this orientation toward the absolute τέλος every outcome, even the most glorious that can arise in a wisher’s heart and a creative poet’s imagination, if it is supposed to be the reward, is absolute loss, and the striving person would be better off saying: No thanks, I have received permission only to relate myself to the absolute τέλος.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 377 / CUP1, 414): “But the maximum of the task is, at one and the same time, to be able to relate absolutely to the absolute τέλος and relatively to the relative, or always to have the absolute τέλος with one.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 379 / CUP1, 416): “The monastic candidate considered it the greatest danger not at every moment to relate oneself to the absolute τέλος.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 189 / BA, 66): “He is by a revelation called and entrusted with a teaching, he is called to be a teacher, he is called certainly for his own sake, but principally and essentially for others (the teleological).”

## Temptation, Test, Trial, Ordeal

**Danish term:** n., *Fristelse*; v., *friste*; n., *Prøve*; v., *prøve*; v., *forsøge*; n., *Prøvelse*

### Danish etymology:

*Fristelse, friste:* From Old Danish *fræsta*, from Old Norse *freista*, “make trial of; put to the test”

*Prove, prove, Provelse:* From the Middle Low German *prōve*, from Old French *prueve* or Medieval Latin *proba*, “proof”

*Forsøge:* After the Low German *vorsoken*, derived from *søge*, “to search”

#### Danish definition:

*Fristelse, friste:* (1) n., A great desire for something forbidden; (2) n., that which is alluring or inviting; (3) v., to cause someone to desire something that they will regret; (4) v., in a religious context, to challenge the strength of someone’s character

*Prove, prøve:* (1) n., A situation where a person (under supervision and within a time frame) must demonstrate their knowledge or skills in a specific domain through solving a series of questions or completing a series of tasks; (2) v., to strive at the best of one’s ability to complete such a test

*forsøge:* To see to the best of one’s ability to achieve or attain something

*Provelse:* A severe test that takes place under difficult conditions and involves adversity

#### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 107 / *EO1*, 103): “[Hear] where he plunges into life’s multiplicity, where he breaks himself against its fixed dam, hear these light, dancing tones of the violin, hear the wink of joy, hear the cheers of desire, hear enjoyment’s festive bliss [*Salighed*], hear his wild flight; he hurries past himself, always faster, always more ceaselessly, hear the unrestrained ardor of passion, hear the sighing of love [*Elskovens*], hear the whisper of temptation [*Fristelsens*], hear vortex of seduction, hear the stillness of the moment [*Øieblikkets*]—hear, hear, hear Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 346 / *EO1*, 357): “Have I not set it out correctly? If one has the wind upon one’s own back, then one can easily rush past the beloved, but if one has it against one, then one experiences a pleasant movement, then one flees to the side of the beloved, and the breath of the wind makes one healthier, and more tempting, and more seductive, and the breath of the wind cools the fruit of one’s lips, which are best enjoyed cold, because it is so hot, just as champagne inflames just when it nearly chills.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 352 / *EO1*, 363): “She wishes to compete with me. What tempts [*frister*] her is my proud independence in relation to other people, a freedom like that of the Arabs in the desert.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 30 / *EO2*, 21): “Since this conviction has not gone through any ordeal [*Provelse*], has found no higher grounding, it proves [*viser*] itself to be an illusion and therefore it is so easily to make it laughable.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 35 / *EO2*, 28): “It now has become apparent how romantic love [*Kjærlighed*] was built upon an illusion, and that its eternity was built upon the temporal, and that, notwithstanding that the knight held for himself the inward conviction of its absolute constancy,

there was still no certainty for this, since its trial [*Forsøgelse*] and temptation [*Fristelse*] hitherto had been in an altogether external medium.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 100 / *EO2*, 98): “Thus love [*Kjærligheden*], tested and purified, issues from this movement, and assimilates for itself what is experienced.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 118 / *FT*, 22): “He knew it was God the Almighty who was testing [*prøvede*] him; he knew it was the hardest sacrifice that could be demanded of him; but he knew also that no sacrifice is too severe when God demands it—and he drew the knife.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 153 / *FT*, 60): “[I]t is a trial, a temptation. A temptation; but what does that mean? That which tempts a person in other cases is surely what would hold him back from his duty; but here the temptation is the ethical itself, which would hold him back from doing God’s will.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 169 / *FT*, 77): “The knight of faith, however, is kept sleepless; for he is continually being tried and at every moment there is a possibility of returning in repentance to the universal, and this possibility can just as well be a spiritual agon as truth. He cannot obtain illumination about this from any person; for then he would be outside the paradox.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Strengthening in the Inner Being,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 90 / *EUD*, 83): “No! it must be acquired slowly, appropriated in the ordeal [*Prøvelse*] that began with the renunciation of everything.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Preserve One’s Soul in Patience,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 203 / *EUD*, 201–2): “But there also came a moment when you did not overcome temptation [*Fristelsen*], but temptation [*Fristelsen*] overcame you. When everything was lost, when you were alone with your defeat, when the stillness grew around you, and despair in the distance waved to you, and its rapture [*Begeistring*] already wished to intoxicate you—for, alas, despair is indeed also an rapture—then perhaps these words crossed your mind: God shall make the temptation and its outcome such that we can bear. . . . And the temptation’s outcome is indeed most often the most dangerous temptation; whether we were victorious . . . or we lost.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 49 / *SLW*, 44): “Woman is a temptation [*Fristelse*] that wishes to lure them [gods and men] into becoming laughable.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 76 / *SLW*, 79): “No temptation [*Fristelse*] is so ensnaring as that of modesty, and no deception is so matchless as woman.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 361 / *SLW*, 389): “Never in my life have I felt the temptations [*Fristelser*] of suicide before now.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 416 / *CUPI*, 458): “In temptation [*Fristelsen*] it is the lower that tempts.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 68 / *WL*, 61): “For the more decisively and exclusively preferential love decides upon one single person, the further

it is from loving the neighbor. You, husband, do not lead your wife into the temptation [Fristelse] to forget to love the neighbor because of you; you, wife, do not lead your husband into this temptation!"

## Time, Temporal / Eternity, Eternal

**Danish terms:** n., *tid*; n., *Timelighed*; n., *det Timelige*; adj., *timelig* / n., *Evighed*; adj., *evig*

### Danish etymology:

*Tid*: From Old Norse *tið*, Old High German *zit*, related to English "tide"

*Timelighed*, *det Timelige*, *timelig*: From the Old Norse *tímaligr*, Old English *timlic* (adv.), derived from "hour" in the sense of a "human beings' hour on earth" in contrast to that of eternity

*Evighed*, *evig*: From the Middle Low German *ewich*, derived from Old High German *ewa*, "eternity," corresponding to the Norse *ævi*, "lifetime"

### Danish definition:

*Tid*: (1) n., Fundamental quantity which is measured in, e.g., second, hours, days, years, etc.; also, the development, events, and changes that ceaselessly take place; (2) defined part of time considered as a unit; (3) the period of time coinciding with a specific period, such as a person's life; (4) a point in time; (5) numerical value expressing, e.g., the result of a race or experiment; (6) in language, refers to the tense of a verb

*Timelighed*, *timelig*: (1) n., The condition of belonging to human life on earth, being subject to time and perishability; (2) adj., relating to human life on earth, especially in terms of its perishability

*Evighed*, *evig*: (1) n., Time without end; (2) adj., that which never ceases

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 34 / EO1, 26): "Time passes, life is a stream, etc., so people say. I do not see it; time stands still, and I with it. All the plans I project fly straight back upon me. When I spit, I spit in my own face."

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 41 / EO1, 32): "It is quite remarkable that one finds, in the two most appalling opposites, a conception of eternity. I imagine to myself that unfortunate bookkeeper who, out of despair over the fact that he, by a calculation that seven and six make fourteen had destroyed a trading house, went mad; I imagine him day in and day out untouched by anything else, repeating to himself, 'Seven and six is fourteen'; here I have a portrait *of* eternity.—I imagine to myself a lush, beautiful woman in a harem, resting upon a sofa in all her charm, without a worry in the world; here I again have a portrait *for* eternity."

CORDELIA WAHL: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 299 / EO1, 312): "I call you 'mine' and call myself 'yours,' and as it once flattered your ear, which proudly bowed to my adoration, so shall it now sound as a curse upon you, a curse for all eternity."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 365 / EO1, 376): "Others become engaged when they arrive at this point, and have good prospects of a boring marriage for all eternity. That's up to them."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 369 / EO1, 381): "The eternal in love [*Elskoven*] is that the individuals in its moment [*Øieblik*] first come into existence for each other."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 431 / EO1, 444): "Who I am is not to the point; everything finite and temporal [*Timeligt*] is forgotten, only the eternal remains, the power of love [*Elskovens*], its longing, its bliss [*Salighed*]."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 127 / EO2, 128): "If a systematician were to think of the category of 'interaction,' and develop it thoroughly and with expert logic, but if he then in addition were to say: 'It will require an eternity before the world can complete its eternal interaction,' you certainly cannot deny that one would have the right to laugh at him. However, this is indeed the meaning of time [*Tidens*], and it is the lot of humanity and all individuals to live within it."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 238 / EO2, 249): "The highest meaning that [the mystic] can assign to temporality [*Timeligheden*] is that it is a time of testing in which one again and again gives proof, except without there being any genuine results thereof, without one coming further than one was in the beginning."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 238 / EO2, 250): "This is precisely the beauty of temporality [*Timeligheden*], that the infinite and the finite spirit are separated within it, and it is precisely the greatness of the finite spirit that temporality is assigned to it. Temporality does not therefore exist, if I dare to speak so, for God's sake (in order that he can, to speak mystically, test and try the lover), but it exists for humanity's sake and it is the greatest of all the gifts of grace. It is precisely in this that a human being's eternal dignity lies, that he can gain a history."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 115 / FT, 18): "[I]t is great to grasp the Eternal, but greater to hold the temporal first after having given it up."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 43): "The deeper natures, however, never forget themselves, and never become another being than the one they are. The knight, then, will remember everything; but this recollection is precisely the pain, even though in this infinite resignation he is reconciled with existence. The love for the princess became for him the expression of an eternal love, assumed a religious character, became clarified as a love for the Eternal Being, who perhaps had denied the fulfillment but yet brought him peace in the consciousness of its validity in an eternal form such as none could deprive him of."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): "It requires a purely human courage to resign the whole of temporality in order to win eternity, but I can win this, and I cannot give it up, not in all eternity, for this is a contradiction. But it requires a paradox, and a humble courage, to now grasp the whole of temporality in virtue of the absurd. This courage belongs to faith."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 143 / FT, 49): “Temporality, finitude—around these everything revolves.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 222 / PF, 13): “If matters are to be different, then the moment [*Øieblikket*] must have decisive significance, such that I at no moment either in time or in eternity could forget it, because the eternal, which before was not, came to exist in this moment.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “To Acquire One’s Soul in Patience,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 163 / EUD, 163): “In the eternal, there lies no such self-contradiction, although not because it, like the temporal either is or is not; but because it is. The eternal is not either a something possessed or a something acquired, but is only a something possessed, which can as little be acquired as lost.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 224 / SLW, 240): “That which shall save her, as I first thought, as I still do, is a certain healthiness of temporality.”

QUIDAM: “Guilty?/Not Guilty?,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 299 / SLW, 322): “If a human being shall persevere, then it must be on his own, and not even this is possible if his religiousness does not from day to day absorb eternity into temporality’s resolution. Every human being who in truth remains faithful can therefore thank God for it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 206 / CUP1, 226): “Suppose that only eternity can give an eternal certainty, while existence must settle with a struggling certainty which is not won through the battle becoming easier or illusory, but only through it becoming harder.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 366 / CUP1, 402): “In temporality, the *expectancy* of an eternal blessedness is the highest reward, because an eternal blessedness is the absolute *τέλος*, and this is precisely the sign that one is relating to the absolute, that there is not only no reward to expect, but suffering to bear.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Two Ages* (SKS 8, 85 / TA, 89): “For to the same degree that leveling is powerless against the eternal, it is overpowering against everything temporary.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 14–15 / WL, 6): “But precisely because love [*Kjerlighed*] is the bond of eternity in this way, and precisely because temporality and eternity are heterogeneous, therefore love can seem, to temporality’s earthly shrewdness, a burden; and therefore it can in temporality seem to the sensate person [*den Sandselige*] an immense relief to cast this bond of eternity away from oneself.”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 105 / C, 320–21): “Those who have a sense only for the fortunate accidental qualities of that first youthfulness lack aesthetic culture, and therefore they do not discover that this good fortune is the accidental, the perishable, while genius and the relation to the idea are the eternal and the essential.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 143 / SUD, 27): “Oh, and when the hourglass has run out, the hourglass of temporality; when the noise of

worldliness is silenced, and its restless or ineffectual busyness is at its end; when everything around you is still, as it is in eternity—(. . .) eternity asks you, and every individual in these millions and millions, only one thing: whether you have lived in despair or not.”

## Tragedy, Tragic

**Danish term:** n., *Tragedie*; n., *det Tragiske*; adj., *tragisk*

**Danish etymology:** Via the German *Tragödie*, from the Greek τραγωδία, from τραγωδός, member of the choir; of uncertain origin, hypothesized “goatsinger” from the hypothesis that the singer in a satyr play was dressed as a goat; but ultimately coming to mean any more serious and somber form of poetry, especially a tragic drama centered on suffering

**Danish definition:** (1) A play characterized by deep seriousness and often suffering and a sad ending; (2) by extension, any unexpected, unfortunate situation that causes deep sadness, pain, or grief

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concept of Irony* (SKS 1, 308 / CI, 271): “For the tragic hero, death has validity; for him death is in truth the last contest and the final suffering. Hereby, his own age [*Samtid*], which he wished to destroy, can therefore obtain satisfaction of its vengeful wrath.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 145; JJ:3 / KJN 2, 135): “It could be a theme for a tragedy to allow a hero to have carried out a really great deed, but he did not discover the collision during the moment of action, not until afterwards, and at this point the play begins; he would become perplexed over himself, whether it was justified, whether one dare violate the ordinary laws, etc.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 376; Not12:9 / KJN 3, 374): “δι’ ελεου και φοβου περαινουσα την των τοιουτων παθηματων καθαρσιν. . . The meaning of Aristotle is certainly this: tragedy will, through pity and fear . . . effect the purification of these, by refining sympathy. ελεος og φοβος as egoistic categories are the condition for receiving an aesthetic impression; the effect is that ελεος og φοβος become purely sympathetic, that I forget myself in the aesthetic, purely sympathetic ελεος og φοβος.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 143 / EO1, 143–44): “The action itself in ancient tragedy has an epic component within itself, it is as much event as action. This depends of course on the fact that the ancient world did not have subjectivity reflected into itself. Regardless of whether the individual moved freely, he still rested in substantial categories, in the state, the family, in fate. These substantial categories are the essential fateful factor in Greek tragedy and its essential distinguishing characteristic. The hero’s downfall is therefore not just a consequence of his action, but is in addition a suffering, whereas in modern tragedy the hero’s downfall is not really a suffering, but a deed. In the modern period, therefore . . . [the] tragic hero is reflected in himself, and this reflection has not only reflected him out of every immediate relation to state, kindred, and fate, but often even reflected him out of his own life prior to this point [*foregaaende Liv*]. That which occupies us is a certain, definite element of his life as his own deed. For this reason, the tragic can be exhausted in



situation and dialogue, because there is altogether no more immediacy left over. Modern tragedy therefore has no epic foreground, no epic legacy. The hero stands and falls entirely on his own deeds.”

A: “The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 145 / EO1, 145–46): “The tragic contains an infinite gentleness; in relation to human life, it is really, in aesthetic terms, what divine grace and mercy are; it is even softer, and therefore I will say: it is a motherly love [*Kjerlighed*] that lulls the troubled one. The ethical is strenuous and hard.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 227 / EO2, 237): “I divest myself of the hero’s garb and the pathos of tragedy; I am not the tormented one who can be proud of his sufferings, I am the humbled one who feels my transgression; I have only one expression for what I suffer—guilt, one expression for my pain—remorse, one hope before my eyes—forgiveness.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 201 / FT, 60): “He who denies himself and sacrifices himself for duty gives up the finite in order to grasp the infinite—he is secure enough; the tragic hero gives up what is sure for that which is still surer, and the observer’s eye rests confidently on him.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 169 / FT, 78–79): “The tragic hero gives up his wish in order to fulfill his duty. . . . The tragic hero gets a higher expression of duty, but not an absolute duty.”

THE YOUNG MAN: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 40 / SLW, 36): “The comic and the tragic continually correspond.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 253 / SLW, 272): “It is a comic contradiction to speak passionately or with systematic decisiveness about something of which one is not oneself persuaded or does not even understand, but it is a tragic, a profoundly tragic contradiction that one must speak in vague expressions, in joking hints, in chatty platitudes about that which preoccupies and worries one to death.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 235 / CUP1, 259): “[*The*] tragic hero expresses the regular declension of the universal for all.”

## Truth / Untruth

**Danish term:** n., *Sandhed*; n., *Usandhed*

### Danish etymology:

*Sandhed*, “truth,” derived from the root *sand*, from the Old Norse *sannr*, Old English *sop* (cf. Latin *sunt*, “they are”), from an Indo-European root meaning “to be”

*Usandhed*: Negation of *Sandhed* with negative prefix *u-*

### Danish definition:

*Sandhed*: Property of the content of a statement or a way of thinking that corresponds to reality or to the essence of things; a statement containing such content

*Usandhed*: Property of the content of a statement or way of thinking that does not correspond to reality; a statement containing such content

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 17, 24; AA:12 / *KJN* 1, 19): “That which I genuinely lack is becoming clear with myself regarding *what I must do*, not what I must know, except insofar as a sort of knowledge must precede every action. It depends on understanding my purpose, on seeing what the Deity genuinely intends [*vil*] that I should do; the important thing is to find a truth that is true *for me*, to find *the idea for which I would live and die*. And what use would it be to me if I found out a so-called objective truth; if I labored through the philosophers’ systems and could, when called for, call them for inspection; if I could point out inconsistencies in every particular circle?—what use would it be to me if I could develop a theory of the state and picked out particularities from manifold places to combine these into one totality, to construct a world in which I, again, did not live, but which I only held out to view for others;—what use would it be for me that develop the meaning of Christianity, that I could explain many particular phenomena if this had, *for myself* and *my life*, *no deeper meaning?* . . . What use would it be for me that the truth stood there before me cold and naked, indifferent whether I acknowledged it or not, causing an anxious shudder rather than trusting devotion?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 392–93; Not13:23 / *KJN* 3, 390): “The analogy that Leibniz gives, that the rules of harmony exist before anything is played (cfr. § 181), proves nothing. In this way only abstract truth is demonstrated. But Christianity is an historical truth, how can it then be the absolute?”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 44 / *EO1*, 35): “To knowledge of truth I perhaps have come; to salvation [*Salighed*], surely not.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 380 / *EO1*, 392): “What she must learn is to make all the movements of infinitude, to swing herself, to rock herself in moods, to confuse poetry and actuality, truth and fiction, to frolic in infinity.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 37 / *EO2*, 29): “But within Christianity also love had to undergo many things before one came to see the profundity, beauty, and truth that lie in marriage.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 82–83 / *EO2*, 78): “If someone intends to strip people of their illusions in order to lead them to something truer, then you are here as always ‘at your service in every way.’ On the whole, you are untiring in ferreting out illusions in order to smash them to pieces. . . . However, you have by no means come to the truth. You have come to a standstill with destroying the illusion, and since you have done this in every possible, conceivable direction, you have really worked yourself into a new illusion—that is, that one can stop with this.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 221 / *EO2*, 231): “The more significant the truth which is to emerge from something, the more dangerous are the aberrations.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 130 / FT, 35): “Perhaps someone in our time will be foolish enough, envious enough of the great, to attempt to make himself and me believe that if I had actually done this I would have done something even greater than what Abraham did. . . . And yet this is the greatest untruth: for my gigantic resignation was a substitute for faith.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 221 / PF, 13): “For the ultimate thought in all questioning is that the person asked must himself possess the truth and get it by himself. The temporal point of departure is a nothing; for in the same moment that I discover I have, from eternity, known the truth without knowing it, in the same instant [*Nu*], that moment [*Øieblik*] is hidden in the eternal.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 222 / PF, 14): “If this is now to have decisive significance, then the seeker must right up until the moment not have had the truth, not even in the form of ignorance, for then the moment becomes only the moment of the occasion; yes, he must not even be a seeker. . . . He must therefore be categorized as outside the truth (not coming to it, like a proselyte, but going away from it), or as untruth. He is, then, untruth.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 224 / PF, 15): “The untruth, then, is not just outside the truth, but is polemical against the truth, which is expressed by saying that he himself has forfeited and is forfeiting the condition.”

FRATER TACITURNUS: “Letter to the Reader,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 395 / SLW, 426): “She determines his fate, he says; this is true. But the untruth is that she determines it, for it is determined. Him remaining *in suspenso* is at one and the same time a passionate expression for his sympathy for her, but also the demonic.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 182 / CUP1, 199): “When the truth is asked after objectively, truth is reflected upon as an object to which the knower relates. What is reflected upon is not the relation, but that it is the truth, the true thing to which he relates. If that to which he relates is only the truth, the true, then the subject is in truth. If the truth is asked after subjectively, then the individual’s relation is reflected upon; if only the how of this relation is in truth, then the individual is in truth, even if he relates himself in this way to untruth.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 184 / CUP1, 201): “If someone who lives in the midst of Christianity goes up to God’s house, to the true God’s house, with knowledge of the true conception of God, and now prays, but prays in untruth; and if someone lives in an idolatrous land, but prays with the whole passion of infinity, although his eyes are resting upon the image of an idol: where is there the most truth? One prays in truth to God, although he prays to an idol; the other prays in untruth to the true God, and therefore in truth prays to an idol.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 186 / CUP1, 203): “Only in subjectivity is there decision, whereas to intend [*at ville*] to become objective is untruth.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 360 / WL, 366): “The truth must essentially be considered as struggling in this world; the world has never been so good, and

shall never become so good, that the majority wish for the truth, or have the true conception thereof, so that its proclamation would therefore immediately win everyone's approval."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 180 / SUD, 66): "[I]f the despair is intensified, it becomes defiance, and now becomes disclosed how much untruth there lay in this matter of 'weakness.'"

## Understanding

**Danish term:** n., *Forstaaelse*; n., *Forstand*; v., *forstaae*

### Danish etymology:

*Forstaaelse*: From the Old Danish *forstande*, borrowed from the Middle Low German *vorstan* from the Old Saxon *forstandan*; cognate with the English "understand"

*Forstand*: From the Middle Low German *forstant* and corresponds to modern German *Verstand*

**Danish definition:** (1) Possession of a clear idea of something, especially through grasping the proper context of a specific case or through comprehending its larger meaning or significance; (2) the ability or willingness to put oneself in the position of others and accept their way of life; (3) to be party to an agreement with someone

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "Diapsalmata," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 31 / EO1, 22): "It [viz., folk-literature] is not going to let itself be bargained down one bit by the cold probability calculations of a sober understanding."

A: "Rotation of Crops," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 286 / EO1, 298): "When two human beings fall in love with each other, and have the feeling that they are destined for each other, then it is important to have the courage to break it off; for by continuing there is only everything to lose, nothing to win. It seems a paradox and it is indeed, for the feelings, not for the understanding."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 375–76 / EO1, 387): "With the cold, calm light of the understanding I considered everything; proud and unmoved, nothing terrified me—even if a spirit would have knocked on my door, I would have calmly grabbed the candelabra to open it."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 149 / EO2, 151): "There is a proverb that has survived through the centuries, in which someone has described the shrewd politics of the Romans: *divide et impera* ['divide and conquer']. In a far more profound sense, one can say this about the process of the understanding; for its cunning politics is precisely to partition and by this partitioning to secure its dominion."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 113 / FT, 17): "By faith Abraham trekked out from the land of his fathers and became a stranger in the Promised Land. He left one thing behind, and took one thing with him; he left his worldly understanding behind and took faith with him; otherwise he would surely not have trekked out, but would, after all, have thought it was clearly unreasonable."

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 141 / FT, 46–47): “‘The absurd’ does not belong to the categories proper to the scope of the understanding. It is not identical with the improbable, the unexpected, the uncalculated.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 176 / FT, 86): “[I]t warns against trusting in the cunning calculations of the understanding, which are more faithless than the oracles of antiquity.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 243 / PF, 37): “But every passion’s highest potentiation is always to will its own downfall, and in this way it is also the understanding’s highest passion to will the collision, notwithstanding that the collision must one way or another become its downfall. This is, then, the highest paradox of thought: to intend to discover something which thought itself cannot think.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 244 / PF, 38–39): “[B]ut then the understanding stands still—as Socrates did; for now the paradoxical passion of the understanding awakens, which wills the collision, and intends, without rightly understanding itself, its own downfall.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 244–45 / PF, 39): “But what is this unknown against which the understanding in its paradoxical passion collides, and which even disturbs man and his self-knowledge? It is the unknown. But it is indeed not some human being, insofar as he knows this, or any other thing that he knows. So let us then call this unknown *the god*. This is just a name we give it. To wish to demonstrate that this unknown (the god) exists perhaps hardly occurs to the understanding. That is, if the god does not exist, then it is indeed an impossibility to demonstrate it; but if he exists, then it is indeed folly to intend to demonstrate it.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Philosophical Fragments* (SKS 4, 235 / PF, 28): “If, now, *the moment* is to have decisive significance . . . then the learner is in untruth, yes, is there through his own fault—and yet he is the object of the god’s love, who intends to be his teacher, and the god’s concern is to provide equality. If this cannot be provided, then the love will become unhappy and the instruction meaningless, because they cannot understand each other.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Love Hides a Multitude of Sins,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 85 / EUD, 77): “For the understanding, it is a great thing to recollect everything; for it, it is a piece of folly that love hides the multitude of sins.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 88 / SLW, 90): “But while the understanding stands still, the imagination runs its wild goose chase, calculation calculates wrongly, and sagacity despairs, the married life goes along and is transformed by the wonder from glory to glory, the insignificant becomes more and more significant by the wonder—for the believer.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 113–14 / SLW, 120–21): “As soon as the understanding intends to try to explain or think through falling in love, the ludicrousness becomes apparent, which can best be expressed like so: the understanding becomes ludicrous.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 114 / SLW, 121): “All falling in love is a wonder [Vidunder]; what wonder is it, then, that the understanding stands still, while the lovers kneel in adoration before the wonder’s holy sign.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 213 / CUP1, 233): “There, where the understanding despairs, faith is already present, properly making the despair decisive, so that the movement of faith does not become a transaction within the haggling territory of the understanding. But to believe against the understanding is a martyrdom, to begin to get a bit of the understanding back is a spiritual agon [Anføgtelse] and regression.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 441; Not15:12 / KJN 3, 440): “When all the clever people easily understood that I was a scoundrel, and every clever person flattered himself that he could entirely understand it: then she said, ‘I do not understand Magister Kierkegaard, but I believe nonetheless that he is a good person.’ Truly, mighty words, which also impressed me.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 283–84 / WL, 285–86): “The one who loves does not have understanding of evil and does not wish to have that; he is and remains, he will be and wishes to remain, a child in this respect. . . . Understanding of evil (however much it will make believe for itself and others that it can keep itself completely pure, that it is pure understanding of evil) is still in an understanding with evil.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 153–54 / SUD, 38): “[T]o believe is indeed to lose the understanding to win God.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 203 / SUD, 90): “It is something both to laugh and to weep over, all these declarations about having understood the highest, as well as the virtuosity with which many, *in abstracto*, know how to expound it, in a certain sense entirely rightly—it is both something to laugh and to weep over when one then sees that all this knowledge and understanding exercise no power over human beings’ lives, that their lives do not in the remotest sense express what they have understood, but rather the opposite. . . . Are ‘to understand’ and ‘to understand’ therefore two things? They certainly are; and someone who has understood this— . . . is *eo ipso* initiated into all the secrets of irony.”

## Unhappiness, Unhappy, Unfortunate

**Danish term:** n., *Ulykke*; adj., *ulykkelig*

**Danish etymology:** From the Middle Low German *ungelucke*, “unlucky,” compare with English “unlucky”

**Danish definition:** (1) A sudden, unintended event that causes significant physical harm to someone or something; (2) misfortune; (3) the power of fate to bring misfortune; the adjective means; (4) experiencing deep grief, adversity, suffering, or worry, and SK seems to use *Ulykke* principally as a substantive for the adjective, meaning, “the condition of experiencing deep grief, etc.”

**Kierkegaardian Usage:**

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 235; Not8:33 / *KJN* 3, 229–30): “How I would like to turn back to her; how I would like to tell myself that it was the right thing. Ah, if only I *could!*— . . . It is, after all, hard to have made a human being unhappy, and hard that having made her unhappy is nearly the only hope I have of making her happy.”

VICTOR EREMITA: “Preface,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 17 / *EOI*, 9): “I imagine for myself a young, energetic girl of genius getting the extraordinary idea of intending to avenge her sex upon me. She thinks that she shall be able to force me, to let me taste the pains of unhappy love. See, that is the girl for me.”

A: “The Unhappiest One,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 217 / *EOI*, 223): “Recollection is above all the essential element of the unhappy ones.”

A: “The Unhappiest One,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 222 / *EOI*, 229): “For there he stands, the envoy from the kingdom of sighs, chosen favorite one of sufferings, apostle of sorrow, silent friend of pain, recollection’s unhappy lover, in whom recollection is disturbed by the light of hope, in whom hope is disappointed by the ghostly shades of recollection. . . . Arise, dear Συμπαρανεκρώμενοι, bow down, witnesses of sorrow, in this solemn hour. I hail you, great unknown, whose name I know not, I hail you with your title of honor: the unhappiest one.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 48 / *EO2*, 41): “For the happy individualities, the first love is, in addition, the second, the third, the last; the first love here has the qualification of eternity. For the unhappy individualities, the first love is the instant, the momentary; it receives the qualification of temporality. For the former, the first love, when it is, is a something present; for the latter, it is, when it is, a something past.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 139 / *EO2*, 141): “That which makes you unhappy is that you place the essence of love simply and solely in these visible signs.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 9–10 / *R*, 131): “Therefore, repetition, if it is possible, makes a human being happy, while recollection makes him unhappy.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 129 / *FT*, 34): “I can well hold out in living my way, I am happy and content, but my happiness is not that of faith, and in comparison with it is actually unhappiness.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 192 / *FT*, 103): “There were many girls who were unfortunate in love, but still such a girl became such; Sarah was that before she became it.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 133 / *SLW*, 141): “But if the wife and mother is beautiful in this way in her happiness . . . then she is, again, in her unhappiness and her day of distress more poetic than the young girl.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 213 / *SLW*, 228): “My unfortunate bias . . . has a sense only for the possibilities of unhappiness.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 20, 35; NB:34 / *KJN* 4, 33–34): “I am, in the most profound sense, an unhappy individuality, who from my earliest hour has been nailed fast to one or another suffering bordering upon madness, which have their deeper ground in a misrelation between my soul and my body; for . . . it stands in no relation to my spirit, which, on the contrary, perhaps through the tension of the relationship between soul and body, has acquired an unusual elasticity.”

## Universal / Exception

**Danish term:** adjectival n., *det Almene*; adj., *almen*; adj., *almindelig*; adjectival n., *det Universelle*; adj., *universel* / n., *Undtagelse*

### Danish etymology:

*Almene, almen:* From the Old Norse *almennr*, “that which governs the whole” or “that which applies to most or all people, the public”

*Almindelig:* From the Old Norse *almenniligr*, “that which is ordinarily the case”

*Universelle, universel:* From the Latin *universalis*, “that which applies in all cases and/or to the entire world”

*Undtagelse:* From the verb *undtage*, “to exclude,” from the Old Norse *undan taka*, meaning: (1) Something or someone excluded or not counted, specifically what is excluded from a definition or rule; or (2) a deviation from the norm, “exceptional” in the sense of a rare case

### Danish definition:

*Det Alemene, et al.:* (1) That which applies to the whole; (2) that which applies to all or most cases; (3) that which applies without exception

*Undtagelse:* (1) Someone or something not taken into account or excluded from a rule; (2) that which is excluded

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 69 / *EOI*, 62): “Love [*Elskoven*] was present everywhere as an element [*Moment*] and momentarily [*momentviis*] present in the beautiful individual. The gods no less than human beings knew its power; the gods no less than human beings knew happy and unhappy love affairs. In none of them however was love present as a principle; insofar as it was in them, in the particular individual, it was there as a fragment [*Moment*] of love’s universal power.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 99–100 / *EOI*, 95): “It [music] is far more abstract than language and therefore does not express the particular but the universal in all its universality, and yet it expresses the universal not in the abstraction of reflection, but in the concretion of immediacy.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 243 / *EO2*, 255): “The ethical is the universal.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 244 / *EO2*, 256): “Not until



the individual himself is the universal, not until then can the ethical be actualized. . . . Someone who views life ethically sees the universal, and someone who lives ethically expresses the universal in his life, he makes himself the universal human being; not by stripping off [affører] his concretion, for then he would become nothing at all, but by arraying [ifører] himself in it and interpenetrating it with the universal.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 309–10 / EO2, 328): “The more of the universally-human an individual can actualize in his life, the more extraordinary a human being he is. The less of the universal he can assimilate, the more imperfect he is.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 54 / R, 183): “The fact is, in this respect there are exceptions who cannot be declined in the universal case forms.”

CONSTANTIN CONSTANTIUS: *Repetition* (SKS 4, 92–93 / R, 226–27): “On the one side stands the exception, on the other the universal, and the struggle itself is a singular conflict between the wrath of the universal and its impatience over all the disturbance the exception causes, and its devoted [forelskte] preferential love [Forkjærlighed] for the exception; for, in the end, just as Heaven rejoices more over a sinner who repents than over 99 righteous, so does the universal over an exception. On the other side battles the insubordination and defiance of the exception, his weakness and sickness. The whole thing is a wrestling match [or, breaking: brydning] in which the universal breaks [bryder] with the exception, wrestles [brydes] with him in conflict, and strengthens him through this wrestling [or, breaking: brydning].”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 148 / FT, 54): “The ethical as such is the universal, and as the universal, it is in force for everyone, which can be expressed from another side by saying that it is in force at every moment.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 153 / FT, 60): “As soon as I speak, I express the universal, and if I do not do that, no one can understand me.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 160 / FT, 68): “The ethical is the universal, and as such also the divine.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 172 / FT, 82): “The ethical, as such, is the universal, and, as the universal, is the disclosed.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 248 / EUD, 250): “[For] in that case it was not upbuilding, had not found the universal, but was charmed by the accidental.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 163 / SLW, 175): “Such a religious exception will, therefore, ignore the universal, will outbid actuality’s terms. It is thereby seen straightway that he is unjustified.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 164 / SLW, 176): “From this it is then easily seen that the no one can, by himself, become a justified exception.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 167 / SLW, 179): “Even . . . if it is definite that he cannot do

otherwise, he has still, by taking this step [of becoming an exception to the universal], ventured out in the untamed, infinite space where the sword of Damocles hangs over his head if looks up to Heaven, where the snare of unknown temptations [*Fristelsers*] clutch at his feet if he looks toward the earth; where no human help reaches out, where not even the most daring pilot, who is willing to sacrifice his life, ventures out, because here there is more to lose than life; where no compassion reaches out for him, yes, not even the tenderest sympathy can catch sight of him, because he has ventured out in the empty space from which humankind shrinks back.”

PETRUS MINOR: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Magister Adler as a Phenomenon* [published posthumously] (SKS 15, 118 / BA, 30): “An extraordinary [*Extraordinaire*] therefore has to step out of the ranks; for an extraordinary is too important to be within the ranks, and the earnestness of the universal demands unity and uniformity in the columns, demands to see who the extraordinary is or to see that he is the extraordinary.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 327 / CUP1, 358): “If someone is represented to be great with regard to the universal, by his virtue, his faith, his magnanimity, his faithfulness, his perseverance, etc., then admiration is a faithless relation, or can easily become one. What is great with regard to the universal must therefore be represented as an object not for admiration but as a requirement.”

## Venture

**Danish term:** n., *Foretagende*; n., *Vovet*; v., *vove*; n., *Vovestykke*

### Danish etymology:

*Foretagende*: Present active participle from the verb *foretage*, from the Older New Danish *foretage*, after Middle Low German *vornemen*, “to place in front of one to view closely”

*Vovet, vove*: From the Low German *wagen*, “put at stake, wager,” from *vegtskål*

*Vovestykke*: Compound of *vove* and *stykke*, “piece (of something)”

### Danish definition:

*Foretagende*: Putting something planned into action

*vove*: (1) To have the courage to do something, to dare; (2) to place something at risk

*Vovestykke*: Bold action, a personal enterprise that requires courage and is associated with risk

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 68 / EO1, 61): “But as they say: boldly ventured is half won.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 339 / EO1, 350): “[One] cannot know what a human being in their despair might descend to venture. The most circumspect and most timid people at times venture the most desperate things.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 269 / EO2, 284): “One wishes to have the courage to venture out into the most dangerous struggles, but one does not wish to tackle the necessities of life.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 127 / FT, 32): “If there were such a one who, after having heard the greatness, but also the frightfulness in Abraham’s deed, ventured to go forward on that path, then I would saddle my horse and ride with him. At every station until we came to Mt. Moriah I would explain to him that he could still turn back. . . .”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Against Cowardliness,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 354 / EUD, 369): “There is a folly in youth’s high-flying resolutions, but in reliance upon God one dares to venture everything. Venture it, therefore, you who became faithless to yourself and to your resolution . . . venture to renew your resolution.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “Some Reflections on Marriage in Answer to Objections,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 110 / SLW, 116): “But a married man who is that with his life and soul is certainly the one who has ventured and ventures the most of all.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 242 / SLW, 260): “[The] unmarried person can venture more in the world of spirit than the married person, can stake everything and be concerned only about the idea.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 365 / SLW, 394): “What is my guilt? That I have ventured into something I could not carry out [*realisere*].”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 138–39 / CUP1, 149): “If anything in the world can teach a human being to venture, it is the ethical, which teaches someone to venture everything for nothing, to venture everything, including also world-historical flattery, in order to become nothing.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 139 / CUP1, 149): “[N]ot every bold venture is half-won, for there is also a bold venture in which much is lost.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 138–39 / CUP1, 149): “[A] daring venture is not, no matter how rash, is not a tumultuous proclamation, but a quiet dedication that knows that nothing is received in advance, but stakes everything.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 388 / CUP1, 426): “No, if I am truly to venture and truly seeking after the highest good, then there must be uncertainty, and I must, if I may put it this way, have room to move. But the greatest room I can have to move, where there is room for infinite passion’s most vehement gesture, is uncertainty of knowledge in relation to an eternal blessedness, or that choosing it is, in a finite sense, lunacy; see, now there is room, now you can venture!”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 195 / WL, 196): “This is *merely human self-denial*: without fear for oneself and without regard for oneself to venture into danger—into the danger where honor beckons the victor, where the admiration of contemporaries and onlookers already beckons someone who merely ventures. This is

*Christian self-denial*: without fear for oneself and without regard for oneself to venture in the danger concerning which contemporaries—prejudiced and blinded and complicit—have or wish to have no idea [*Forestilling*] that there is honor to be won; so it is therefore not just dangerous to venture into the danger, but doubly dangerous, because the onlookers' mockery awaits the courageous one equally whether he wins or he loses."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 270 / WL, 271): "The small-minded person has never had the courage for this daring, humble and proud, God-pleasing venture: *before God* to be oneself—for the emphasis lies upon 'before God,' since this is the source and origin of all distinctiveness."

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 150 / SUD, 34–35): "But not to venture—this is prudent. And yet, by not venturing, one can easily lose just as terribly what would be difficult to lose, no matter how much one lost by venturing . . . oneself."

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 23, 138; NB16:62 / KJN 7, 140): "In the first lap of a human being's life, the greatest danger is not to venture. Then, if one has ventured profoundly, the second time the greatest danger is to venture too much. In the first case, by not venturing one veers off into the service of triviality; in the second case, by venturing too much, one veers into the fantastical, perhaps the presumptuous."

## Virtue

**Danish term:** n., *Dyd*

**Danish etymology:** From the Old Norse *dygð*, formed from the root in the verb *du*, "to be suitable for or skilled at something"

**Danish definition:** (1) The quality of an object (rarely of an animal) in virtue of which it is useful or capable of fulfilling its function; (2) supernatural power; (3) quality that is morally valuable, consistent with duty, or morally praiseworthy; (4) in philosophical usage, the paradigm qualities of a morally good person

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: "Rotation of Crops," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 275 / EO1, 285): "Therefore, when one chooses a nursemaid, one always looks essentially not just whether she is sober, trustworthy, and behaves with propriety, but one also takes into aesthetic consideration whether she knows how to entertain children, and one would not have any misgivings about giving the nursemaid the sack if she was found not to have this quality, even if she had all other excellent virtues."

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: "The Seducer's Diary," *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 355 / EO1, 366): "She laughed at me—. Patience is still a precious virtue, and he who laughs last laughs best."

JUDGE WILHELM: "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage," *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 148 / EO2, 139): "It [marital love] is faithful, constant, humble, patient, long-suffering, tolerant, sincere, easily satisfied, alert, enduring, willing, happy. All these virtues have the quality that they are qualifications within the individual."

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 230 / EO2, 241): “A Greek individuality who developed himself into a perfect epitome of all personal virtues may now attain as high a degree of virtuosity as he wishes, his life is still not more immortal than the world whose temptation his virtue conquered; his blessedness [*Salighed*] is a solitary self-satisfaction, as transitory as everything else.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 230 / EO2, 240): “[The] civic virtues . . . were really the true virtues in paganism.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 153 / FT, 59): “Therefore, while the tragic hero is great by his civic virtue, Abraham is great by a purely personal virtue.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Against Cowardliness,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 337 / EUD, 350): “It is great to plunge oneself into danger, it is great to battle with untold horrors, but it is also wretched . . . to be rich in truths, poor in virtues.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 317 / SLW, 340): “To be a model of virtue, a bright norm of a human being is, for one thing, very embarrassing—and also very dubious.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 39 / CUP1, 34): “When Eudamidas in the academy saw the aged Xenocrates with his disciples seeking after the truth, he asked: ‘Who is this old man?’ And when one then answered that he was a wise man, one of those seeking after virtue, he cried out, ‘When, then, will he use it?’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 150 / CUP1, 161): “I wish by these words to call to mind Plutarch’s splendid definition of virtue: ‘Ethical virtue has passion for its material, reason for its form.’”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 514 / CUP1, 565): “And if it is a sorry error to intend to become like God by means of virtue and holiness instead of becoming humbler and humbler, then how much more is it laughable to intend to be that in consideration of the fact that one is an unusually brilliant mind; for virtue and purity are indeed in essential relation to God’s essence, the other qualification makes God himself laughable as *tertium comparationis* [the point of comparison].”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 161 / SUD, 46): “It is this that the Church Fathers meant when they said that the virtues of the pagans are glittering vices; they meant that the heart of paganism was despair, that paganism was not conscious before God as spirit.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 196 / SUD, 82–83): “But it is often enough overlooked that the opposite of sin is by no means virtue. This is, in part, a pagan view, which is satisfied with a merely human measuring stick, and which precisely does not know what sin is, that all sin is before God. No, *the opposite of sin is faith*, as it says in Romans 14:23: ‘all that is not of faith is sin.’ And this is one of the most decisive definitions for all of Christianity, that the opposite of sin is not virtue, but faith.”

## Wish

**Danish term:** n., *Ønske*; v., *ønske*

**Danish etymology:** From Old Danish *usk, ønsk, ynsk*, Old Norse *ósk* (“wish”)

**Danish definition:** (1) Longing or striving to obtain or achieve something; (2) hope that someone gets or experiences something specific

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 225; Not8:3 / KJN 3, 221):

Now why do you rub so violently  
See, I obey your beck and call  
When you need me and call  
I come like a flash of lightning.

Not I alone, my R., but . . . all the various willing servants who are within me, ready to obey your beck and call, a servant for your every wish and if possible ten for each; but all of these unite in me in one genie of the ring, who, unlike that genie who appeared before Alladin, would be bound to you by an external and accidental connection; but by my soul's whole longing, for did not I myself bring you the ring that I obey.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Notebooks* (SKS 19, 228; Not8:13 / KJN 3, 224): “It was my only wish that I might remain with her; but from the moment I felt that it must go wrong, and this moment came all too promptly, I resolved to make her think that I did not love her; and now I stand here, hated by everyone for my faithlessness, the apparent cause of her unhappiness and yet I am as faithful to her as always. And even if I could see her happy with another, however much pain might lie therein for my human pride, I would still be glad; but she consumes herself in sorrow over the fact that I, who could make her happy, will not. And in truth I could have made her happy if not for etc. . . .”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 35 / EO1, 26–27): “No pregnant woman could have stranger and more impatient wishes than I have. These wishes sometimes involve the most insignificant things, sometimes the most sublime, but all of them have to an equally high degree the momentary passion of the soul.”

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 57–58 / EO1, 50): “The poet wishes for his subject matter; but, as one says, to wish is no art—this is entirely correct, and it applies with great truth to a multitude of powerless poetic wishes. To wish correctly is, on the contrary, a great art, or more correctly, it is a gift. . . . [Yes,] to abstract reason it appears laughable, since it rather thinks of wishing in relation to what is not, not in relation to what is there.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 19 / EO2, 9): “Even if it were at my disposal, I would never wish her one more beautiful.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 240–41 / EO2, 252): “The

person who lives ethically also wishes to be happy in his choice; however, if the choice proves itself not to be entirely according to his wish, he does not lose courage; he straight-away sees his task, and that the art is not to wish, but to will.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 105 / FT, 9): “[H]is soul had but one wish, to see Abraham; one longing, to have been witness to that event.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 114 / FT, 18): “If Abraham had wavered, then he would have given it up. He would have said to God: ‘Since it is not, perhaps, your will after all that it should happen, then I will give up the wish; it was my one and only wish, it was my blessedness. My soul is upright, I hide no secret grudge because you denied it.’”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 137 / FT, 43): “If what I have said here is to have any meaning, then it must be maintained that the movement happens properly. The knight will therefore, in the first place, have the power to concentrate his whole life’s content and the meaning of actuality into one single wish. If a person lacks this concentration, this conclusive exclusivity, his soul is from the beginning divided into multiplicity, and he never comes to make the movement.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 144 / FT, 50): “And yet it must be glorious to get the princess, this I will say every moment, and the knight of resignation who does not say this is a traitor. He has not had one single wish, and he has not held the wish young in his pain.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 169 / FT, 78): “The tragic hero gives up his wish in order to fulfill his duty.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “One Who Prays Aright Struggles in Prayer and Is Victorious—in that God Is Victorious,” *Four Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 375 / EUD, 394): “Is the one who prays changed? . . . Already from the beginning, that he prayed was beneficial to him, however imperfect his prayer was; it helped him, after all, to concentrate his soul upon one wish. . . . But someone who prays still knows how to make distinctions, little by little he gives up what, according to his earthly conception [*Begreb*], is insignificant, since he does not rightly dare to come before God with it . . .; but on the contrary gives all the more emphasis to the desire for his one and only [*eneste*] wish. Then, concentrating his soul before God upon the one wish—and this already has something ennobling about it, is preparation for giving up everything, for the only person who can give up everything is one who has had only one single wish. In this way he is prepared to be strengthened in struggle with God.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 231 / SLW, 247): “Everything is to work her loose, to annihilate everything between us, and then I, in addition, discipline my soul so that it might hold itself upon the peak of my wish, that my wish, if its fulfillment should ever be possible, might be just as aflame in that moment. . . . To wish while one is young is not difficult, but to hold one’s soul upon the wish when secret resentment, when moral anxiety consumes its power, is not easy.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 23 / CUP1, 13): “[The] young dialectician puts the whole awesome confidence of youth in the

renowned person; yes, like a girl who has only one single wish, to be loved by that one person, so he wishes only one thing, to become a thinker.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 89 / WL, 84): “[Someone] who loves the neighbor . . . wishes essentially to exist equally for all human beings, whether he is now in actuality known by many or not. This is undeniably a significant wingspan, but it is not a proud flight that soars above the world, but is self-denial’s humble and difficult flight along the ground.”

## Witness

**Danish term:** n., *Vidnesbyrd*; n., *Vidne*; v., *vidne*

### Danish etymology:

*Vidnerbyrd*: From Old Norse *vitnisburðr*, “bear witness”

*Vidne* / *vidne*: From Old Norse *vitni*, “witness”

### Danish definition:

*Vidnesbyrd*: (1) Evidence of something; (2) an account of something seen firsthand; (3) a teacher’s statement regarding a pupil’s skill and diligence; (4) the Christian God’s revelation of his will; (5) a person’s proclamation of his or her religion

*Vidne*: Someone who gives an account (*Vidnesbyrd*) of something that he or she has seen firsthand

*vidne*: (1) To answer questions as a witness (*Vidne*); (2) to solemnly proclaim a personal belief to be true

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “The Immediate Erotic Stages or the Musical Erotic,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 62 / EO1, 55): “In that respect, I have on my side the whole witness of time and agreement of experience.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 311 / EO1, 321): “A sober third party does not always find that the lovers are most beautiful at this instant. I have been witness to lovers’ trysts where, despite the fact that the girl was lovely and the man handsome, the total impression was almost revolting, and the meeting itself far from beautiful, although it certainly seemed so to the lovers.”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 305/ EO2, 323): “I am far from daring to think myself significant enough to represent ethics as attorney. I am, on the whole, only a witness.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 171 / FT, 80–81): “The true knight of faith is a witness, never a teacher, and therein lies the profoundly human, which contains somewhat more to it than this flirting participation with other people’s welfare, which is honored by the name of sympathy, while it is really nothing but vanity. Someone who intends to be only a witness confesses thereby that no person, not even the most humble, needs another person’s participation or should be demeaned thereby so that another may be honored.”



SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Every Good and Perfect Gift Is from Above,” *Two Upbuilding Discourses 1843* (SKS 5, 44 / EUD, 35): “You did not childishly demand that every one of your wishes should be fulfilled; you prayed for only a witness, be it early or late; for your troubled soul concealed a wish.”

QUIDAM: “‘Guilty?’/‘Not Guilty?’” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 323 / SLW, 348): “If it holds true that earthly love seeks secrecy, it holds all the more true that prayer prefers solitude and to be as hidden as possible, in order neither to be disturbed nor to embarrass others with its emotion; certainly, neither does one need to have witnesses on hand, and it would of course help very little to have them.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 194 / CUP1, 212): “A witness can testify that he has believed it and also that, far from being an historical certainty, it is directly contrary his understanding; but of course such a witness repels in the same sense as the absurd, and a witness who does not repel is *eo ipso* a deceiver or a man who is talking about something entirely different.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 277 / WL, 279): “Has the life of one who loves been wasted, then, has he lived entirely in vain, since there is nothing, nothing at all, that witnesses to his work and toil?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 363 / WL, 370): “Even if in this regard social conditions [*Forholdene*] have changed, even if things no longer go to the extreme and decisive point that witnesses of the truth must sacrifice life and blood—nevertheless, the world has not essentially become better, it has only become less passionate and more petty.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 16, 89 / PV, 109): “But no truth-witness—ah, and of course every human being, you and I, should be that—dares to be mixed up with a crowd. The truth-witness—who of course has nothing to do with politics, and does his utmost to watch out against being confused with a politician—the truth-witness’s devout work is to mix as much as possible with all, but always individually, to speak with each one particularly, on the highways and byways—in order to split up or to speak to a crowd, not in order to form a crowd but in order that one or two individuals might nevertheless go home from the gathering and become an individual [*den Enkelte*].”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 187 / SUD, 76): “It is, to compose an analogy, as if a slip of the pen entered an author’s work, and it then became conscious of itself as an error—although perhaps it was no genuine error, but in a far higher sense essentially belonged to the whole production—it is as if this slip of the pen now wished to mount insurrection against the author, out of hatred for him forbade him from correcting it, and in mad defiance said to him: ‘No, I will not be erased, I will stand as a witness against you, a witness that you are a mediocre author.’”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *Practice in Christianity* (SKS 11, 96/ PC, 87): “Every time a witness of the truth makes truth into inwardness (and this is the essential occupation of the witnesses of the truth), every time a genius in an original way internalizes the true—then the established order will also be offended at him.”

## Youth, Young

**Danish term:** n., *Ungdommelighed*; n., *Ungdom*; n. Yngling; adj., *ung*

**Danish etymology:** The root *ung* is derived from the Old Norse *ungr* and English *young*; related to Latin *juventis*, “youth”

**Danish definition:** The quality of being youthful; someone who is youthful

### Kierkegaardian Usage:

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 29 / EO1, 21): “Old age realizes the dreams of youth: one sees this in Swift. He founded in his youth an insane asylum, in his old age he himself entered it.”

A: “Diapsalmata,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 51 / EO1, 42): “This calls to mind my youth and my first love [*Kjærlighed*—then I longed, now I only long after my first longing. What is youth? A dream. What is love [*Kjærligheden*]? The content of the dream.”

JOHANNES THE SEDUCER: “The Seducer’s Diary,” *Either/Or Part I* (SKS 2, 385 / EO1, 397): “What communion is there between youth and these meditations!”

JUDGE WILHELM: “The Balance between the Aesthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality,” *Either/Or Part II* (SKS 3, 159 / EO2, 161–62): “Although he was the younger, you the older, he had nonetheless by his noble youthfulness made the moment earnest. Is it not true that you would yourself become young, you would feel that something beautiful lay in being young, but also something very earnest that it is by no means an indifferent matter how one uses one’s youth, that it contains a choice for one, an actual either/or?”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Journals* (SKS 18, 160; JJ:64 / KJN 2, 148): “When I was very young I could not understand how one went about writing a book. This I now understand very well, but on the contrary, now I cannot grasp why someone would want to do it.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 114 / FT, 18): “What is it to be God’s chosen one? Is it to be denied in youth the wish of youth, so that one may with great difficulty receive its fulfillment in old age?”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 115 / FT, 18): “Had Abraham not believed, then perhaps Sarah would have died from sorrow, and Abraham, dulled in grief, would not have understood the fulfillment, but smiled at it as at a dream of youth. But Abraham believed, and therefore he was young; for the one who always hopes for the best becomes old, defrauded by life, and the one who is always prepared for the worst grows old too soon, but the one who believes preserves an eternal youth. Thus this story is praised! For Sarah, though advanced in years, was young enough to desire the pleasure of motherhood, and Abraham, though gray-haired, was still young enough to wish to be a father. In outward respects the marvel lies in the fact that it happened according to their expectation; in a deeper sense the marvel of faith lies in the fact that Abraham and Sarah were still young enough to wish, and that faith had preserved their wish, and, with it, their youth.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 138 / FT, 44): “Fools and young people go on about how everything is possible for a person. This, however, is a great delusion.”

JOHANNES DE SILENTIO: *Fear and Trembling* (SKS 4, 149 / FT, 55): “Every more thorough thinker, every more earnest artist still regenerates himself in the eternal youth of the Greeks.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “Think about Your Creator in the Days of Your Youth,” *Three Upbuilding Discourses 1844* (SKS 5, 248–49 / EUD, 250): “In another sense, youth is only vanity and longing after what is still more vain; ‘for charm is deceptive, and beauty is vain’ (Proverbs 31:30), and the fickle mind rushes away with short-lived hope, and the dance ends, and the joke is forgotten, and strength vanishes, and youth is past, and its place it knows no more; but youth’s thought of its creator is a budding rose that does not wither because it does know the years or the time of the year, and it is the child’s most beautiful ornament, and the bride’s most glorious jewel, and the dying person’s best finery.”

WILLIAM AFHAM: “In Vino Veritas,” *Stages on Life’s Way* (SKS 6, 18 / SLW, 10): “When youth wears glasses, the lenses are for seeing at a distance, for it lacks the power of recollection, which is: to distance, to place at a distance.”

JOHANNES CLIMACUS: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 416 / CUP1, 458): “No, poetry is youth, and worldly wisdom comes with the years, and religiousness is the relation to the eternal; but the years make a human being stupider and stupider, if he has lost his youth and not found the relation to the eternal.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Works of Love* (SKS 9, 250 / WL, 250): “In youth, a human being has plenty of expectation and possibility; it develops by itself in the youth as the precious myrrh that drips down from the trees of Arabia.”

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: “States of Mind in the Strife of Suffering,” *Christian Discourses* (SKS 10, 119 / CD, 107): “If one should with one word designate that which is characteristic of the life of childhood and youth, one must certainly say it is a dream-life.”

INTER ET INTER: *The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress* (SKS 14, 104–5 / C, 320): “The idea of youthfulness as a task and being very young oneself do not at all correctly correspond to each other in the sense of ideality. Insofar as unaesthetic spectators are of the opposite opinion, it is because they are deceived by a sensory illusion that confuses the joy over Miss Jane Doe’s external [*phenomenale*] youthfulness with the actress’s essential ideality.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 173 / SUD, 58): “Youth has the illusion of hope, the aged that of recollection.”

ANTI-CLIMACUS: *The Sickness unto Death* (SKS 11, 174 / SUD, 59): “Why, I wonder, did Socrates love youth, unless it was because he knew humanity!”

# A Very Short List of Suggested Further Reading

*The following is merely a brief list of suggested starting points, one intended as neither exhaustive nor indicative of the merits of works not listed therein.*

## Monographs

- Caputo, John D. *How to Read Kierkegaard*. London: Granta Books, 2007. An easy entry to the world of Kierkegaard.
- Carlisle, Clare. *Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling: A Reader's Guide*. London; New York: Continuum, 2010.
- Lippitt, John. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Kierkegaard and Fear and Trembling*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Mackey, Louis. *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971. Despite its age, this remains perhaps the best secondary work on Kierkegaard published to date for the new reader.

## Biography and Background

- Garff, Joakim. *Kierkegaard's Muse: The Mystery of Regine Olsen*, trans. Alastair Hannay. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.
- . *Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Kirmmse, Bruce H. *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990.
- Lowrie, Walter. *A Short Life of Kierkegaard*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942. Now somewhat out of date, but readable and still useful.

## Anthologies

- Perkins, Robert, ed. *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, 23 volumes. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984–2014. Volume 6 concerns *Fear and Trembling*.
- , ed. *Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling: Critical Appraisals*. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981.
- Rée, Jonathan, and Jane Chamberlain, eds. *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.

## Danish Text

- Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, 28 volumes. København: Gads Forlag, 1997–2012. Volume 4 contains *Frygt og Bæven* [*Fear and Trembling*].

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