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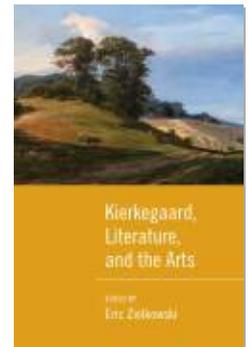
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Kierkegaard's Christian Bildungsroman

Joakim Garff

He walks like a stranger, and yet he seems to be at home, for through the imagination he is always at home with this image, which he desires to resemble. (SKS 12:188 / PC 189)

“When it was a matter of boldness, enthusiasm, zeal, almost to the border of madness, what was this pen not able to present!” So exclaims Kierkegaard, with joyous breathlessness, in *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* (SKS 15:52 / PV 72). As one can see, it is not intractable paradoxes he falls into a swoon over, not the silent plains of the conceptual or the infinity of combinations, but rather the pen's artistic appeal to the senses in a thoroughgoing and not insignificant sense. It is hardly a risky claim to make that it is precisely thanks to this eminent command of the rhetorical register that Kierkegaard *is* Kierkegaard. Just as Hegel's thought characteristically operates on such a high level of abstraction that association and imagination must rush to the rescue of readers when they are just about to succumb under the strenuousness of the concept, so almost the opposite is the case with Kierkegaard.¹ No sooner have you been set down in the midst of a complicated dialectical operation than you are sent off on a rejuvenating jaunt into a text that expounds itself expressively, brightly, and breezily, as all the while the compact mass of the concept transforms into images, expands allegorically, or dons the down-to-earth form of the fable. One could therefore fittingly call Kierkegaard's philosophical discourse, which continually oscillates between concept and image, a discourse of *visualization*, while his theological discourse is a kind of discourse of *autopsy*, insofar as it attempts to suspend the time between Jesus of Nazareth and the modern reader.

Kierkegaard's aesthetic practice associates him with a famous pair of concepts in the aesthetic tradition: namely, the concepts of the beautiful and the sublime, which, particularly since the appearance of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790), have been a constant part of the curriculum in modern aesthetic theory.² The beautiful, according to Kant, is everything that merely *pleases* but never *affects* the viewer in a deeper sense, and thus awakens neither anxiety nor desire in the viewer but instead engenders a contemplative state that may very well look a little like happiness. This experience of beauty stands in contrast to the experience of the sublime,

which has an almost violent effect upon the imagination. The sublime is the catastrophic, the awesome and anxiety-inducing: mountains in sudden motion, a foaming sea, earthquakes, fatal phenomena that completely breach the familiarity of civilization and momentarily throw humanity's self-evident place in the world into doubt.³

For obvious reasons, a text cannot be sublime in the Kantian sense, but it can imitate or mimic the sublime by shaking its reader rhetorically. Countless examples could be used to demonstrate that this is what the Kierkegaardian texts aim to do, but let me just cite a journal entry from 1845, where Kierkegaard, speaking of the ideal of the art of preaching, remarks, "If no earthquake, no volcanic eruption, no plague, war, etc., teaches people about the uncertainty of everything, then daily use of the religious discourse ought to have the same effect" (*SKS* 18:275, *JJ*:407 / *KJN* 2:254). With this, Kierkegaard is not merely far-removed from the values of enlightened humanism and the norms of cultivated society; he has also announced the discourse of sublimity that he practices in his writing. And just as the text mimics the sublime, so must the reader mimic the text.

This is confirmed, almost to excess, by the third section of *Practice in Christianity*, which Kierkegaard published on September 27, 1850, and, at the last minute, attributed to Anti-Climacus. The work consists of three sections or numbers, with three separate title pages and three separate but identical prefaces, all of which are signed "S.K." The third of these sections is presented on the chapter title page as "Christian Development" and thereby calls to mind formation and the Bildungsroman. In this third section, which is divided into seven chapters of varying length, the third chapter is introduced with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ! How various are the many things to which a person can feel drawn, but there is one thing to which no one ever felt naturally drawn, and that is to suffering and abasement. We human beings think that we ought to flee from that as long as possible and in any case must be forced into it. But you, our Savior and Redeemer, you the abased one, who will not force anyone, and least of all into what must be a person's highest honor: to dare to want to be like you—would that the image of you in your abasement might stand before us so vividly, so awakening and persuasive, that we will feel ourselves drawn to you in lowliness, drawn to want to be like you in lowliness, you who from on high will draw all to yourself. (*SKS* 12:170 / *PC* 167)

The prayer is not just a prayer. It also contains elements of the tactic with which Kierkegaard intends to overcome the resistance with which the so-called natural person meets suffering and abasement. And just as such resistance is natural, so too is the resistance of the text to the artistic, the

artificial, the cunning. As the text demonstrates, the natural person's resistance to suffering and abasement is overcome precisely through an "image," one that makes such suffering and humiliation not merely "vivid" and "awakening" but also so "persuasive" that the reader is drawn into wanting to resemble the abased one.

Although it is imperative for Anti-Climacus to maintain the "prototype's" radical and fundamental difference from an epoch that aestheticizes the Christian categories, the countermove he initiates against such an aestheticization is itself utterly aesthetic, insofar as his text persistently addresses the reader's powers of visualization. Symptomatic in this respect is the marked tendency, to which Anti-Climacus is prone, of appealing often and excessively to the eyes and the gaze. "Is this sight not able to move you?" (*SKS* 12:173 / *PC* 171; compare *SKS* 12:174 / *PC* 171) he declares after an account of the debased savior, an account that is accompanied on its passage through the text by persistent comments on the impact this particular "sight" has upon the reader. "So look at him once again, him the abased one! What effect does this sight produce? Should it not be able to move you in some way to want to suffer in a way akin to his suffering?" (*SKS* 12:176 / *PC* 174; compare *SKS* 12:176, 180 / *PC* 173, 178). With this *iconography* the reader will be moved—"not," it should be noted, "to tears" (*SKS* 12:174 / *PC* 171) and other sentimentality but rather *away from* the text and thence to action *outside* the text. Only there, on the outside, is this particular reading concluded in earnest.

In parallel with this frequent appeal to the reader's readiness to visualize, the text sets out to exclude our well-known, all-too-well-known image of Christ. Sounding almost like a hypnotist's patter, it says, "If possible, forget for a moment everything you know about him; tear yourself away from the perhaps apathetic habitual way in which you know about him; approach it as if it were the first time you heard the story of his abasement" (*SKS* 12:176 / *PC* 174). Even if this gesture does not have the desired effect, the text promptly offers a radical alternative: "Or if you think you are not able to do that, well, then, let us help ourselves in another way, let us use the help of a child, a child who is not warped by having learned by rote a simple school assignment about Jesus Christ's suffering and death, a child who for the first time hears the story—let us see what the effect will be, if only we tell it fairly well" (*SKS* 12:176 / *PC* 174). One notes how Anti-Climacus carefully maintains that the child is not spoiled by the hackneyed interactions with the divine that follow from the mechanical rote learning in schooling but, on the contrary, that the child possesses the "primitivity" that is the alpha and omega of the religious condition. Anti-Climacus continues, "Imagine a child, and then delight this child by showing it some of those artistically insignificant but for children very valuable pictures one buys in the shops" (*SKS* 12:177 / *PC* 174).⁴ Various pictures are laid out in front of the child—one of Napoleon, one of William Tell, and so forth—which the adult accompanies with lively, horizon-broadening explanations. Just as the child, with "unspeakable

delight,” lets its gaze leap from picture to picture, its eye is suddenly caught by one “that you have deliberately placed among the others; it portrays the one crucified” (SKS 12:177 / PC 174–75). At first the child cannot relate to the picture, which it puzzles over and asks “why he is hanging from such a tree” (SKS 12:177 / PC 175). When the adult explains that the picture depicts an execution, the child becomes greatly affected, to such a degree that it becomes “anxious and afraid for his parents and the world and himself” and forgets all about the other pictures, for “as it says in the ballad, they will all turn their backs, so different is this picture” (SKS 12:177 / PC 175).

The sight of one crucified is, in a Kantian sense, a sublime moment, filled to the brim with strangeness and horror, and thus capable of carrying the child away from the familiar, well-known world that Anti-Climacus has broken down. Special emphasis is placed on the way this breakdown brings about immense alienation within the child, whose shock, understandably enough, increases when one tells it “that this crucified one is the Savior of the world” (SKS 12:177 / PC 175). Once this one *picture* (*billede*) has pushed itself in front of all the others and has thereby wholly concretely made itself into a *prototype* (*forbillede*), the adult must then furnish the child with the “prototype’s” more specific religious character:

See, now is the moment; if you have not already made too powerful an impression upon the child, then tell him now about the one who was lifted up, who from on high will draw all to himself. Tell the child that this one who was lifted up is [the crucified]. Tell the child that he was love, that he came to the world out of love, took upon himself the form of a lowly servant, lived for only one thing—to love and to help people, especially all those who were sick and sorrowful and suffering and unhappy. Tell the child what happened to him in his lifetime, how one of the few who were close to him betrayed him, the few others denied him, and everyone else insulted and mocked him, until finally they nailed him to the cross—as shown in the picture. . . . Tell it very vividly to the child, as if you yourself had never heard it before or had never told it to anyone before; tell it as if you yourself had composed the whole story, but do not forget any feature of it that has been preserved, except that you may forget as you are telling it that it is preserved. (SKS 12:178 / PC 176)

Anti-Climacus’s recurring imperatives (“Tell! Tell!”) signify that the occasion is no longer—as with Climacus in *Philosophical Fragments*⁵—a laconic, world-historical *nota bene* but rather a dramatically presented narrative sequence, which takes shape through the narrative’s almost feverish engagement in what is narrated. Whereas for Climacus the moment was a paradoxical point that evades both comprehension and vision, with Anti-Climacus it becomes expressive and plastic: the moment (*Øieblikket*, “the

glance of an eye") unites with the eye's glance when it is exposed to an image that works by grasping, and grasps by making itself present. At the sight of this bloody image the child loses its sense of "time and place" (*SKS* 12:186 / *PC* 186) to such a degree that it quite forgets that the event itself, the crucifixion, took place "over eighteen hundred years [ago]" (*SKS* 12:179 / *PC* 177).

Bildungsroman and Visualizing Bildungsroman

The experiment with the child constitutes the first part of the sequence that I, in a hybrid translation, call Kierkegaard's *billedannelsesroman*. The hybrid is formed by combining the word *billedannelse*, which can be translated as "image formation," with the word *dannelsesroman*, which in English is rendered by the German term *Bildungsroman*. Perhaps one could render *billedannelsesroman* as "image formation novel" or "picture creation," but in what follows I prefer to use the term "visualizing Bildungsroman." The point is that the images that are formed transform the one who forms these images. Hence it is no coincidence that the word *Bild*, "picture," occupies such a prominent place in *Bildung*.

Formation novels and visualizing formation novels are both in the business of bringing an identity-formation to consummation. Such an identity-formation normally depends upon a productive exchange between individualization and socialization. A person never becomes herself *by* herself and *for* herself but always via detours, by historical, cultural, and many other detours, in other words, via the world. It is this process that the Bildungsroman presents in epic fashion, when it has its protagonist—typically a young, intellectual man—go out into the world in order to fulfill his own, natural talents and little by little bring himself into balance with himself and his surroundings. The Bildungsroman is a diverse and folkloristic undertaking, with an extensive gallery of personae—artists, jugglers, magicians, sensual women, and other captivating figures—wherein the protagonist (and the reader!) can see themselves reflected.⁶ After an enthusiastic odyssey through foreign milieux and cultures, the protagonist returns home as a *clarified* version of himself and has, through his return, carried out the three-phase compositional scheme *at home—homeless—home* by which the Bildungsroman is guided and with which it consolidates its capacity to edify.

Kierkegaard never wrote a Bildungsroman; indeed, it is a matter of debate whether any text among the mountains of written paper he left behind can meaningfully be called a *novel*. It is indisputable, however, that Kierkegaard thinks in character types and populates his work with *textual characters* that he either imports from the rich stock of world literature or single-handedly conjures up from the magical darkness of the ink bottle. The presence of these textual characters in Kierkegaard's discourse is not merely due to Kierkegaard's wanting to *illustrate* his philosophical or theological concerns

in them but goes considerably further and reveals the long-neglected fact that Kierkegaard understands the person as a being that, in its encounter with stories—be it in myth, Greek tragedy, or biblical accounts—is endowed with a *narrative identity*, which it is inscribed into and is being interpreted through. This is true of the young man in *Repetition*, whose self-understanding is fundamentally altered after reading the book of Job; it is true of a number of characters in *Fear and Trembling*, where the account of Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac is maintained in the most varied ways, but it is true also in the upbuilding production, where the reader is exposed to and enclosed by the New Testament narrative, inasmuch as the exposure reflects “the law” and the enclosure corresponds to “the gospel.”

The conception of *Christian* identity-formation that is developed and radicalized, work by work, throughout the authorship is also inextricably bound up with the New Testament narrative: in Christian identity-formation, one receives one’s identity by placing oneself as a narrative possibility at the disposal of the God that came into being in Jesus of Nazareth and has sealed his fate. In the comprehensive program of formation that Kierkegaard offers in his authorship, there thus stands a *theological* aim of actualizing, within the individual person, the relationship to self and to God given in the Christian narrative.

There is thus a double identity-formation in Kierkegaard: first, *human* identity-formation, which implies that the person must relate to himself or herself as a more or less realized self-relation; second, *Christian* identity-formation, which entails that the person in such a self-relationship must also relate to himself or herself as a not-yet-actualized narrative possibility. Vigilius Haufniensis and Anti-Climacus represent the double formation in their respective programmatic declarations; the former, when he demonstrates in *The Concept of Anxiety* that the task is to make a person into “the true and the whole man” (SKS 4:325 / CA 18); the latter, when he decrees in *The Sickness unto Death* that “the self must be broken in order to become itself” (SKS 11:179 / SUD 65).

The New Testament narrative is the prism through which this breaking of the subject takes place, and Anti-Climacus has thereby, with brilliant, anachronistic precision, announced the deconstruction of the subject as practiced in the late Kierkegaard’s upbuilding discourses and the late production overall. This deconstruction is practiced in various ways, but if one turns one’s gaze toward the next phase in the visualizing Bildungsroman, one will, I think, be able to get an impression of this theological praxis.

“The Image of Perfection”

With this background in mind, let me return to the third section of *Practice in Christianity*, whose fourth chapter portrays the child’s further development.

The chapter does not refer expressly to the previous one, but it seems evident that the two chapters belong together in narrative terms and fall under the category "Christian Development" announced by the section heading. The child is no longer a child, but a youth. From the stage directions that introduce him, it appears that the earlier "vision" of the abased savior continues to work as an indelible *afterimage* and lies behind the life view the youth goes by in the world. The child, hypnotically thrown into his state of contemporaneity with Jesus of Nazareth, had certainly expressed his astonishment that God did not step in and prevent the horrors of the crucifixion, but when the adult, by way of response, had spoken of the resurrection on the third day, the account made no particular impression on the child, who is absorbed by the story of Jesus's suffering and death to such a degree that it simply "will not feel like hearing about the glory that followed" (SKS 12:179 / PC 177). After a period of wishing to avenge Jesus and put his tormentors to death, the child regained his composure, but he has by no means forgotten that impression from childhood; now he simply interprets the impression in a different way (see SKS 12:180 / PC 178).

Before the next phase of the visualizing Bildungsroman unfolds, Anti-Climacus inserts an anthropological statement into his text: "Every human being possesses to a higher or lower degree a capability called the power of the imagination, a power that is the first condition for what becomes of a person" (SKS 12:186 / PC 186). One understands that the youth in the visualizing Bildungsroman we are considering is in possession of precisely such an imaginative capacity, thanks to which he is able to comprehend "some image of perfection (ideal)," which can *either* be "handed down by history" and thereby have "the actuality of being" *or* be "formed by the imagination itself" and thus be a nonactual entity, a mere "thought-actuality" (SKS 12:186 / PC 186–87). Anti-Climacus informs us, "To this image . . . the youth is now drawn by his imagination, or his imagination draws this image to him. He becomes infatuated with this image. . . . He does not abandon it, even in sleep, this image that makes him sleepless" (SKS 12:186 / PC 187).⁷

One of imagination's strengths is that it is able to suspend time and space, but its weakness is that it places the youth at a distance from the sufferings that are in fact associated with wanting to actualize the ideal. Anti-Climacus explains, "In one sense the imagination's image or the image that the imagination depicts or maintains is still nonactuality; with regard to adversities and sufferings, it lacks the actuality of time and of temporality and or earthly life" (SKS 12:187 / PC 187). How it comes about that the nonactual "image" or "picture" depicted by the imagination nonetheless does impose the sufferings of actuality upon the youth is described in the following passage, in which the youth experiences a decisive metamorphosis:

His appearance shows it; his eyes see nothing of what lies closest around him, they seek only that image; he walks like a dreamer, and

yet one can see by the fire and the flame in his eyes that he is wide awake; he walks like a stranger, and yet he seems to be at home, for through the imagination he is always at home with this image, which he desires to resemble. And just as it so beautifully happens with lovers that they begin to resemble each other, so the young man is transformed in likeness to this image, which imprints or impresses itself on all his thought and on every utterance by him, while he, to repeat, with his eyes directed to this image—has not watched his step, has not paid attention to where he is. He wants to resemble this image; he is already beginning to resemble it—and now he suddenly discovers the surrounding world of actuality in which he is standing and the relation of this surrounding world to himself. (SKS 12:188 / PC 189)

It is a subtle fact in the visualizing Bildungsroman that as a result of his infatuation with the image, the youth loses his orientation in the empirical world and is thereby exposed to the very suffering that his “imaginary image” had kept at a safe distance from him. Like the lovers who over time come to resemble each other, the youth is little by little transformed by his “imaginary image,” which has occupied him to such an extent that the image visibly “imprints or impresses itself” in his whole appearance, his thought and speech: the *iconic fixation* has brought about his own *iconification*.

As already mentioned, the typical Bildungsroman brings to fruition 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 deconstructs this schema, inasmuch as it adds a dialectical Christian qualification to the second phase and postpones the third phase to a more or less metaphorical eternity. We thus come to know of the youth that he went about as a *stranger* among people but was nonetheless *at home* because he was at home with the image he so passionately wanted to resemble (compare SKS 12:188 / PC 189). Precisely this modality, being *a stranger and yet at home*, is the authentic, Christian modality in this world, a world in which only the inauthentic Christian can feel at home: “So the youth goes out into the world with this image before his eyes. He does not need to do what piety felt the urge to do—to walk the long way to the Holy Land in order to put himself back in time, because this image is so vivid to him that in another sense he still can be said to have journeyed abroad, although he remains in his customary place in the old surroundings—but occupied solely with wanting to resemble this image” (SKS 12:192 / PC 193). This allegorization of the pilgrimage, which is carried over from the outer, real world to the subject’s interiority, corresponds to suspension instituted by the “imaginary image” of the time between the youth and Jesus of Nazareth. The youth shall *not* set out on the long journey to the Holy Land, *not* give himself over to homelessness,

because he already *is* homeless in this world—precisely thanks to the image whose existential configuration he increasingly takes on. With a paradoxical logic of its own, the youth also undergoes a metamorphosis into an “old person,” “although not many years have passed” (SKS 12:194 / PC 195). The visualizing Bildungsroman’s ontogenetic final stage is a reality, and Anti-Climacus can conclude:

In a certain sense the youth’s imagination has deceived him, but indeed, if he himself *wills*, it has not deceived him to his detriment, it has deceived him into the truth; by means of a deception, it has, as it were, played him into God’s hands. . . . A shudder, it is true, may go through him for a moment as he now considers the matter, but abandon the image—no, that he cannot persuade himself to do. On the other hand, if he cannot persuade himself to abandon the image, he cannot escape the suffering either. . . . So he does not abandon the image but cheerfully enters the suffering into which he is being led. . . .

He perseveres until he dies: then he passed his test. He himself became the image of perfection he loved, and the imagination has truly not deceived him any more than Governance. (SKS 12:189–91 / PC 190–91)

Exit: Brushes, Palette, Pen, Paper

Kierkegaard’s critique of the cultivated society, a critique that gathers strength over time and becomes one of the essential preconditions for the so-called struggle with the Church, is a chapter in itself but is rooted in a Christian quarrel with every nonreligious body of thought that assumes the person *herself* has at her disposal the crucial conditions for emancipating herself from her more or less self-imposed immaturity and becoming herself—and thus, under her own power, escaping her existential *homelessness* and coming *home*, as the terminology of the formation novel would have it. Kierkegaard wishes to keep existence open, such that every time is accessible for God, who is the person’s creator and therefore reserves the sovereign right to compose poetically with his creation—terrible, joyful, sublime.

That it is the iconic representation of Christ that is transposed into the youth’s imitation should have made it clear how the aesthetic (image) is active in the religious (prototype) or, if you will, how deeply *mimesis* is connected with *imitatio*. So it is not for nothing that the difference between the words “picture” (*billede*) and “prototype” (*forbillede*) is only the little prefix *for-*, which Anti-Climacus never remarks upon. Nor does he note that the difference between the words “draw” or “attract” (*drage*) and “deceive” (*bedrage*) is only *be-*, and that there is thus only a hair’s breadth between the

redemptive activity carried out by the divine and the manipulative practice characteristic of a seducer.

However, in his portrayal of the movement of the icon-fixated youth toward the sufferings of actuality, Anti-Climacus himself presumably senses how his portrayal has suddenly acquired an alarming resemblance to a seduction story. In any case, he finds himself compelled to include this reassuring remark: “If the power that governs human life were a seductive power, then at this moment it would mockingly say of this youth: Look, now he is trapped” (SKS 12:188 / PC 189). Yet Governance does not mock in this way, so long as “the power that governs human life is love” (SKS 12:189 / PC 189). This is of course an upbuilding thought, but—one may well object—in itself it is absolutely no guarantee that the *text* in which the dangers of seduction are repudiated does not *itself* have seduction within its power and perhaps practices it most effectively precisely by downplaying it. And perhaps, when all is said and done, that is the only way one can seriously play the reader “into God’s possession.”

The visualizing Bildungsroman testifies to Kierkegaard’s highly ambivalent relationship toward art, reminiscent of the “sympathetic antipathy” that in *The Concept of Anxiety* is a fundamental determination of anxiety’s ambiguous essence. Later in *Practice in Christianity* this tension between aesthetic theory and aesthetic practice becomes dramatically exposed. In the work’s penultimate section, Anti-Climacus mocks the sermon that gives in to something as aesthetic as “contemplation” and thereby holds itself at an existential distance from “the prototype”: “by observing I go into the object (I become objective),” with the result that “I leave myself or go away from myself (I cease to be subjective)” (SKS 12:228 / PC 234). It is precisely these characteristics that the experiment with the child’s gaze, which got lost in the image of the crucified one, refutes in the starkest terms. If he were not so wrapped up in the image, the youth would never have wished to have become subjective.

The opposition between, on the one hand, “observation” or “admiration” as the merely objective, and, on the other hand, “imitation” as the subjective, true attitude toward the “prototype” gives Anti-Climacus the opportunity to speak about “Christian art” (SKS 12:246 / PC 254). In this regard he stresses how impossible it would be for him to portray Christ; indeed, as he explains further:

[It is] incomprehensible to me from whence an artist would gain the calmness, or incomprehensible to me is the calmness with which an artist has sat year in and year out occupied in the work of painting Christ—without having it occur to him whether Christ would wish to be painted, would wish to have his portrait, however idealized it became, depicted by his masterly brush. I do not comprehend how the artist would maintain his calm, that he would not notice Christ’s

displeasure, would not suddenly throw it all out, brushes and paints, far, far away, just as Judas did with the thirty pieces of silver, because he suddenly understood that Christ has required only imitators [i.e., disciples]. . . . I do not comprehend it; the brush would have fallen out of my hand the very second I was about to begin; very likely I would never have been the same again.

I do not comprehend this calmness of the artist in this kind of work. . . .

Yes, this is incomprehensible to me; I repeat, it is incomprehensible to me. (*SKS* 12:246–48 / *PC* 254–56)

Perhaps what is most incomprehensible is that it all seems so incomprehensible to Anti-Climacus. If the painter must throw out his paints and palettes, then Anti-Climacus, too, should throw out his pens and papers, for they are both producing “Christian art.” Nonetheless, or perhaps especially because of this, he continues indignantly, “Soon it will have gone so far that people must make use of art in the most various ways to help get Christendom to show at least some sympathy with Christianity” (*SKS* 12:248 / *PC* 256).

Anti-Climacus is right. Except that the moment will not come soon, but has already long since arrived and has come thanks, among others, to Anti-Climacus, who drills Christianity into his unchristian reader.

As art, indeed, can do.

Notes

Translated by Patrick Stokes.

1. Compare Jørgen Carlsen, “‘Her ruelles,’” *Slagmark*, no. 4 (Aarhus 1985): 28–45; see 33.

2. Compare Jørgen Dehs, “Ikke Phantasiens Kunstrige Væven, men Tankens Gysen,” *Slagmark*, no. 4 (Aarhus 1985): 46–59.

3. Compare *ibid.*, 48–49.

4. On this passage, see also the essay by Ragni Linnet in this volume.—Ed.

5. “Even if the contemporary generation had not left anything behind except these words: ‘We have believed that in such and such a year the god appeared in the humble form of a servant, lived and taught among us, and then died’—that is more than enough. The contemporary generation would have done what is needful, for this little announcement, this world-historical *nota bene*, is enough to become an occasion for someone who comes later, and the most prolix report can never in all eternity become more for the person who comes later” (*SKS* 4:300 / *PF* 104).

6. Compare Johnny Kondrup, *Levned og tolkninger: Studier i nordisk selvbiografi* (Odense: Universitetsforlag, Odense, 1982), 85.

7. Possibly something about this insomniac, this life vision in this chapter of *Practice in Christianity* is an aesthetic marker, the permanently seeing eye that cannot be closed.

