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## Kierkegaard, Literature, and the Arts

Ziolkowski, Eric, Garff, Joakim, Jøthen, Peder, Rovira, James

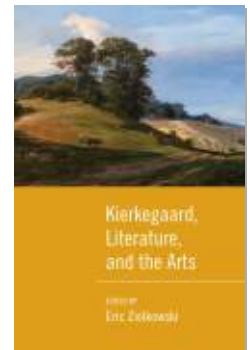
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# Introduction

Eric Ziolkowski

Thirty years ago, the late Nathan A. Scott Jr. observed, “Certainly Western philosophy . . . has only very rarely permitted itself to be fructified by the poetic imagination.”<sup>1</sup> Among modern theologians, he added, Søren Kierkegaard and John Henry Newman were the sole exceptions in “hav[ing] been influenced in any decisive way by poetic methods and modalities” and in taking literature and the arts “to be fecundating materials for theological reflection,” rather than employing them—as did Paul Tillich, Nikolai Berdyaev, and Jacques Maritain—mainly as “cultural barometers of the cultural situation requiring to be addressed by Christian theology.”<sup>2</sup> Today, Scott’s observation may not elicit raised eyebrows. George Pattison, in opening his essay in the present volume, rightly notes that it is “no new discovery” to realize “that Kierkegaard might be read in the perspective of literature and the arts.” On the contrary, this insight was first registered in Kierkegaard’s own time and has found expression off and on to the present day, though it has never held a dominant sway.

Generally speaking, with some notable exceptions, the reception of Kierkegaard over the past century and a half has tended to emphasize the philosophical and theological dimensions of his writings at the expense of the literary and artistic. This is undoubtedly due, at least in part, to his extreme anomalousness as an author. As Edward F. Mooney puts it in his own contribution to this volume, Kierkegaard “enacts a kind of disordered, anomalous, hybrid status for himself,” serving as “a literary philosopher (or philosophical *littérateur*) and a cultural and existential *provocateur*,” an inventor of “countergenres, parabooks, unclassifiable publications.” Confronted with such an anomaly as Kierkegaard, readers have often not known what to make of his and his pseudonyms’ pervasive literary and artistic concerns. This is largely because the sequential progression of the existential stages charted and plumbed in his writings appears to promote a movement *from* the aesthetic, *through* the ethical, and *into* the religious—what Hans Urs von Balthasar termed Kierkegaard’s “banishment of the aesthetic from the realm of theology.”<sup>3</sup> The present volume focuses on the reverse direction of that movement, that is, backward toward the aesthetic, and to the formal media of expression associated with it, presenting a wide, variegated array of perspectives on Kierkegaard in relation to literature, music, opera, theater, dance, visual art, and film.

Here, an immediate qualification is in order. Despite the concentration of this volume on the relation of Kierkegaard to literature and the arts, he himself cannot be categorized as a poet, novelist, or story writer in any conventional sense. Nor was he a practitioner of any of the other arts. For all his and his pseudonyms' manifest love of music, particularly of Mozart, Kierkegaard played no musical instrument, nor sang, nor does he or any of his pseudonyms, when discussing music, broach the sorts of questions that musicologists and music theorists conventionally treat—that is, concerning key, harmony, rhythm, and so forth; indeed, there is no evidence that he could read music. Dance and the visual arts, as the essays by Anne Margrete Fiskvik and Ragni Linnet demonstrate, likewise bear significantly upon Kierkegaard's writings (in ways unappreciated heretofore). Yet he wrote relatively little about dance and visual arts and set forth no theory of them. Moreover, his artistic skill, in Pattison's words, "seems to have been limited to some rather primitive caricatures in the margins of the journals," and he never performed ballet. As Fiskvik suggests, despite his personal acquaintance with the ballet master August Bournonville, it would be difficult even to imagine Kierkegaard on the ballroom floor.

As for his pervasively literary nature,<sup>4</sup> his self-image as "only a singular kind of poet [*en egen Art Digter*]" (SKS 12:281 / WA 165) or "hardly anything but a poet [*næsten kun en Digter*]" (SKS 13:25 / PV 18), and his predilection for the theater, which led him to contemplate "transform[ing] [his personal] struggle into literary works, even present[ing] it on the stage as straight drama" (SKS 24:193, NB22:164, n.d. 1851 / JP 6:6718), his compulsion to engage in "creative writing" is undeniable. His journals and papers up through the 1840s record any number of ideas and plans for, and occasionally sketches or drafts (none of them completed) of, stories, novels, dramas, and various other literary-artistic writing projects, the most fully developed of which is an Aristophanic burlesque play (SKS 17:280–97, DD:208, n.d. 1837 / KJN 1:272–89).<sup>5</sup> Consistent with certain hints by the pseudonyms, some of the pseudonymous writings have previously been read as novels,<sup>6</sup> and in the present volume Pattison and Joakim Garff read *Either/Or* and *Practice in Christianity* as Bildungsromane; Howard Pickett ascribes a "theatrical form" to the entire pseudonymous corpus, especially *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*; and Martijn Boven finds the whole authorship, especially *Repetition*, functioning as a "theater of ideas." However, the fact remains, none of Kierkegaard's published works was written for the stage, and none presents itself as a *traditional* novel. In the final analysis, if there could ever be such an analysis of Kierkegaard, we would have to agree with Mooney: "Kierkegaard did not deliver novels or plays or poems, but he easily *could have*. He had other fish to fry. Something diverts his attention from becoming *only* a literary figure."

There is another point to acknowledge before examining Kierkegaard in his relation to literature and the arts. Ultimately, those writings, let alone that

relation, cannot be considered in isolation from the life of Kierkegaard, a life that was overtly none too exciting. To be sure, there were his painful break on August 11, 1841, from the single love of his life, Regine Olsen, and then, five years later, his publicly humiliating, yearlong imbroglia with the local tabloid, *The Corsair* (*Corsaren*), whose cartoonist caricatured him as both a cruel cad and a skinny hunchback, a kind of foppish Quasimodo in a top hat, overcoat, and trousers with uneven legs.<sup>7</sup> Closing out the twilight of his relatively brief life, there was also his fierce, bold attack upon his nation's established church, homing in on Denmark's twin ecclesiastical icons at that time, the recently deceased bishop Jakob Peter Mynster and his episcopal successor, Hans Lassen Martensen. Still today, imposing, larger-than-life busts of these two clerics flank the north side of Copenhagen's Church of Our Lady (Vor Frue Kirke), statuary centurions on guard, as if to assure their flock of protection against the likes of Kierkegaard. The latter's own most conspicuous memorial, a full-body statue of him seated and writing, is situated blocks away, in the somewhat secluded, innocuously secular, tree-shadowed space of the Royal Library garden.

Nonetheless, Kierkegaard's life seems rather undramatic, unless one perceives in it, as Mircea Eliade did (rightly or wrongly), the recurrence of an ancient mythic pattern. The Romanian-born novelist, story writer, and historian of religions likened Kierkegaard to, of all people, Achilles, on the grounds that both men were lifelong bachelors. In Eliade's view, Achilles resisted the happy, fruitful life that had been predicted for him, had he married, because in that case he would have given up his becoming a hero and his uniqueness and immortality that came with that status: "Kierkegaard passes through exactly the same existential drama with regard to Regina [*sic*] Olsen: he refuses marriage in order to remain himself, 'the unique,' to be able to hope for the eternal, by rejecting the modality of a happy existence in the 'general.'" <sup>8</sup> Otherwise, aside from the highly public *Corsair* debacle and assault on Christendom, Kierkegaard's life offers little external drama, nor even much physical movement outside the chambers of the successive Copenhagen houses and apartments he inhabited over the years. Aside from his daily walks about the city, his random chats with people on the streets (his "people baths," as he called them), his theater and concert-going, his occasional carriage rides through the nearby countryside, and his five trips abroad (once to Sweden, in 1835, and four times to Berlin, in 1841–42, 1843, 1845, 1846), what confronts us is a most unconventional drama of intensely private, introspective, and yet obsessively recorded, inscribed, and transcribed existence that revolved around incessant reading, reflecting, and writing. The sheer verbosity of Kierkegaard, a basic and at times perhaps irritating aspect of his work, justifies Garff's diagnosis of him as a graphomaniac, a sufferer of hypergraphia.<sup>9</sup> This led Johan Ludvig Heiberg to characterize the "two big, thick volumes" constituting *Either/Or* as "a monster [*Monstrum*] of a book,"<sup>10</sup> introducing several size-related associations—*bigness*, *thickness*,

*monstrosity*—that became standard tropes in reviews and critical discussions of Kierkegaard’s published writings. Martensen harked back to these associations in an article published in 1854, where he dismissed “the whole prolix [or longwinded, *vidtløftige*] Kierkegaardian literature,”<sup>11</sup> averring that Kierkegaard produced more books, both signed and pseudonymous, than was divinely warranted.<sup>12</sup>

The indissoluble link between the personal existence of Kierkegaard and his literary art is suggested by an observation made by the Swiss writer Denis de Rougemont in 1934, that heyday of fascism, Nazism, communism, and what he disparaged as mass rule. Among the writers whose thought had transformed “the data of [people’s] lives” by that time, Rougemont distinguished two main “families.” The first, to which Hegel, Marx, and Georges Sorel belong, “acts only by the objective content of its theories, not by its indifferent style. On the other hand,” wrote Rougemont regarding the second “family,” the one by which he claimed to have been personally inspired: “a Pascal, a Kierkegaard, a Rimbaud act less by virtue of their conclusions than by that of *their personal drama made ‘flesh’ by the turns of their language, the movement of their thought.*”<sup>13</sup> We might add, not only are aspects of the persona of Kierkegaard incarnated into his writings, but also material objects from his immediate physical surroundings are reflected, sometimes betraying his attraction to other arts. For example, as Roger Poole has shown, several of the *Discourses at Friday Communion* (1849, 1851), at least two of which Kierkegaard evidently delivered in the Church of Our Lady, allude to Bertel Thorvaldsen’s celebrated statue of Christ, which stands at the altar there, facing Thorvaldsen’s sculptured renditions of the twelve disciples, six on each side of the nave. In several instances in his delivery of those discourses, it seems probable that Kierkegaard even gestured with his hand toward the Christ statue, connecting his words directly with it. Moreover, the inscription from Matthew 11:28 above the statue, “Come here, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest” (*SKS* 12:13 / *PC* 5), is the text for the entirety of *Practice in Christianity*, which Kierkegaard published in 1850 under the pseudonym Anti-Climacus: “All those mediations are full of implicit and often explicit reference to the figure of Christ, standing in marble at the altar of Vor Frue Kirke.”<sup>14</sup> Another, earlier example occurs in Kierkegaard’s *Repetition*, published in 1843 under the pseudonym Constantin Constantius, whose account of his arrival back in Berlin for a return visit places him in the same apartment building, Jägerstrasse 57, on the corner with Charlottenstrasse, where Kierkegaard had resided on his first sojourn in Berlin (see Kierkegaard to Emil Boesen, January 1, 1842, *SKS* 28:156, Brev 83 / *LD* 116, letter 60)—and where, in fact, he wrote *Repetition* on his second visit, in 1843.<sup>15</sup> “So I arrived in Berlin,” writes Constantin Constantius: “I hurried at once to my old lodgings to ascertain whether a repetition is possible. May I assure any commiserating reader that the previous time I managed to get one of the most pleasant apartments in Berlin; may I now

give even more emphatic assurance. . . . Gensd'arme [*sic*] Square is certainly the most beautiful in Berlin; *das Schauspielhaus* [the theater] and the two churches are superb, especially when viewed from a window by moonlight" (SKS 4:27 / R 151). Later in life, Kierkegaard would satirically analogize the contemporary church to the theater as an institution, likening priests to "stage performers" (*Skuespillere*; SKS 24:71, NB21:119, n.d. 1850 / KJN 8:67). Priests, he suggested, would be the first to condemn any believer who dared to act in accord with the New Testament; they would regard it "as ridiculous as if a person were to act according to what he sees or hears in the theater" (SKS 23:485, NB20:172, n.d. 1850 / KJN 7:493). Further, in a statement quoted in part by Pickett, he wryly noted, "In the theater, if one notices the prompter [*Souffleuren*]," that is, the hidden person who whispers forgotten lines to actors onstage, "the illusion is disturbed. In church, the illusion would be perfect only if the prompter were present" (SKS 24:252, NB23:88, n.d. 1851 / KJN 8:251). Nonetheless, the scene evoked above of "*das Schauspielhaus* and the two churches" is emblematic of the life of Kierkegaard in a way that even he may not have recognized. This can be appreciated by anyone familiar with the Gendarmenmarkt, whether from visiting there today (as its basic layout remains the same as in Kierkegaard's time, despite the severe damage it suffered during the Second World War) or by perusing the frontispiece of this volume, an engraving from about 1837 that shows the Gendarmenmarkt in the decade prior to Kierkegaard's first Berlin stay, with Kierkegaard's building visible in the background.<sup>16</sup> As though concretized upon that celebrated square to mirror materially and architecturally one of the basic tensions in his own existence, *aesthetic existence* (in the form of the theater Kierkegaard attended, now the concert house for the Konzerthausorchester Berlin) is literally flanked on either side by *institutional religion* (in the form of the German Cathedral and the French Cathedral). When viewed at night by moonlight, Constantin Constantius goes on to comment, this whole scene "is transformed into a stage setting [*en scenisk Decoration*]. A dream world [*En drømmende Virkelighed*] glimmers in the background of the soul" (SKS 4:28 / R 152).

The linguistic, reflective incarnating of Kierkegaard's personal drama is rendered immeasurably more complex by what Pattison, in his essay herein, calls the "moving kaleidoscope of [Kierkegaard's] works, styles, and genres." Any reader of Kierkegaard's so-called aesthetic writings published under exotic, often amusingly Latinate noms de plume is acquainted with the vertiginous array of pseudonymous voices that speak from them. As much as any literary artist ever, Kierkegaard exists, as I have put it elsewhere, "largely in, or even *as*, a dialectic between his (and his pseudonyms') reading of literature and his (and their) production of literature—literature, that is, in the conventional sense of poetic or literary art."<sup>17</sup> Thus, we know, to borrow Mooney's words, that Kierkegaard "inherits genetic material from his ancestors": Socrates, Plato, Kant, Hegel, and other philosophers, as well as,

no less profoundly, Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Hamann, and German Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel, Jean Paul, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, E. T. A. Hoffmann; the post-Romantic Heinrich Heine; and Adam Oehlenschläger, Jens Baggesen, and other Danish writers. The extensive, standard-setting series of several dozen volumes edited by Jon Stewart at the Kierkegaard Research Centre in Copenhagen, “Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources,” offers what is as close as possible to a comprehensive scholarly accounting of the manifold major thinkers, writers, poets, and others who influenced Kierkegaard, and also of those around the globe whom he in turn influenced. His works are, to echo Mooney again, “like lively biological specimens . . . self-replicating,” passing on their “genes” to Ibsen, Kafka, Rilke, and countless others up through John Updike and Woody Allen.

Yet even the notion of “influence” becomes problematic when applied to Kierkegaard, given his insistence on distinguishing himself from his pseudonyms: “That is, I am impersonally or personally in the third person a *souffleur* [prompter] who has poetically produced the *authors*, whose *prefaces* in turn are their productions, as their *names* are also. Thus in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me. I have no opinion about them except as a third party [*Trediemand*], no knowledge of their meaning except as a reader, not the remotest private relation to them, since it is impossible to have that to a doubly reflected communication” (*SKS* 7:569–70 / *CUP* 1:625–26). Such a severance of author from authorship, a feature of his that has endeared Kierkegaard to postmodernists, among others, was not entirely new with him. For example, Kant, in his first critique, where he suggests that our understanding of Plato’s expression “idea” may differ from Plato’s understanding of it, observes “that it is by no means unusual, upon comparing the thoughts which an author has expressed in regard to his subject, whether in ordinary conversation or in writing, to find that we understand him better than he has understood himself. As he has not sufficiently determined his concept, he has sometimes spoken, or even thought, in opposition to his own intention.”<sup>18</sup> Kierkegaard, in claiming to relate to his pseudonyms as a “third party” or reader, in effect—whether wittingly or not—takes Kant’s point a step further, distancing himself as author from his own pseudonyms whose works Kant would have us believe we might understand “better than” they (and also “better than” Kierkegaard).

In a number of places in his journal, Kierkegaard characterizes the relationship between his pseudonymous and signed writings with a memorable analogy to one of the great rivers of the Iberian peninsula, renowned since ancient times for the geologically peculiar fact that, not far from its source, the river dives below the earth’s surface and follows a subterranean course before resurfacing some ten miles farther. “Just as the Guadalquivir [*sic*] plunges underground at one point and then emerges later,” writes Kierkegaard, “I must now plunge into pseudonymity; but I have now also understood where I

will emerge again in my own name” (*SKS* 22:70, *NB11*:123, n.d. 1849 / *KJN* 6:65). It is a marvelous analogy, almost surely derived from his reading of *Don Quixote*, but there is a problem: Kierkegaard cites the wrong river—that is, the Spanish waterway famous for its subterranean plunge is not the Guadalquivir (which never goes underground) but the Guadiana, as mentioned in Cervantes’s novel.<sup>19</sup> Aside from this confusion of the rivers, Kierkegaard’s analogy can also seem misleading, for it might distract us from remembering that all of Kierkegaard’s numerous Guadiana-like plunges “into pseudonymity” were accompanied by the *surfacing and, quite often, resurfacing* of his various literary personae, all of whom must be regarded as separate, distinct *writers* as well as separate, distinct *readers* in their own right, with attitudes, convictions, worldviews, and interpretive proclivities that cannot necessarily be equated with Kierkegaard’s own or with those of each other.

The question of how to construe Kierkegaard, especially in relation to literature and the arts, becomes more complicated if we consider him in the light of two seemingly opposed conceptualizations of the human being: Ellen Dissanayake’s notion of *homo aestheticus* and Eliade’s, of *homo religiosus*. These two notions encapsulate the human being, or what Dissanayake and Eliade posit to be two essential aspects of the human being, within the two categories that stand opposed as the first and third of Kierkegaard’s and his pseudonyms’ existential stages: the aesthetic and the religious. Although the cognitive distinction between art and religion is a relatively recent, peculiarly Western development,<sup>20</sup> Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms separate the aesthetic stage and the religious stage so radically as to locate the ethical, as well as the transitional phases of irony and humor that border it, as a separate stage in between (e.g., *SKS* 7:455 / *CUP* 1:501–2). Dissanayake takes art to be “a biologically evolved element in human nature,” that is, “a natural, general proclivity that manifests itself in culturally learned specifics such as dances, songs, performances, visual display, and poetic speech”—hence her coinage, *homo aestheticus*.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, although Eliade applies the term *homo religiosus* in some instances to “the man of the traditional societies,”<sup>22</sup> as opposed to modern, “secularized” humans, it is evident that he conceives of *homo religiosus* also, perhaps even primarily, as an essentialist description of the entire human race at any and all times and places.<sup>23</sup>

Are Dissanayake’s and Eliade’s conceptions of the human being reconcilable with the Kierkegaardian conception of the aesthetic and the religious? On the one hand, whatever else Kierkegaard might have thought of the Darwinian theory of biological evolutionism had he lived to be acquainted with it, he would have recognized the affinity between Dissanayake’s view of human beings as “inherently aesthetic and artistic creatures”<sup>24</sup> and his (and his pseudonyms’) own association of the aesthetic stage with natural, instinctual existence and the arts. For Dissanayake, the human being is *homo aestheticus* because it is in human nature to be so; likewise, Kierkegaard and at least some of his pseudonyms seem to recognize that the movement of the



individual into the ethical stage or even, finally, into the religious can never entail an absolute transcendence of, or evolution from, the aesthetic. He allows that the poetic and aesthetic dimensions of life are not confined to the aesthetic stage but, in Sylvia Walsh's words, "are crucial to and may be integrated with an ethical or religious orientation."<sup>25</sup> As Christopher Barnett observes in the present volume, echoing a suggestion made also by C. Stephen Evans, all three Kierkegaardian stages—the aesthetic, ethical, and religious—"are permanent domains within the self, which, like a Venn diagram, overlap one another at certain key junctures." On the other hand, Eliade's understanding of the human being as inherently religious cannot be squared with Kierkegaard's portrayal of the religious as an existential stage into which only the ethically qualified individual might enter by means of a decision and "leap" that is, as Fiskvik reminds us, expressly conceived by Kierkegaard as ballet-like.

Notwithstanding the allowance by his pseudonym Johannes Climacus for the presence of Religiousness A "in paganism [*i Hedenskabet*]" (see *SKS* 5:506 / *CUP* 1:557), Kierkegaard's primary association of religion with Abrahamic faith and Christianity does not square with Eliade's recognition of "archaic"—that is, pre-Christian and also "pagan"—peoples as epitomizing *homo religiosus*. If the notion of *homo aestheticus* seems to suit Kierkegaard's anthropology more closely than does that of *homo religiosus* (because for Kierkegaard, whereas the individual may conceivably retain residual aesthetic traits after entering the ethical or the religious stage, a person can bear no trace of the religious stage before having entered it), there would seem in turn a natural affinity between this aesthetic anthropology and the bourgeois, "post-Romantic" age Kierkegaard inhabited, an age described by Pattison as "permeated through and through by the Romantics' valorization of art as a, if not the, central mode of human beings' self-experience and self-understanding."

Still, there is yet another category in which Kierkegaard, his literary and aesthetic proclivities, and his aforementioned graphomania might most suitably be construed. In a little book published not much over a decade ago in Cali, Columbia, Diego Gil Parra submits that in the same way as there exists *homo ludens* (the human who plays), *homo faber* (the human who makes), and *homo sapiens* (the human who thinks), and, we might add, *homo religiosus*, whom Gil Parra does not mention, there are legitimate reasons to speak of the existence of *homo litterarius* (the literary human), who is human inasmuch as he or she writes and reads.<sup>26</sup> This idea gives pause because, for an obvious reason, the argument could never be made, as Dissanayake and Eliade do make it for *homo aestheticus* and *homo religiosus*, that the condition of *homo litterarius* is inherent or essential to the human race. Why? Because as Dissanayake reminds us in a different context, "literacy is a recent human invention and an even more recent widespread accomplishment. It can be reasonably claimed that 99 percent of the humans who ever existed

could not have read the Great Books, or any books, indeed anything at all.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, for Gil Parra, who seems aware of this consideration, *homo litterarius* “is not a permanent condition . . . a professional attribute, for example,” but rather “a *moment*, a stage [*un estado*], perhaps a trance” that is “purely an infinitive verb, purely to make, purely to grasp.”<sup>28</sup> Epitomes of *homo litterarius* include Homer, Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Kafka, and Borges, while Don Quixote is the consummate *homo litterarius* of “living flesh and body.”<sup>29</sup> Kierkegaard, who fancied himself a latter-day Don Quixote (SKS 22:199, NB12:103, n.d. 1849 / KJN 6:199) and who reportedly dubbed himself “the greatest prose stylist Denmark had produced,”<sup>30</sup> should naturally be added to Gil Parra’s list.

With the aspects of the *litterarius*, *aestheticus*, and *religiosus* in Kierkegaard as its three main focal points in approaching his writings, the present volume is structured to consider his relation and pertinence to literature and the arts from a broad range of angles.

This volume of fourteen essays divides into four main parts, the first two of which consist of four essays each, and the last two parts, three essays each. The essays in part I focus on Kierkegaard in relationship to literature, his own main medium of expression; part II, to the performing arts, including theater, music, and dance; part III, to visual arts and film; while the essays of part IV are comparative in nature, considering Kierkegaard in juxtaposition with a Romantic poet, a modern composer, and a contemporary musician, singer, and songwriter.

The first two essays offer overarching perspectives on Kierkegaard’s whole literary project, each with a different emphasis. The opening essay, George Pattison’s “The Bonfire of the Genres: Kierkegaard’s Literary Kaleidoscope,” pursues the twofold task of examining Kierkegaard as reader or recipient in relation to literature and other arts contemporaneous with him, and then of gauging his contribution as a writer to his cultural world. The second essay, Edward F. Mooney’s “Kierkegaard’s Disruptions of Literature and Philosophy: Freedom, Anxiety, and Existential Contributions,” considers Kierkegaard likewise in relation to literature, but then also to philosophy as well as to his native city, Copenhagen.

Pattison stresses “the sheer scale and variety of [Kierkegaard’s] engagement with literature and the arts,” ranging from the early, extensively informed interests Kierkegaard developed in Faust, Don Juan, the Wandering Jew, folk literature, the troubadours, and children’s stories, to mention but a few of the more prominent of those interests, onward through his deep engagements with drama and opera and his evident fascination with guitar playing and ballet. It is only with the visual arts, both classic and contemporary, that Kierkegaard seems “lacking an all-round and in-depth familiarity”—although, as Ragni Linnet’s essay will reveal, there runs throughout Kierkegaard’s writings a detectable “ontology of pictorial art.” Most important, Pattison urges

us to resist the temptation to view Kierkegaard's relation to literature mainly within the context of all the many authors we know he read. Not to be overlooked is the fact of Kierkegaard's regular and frequent attendance at the theater, both in Copenhagen and in Berlin during his stays there: "Kierkegaard is not just sitting at home or in the library reading books: he is out there in the theater and writing not just on what he has read but on what he has seen and heard." This point resonates in self-evident ways with the focus of more than one other essay in this volume, most notably Martijn Boven's, on Kierkegaard's oeuvre as a "theater of ideas" and the roles of performance and performativity particularly in *Repetition*, and Nils Holger Petersen's, which extends the discussion to Kierkegaard's ideas on specifically *musical* theater and opera. Likewise, Pattison's further comments on Kierkegaard's fascination with the phenomenon of "live performance, which, in an age before film and sound reproduction, was by definition an ephemeral art," anticipate the essay by Ronald M. Green, who, in bringing several of Kierkegaard's writings to bear on Denis Villeneuve's film *Incendies*, expresses his conviction that Kierkegaard would have appreciated the cinematic medium.

Setting the tone, in a sense, for this entire volume is the titular metaphor Pattison offers to sum up Kierkegaard's oeuvre: "a kind of moving kaleidoscope of works, styles, and genres," the only sufficient representation of the "present age" described in Kierkegaard's *Two Ages*, a time whose many and diverse self-representations are perpetually "on the edge of falling away into incoherence." Pattison invokes Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the modern novel, with its ability to incorporate multiple genres, as an analogue to Kierkegaard. Accordingly, we might look to that novelist whose works Bakhtin deemed the peerless epitome of the novel's "polyphonic" potentialities, Dostoevsky, for an expression of that same sense of the telltale contemporary uncentered, cultural multifariousness that Pattison ascribes to Kierkegaard. I have in mind the scene in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, published in 1869, less than a decade and half after Kierkegaard's death, where the rogue Lebedev enrages the other guests at Prince Myshkin's birthday party by sharing his drunken cogitations about the current age's lack of a "binding idea" like that which "bound and guided men's hearts and fructified the waters of life" in medieval Europe.<sup>31</sup> Later, Myshkin reiterates Lebedev's theory when he distinguishes between the "one idea" by which people were "animated" during the reign of Peter the Great and the ideological diffusion—and, some might say today, increasingly compulsive and frivolous "multitasking"—of modern humans: "In those days people seem to have been animated by one idea, but now they are much more nervous, more developed, more sensitive—they seem to be animated by two or three ideas at a time—modern man is more diffuse and, I assure you, it is this that prevents him from being such a complete human being as they were in those days."<sup>32</sup> In negotiating his way through the same era of ideological diffusion, Kierkegaard, as Pattison puts it, "held a kaleidoscope to a kaleidoscopic time" and thereby "gamble[d] . . . that

his efforts would be kept from falling into formlessness by the ‘great, uplifting, simple, elementary thoughts’ [SKS 8:286 / UDVS 189] that he sought to keep in constant view.” In this regard, perhaps the closest musical analogy to Kierkegaard’s writings is found in the symphonies and song collections of Mahler. Although regarding his work, as Leonard Bernstein noted, there is much “carping about how derivative the music is of Mozart, Schubert, Wagner and the lot”<sup>33</sup> (including Beethoven and Bruckner, we might add), it has become platitudinous to observe that Mahler extended the conventional key system of tonality to the edge of atonality.

Another of Pattison’s points, about Kierkegaard’s literary penchant for satire, pastiche, and spoofing, and the attendant question about whether the pseudonymous works are to be taken “seriously,” overlap with a concern taken up in Mooney’s essay. Mooney considers whether Kierkegaard, in establishing his “disordered” or “hybrid status,” is “just playing around” and at times “pulling our leg” in his writings, making them “just flippant, a wise-crack,” or “all a joke.” Whatever the case, as Mooney points out, the effect of the writings on readers can be seducing, stinging, and confusing all at once, as Kierkegaard stops, interrogates, and often abandons his audience “without answers.” This applies even to the question of what Kierkegaard, as “a kind of philosophical poet,” *really was*. Pursuing the *via negativa*, Mooney observes that Kierkegaard is *not* a dramatist, an essayist, a “man of letters,” a journalist, a historian, or a biographer, though his writings yield examples and elements of the sorts of works produced by all those different types of writer. Complicating this quandary, Mooney notes, is the fact that in Kierkegaard, not only a philosophical vocation but a religious vocation as well competes with the literary one, making his writer’s identity a “three-part” one “in the trifold identity of his works: religious, aesthetic, and philosophical—all of the above, and hence not *simply* any of the above.” At the same time, Mooney contends, the refusal by Kierkegaard to “settle” exclusively “into” any one of those three areas, that is, philosophy, theology, or “literature” per se, has the “existential rationale” of allowing him—and presumably his readers—to remain free for “new life.” Thus Mooney distills from Kierkegaard the lesson that reading is, as an activity, “an ethical venture” by which “we expose who we are—I expose who *I* am (existentially) in ‘the what’ and ‘the how’ of my writing and reading.”

No less so than Mooney’s essay, the third essay in part I, Marcia C. Robinson’s “Kierkegaard’s Existential Play: Storytelling and the Development of the Religious Imagination in the Authorship,” is concerned with the effect of Kierkegaard’s writings on readers. Robinson aims both to demonstrate how Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms cultivate a religious imagination in readers by “heighten[ing] their abilities to ‘feel’ and to ‘know’ the ideality and actuality of faith” and to show that the development of this imagination through stories in particular is not a one-time process, any more so than reading the Bible is for a devout religious person. Drawing upon Pattison’s

2002 monographic study of Kierkegaard's *Upbuilding Discourses*,<sup>34</sup> she agrees with Pattison that Kierkegaard's imagery has an ethical purpose and she further attempts to develop a kind of dialectic of the image that balances the kataphatic/phenomenal and the apophatic/noumenal. Her suggestion is that an ever-developing or maturing religious imagination is essential for a vibrant and engaged spiritual and ethical life because such an imagination makes sense of the divine in its power to be compelling.

Robinson is especially interested in how the tempering of imagination with actual experience in Kierkegaard occurs through his carefully worked-out method of "faith-oriented storytelling," which presupposes a deep understanding of his readers' "actual circumstances, values, fears, concerns, and conceptions of and attitudes toward faith." While acknowledging the usefulness of Pattison's construal of Kierkegaard's authorship as a "magic theatre" (an image drawn from Kierkegaard's Constantin Constantius) and Martin Thust's construal of it as a "marionette theatre," Robinson, inspired by Fellini's 1954 film, *La Strada*, proposes that we view it as a "'funhouse' of existential activity"—albeit a funhouse that "is not a simple matter of fun and games, but more like a fairy tale that uses the comic, the charming, the seductive, or the magical, in order to draw the reader into the anxiety, the suffering, the terror, and the death that dog human existence." Robinson demonstrates the crucial role played by works of the German Romantic Johann Ludwig Tieck in helping to shape the understanding at which Kierkegaard arrived during his student years of the inseparability of the moral-religious ideal from the feeling it instills or from the aesthetic medium through which it is communicated. Of all the cast of pseudonyms Kierkegaard later developed to act on this understanding, Climacus, that "dialectical poet" of both *Philosophical Fragments* (or *Philosophical Crumbs*) and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, is the one whom Robinson identifies as his most exemplary storyteller.

The last essay of part I, Joakim Garff's "Kierkegaard's Christian Bildungsroman," and the first essay of part II, Howard Pickett's "Beyond the Mask: Kierkegaard's *Postscript* as Antitheatrical, Anti-Hegelian Drama," have in common that they each single out a specific one of Kierkegaard's pseudonymous writings to examine it as exemplifying a particular literary genre: in Garff's case, *Practice in Christianity*, as a Christian Bildungsroman; in Pickett's case, as his subtitle indicates, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, as what Pickett calls an antitheatrical drama.

Connecting provocatively with Linnet's essay on Kierkegaard's treatment of visual art later in this volume, Garff suggests that Kierkegaard's philosophical discourse, with its constant oscillation between concept and image, is a "discourse of *visualization*," while his theological discourse, with its effort to suspend the eighteen hundred years that separate the modern reader from Jesus, is a "discourse of *autopsy*." Appealing to the Kantian distinction between the beautiful, as that which merely pleases, and the sublime, as that

which “arouses satisfaction, but with dread [*erregen Wohlgefallen, aber mit Grausen*],”<sup>35</sup> Garff further observes that the aim of each of Kierkegaard’s writings is precisely to “imitate or mimic the sublime by shaking its reader rhetorically.” Of the innumerable instances of this tendency in the authorship to evoke the sublime, which dovetails with Kierkegaard’s “frequent appeal to the reader’s readiness to visualize,” Garff holds up for analysis as a perfect example Anti-Climacus’s chronicling of the lingering, gradually transformational effect that the strange and horrifying sight of the crucified Jesus, as represented in a picture, has on the unnamed youth in *Practice in Christianity*.

This crystallizes the aspects of *Practice in Christianity* that make it what Garff calls Kierkegaard’s *billedannelsesroman*, literally an “image formation novel” but more accurately, albeit loosely, as Garff prefers to render it, “visualizing Bildungsroman.” The Bildungsroman (novel of education, educational novel, or, more precisely, novel of cultivation), a term coined by Karl Morgenstern in the early 1820s for a genre that portrays the mental and intellectual development of the protagonist from childhood to maturity and thus contributes to the reader’s own education or cultivation (*Bildung*), finds its prototype in C. M. Wieland’s *Geschichte des Agathon* (1766–67, *The Story of Agathon*) and reaches its literary apogee with Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–96, *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*). As developed in such masterpieces as these, the Bildungsroman as a genre is not distinctly Christian in orientation. Yet, whereas Wieland’s novel is set in ancient (pagan) Greece and Goethe’s is wholly secular in its ambience, Kierkegaard departs from, or innovates upon, that literary tradition in two main ways in his oeuvre as a whole and in Anti-Climacus’s *Practice in Christianity* in particular: first, by making specifically “Christian identity-formation,” to borrow Garff’s terms, the crux of the narrative; second, by not so much focusing on the moral, intellectual, and psychological development of the protagonist as seeking to actualize the individual reader’s own relationship to self and to the God of the New Testament narrative. (In this regard, we might note, the story of the youth’s Christian identity-formation in *Practice in Christianity* inverts the little narrative that closes the fourth and final chapter of Kierkegaard’s unpublished “Book on Adler,” drafted between the fall of 1846 and January 1847: namely, what might be described as the mini-Bildungsroman of the upbringing of a pseudo-Christian within Christendom; SKS 15:287–95 / BA 134–42.)

Thus, as Garff points out, while the conventional Bildungsroman traces “a process of individuation, the sequential structure of which follows the topography of the formation journey and can therefore be reproduced with the phrases *at home—homeless—home*,” the visualizing Bildungsroman alters this sequence by “add[ing] a dialectical Christian qualification to the second phase, and postpon[ing] the third phase to a . . . metaphorical eternity.” In this way, through Garff’s analysis, an unexpected connection becomes perceptible between the aim of Christian edification underlying Kierkegaard’s

(or Anti-Climacus's) *billeddannelsesroman* and the medieval mystical sensibility of Hugh of St. Victor. At that phase in the narrative when the youth has developed the sense of being "a *stranger* among people, but . . . nonetheless *at home* because he was at home with the image he so passionately wanted to resemble," we might be reminded of Hugh's adage from the late 1120s: *Perfectus vero cui mundus totus exsilium est* (He is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land [or place of exile]).<sup>36</sup>

With the transition from Garff's essay to the first of the four essays of part II, our focus shifts from the relation of Kierkegaard to literature to his relation to the performing arts. While Garff also found *Practice in Christianity* as a visualizing Bildungsroman to reflect "Kierkegaard's highly ambivalent relationship toward *art*" (my emphasis), a relationship that Linnet's essay will later explore in depth, Pickett investigates an equally intense ambivalence toward *theater* reflected in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, a text Pickett regards as "essentially theatrical" in form but "also *antitheatrical*" in content. Climacus disparages and dismisses the abstract, speculative thought of Hegelianism as a mere *Schattenspiel*, or "shadow play" (SKS 7:323 / CUP 1:353). As Pickett points out, Hegel himself, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (*Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, delivered in Berlin in 1821, 1824, 1827, and 1831; published posthumously in 1837), routinely deploys theatrical terminology to describe the Spirit's concrete self-manifestation "on the stage [*auf dem Theater*]" of "Universal History." Schelling, we might add, likewise posits human history as "a play" (*Schauspiel*) in which the deity "reveals and discloses himself successively,"<sup>37</sup> and this idea—known also as the *theatrum mundi*—evidently struck Kierkegaard. In *Either/Or, II*, Kierkegaard's pseudonym speaks of the person who "feels himself present as a character in a drama the deity is writing [*der føler sig med som en Person i det Skuespil, Guddommen digter*]" (SKS 3:136 / EO 2:137). Perhaps hovering in the background of all such conceptions, albeit not in a lineage of direct influence, is Calvin's notion of the cosmos as "a dazzling theater [*theatrum*]."<sup>38</sup>

Kierkegaard's stance toward the theater, as Pickett points out, sets him and Climacus in very different relationships to two of the most seminal thinkers of the ancient West. While Climacus is bothered that actual ethical agents are ethically obliged to engage in actuality, not possibility, it was Aristotle who, in valuing possibility above actuality, viewed the theater positively as dealing in possibility. At the same time, Kierkegaard, in viewing theater negatively, joins Augustine, who in his *Confessions* (3.2.2) lamented that the audience at a theater play (*spectaculum theatricum*) is encouraged to enjoy observing the sufferings of characters onstage without feeling an inclination to assist them.<sup>39</sup> Further, Climacus charges Hegelian philosophers not only with hypocrisy and charlatanry for pretending to be merely spectators (looking on outwardly and as though they had God's vantage) in the theater of the world, rather than actors (engaged inwardly) within the world, but also with

being naively theatrical in their tendency to act as though they can envision life and the world as a total, complete “system.”

On the other hand, despite his having cast the theater and the theatrical Hegelian subject in so negative a light, Climacus also elaborates his own theatrical metaphor for “becoming subjective.” Whereas the Hegelian “shadow play,” in relying upon an objective form of thought that Kierkegaard and Climacus viewed as artificial and illusory, amounts in Pickett’s words to “a ‘philosophy of the spectacle’ focused on detached spectators and mere external appearances,” Climacus favors “an inward, subjective ‘philosophy of the actor,’ with its defining emphasis on action and internal effort.” Despite his denunciation of the theatrical Hegelian subject, Climacus comes to construe the individual’s ethical development as a “private theater” (*Privat-Theater*) in which not only God is the “spectator” (*Tilskuer*) but the individual, too, is a spectator and is also supposed to be an “actor” (*Skuespilleren*), albeit “not . . . one who deceives [*bedrager*] but one who discloses” (*SKS 7:146 / CUP 1:157*; quoted by Pickett). To be sure, *Postscript* lacks the typical features of a theatrical play, such as acts, scenes, stage directions, and dialogue. Yet Pickett demonstrates that *Postscript* “signals its theatricality,” with Climacus himself emerging as its “most theatrical feature” as he delivers one long soliloquy. In this way, Pickett concludes, Kierkegaard’s theatrical technique in *Postscript* counters Climacus’s antitheatrical rhetoric, and the spectacle of *Postscript* distinguishes itself from its counterpart in Hegel by “admit[ting] its own theatricality.” By transcending the bipolarity of antitheatrical versus pro-theatrical to the point of being what Pickett calls metatheatrical, and by anticipating the *Verfremdungseffekt*, or alienation effect, cultivated in the theater by Brecht, Climacus’s work “awakens its readers to the challenges posed by their own inward subjectivity.”

Part II’s second essay, Martijn Boven’s “A Theater of Ideas: Performance and Performativity in Kierkegaard’s *Repetition*,” in a sense picks up where Pickett’s essay left off, though Boven concentrates his attention on *Repetition*, which appeared a little more than two and a half years before *Postscript*. Submitting that Kierkegaard’s whole oeuvre, and *Repetition* in particular, may be viewed as a “theater of ideas,” Boven first establishes a theoretical framework on the distinction between “performative writing strategies” and “categories of performativity,” an approach informed by the theory of J. L. Austin and the earlier investigations of Kierkegaard by Sylviane Agacinski, Samuel Weber, and Gilles Deleuze. For Boven, Kierkegaard is a writer who diverges from the Aristotelian tradition of mimetic representation by developing his oeuvre as a conceptual “theater” in which performance, rather than representation, of philosophical and existential problems occurs: “His works not only *say* something; they also attempt *to do* something, to have a performative effect.”

Boven’s next step is to demonstrate that the titular concept of Constantinus Constantius’s *Repetition* is a category meant to trigger the reader’s subjectivity



into action by compelling the reader to confront a vaguely articulated, confusing, contradictory, “unresolved” existential problem. Here, we might be reminded of Mooney’s wondering whether Kierkegaard’s writings might be ultimately a “wisecrack” or “joke.” Yet, as Boven suggests, there is method to the seeming madness, as Constantius achieves this active effect in the reader by means of a performative writing strategy involving a “dialectic of advance and withdrawal,” whereby the reader is confused by the constant oscillation in the senses of the term *repetition* that are evoked in the text—between repetition in the “ordinary” sense of “an event that occurs for a second, a third, or any other time,” as with a rehearsal, and repetition in the “existential” sense of an occurrence that “will always emerge as a unique event.” This latter notion points to Boven’s reminder that Kierkegaard regarded subjectivity itself as repetition, inasmuch as he viewed subjectivity—somewhat, we might note, as Buddhists regard the individual self—as lacking any essential, unchangeable, or unchanging core. Finally, considering *Repetition* as “philosophical theater,” Boven uncovers three specific “clues” left by Constantin Constantius, each of which hints at his consciously developed performative writing strategy: the titling of his book as a “venture,” which implies an outcome that cannot be known in advance; his indication in his letter to his book’s “real reader” that he is seeking a reader willing to make an effort to understand the book; and the digressive *mise en abyme* that reveals how to perform the book we are reading through two examples of kitsch, one involving a Nürnberg print (of the sort discussed also by Linnet) and the other, a type of popular play, a *Posse* (or farce, burlesque, or vaudeville). Perhaps, we might add, a fourth “clue” to the compositional plan behind *Repetition* as “philosophical theater” is the mention by Constantius of the *Schauspielhaus* on the Gendarmenmarkt, visible by moonlight from his Jägerstrasse apartment, together with his elaborative description shortly afterward of the three theaters in Berlin at that time: the Gendarmenmarkt *Schauspielhaus*; the opera house for ballet and opera, that is, the Staatsoper, or the State Opera, located on the boulevard Unter den Linden, not far from the Gendarmenmarkt, and still operative; and the Königsstädtisches Theater, or Königstädter Theater, which stood on Alexanderplatz, a fair distance from the Jägerstrasse lodgings of Kierkegaard/Constantin Constantius.

Another aspect of the deep-seated concern of Kierkegaard with the theater, his theatrical aesthetics, together with his theory of music, is the focus of the next essay, by Nils Holger Petersen, “Kierkegaard’s Notions of Drama and Opera: Molière’s *Don Juan*, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, and the Question of Music and Sensuousness.” Petersen’s interest is in the treatise on Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, “The Immediate Erotic Stages or The Musical-Erotic,” in *Either/Or*, I, ascribed to the aesthetical pseudonym “A.” In probing “A’s” understanding of drama and the medium of music and how that understanding relates to more general questions of worldview, Petersen considers closely the distinction “A” draws between language as the authentic medium of the

idea, absolutely qualified by spirit, and music as the medium through which sensuous immediacy finds expression and which exists only while it is being performed. Petersen suspects that “A’s” ranking of language above music, viewing language as more precise and reflective than music, may express Kierkegaard’s polemical attitude toward the early Romantics, such as Wilhelm Heinrich Wackenroder and E. T. A. Hoffmann, who exalted music as the loftiest of the arts. This conception of music underlies “A’s” discussion of Molière’s *Don Juan* and Heiberg’s version of that drama, to both of which Petersen devotes considerable attention. Yet the theological implications of “A’s” aesthetics are what most intrigue Petersen, who draws from Ettore Rocca’s reading of “The Immediate Erotic Stages” as a Christian text. Rocca challenges “A’s” argument that music, as the medium of the sensuous erotic, is the “devil’s work” and that music is therefore excluded from Christianity. For Rocca, the function of music is to act under the power of the spirit. As Petersen points out, this same function carries over to Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, inasmuch as the idea of this work is so intimately linked with its form. In Mozart’s opera, the conflict between the spirit and the sensuous is encapsulated in that between the Commendatore qua spirit and Don Giovanni qua sensuous immediacy.

The Don Juan–like seductiveness of “A’s” rhetoric could make it easy for the reader to lose sight of precisely that aspect of “The Immediate Erotic Stages” about which Petersen reminds us when he cautions about the need “to be careful about drawing overly strict musical-philosophical implications out of a treatise that, after all, is written in a literary, associative style rather than based on a consistent theoretical construction.” On this point, Petersen, like Boven, might almost seem to approach Mooney’s view of Kierkegaard/“A” as engaging in a sort of joke. Nonetheless, Petersen takes “A’s” music philosophy seriously enough to consider the implications of its being “based on notions of ephemerality and of music being silenced by reflection and memory,” especially as the memory of Don Giovanni’s past sins and wrongs is brought by the statue of the Commendatore. Through further appeals to Augustine’s deconstruction of the present moment of a musical tone in book 11 of the *Confessions*; to the late Danish thinker K. E. Løgstrup’s argument that perception of time occurs through comparison with at least momentarily unaltered objects, or fictional space; and to Theodor Adorno’s notion of music as the condensing of suffering into a moment—through these and other appeals, Petersen demonstrates that “A’s” music philosophy collapses, or “annihilates itself,” through its own inherent contradictions (e.g., by finding that Mozart’s opera expresses “what cannot be retained”) and also as the result of our taking it at face value.

A fitting segue to the final essay in part II is afforded by “A’s” own summation of Don Giovanni’s life, a summation whose latter portion is referenced several times by Petersen, as having developed “in the dancing strains of the violin [*i de dandsende Violintoner*], in which he lightly, fleetingly . . . dances

over the abyss [*dandser han over Afgrunden*], jubilating during his brief span” (SKS 2:131 / EO 1:130). In her essay “‘Let No One Invite Me, for I Do Not Dance’: Kierkegaard’s Attitudes toward Dance,” Anne Margrete Fiskvik examines the surprising number of allusions to dance and movement in *Either/Or* (both parts), *Fear and Trembling*, *Philosophical Fragments*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, and *Works of Love*, analyzing the concern these works express with both the ballroom dancer and the ballet dancer; the contrasts between male and female dancers; the dancing master who choreographs and designs the ballet; the expressionistic, emotive aspects and potentialities of dance; the question of what sorts of plots and subjects are suitable for ballet; as well as the use made of dance as a metaphor or allusion for the enrichment of the philosophical or theological discussions in these works. This essay is groundbreaking, for Fiskvik has no scholarly precursor in considering these various uses of dance in Kierkegaard’s writings together in any sort of systematic way.

Just as Garff and Pickett found Kierkegaard ambivalent toward art and theater in *Practice in Christianity* and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, respectively, so Fiskvik finds Kierkegaard betraying an ambivalence toward dance, despite his admiration of it as an art form and despite his personal acquaintance with the ballet master August Bournonville, whom he admired as a dancer—though not so much as a choreographer or poet. Although, as Petersen reminds us, *Either/Or*’s “A” stresses that it is through the *audial* medium of music that the demonic being of Don Juan is best captured (“*Listen to the beginning of his life . . . hear the whisper of temptation, hear the vortex of seduction, hear the stillness of the moment—hear, hear, hear Mozart’s Don Giovanni*”); SKS 2:106–7 / EO 1:103, my emphasis), Fiskvik calls attention to passages in *Concept of Anxiety* as well as in Kierkegaard’s journal that explicitly reflect the deep and favorable *visual* impression left on Kierkegaard by the dramatic leaps he had seen Bournonville execute on stage, especially in the role of another, even more explicitly demonic character: Mephistopheles. Still, while briefly entertaining the thought that the best way to portray Don Juan’s story might be to stage it as a ballet, “A” then rejects that idea (SKS 2:109 / EO 1:106) because, in Fiskvik’s words, he clearly “feels that the deepest and most profound thoughts of humans cannot be portrayed through bodily movement.” The fact that “A” conveys this attitude in what Fiskvik characterizes as a didactic manner is but one more symptom of what Boven describes as the “performative” strategy of Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous writings. Their aim, to paraphrase Boven, is not only *to say* something but also to *try to do* something, to have a performative effect—in this case, to cause the reader, as Fiskvik puts it, “to contemplate balletic plots and the usefulness of bodily movement and dance as aesthetic expressions.”

It is indicative of Kierkegaard’s irrepressible habit of transforming the materials of both art and life into philosophically or theologically useful

images and metaphors that he or one of his post-*Either/Or* pseudonyms will often convey thoughts through dance metaphors, thus seeming to contradict the uncomplimentary remarks made in *Either/Or* about Bournonville's choreographic skill or the dramatic capacities of ballet. Among the dance-related metaphors in Kierkegaard's writings that Fiskvik considers in demonstrating this point are those having to do with loneliness in mortal life (= refraining from dancing with anyone, hence the title of Fiskvik's essay); the concealment by Kierkegaard of his own efforts as an author (= the balletic ideal of the concealment by the dancer of his or her panting and exertion); the "leap" of faith (= the dancer's leap) and the constant flux of faith (= the twisting of a tight-rope dancer); lost love (= the dancer who remains in the stance expressive of bowing toward one who is not seen); and so forth. In the case of Johannes de Silentio's use of the ballet dancer as a metaphor for the "knight of infinity," the pseudonym's point that the dancer's momentary wavering upon landing from a leap "shows that they are aliens in the world" (*SKS* 4:135–36 / *FT* 41; quoted by Fiskvik) might again call to mind Anti-Climacus's discussion of the developing Christian youth who "walks like a stranger, and yet . . . seems to be at home" (*SKS* 12:188 / *PC* 189)—a discussion which, in connection with Garff's notion of Anti-Climacus's "visualizing Bildungsroman," I earlier related to Hugh of St. Victor's adage about the perfection of the person to whom the whole world is as a foreign land. As Kierkegaard puts it in "The Book on Adler," the young person who hopes earnestly to live a Christian life must stand in solitude "like an alien," totally aloof from "the glad gospel that is proclaimed on the dance floor of youth [*Ungdommens Dandseplads*]" (*SKS* 15:294, Cap. IV, §5 / *BA* 141).

The "high" art of ballet is one thing; the social realm of the "dance floor," or the ballroom, is quite another. Mooney, in his own application of a dance metaphor to Kierkegaard, may be right to conclude that the Dane's "writings bring us to the dance, and perhaps demonstrate some steps, but the rest is up to us—to *me*." In contrast, Fiskvik points out that, with regard to the ballroom, Kierkegaard seems to have held a conservative view that belies his role otherwise as an "intellectual rebel." He apparently believed that a gentleman should dance well, but not so well as to be confused with a professional ballet dancer.

Like the relationship of Kierkegaard to dance, the subjects of this volume's third part, his relationships to visual arts and film, have heretofore remained largely unexplored. The first of part III's three essays, Christopher B. Barnett's "Painting with Words: Kierkegaard and the Aesthetics of the Icon," opens with a discussion of the "rupture" between Kierkegaard's religious and aesthetic commitments, with references to the contrasting assessments of that rupture by Pattison, who sympathizes with Kierkegaard's vision, and by Hans Urs von Balthasar, who does not. Despite the seeming unlikelihood that a favorable appraisal of aesthetics might be developed from Kierkegaard's writings, Barnett detects an "'aesthetics of the icon' . . . implicit in

Kierkegaard's own copious employment of aesthetic imagery," his contention being that Kierkegaard does not rupture the two spheres but rather "has a dialectical view of the matter: aesthetic imagery can function either in the manner of icons or in that of idols." Barnett pursues this thesis in a threefold manner. First, he examines the variety of ways, both positive and negative, in which the concept of *Billede* (image or picture) is employed in Kierkegaard's writings. For example, on the one hand, Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms regard *Billede* as a dangerous concept, knowing all too well that an image can entice someone to become fatally enraptured, like Narcissus, with what is not real. On the other hand, in some places, especially his upbuilding discourses, Kierkegaard characterizes certain biblical heroes, such as the prophetess Anna (Luke 2:36–38) and the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7:37–50), as "images." Second, Barnett argues that this dialectic use of *Billede* enables Kierkegaard potentially to integrate the aesthetic and the religious in his thinking, in that he not only applauds but employs the aesthetic to draw readers to seek the religious in their concrete existence. Third, Barnett demonstrates that the distinction drawn by Jean-Luc Marion between the idol, which absorbs the observer's gaze, and the icon, which redirects it, can illuminate the "pictures" that crop up throughout Kierkegaard's oeuvre. The "aesthetics of the icon" that emerges from Barnett's analysis of Kierkegaard's writings thus "points beyond itself, viewing art not as an end in itself but as a means toward religious and, with it, existential fulfillment."

This positive aesthetics, in enabling Kierkegaard to present images of holiness, is a far cry from his wariness of the negative, dangerous aspects of *Billede*, epitomized by the representation of Johannes the Seducer's preference for fantasizing about Cordelia rather than being in a relationship with her. Such wariness, ingrained in the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions through the second Mosaic commandment (Exodus 20:4) and the messages against *shirk*, or idolatry, conveyed by the prophet Muḥammad (Qur'ān 13:13 and 31:13, to mention but two of the many pertinent Qur'ānic verses), is not limited to cultures conditioned by those moral teachings. Perhaps no work of literature outside Kierkegaard's writings illustrates more vividly the perceived danger of image making, whether through art or through the purely mental processes of the imagination, than Yukio Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (*Kinkakuji*, 1956). Set in Kyoto in the period leading up to, during, and following the Second World War, the novel recounts the life of the young Zen acolyte Mizoguchi, a deeply traumatized and suffering neurotic but also a consummate aesthete in the Kierkegaardian sense of the term, whose obsession with the image of the celebrated temple named in the novel's title passes through a series of modes, each one more divergent from reality than the one preceding it. The image is first formed for him, before he ever sees the temple, from his father's exalted descriptions, but then is challenged by his disappointment with the sight of the actual temple when he first visits

it; later it is restored when the thought that the temple might be destroyed by an Allied bombing leads

my image of the Golden Temple gradually . . . to be superimposed on the real temple . . . just as the copy that one has made through a piece of drawing-silk comes to be superimposed on the original painting: the roof in my image was superimposed on the real roof, the Sosei on the Sosei that extended over the pond, the railings and the windows of the Kukyochō on those railings and windows. The Golden Temple was no longer an immovable structure. It had, so to speak, been transformed into a symbol of the real world's evanescence. Owing to this process of thought, the real temple had now become no less beautiful than that of my mental image.<sup>40</sup>

In the end, to rid himself once and for all of the problem posed by the temple, its beauty, and its image, Mizoguchi burns it down. Given the merely coincidental but manifest impact that the pyrophobia from which Kierkegaard suffered from childhood had on his writings, there can be little doubt that he would have read Mishima's novel with great interest.<sup>41</sup>

The second essay of the third part offers a kind of counterpoint to the focus of Petersen's essay on Kierkegaard's notion of music as the demonic, sensual medium expressive of passion, as embodied by Mozart's antihero, Don Giovanni. Ragni Linnet's "Kierkegaard's Approach to Pictorial Art, and to Specimens of Contemporary Visual Culture" takes as its subject Kierkegaard's much less often discussed understanding of pictorial art as emblematic of the reflective aesthetic, which she finds represented by *Either/Or's* "A" and Johannes the Seducer, who considers this passion detachedly from a distance. Linnet observes that *Either/Or's* opening sentence, in broaching the question of the relationship between the "inner" and the "outer," pinpoints "the essence and nature, and the limits and potentials, of the concrete image, because a picture, if anything, is the medium of 'the outer'—that is, the external presentation of its subject." She also notes how important this definitive aspect of pictorial art was for Kierkegaard, because only "academic, idealistic painting," as opposed to "popular pictorial art," is assessed by a congruence of the "inner" and the "outer." And whereas "The Immediate Erotic Stages or The Musical-Erotic" was the obvious text for Petersen to concentrate on as an exposition of "A's" (and implicitly Kierkegaard's) theory of music, Linnet turns to another, short essay in *Either/Or's* first part, "Silhouettes," for an exposition of what she calls the "beautiful image."

Much like Fiskvik in her exploration of the place of dance in Kierkegaard's thinking and writings, Linnet is, for the most part, unprecedented in exploring the multifaceted bearing of the visual arts upon them.<sup>42</sup> Kierkegaard's pseudonym Inter et Inter might even seem to discourage such exploration when he speaks disparagingly of the art critic's profession: "Most people's

art criticism [*Konstkritik*] has categories and thought-patterns essentially in common with every butcher's assistant, national guardsman, and store clerk, who talk enthusiastically about a damned pretty and devilishly pert wench of eighteen years. These eighteen years, this damned prettiness and this devilish pertness—this is art criticism" (*SKS* 14:94 / *CD* 305). Yet, while acknowledging that Kierkegaard set forth no cohesive pictorial theory and made relatively few references to statues, pictures, and artists, Linnet finds that "Silhouettes" presents the primary means for reconstructing "the pictorial theory that remains by and large unchanged throughout all Kierkegaard's work: the picture's relation to time, including the past (recollection), the present (presence), and the future (self-appropriation), and to the spirit, the body, existence, the self and subjectivity, and love." "Silhouettes," she shows, bifurcates into halves Kierkegaard's own pictorial thinking over two questions: the question of the relation between the inner and the outer, and of whether the inner can be objectified into an outer, visible manifestation; and the question of the nature of sight. For Kierkegaard, the inner and the outer are fundamentally incommensurable, and the picture is capable not of encompassing but of affecting the individual's innermost being. As for the relation between form and appropriation, "Silhouettes" carefully exposes the limitations of pictorial art. Invoking the examples of the three jilted women in "Silhouettes," Goethe's Marie Beaumarchais, Mozart's Donna Elvira, and Goethe's Margaret, "Silhouettes" suggests that once their immediate sorrow becomes reflective, it ceases to be expressible through pictorial art—a suggestion that counters the famous theory of Lessing in his *Laocoon* (*Laocoon*, 1766) that, because art depicts repose while poetry depicts motion, the subject of artistic portrayal must have, as "A" puts it, "a quiet transparency so that the interior rests in the corresponding exterior" (*SKS* 2:167 / *EO* 1:169).

The bulk of Linnet's essay consists of a systematic analysis of a selection of seven "appropriations" of pictorial artworks and specimens of visual culture that figure in various writings of Kierkegaard, whether ekphrastically or as the grist for theoretical discussions, ranging from Veronica's Veil, Ferdinand Piloty's lithograph of Romeo and Juliet's "kiss," and an "ancient" painting of Ariadne and Theseus, to the popular one-sheet prints of the time known as *Neuruppiner Bilderbogen* or *Nürnbergers* (mentioned also by Boven) and a reproduction of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, to mention but some of Linnet's examples. In contrast, Ronald M. Green's essay "Kierkegaard's Concept of Inherited Sin: A Cinematic Illustration," which completes the third section, uses the discussions of hereditary sin in three pseudonymous writings by Kierkegaard as lenses through which to analyze a single work in "the most modern of all the arts,"<sup>43</sup> cinema.

Those writings are the essays "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama" and "The Balance between the Esthetic and the Ethical in the Development of the Personality" by *Either/Or's* "A" and Judge William, respectively (*SKS* 2:137–62; 3:155–314 / *EO* 1:137–64;

2:155–333), and *The Concept of Anxiety*, “written by” Vigilius Haufniensis. The theory of original sin that Green distills from these texts is threefold: we are shaped by our past and the actions of our predecessors; we participate in and are responsible for those actions, both good and bad, and therefore, in choosing ourselves, we must repent for our predecessors’ wrongful deeds; and our moral and psychological links to our parents are ineluctably bound up with sexuality. The film to which Green applies this theory is the Quebec director Denis Villeneuve’s *Incendies* (2010, literally “Fires”), an adaptation of the Lebanese Canadian playwright Wajdi Mouawad’s 2003 drama of the same title, known in English as *Scorched*.<sup>44</sup> Before turning to that film, after noting Kierkegaard’s pioneering employment of fictional materials such as operas, plays, and novels in the development of philosophical and theological concepts, Green makes an extraordinarily pregnant claim to support the use of a film to illustrate Kierkegaard’s ideas: “If Kierkegaard were alive today, there is no doubt in my mind that he would be entranced with contemporary cinema, and that *Incendies*, if he viewed it, would be among the creative works that would draw his interest.” The first part of that claim is worth considering for a moment.

Despite the significant influence he has exerted on film directors ranging from Carl Theodor Dreyer to Woody Allen, the bearing of Kierkegaard’s writings upon the film medium is rarely considered.<sup>45</sup> Yet it seems certain that, in support of Green’s claim, the theory and underlying technology of cinematography would have fascinated Kierkegaard. Bona fide “series photography,” which paved the way to the first projection of motion pictures for public viewing in December 1895, was not developed until over a decade and a half after his death. Yet, inspired largely by discussions of the illusory “persistence of vision” for which Peter Mark Roget had proffered a seminal—albeit, we now know, false—explanation in 1825,<sup>46</sup> the inventing of the various oddly named machines and devices designed to create the illusion of moving pictures began during Kierkegaard’s lifetime.<sup>47</sup>

Although there is no evidence that Kierkegaard knew of Roget, or of the Thaumatrope, the “Wheel of Life,” the Phenakistoscope, the Stroboscope, or the Daedalum,<sup>48</sup> there are remarkable affinities between certain interests of Kierkegaard’s and various developments whose eventual coalescence made possible the birth of cinema. In one of his polemics against Christendom in 1854, Kierkegaard urges, “Away, away, away with all optical illusions [*Øienforblindelse*], forward with the truth . . . : We are incapable of being Christians in the New Testament sense” (*SKS* 14:159 / *MLW* 34). Here, his use of the analogy of an optical illusion corresponds to Roget’s concern, expressed in a different context, with a “curious optical deception” or “visual deception”<sup>49</sup> that involved the spokes of a rolling carriage wheel appearing curved when glimpsed through a series of vertical apertures such as venetian blinds. It is also not impossible that Kierkegaard was to some extent aware of the two separate but parallel lines of development on which, as Jack C.



Ellis points out, the discoveries and inventions leading to motion pictures occurred: first, the notion, stemming from the discussion of persistence of vision, that a succession of related still images could create an illusion of movement; second, the invention of a process of still photography and, later, of a technical means by which to take and show photographs fast enough to employ fully the image-succession theory.<sup>50</sup> Regarding the first of these developments, Kierkegaard notably characterized his own times as “an age of movement” (*Pap.* VII<sup>1</sup> B 195:373 / *MLW*, Suppl., 384). His enduring pre-occupation with “illusions,” “imaginary constructions,” and—as noted by Fiskvik in connection with dance—“movements” and “motions”<sup>51</sup> entitles us to suspect that he would have been captivated by the ability film grants us “to see a series of static images as a single continuous movement,” which makes cinema the first form of art “to rely solely on psycho-perceptual illusions generated by machine.”<sup>52</sup>

Like the developments that led to the invention of film, the beginning of the second line of development mentioned by Ellis coincided with Kierkegaard’s youth, as photography finds its earliest precursors in the invention of heliography by the Frenchman Nicéphore Niépce in the 1820s and of the daguerreotype by his countryman Louis Daguerre toward the end of the next decade. As Linnet points out, the daguerreotype arrived in Denmark in 1840, and by 1844 there were three “photo” studios, two of which were already there in 1842. Kierkegaard’s own awareness of the technology behind the daguerreotype, she notes, is reflected in Judge William’s estimation that the daguerreotype process took a half-minute to record an image.

There are still more reasons why the cinema would likely have entranced Kierkegaard. For example, the theatrical quality that Green, like Pattison, Pickett, and Boven, perceives in some of Kierkegaard’s writings, together with Kierkegaard’s and some of his pseudonyms’ musings upon the existential pertinence of theater, is noteworthy because the incorporation of pictorial and realistic staging in the popular nineteenth-century theater “offered extraordinarily precise models for what . . . films would become.”<sup>53</sup> Moreover, given his disdain for “rabble-barbarianism” (*Pøbelagtighed*; see *SKS* 20:19–20, NB7 and 7d, March 1846 / *Cor.*, Suppl., 213–14; *Pap.* VII<sup>1</sup> B 123, n.d. 1845–46 / *TA*, Suppl., 136; *SKS* 20:258, NB3:28, n.d. 1847 / *CD*, Suppl. 360; *SKS* 16:45, 47 / *PV* 64, 67) and for the “crowd” (*Mængde*), which he equated with cowardliness (*Feighed*) and untruth (*Usandheden*; see, e.g., *SKS* 16:88 / *PV* 108), Kierkegaard would supposedly have been wary of the association Walter Benjamin perceived between the cinematic medium and the increasingly emergent “masses” (*die Masse*).<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, although the “discreet but decisive role” that Kierkegaard is found to have played “in Benjamin’s thought in general”<sup>55</sup> seems not to have extended to that German thinker’s pioneering theory of film, two other aspects of cinema that Benjamin identifies as definitive of the medium correspond with some of Kierkegaard’s central preoccupations. First, Kierkegaard, the consummate dialectician, might be

expected to feel an affinity with the “dialectical structure” of film, whereby “discontinuous images replace one another in a continuous sequence.”<sup>56</sup> Second, as “the first art form whose artistic character is entirely determined by its reproducibility,” film might seem—in its capacity not only to be “technologically reproducible”<sup>57</sup> but to be replayed, rewatched or re-viewed, and hence experienced over and over—to bring about an experience akin to what Constantin Constantius unsuccessfully sought to achieve upon returning to Berlin to take up lodgings in his former quarters next to Gendarmenmarkt: *repetition*.

The natural affinity Green discerns between the film *Incendies* and the several Kierkegaardian texts he considers on hereditary sin might seem strengthened when we consider that repetition, that technical hallmark of cinema, is a category invoked in one of those texts, *The Concept of Anxiety*, whose pseudonym, Vigilius Haufniensis, repeatedly draws upon Constantin’s *Repetition* (see *SKS* 4:324fn.–325, 340, 351, 393fn., 408, 415, 449fn., 451fn. / *CA* 17fn.–18, 34, 46, 90fn., 106, 113, 149fn., 151fn.). As it happens, the plot of Villeneuve’s film, like the plots of so many great movies, hinges not so much on repetition as on what Constantin and hence Vigilius construe as a category that complements repetition: *recollection*, a notion crucial to ancient Greek, and particularly Platonic, epistemology. “Repetition and recollection,” Constantin observes, “are the same movement, except in opposite directions, for what is recollected has been, is repeated backward, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward” (*SKS* 4:9 / *R* 131; compare *SKS* 4:393, including 393fn. / *CA* 89–90, 90fn.). Even more to the point is yet another category crucial to the Greeks, and especially the exposition of tragedy by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. This other category, *recognition* (ἀναγνώρισις), is discussed by the pseudonym of Kierkegaard’s *Fear and Trembling*, Johannes de Silentio.

Although neither Johannes de Silentio nor Constantin nor Vigilius ever discusses all three of these terms together in relation to one another, recognition—which always presupposes and dispels some “prior hiddenness” (*SKS* 4:174 / *FT* 83)—clearly must precede both recollection and repetition inasmuch as each of the latter, in order actually to occur, would have to presuppose some form of recognition: that is, what remains “hidden” and is not first recognized can be neither meaningfully recollected nor meaningfully repeated. The focus of *Incendies* switches back and forth between contemporary Montreal and an unnamed Western Asian country in the past, torn by interreligious warfare and savagery (presumably Lebanon during its civil war), as the film employs successive flashbacks—a cinematic form of recollection—to link scenes from the life of a now deceased Western Asian woman who had immigrated to Canada with the lives of her three offspring. Through a series of tragic recognitions, one of these offspring is revealed to have been unwittingly the torturer and rapist of his own mother and the father of her other two children, his siblings. In turn, these recognitions touch

upon what Green deems a fundamental point in the Kierkegaardian analysis of hereditary sin: “We must all ask to what extent, by accepting, affirming, and sexually reproducing our identities within warring families, ethnicities, and communities, we are complicit in the crimes of our ancestors.”

The fourth and last part of this volume comprises three essays that consider Kierkegaard in juxtaposition with several other creative figures in literature and the arts: the English poet and visual artist William Blake (1757–1827) in “The Moravian Origins of Kierkegaard’s and Blake’s Socratic Literature,” by James Rovira; the German composer Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) in “*Don Giovanni* and *Moses and Aaron*: The Possibility of a Kierkegaardian Affirmation of Music,” by Peder Jothen; and the contemporary American singer, songwriter, and 2016 Nobel laureate (for literature), Bob Dylan (b. 1941) in “Kierkegaard, Dylan, and Masked and Anonymous Neighbor-Love,” by Jamie A. Lorentzen. Kierkegaard, as I have elsewhere discussed,<sup>58</sup> disparaged the act of comparison (*Sammenligning*) as dangerous and misguided, arguing that it distracts the individual from focusing on eternal truth. The overriding assumption of each of these three essays, however, is that thoughtful comparison, equally attentive to similarities and differences, and with “a clear articulation of purpose,”<sup>59</sup> can enhance our understanding of both figures (and their works) under consideration.

Regarding Kierkegaard’s relation to Blake, Schoenberg, and Dylan, the three essays acknowledge that Blake, who died when Kierkegaard was fourteen, could not have known of him; that there is, by the same token, no evidence that Kierkegaard knew of or was influenced by Blake, though it is not impossible that he encountered some of his poetry in German translation; and that there is no reason to suspect that Schoenberg, who was born almost twenty years after Kierkegaard’s death, or Dylan, was influenced by Kierkegaard, or even that either of them read him. So what is the purpose of these three comparisons by Rovira, Jothen, and Lorentzen? For Rovira, Kierkegaard and Blake, despite their obvious national, vocational, and other differences, “are mutually illuminating figures not only because they similarly appropriated Socratic thought but also because their works respond to very similar, and mutually influential, cultural milieux.” In both cases, an upbringing by Moravian parents had the probable consequence that Blake and Kierkegaard were influenced in their views of Socrates by that founding Moravian figure and self-styled Socratic figure Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf and as a result regarded Socrates with “some ambivalence.” Because the “literary qualities” of Kierkegaard stem from the Socratic nature of his philosophical enterprise, which “favors dialogic contemplation of significant questions over the systematic, discursive presentation of conceptual truths,” Rovira contends that a comparison of him and Blake in their engagements with Socrates can shed light on Kierkegaard’s literary qualities.

Jothen, too, is concerned with a particular ambivalence in Kierkegaard, but with regard to music rather than to Socrates. Arguing that Kierkegaard’s

musical aesthetic has less to do with music itself than with the formative role music plays in relation to desire, thought, and the form of one's life, particularly in the aesthetic stage, Jøthen does two things. First, he shows that whereas music serves for *Either/Or's* "A" to disclose sensuous, abstract immediacy rather than clear, comprehensible truth to the listener, Kierkegaard himself elsewhere suggests that music, especially gospel-related hymns, can valuably serve to guide the listener to cultivating a self-consciousness shaped by Christian truth. Then, pursuing the implications of this ambivalence, Jøthen uses his comparison of Schoenberg's *Moses and Aaron* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* to demonstrate that the atonal, de-sensualizing subversion by Schoenberg's opera of the harmonic tradition epitomized by Mozart's opera, which so allured "A," exposes both the limitations of "A's" conception of music (as did the analysis of it in Petersen's essay) and the possibility of regarding music as an aid to Christian self-cultivation.

This last point is especially suggestive when considered in relation to Bob Dylan, for whom music, and songs in particular, are not so much aids to religious self-cultivation as constitutive of a kind of religion itself. In a statement quoted by Lorentzen, Dylan denies heeding rabbis, preachers, evangelists, or any other religious clerical figures. Instead, he declares "songs" to be his "religion," his "lexicon," and the objects of his belief, as he finds "the religiosity and philosophy" exclusively "in the music." Lorentzen's comparison of Kierkegaard with Dylan is therefore a fitting subject on which to close this volume. For Dylan's equation of religion with songs, a medium that fuses word and music, offers a possible resolution to the hierarchizing by Kierkegaard's "A" of poetry over music and the other arts—a hierarchizing done under the influence not only of the Lutheran axiom *sola scriptura*, as Jøthen points out, but also of Lessing's *Laocoon*, as touched upon by Linnet. "A's" suggestion is that art grows more perfect the more it grows free of space and turns to time, transitioning from sculpture to painting, as Lessing already indicated; then to music, whose element is time, but which exists only in the moment; and ultimately to poetry, "the highest of all the arts and therefore also the art that best knows how to affirm the meaning of time" (*SKS* 3:135 / *EO* 2:136).<sup>60</sup> That the composer and singer of "The Times They Are a-Changin'" suggests otherwise is all the more provocative in view of Lorentzen's observation that one of the affinities shared by Kierkegaard and Dylan lies in Kierkegaard's deeply informed, long-standing fascination with the medieval troubadour tradition and Dylan's musical-ethical ambition "to serve as a performing artist qua modern troubadour."

Considered together, the essays by Green and Lorentzen point to a tension, if not ultimately an impasse, in Kierkegaard's thinking when considered in the light of *Incendies* and Dylan's songs. With Dylan, as Lorentzen points out, Kierkegaard shares the sense that becoming fully human requires loving the neighbor and the development of the "self-as-relational phenomenon."

As Judge William tells “A,” “You are a nonentity and are something only in relation to others, and what you are you are only through this relation” (*SKS* 2:157 / *EO* 2:159). Yet, as Green demonstrates through the lens of *Incendies*, Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms also expose the formidable if not fatal impediment posed to neighbor-love by the perpetuation and accentuation of human sin through human sexuality and procreation. It is perhaps this conceptual tension or impasse in Kierkegaard that makes contemplating his relation to literature and the arts so fascinating and yet challenging. For surely no other thinker casts the stage of existence epitomized by Johannes the Seducer in so seductive a light, revealing its ultimate rootedness in the inherently erotic, sexual disposition of the human being, while at the same time indirectly cautioning against the fatal danger of what Bakhtin termed—arguably under Kierkegaard’s influence—the “temptation of aestheticism.”<sup>61</sup> If this notion of temptation seems to hark back to the biblical myth of the Fall, despite the definitive lack of a sense of guilt consciousness in the aesthetic stage, it is not surprising that, as Tatiana Shchytsova has suggested, Bakhtin should have followed Kierkegaard in associating the preference for the aesthetic mode of existence with sin, or in Bakhtin’s words, with “a fall (a lapse into sin) that is immanent to being.”<sup>62</sup> Though not an overriding theme of this volume, this implicit association of the aesthetic with sin in Kierkegaard’s thinking perhaps lies somewhat in the background of the following essays on Kierkegaard, literature, and the arts.

## Notes

1. Nathan A. Scott Jr., *The Poetics of Belief: Studies in Coleridge, Arnold, Pater, Santayana, Stevens, and Heidegger* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 11.

2. *Ibid.*, 11, 171n50. See also Scott’s *Negative Capability: Studies in the New Literature and the Religious Situation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969), 26.

3. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Herrlichkeit: Eine theologische Ästhetik* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1960–), 1:47; *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, 7 vols., trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, ed. Joseph Fessio (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982–89), 1:50.

4. See Eric Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2011).

5. See *ibid.*, 28–29; Pattison’s essay in this volume.

6. See Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 29–30.

7. Reproductions of these cartoons are found in vol. 6 (1979) of Uffe Andreassen, ed., *Corsaren: M. A. Goldschmidts årgange*, 7 vols. (Copenhagen: Det danske Sprog-og Litteraturselskab, C. A. Reitzel, 1977–81); *Cor.*, Suppl., 109–37, intermittently throughout.

8. Mircea Eliade, *Traité d’histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1953), 368 (§149), my translation.

9. Joakim Garff, *Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 458.

10. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Litteræ Vintersæd" (Literary Winter Grain), in *Intelligensblade* (ed. J. L. Heiberg), 2, no. 24 (1843): 288; trans. in *Cor.*, 273n40. See also the discussions of this review in George Pattison, "The Initial Reception of *Either/Or*," in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Either/Or, Part II*, ed. Robert L. Perkins (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995), 295–96; Alastair Hannay, *Kierkegaard: A Biography* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 182–83.

11. Hans Lassen Martensen, "On the Occasion of Dr. S. Kierkegaard's Article in *Fædrelandet*, no. 295," *Berlingske Tidende*, 302 (December 28, 1854), in *SV*<sup>1</sup> 14:13 / *MLW*, Suppl., 364.

12. In Martensen's words, Kierkegaard as author had failed to consider that a servant of God "must not only guard against suppressing anything of what he is sent to say to people but likewise must guard against saying more than he is sent to say, which includes also that he must guard against saying more than he in particular is sent to say according to the specific gift of the Spirit that is place in his soul" (*SV*<sup>1</sup> 14:13 / *MLW*, Suppl., 363). Had this "golden rule" been heeded, adds Martensen, "much untruthful and exorbitant talk about the heights and depths of the Christian life, for example, about dying to the world . . . would be avoided; indeed, many upbuilding discourses and books would be unwritten" (*SV*<sup>1</sup> 14:13 / *MLW*, Suppl., 364). Four years earlier, Martensen had alluded to the Kierkegaardian authorship as a "prolix literature [*vidløftige Litteratur*]" with which he admitted to being only meagerly and fragmentarily acquainted. Hans Lassen Martensen, *Dogmatiske Oplysninger: Et Leilighedskrift* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1850), 13; trans. in *MLW* 624n20. After the appearance of Martensen's 1854 article, Kierkegaard would remind readers of that admission, with the obvious intent of questioning Martensen's integrity; see *SKS* 14:129fn. / *MLW* 9fn.; compare *Pap.* XI<sup>3</sup> B 82, p. 125, 1854 / *MLW*, Suppl., 491. Later, Kierkegaard repeated Martensen's own phrase, claiming to have "managed to get my whole 'prolix literature' situated in literature until its time comes" (*Pap.* XI<sup>3</sup> B 89, p. 141, n.d. 1855 / *MLW*, Suppl., 503). For further discussion, see Eric Ziolkowski, "Kierkegaard, Fire, and the Proximity of Filling Time," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 29, no. 1 (2013): 19–36.

13. Denis de Rougemont, "Kierkegaard" (1934), in *Les personnes du drame* (Neuchâtel: Baconnière, 1944), 18–19; *Dramatic Personages*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), xi, emphasis mine.

14. Roger Poole, *Kierkegaard: The Direct Communication* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 245.

15. Today, on the outside wall of this building on Jägerstrasse, a plaque commemorates Kierkegaard's four stays in that building (1841–42, 1843, 1845, 1846), indicating that it was there that he wrote the first drafts of *Either/Or I*, *Repetition*, and *Fear and Trembling*.

16. Engraving by Carl Strahlheim (pseud. for Johann Konrad Friedrich) in Carl Strahlheim, *Die Wundermappe oder sämtliche Kunst- und Natur-Wunder des ganzen Erdballs*, vol. 5: *Nord-Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M.: Im Comptoir für Literatur und Kunst, 1837). The picture, a copy of which I possess, appears between pp. 82 and 83, although the list of illustrations on p. vii states that this

engraving, labeled “Ansicht des Gensd’armen-Marktes mit dem Schauspielhaus,” appears on p. 72. (I am grateful to Stefan Lankuttis and his associates at the Kultur und Bibliotheken–Wissenschaftliche Stadtbibliothek, Landeshauptstadt Mainz for providing me a digitized photocopy of that list and for confirming the location of the Gendarmenmarkt illustration within the original volume, a copy of which I was unable to obtain.) On the volume’s title page, the following statement is found: “Treu nach der Natur abgebildet und topographisch-historisch beschrieben von C. Strahlheim.”

17. Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 37.

18. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinem Vernunft*, ed. Jens Timmermann (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998), 421 [B 314]; *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1956), 310.

19. See Eric Ziolkowski, “Guadalquivir: Kierkegaard’s Subterranean Fluvial Pseudonymity,” in *Kierkegaard’s Literary Figures and Motifs*, Tome 1, ed. Jon Stewart, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, vol. 16 (London: Ashgate, 2014), 279–96. On Kierkegaard’s reading of *Don Quixote*, see Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 127–81.

20. See Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 8–12.

21. Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus: Where Art Comes From and Why* (1992; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), ix, xii.

22. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion. The Significance of Religious Myth, Symbolism, and Ritual within Life and Culture*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959), 15.

23. This point is convincingly demonstrated by Bryan Rennie, *Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 41–46 (chap. 5: “Homo Religiosus”). Though space is obviously lacking here for a full rehearsal of the evidence Rennie marshals on this point, suffice it to quote Eliade himself from two different works of his (each quoted by Rennie as well; *ibid.*, 44): “Nonreligious man *in the pure state* is a comparatively rare phenomenon, even in the most desacralized of societies. The majority of the ‘irreligious’ still behave religiously, even though they are not aware of the fact” (Eliade, *Sacred and the Profane*, 204, italics in text); “In the last analysis, we discover that the latest activities and conclusions of scientists and technologists—the direct descendants of *homo faber*—reactualize, on different levels and perspectives, the same fears, hopes and convictions that have dominated *homo religiosus* from the very beginning” (Mircea Eliade, “*Homo Faber* and *Homo Religiosus*,” in *The History of Religions: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Joseph Kitagawa [New York: Macmillan, 1985], 11).

24. Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus*, ix.

25. Sylvia Walsh, *Living Poetically: Kierkegaard’s Existential Aesthetics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 4.

26. Diego Gil Parra, *El homo litterarius* (Cali, Colombia [?]: Fundación Literaria Botella y Luna, 2004), 1. Gil Parra was not the first to coin the term *homo litterarius*. It also occurs in the title of Reto Ferrari’s dissertation “Ermanno Cavazzoni e le tentazioni del ‘homo litterarius’: Un discorso sul bisogno di inventare storie o di farsele narrare nelle opere ‘Il poema dei lunatici’ e ‘Le tentazioni di Girolamo’” (Lic. phil., I Univ. Zürich, 1996). My effort to obtain a copy or photocopy of this work proved futile, as I was informed that Zentralbibliothek

Zürich, which owns the sole catalogued copy, will not lend or scan it and that it is not available for purchase.

27. Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus*, 3.

28. *Ibid.*, 107.

29. *Ibid.*, 21, 111.

30. Quoted in Bruce H. Kirmmse, ed., *Encounters with Kierkegaard: A Life as Seen by His Contemporaries*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse and Virginia R. Laursen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 113.

31. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. David Magarshack (1955; repr. with new pagination, Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin, 1986), 391 (pt. 3, chap. 1).

32. *Ibid.*, 528 (pt. 4, chap. 5).

33. Carnegie Hall Speech, 1960, quoted by Egon Gartenberg, *Mahler: The Man and His Music* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 367.

34. George Pattison, *Kierkegaard's Upbuilding Discourses: Philosophy, Theology, Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002).

35. Immanuel Kant, *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen* (1764), in *Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. Wilhelm Weischedel (Wiesbaden: Insel, 1960), 1 (1960): 826 (sec. 1); *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime and Other Writings*, ed. Patrick Frierson and Paul Guyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 14.

36. Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon de studio legendi* [a.k.a. *Eruditionis didascalicae*] 3.20, in PL 176 (1854): 778B; *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 101, quoted (with slight variance in spelling) by Erich Auerbach, "Philology and *Weltliteratur*," trans. Maire Said and Edward Said, *Centennial Review* 13, no. 1 (1969): 1–17, here 17.

37. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800), in *Werke*, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Fritz Eckardt, 1907), 2:276; *System of Transcendental Idealism*, trans. Peter Lauclan Heath (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978), 210.

38. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vols. 20–21 (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960), 1:61 (1.5.8). Compare *Institutes*, 1:72 (1.6.2): "this most glorious theater"; 1:179 (1.14.20): "this most beautiful theater"; 1:341 (2.6.1): "This magnificent theater"; and in other works of Calvin.

39. For further discussion see Eric Ziolkowski, "'I Came to Carthage'; 'So I Arrived in Berlin': Autobiographical Memory in Augustine's *Confessions* and Kierkegaard's *Repetition*," in *Kierkegaard as an Author*, ed. Joseph Westfall (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, forthcoming).

40. Yukio Mishima, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, trans. Ivan Morris (New York: Random House, 1994), 45.

41. See Ziolkowski, "Kierkegaard, Fire, and the Proximity of Filling Time."

42. There are exceptions, of course, one of which is Poole's aforementioned analysis of the role Thorvaldsen's statues of Christ and his apostles in Copenhagen's Vor Frue Kirke play in two of Kierkegaard's *Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*. Also considered has been Anti-Climacus's thought experiment in Kierkegaard's *Practice in Christianity* contemplating how a modern



child unfamiliar with the story of Jesus would react to being shown an image of the crucified Christ juxtaposed with pictures of Alexander the Great, Napoleon, and other famous heroic figures (SKS 12:176–79 / PC 174–77; compare SKS 21:154, NB8:20, n.d. 1848 / KJN 5:160). See Eric Ziolkowski, “A Picture Not Worth a Thousand Words: Kierkegaard, Christ, and the Child,” *Religious Studies and Theology* (Edmonton, Canada) 17 (1999): 4–19; Eric Ziolkowski, *Evil Children in Religion, Literature, and Art* (Houndmills, U.K.: Palgrave, 2001), 137–38.

43. David Parkinson, *History of Film*, 2nd ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2012), 7.

44. Wajdi Mouawad, *Incendies* (Montreal: Leméac, 2003); *Scorched*, trans. Linda Gaboriau (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2005).

45. On Kierkegaard’s influence on Dreyer, especially his film *Ordet* (1955, *The Word*), see Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 293–309. Judith Thurman asks, “Without [Kierkegaard], where would Woody Allen be?” “Søren K.’s Two-Hundredth Birthday,” *New Yorker*, May 20, 2013, <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/sren-k-s-two-hundredth-birthday>, accessed August 24, 2016. For a satirical statement by Allen himself on Kierkegaard’s primacy among philosophers for him, see the opening of Woody Allen, “My Philosophy,” in *Getting Even* (New York: Random House, 1971), 27–28. In October 2013, to commemorate Kierkegaard’s bicentennial, there was held at the Village Recoleta multiplex in Buenos Aires, hosted by the Danish Embassy, a Søren Kierkegaard Film Festival, featuring “three Scandinavian masterpieces centring on or somehow discussing the themes present in Kierkegaard’s most relevant works”: Dreyer’s *Ordet*, Roy Andersson’s *En kärlekshistoria* (1970, *A Swedish Love Story*), and Ingmar Bergman’s *Smultronstället* (1957, *Wild Strawberries*). See Julio Nakamura, “Kierkegaard Festival: Through a Film Darkly,” *Buenos Aires Herald*, October 15, 2013, <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/142896/kierkegaard-festival-through-a-film-darkly>, accessed August 24, 2016. I am grateful to Rhonda Burnette-Bletsch for calling this website to my attention.

46. See P. M. Roget, “Explanation of an Optical Deception in the Appearance of the Spokes of a Wheel Seen through Vertical Apertures” [“read December 9, 1824”], Royal Society of London, *Philosophical Transactions*, 115 (London: Nicol, 1825), 131–40. On the concept of “persistence of vision” as “an inaccurate and inadequate explanation for the apparent motion found in a motion picture,” see Joseph and Barbara Anderson, “The Myth of Persistence of Vision Revisited,” *Journal of Film and Video* 45, no. 1 (1993): 3–12; here 3; a sequel to the same two authors’ “The Myth of the Persistence of Vision,” *Journal of the University Film Association* 30, no. 4 (1978): 3–8.

47. The invention of “series photography” is generally credited to the English photographer working in the United States, Eadweard Muybridge (born Edward James Muggeridge), with the unveiling of his Zoögyroscope in 1879 (later renamed the Zoöpraxiscopes in 1881), and the French scientist, Étienne-Jules Marey, with his invention of the *fusil photographique* (photographic revolver or gun) in 1882. These inventions were preceded—during Kierkegaard’s life—by the Thaumatrope, developed in the 1820s; the Wheel of Life, invented by the English scientist Michael Faraday in 1831; the Phenakistoscope, by the Belgian Joseph Plateau in 1832; the Stroboscope, by the Austrian Simon Ritter von Stampfer in

1831; and the Daedalum, by the English mathematician William George Hoerner in 1834 (marketed as the Zoetrope in the 1860s); and—after Kierkegaard's life—by the Praxinoscope, invented by the Frenchman Charles Émile Reynaud, in 1876. See Jack C. Ellis, *A History of Film* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 14–21; Parkinson, *History of Film*, 8–14.

48. Additional information on these designs can be found in our previous note.

49. See Roget, "Explanation of an Optical Deception," 131, 132; compare 139.

50. Ellis, *A History of Film*, 13.

51. See the fulsome entries on these terms in *Cumulative Index to Kierkegaard's Writings*, prepared by Nathaniel J. Hong, Kathryn Hong, and Regine Prenzel-Guthrie, series eds. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 162–63, 219–20.

52. Parkinson, *History of Film*, 8.

53. Ellis, *A History of Film*, 13.

54. Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit—Zweite Fassung" (1936), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, 7 vols. [in 15], ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972–89), 7, pt. 1:355, 369–70; "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility—Second Version," in *Selected Writings*, 4 vols., ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1996–2003), vol. 3: 1935–38 (2002), 105, 113.

55. Rainer Nägele, "Body Politics: Benjamin's Dialectical Materialism between Brecht and the Frankfurt School," in *The Cambridge Companion to Walter Benjamin*, ed. David S. Ferris (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 174n8, quoted by Joseph Westfall, "Walter Benjamin: Appropriating the Kierkegaardian Aesthetic," in *Kierkegaard's Influence on Philosophy*, Tome 1: *German and Scandinavian Philosophy*, ed. Jon Stewart, Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources, vol. 11, Tome 1 (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2012), 51.

56. From an unpublished fragment of 1935, Benjamin-Archiv, MS 1011, in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 1, pt. 3 (1974): 1040; "The Formula in Which the Dialectical Structure of Film Finds Expression," in *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Y. Levin, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2008), 340.

57. Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit—Zweite Fassung," 361; "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility—Second Version," 109.

58. Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 45.

59. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 53. For elaboration on this oft-cited statement by Smith, see Ziolkowski, *The Literary Kierkegaard*, 46.

60. Compare, e.g., Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Vom Heiligen in der Kunst* (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann, 1957), 162, 292; *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art*, trans. David E. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 156, 288–59.

61. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* [*K filosofii postupka*, written 1920–24, first published 1986], trans. Vadim Liapunow, ed. Vadim Liapunow and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 18.

62. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* [*Avtor i geroi v esteticheskoi deiatel'nosti*, written ca. 1920–23], trans. Vadim Liapunov, in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, ed. Michael Holoquist and V. Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 124. See Tatiana Shchytsova, “Mikhail Bakhtin: Direct and Indirect Reception of Kierkegaard,” in *Kierkegaard’s Influence on Literature, Criticism and Art*, Tome 5: *The Romance Languages, Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, vol. 12, Tome 5 (Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2013), 111–12. Shchytsova quotes the same two passages from Bakhtin, though directly from Russian editions, and hence her wording for the second quotation differs slightly from the wording of its rendering in Liapunov’s translation.