

# Kierkegaard's Relations with Postmodernism and Feminism

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## Introduction

There are intriguing congruities between Kierkegaard and some recent tendencies in feminism and post-modern thought.<sup>1</sup> Neither Kierkegaard, feminists, nor post-modernism are systematic (that's one congruity right there!), so the common points can't be neatly tabulated. But (again typically of all the parties concerned) they tend to lie in three areas: methodology, communicative strategy, and the rejection of procrustean metaphysics. In what follows I will try to assemble some fragments which point out these congruities.

## The Problem Stated

What happens to 'person' in a 'post-modern' era? At one level the answer to this question is plain. From the medieval synthesis through modern times, the search for understanding has been the search for an essence, a metaphysical construct. Within this paradigm, the quest for 'person' has focused on the quality of a metaphysical essence: Are persons primarily body or mind, thought or feeling, material or spiritual?

Postmodern paradigms of the nature of understanding shift the terms of this search. The "loss of the transcendental signified" deconstructs the notion of essence, for selves as for other things. Spiritual reality, understood as metaphysical, has no place in these paradigms.

Feminist paradigms yield a related transformation of the notion of selfhood. In the language of postmodernism, a key feminist claim might be that the "transcendental signified" has been determined patriarchally. The loss of the metaphysical self allows a focus on experience, particularly the social experience of women. Attention to such experience grounds challenges to traditional categories in various fields, notably ethics. Christian ethics, unabashedly determined through patriarchal authority, appears a prime target for such a challenge.

## Post-Modern Christianity: Don Cupitt

Before looking at how Kierkegaard's ideas relate to these issues, it would be helpful to see how Christianity looks to one who wholeheartedly embraces the "post-modern" worldview. This new face of Christianity is manifest in the work of Don Cupitt, theologian and Anglican cleric. His project is incarnate in a variety of works. In what follows I will focus on *The New Christian Ethics*, which is a wide-ranging theological investigation of the status of Christian practice in light of the 'death' of the realist frame of reference for Christian belief.

Cupitt begins by asserting that theological realism has been gradually demythologized since the Enlightenment. He claims that the increasing human consciousness of the social

construction of reality has led to the impossibility of maintaining such a realism. Given that meaning is pure social construction, theological realism is rendered a dead option. Yet Christian ethics (if not other ethical systems as well) is still stated in the 'residually-theological' terms of a platonic-realist framework.[2](#)

Cupitt asserts that "all modern philosophies of language" agree that the world is a human creation, the human world a communication network in and by language.[3](#) He consistently fleshes out this claim with reference to structuralist and post-structuralist ideas, even remarking that French structuralism is much the most advanced tradition in carrying the ideal of 'world-as-language' to its utmost conclusions.[4](#) Thus he cites structuralist theories of language and meaning-creation as furnishing the description and effecting the culminating result of the process of demythologizing realism.

Structuralism insists on the social construction of meaning - that there is no reality beyond what is said in language. The Saussurian term *langue* refers to the total linguistic framework within which utterances take place. Language does not express or point to an external reality; it actually forms this reality. Different linguistic constructions thus name and hence 'create' a different reality.

Cupitt uses this framework to mount a general attack on the concept of private experience.

I cannot experience a thing unless I have been pre-programmed by culture to be capable of experiencing it. . . . If a meaning is not already imprinted upon my constitution, it cannot become excited. There is no experience which is not the firing of a meaning, and therefore, . . . all mystical ideas about extraordinary experiences about the ineffable and about pure unconditioned awareness are dead.[5](#)

One might of course participate in a culture which has mystical ideas as part of its framework. Such ideas would merely be human constructions, with a natural history like any other concepts. But to those who claim to have private unsocialized experiences of the ineffable, Cupitt replies:

What makes it seem so important to you is just what makes it mean nothing at all to me. For, necessarily, the only common meaning is linguistic meaning. *Experience does not exist*; can you understand that? Only the public is real, and experience is not public.[6](#)

Given the death of realism and experience as a basis, Christian ethics is challenged to invent a new decision-structure not dependent on them. But to do so requires rooting out the residual theological realism inherent in a host of Christian practices and beliefs, replacing this with forms tenable in the face of a self-conscious social construction. Consistent with his denials of realism as regards the external world and of private experience, Cupitt goes on to claim that the metaphysical self is a necessary casualty of this rooting out of realism, and with it the idea of internal action and thought as a locus of 'truth.' From this it follows among other things that

In religion . . . we have to give up the old Augustinian idea that the real me is the me at private prayer. My reality is first and foremost relational and linguistic. I am the sum of all my communicative interactions with other people.[7](#)

Private prayer, construed as the ultimate metaphysical connection between the metaphysical self and the real though hidden God, is essentially an ontologically impossible practice.

## **Kierkegaard and Postmodernism I: Methodology**

What kind of relations obtain between Kierkegaard and postmodernism? It is common to suggest that Kierkegaard's position always already comprises the postmodern analysis of knowing and language. The anti-metaphysical strands running through such works as the *Fragments* and the *Postscript*, together with the entire project of the pseudonymous authorship, are taken as forerunners of the postmodern emphasis on constructed truth and plural readings. Thus Kierkegaard has been a central resource for such postmodern writers as Mark C. Taylor.

Kierkegaard's most direct address to the issue of postmodern reading is contained in his *Book on Adler*. This essay has not been much considered by postmodern thinkers, perhaps because it is a minor and topical work, which was occasioned by the case of a clergyman hopelessly confused between Hegelianism and Christianity. Nevertheless, this little work is of great help in clarifying Kierkegaard's relation to postmodernist ideas. In it Kierkegaard discusses two "confusions of the age" which are particularly important in this context: the confusions between the 'genius' and the 'apostle', and between the 'premise-author' and the 'essential author'.<sup>8</sup>

In Kierkegaard's formulation the central distinction between the categories 'genius' and 'apostle' is in the dimension of communicative authority. The contribution of the genius must be judged on its own internal evidence, and such qualities as profundity and cleverness are potentially important. The apostle's contribution, on the other hand, stands or falls on the quality of authority associated with it. Even if I understand the content communicated by the apostle to the fullest, I have not appropriated it fully unless I also accept the authority under which it is promulgated.<sup>9</sup> Kierkegaard consistently maintained that he himself was "without authority." One of his main criticisms of Adler is that he confuses these categories, believing that he can support a claim to revelation through argumentation concerning the content revealed.

The premise-author has "premises for living but no conclusions"; although he may write and even be published, he cannot write the essential final part of the treatise. What the premise-author lacks is an essential life-view. He is outwardly directed, whereas the essential author is inwardly directed. The premise-author thinks that everything will be all right if only a loud enough outcry is made.<sup>10</sup>

The essential author, on the other hand, always has a conclusion in hand and never makes a move through uncertainty. His work is nourishing where the premise-author is devouring.<sup>11</sup>

It is one thing to be a physician . . . , and another thing to be a sick man who . . . communicate[s] bluntly the symptoms of his disease. Perhaps he may be able to express and expound the symptoms in far more glowing colors . . . . But in spite of that there remains the decisive qualitative difference between a sick man and a physician. And this difference is precisely the same decisive *qualitative difference* between being a premise-author and an essential author.<sup>12</sup>

Kierkegaard views Adler under the category of premise-author, especially in light of his willingness to alter and ultimately retract his "revelation" under official pressure.

The distinction between essential and premise authorship gets to the heart of the split between Kierkegaard and postmodernism. The postmodern outcry "vive la Difference!" is avowedly meaning-devouring. To be a postmodernist is to be a premise-author, a reincarnate Adler, an invalid posing as a physician. Clearly Kierkegaard wishes to count himself an essential author, self-contained and upbuilding. In this respect, perhaps even more than in his refusal of apostolic authority, he distinguishes himself from Adler. It is his claim to a self-consistent and edifying "project" which distinguishes Kierkegaard's methodology from that of postmodernism.

## Kierkegaard and Postmodernism II: The Relational Self

Like Cupitt, Kierkegaard discusses the grammar of the self and the relation of religious inwardness and outwardness. His position on this subject reflects a certain tension. But before considering how this tension is played out in specific examples it will be useful to understand how he thinks of the self in general.

Given that Cupitt's reflections on prayer are part of a chapter entitled 'Remaking the Christian Self,' it is worth noting that Kierkegaard also has a theory of the self which is fundamentally epistemological and relational rather than metaphysical. However, he stresses the *internal* relating ability of the self.

A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself.[13](#)

Cupitt rejects the 'inner' mental and soulish self in favor of the 'outer' and relational self. But attention to Kierkegaard suggests that this is a false dichotomy. If Cupitt wants to reject metaphysical realism, his reliance on the inner/outer distinction is untenable. 'Inner' and 'outer' are metaphysical terms which imperfectly name two fuzzy classes of relations.

Kierkegaard's construction of the self as relational stresses this point. As language users we are constantly involved in the process of relation; and while the world around us controls what kinds of selves we are to some extent, by its relation to us, we are at the very least not passive observers of this process. We may choose how to value and integrate the various relations in which we are involved; we may even seek new relations.

Kierkegaard deepens his relational analysis by denying that the self is self-constituted, claiming instead that it is constituted by another, on which it is thus dependent. Inevitably then the question arises of the self's relation to this constituting other. In *The Sickness Unto Death* Kierkegaard runs through the typology of possible relationships between the self and its constitutive other. He finally defines the state of spiritual health thus: "In relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it."[14](#)

So much might be said simply as a matter of philosophical psychology. Even Cupitt's structural-social account of the self might be phrased in these terms, if the constituting power were understood to be the language-using community as a whole. But Kierkegaard of course claims that the establishing power is God.

A reliance on God as establishing power certainly appears metaphysical. But in this context it is significant that God comes into Kierkegaard's discourse as a necessary postulate of relationality, rather than as a metaphysical idea. As D. Z. Phillips points out, in the everyday grammar of religion, the relation between the believer and God is primary, and theological or philosophical attempts to take as foundational the project of 'proving God's existence' metaphysically tend to ignore actual religious practice.[15](#) Kierkegaard's existential method at least has the merit of not ignoring practice.

### The Relational Self In Practice

Kierkegaard's understanding of what is implied by the transparent relation of outward relations to the inward (and where it can go wrong) can be seen at work in four distinct contexts: in his imaginative construction and theological category of the 'Knight of Faith,' in his critical remarks on 'hidden inwardness' in Christianity, in his self-evaluation of his

own maieutic project, and most directly in his comments on the relation between hidden and visible 'works of love.'

The best known of these contexts is that of the 'Knight of Faith,' who represents the ideal of Christianity in *Fear and Trembling*. The Knight of Faith represents a stage beyond that of the Knight of Infinite Resignation, who has visibly given up the world. The Knight of Faith, having given up the world, nevertheless acts 'by virtue of the absurd' as though the world were his.

He resigned everything infinitely, and then he grasped everything again by virtue of the absurd. He is continually making the movement of infinity, but he does it with such precision and assurance that he continually gets finitude out of it, and no one ever suspects anything else.[16](#)

Kierkegaard's two paradigmatic examples of this stage are Abraham and an invented modern figure who is to all outward appearances a tradesman or a tax collector. What they share is a faith so 'inward,' so subjective, that it does not show at all in their everyday lives. Thus it is impossible to determine what they are: whether the contemporary Knight is not perhaps actually the perfect philistine he appears, whether Abraham is not perhaps the heartless automaton the narrative allows.

But while stressing this inwardness as the essence of Christianity, Kierkegaard is also acutely aware of the potential problems of hiddenness. He makes fun of the 'starred and beribboned' personage who declares that he is ready to give all if it should be required of him, but in 70 years he has found no challenge requiring him to give all.

This amounts to making a fool of God; it is like a child playing a game of hide-and-seek so that no one shall find him. One says aloud - if it is required, etc. - and then says very softly - look, not even Satan himself will be able to get hold of me - so cleverly shall I hide.[17](#)

Kierkegaard, always sensitive to the use of language and its relation to other actions, in one passage from his journals makes outward context the test of spiritual sincerity:

. . . all speaking with the mouth is a kind of ventriloquism, an indeterminate something. The deception is that there is, after all, a definite visible figure who uses his mouth. But take care. Language is an abstraction.

In order for speaking actually to become human speech in a deeper sense, or in a spiritual sense, something else is required with respect to being the one who speaks, two points must be determined: the one is the speech, the words spoken, the other is the situation.

The situation determines decisively whether or not the speaker is in character with what he says, or the situation determines whether or not the words are spoken at random, a talking which is unattached.[18](#)

Thus geographical or cultural 'Christendom' is composed of those who claim 'inwardness' but do not ever show it outwardly, who effectively avoid ever being put to the test. Kierkegaard claims that both inwardness and its expression are needed: neither will suffice alone.

Kierkegaard's rejection of hidden inwardness might seem to be at odds with his own case, in which he admits to having hidden his inward Christianity. Indeed he confesses that this "is and continues to be an awkward matter." But he notes that he has not

remained hidden in order to avoid the 'Christian collisions,' nor has he in fact been spared them. Furthermore, he claims that the task which he took on, that of prodding others' false 'hidden inwardness,' could only be achieved by the method of indirect communication, which requires its author to hide his purposes.[19](#)

Finally, the first section of *Works of Love* addresses the problem at hand straight on in dealing with "love's hidden life and its recognizability by its fruits." Here Kierkegaard maintains that the spring of Christian love and action is to be found in God's unseen love. Yet "if it were so, as conceited sagacity, proud of not being deceived, thinks, that we should believe nothing that we cannot see with our physical eyes, then we first and foremost ought to give up believing in love."[20](#) If one did so then one would lose faith in the internal relation which grounds those external relations which are conventional works of love. Religious inwardness and social outwardness are here seen as intimately connected, so much so that the spring of the individual's outward relations is to be found in inwardness. More than that, in speaking of the primary importance of looking toward one's own fruits, rather than those of others, Kierkegaard is foreshadowing Cupitt's exhortation to "meditatively question ourselves, read quietly and think about our lives, our friends, our values . . . if they help us with our real life, which is our life with others."[21](#) But he goes beyond Cupitt in suggesting a touchstone by which one might actually determine something about values, a relation which is valued above all others and in turn serves as a standard of valuation for all others - in short, a transcendent relation.

### **Kierkegaard and Postmodernism III: The Transcendent Relation**

This notion of transcendent relation, which arises naturally from Kierkegaard's understanding of the self as relational, in both "inward" and "outward" aspects, is the foundation of an analysis of personal religious practices (such as private prayer) which does not depend on a substance-metaphysics. Of course, religious believers often refer to these practices using an expression which has the surface grammar of substance-metaphysics, speaking of relations between individuals and 'the transcendent.' But Kierkegaard for one consistently tries to subvert this surface grammar and center his work on the deep grammar of relation, as in the following passage:

When the question about truth is asked subjectively, the individual's relation is reflected upon subjectively. If only the how of this relation is in truth, the individual is in truth, even if he in this way were to relate himself to untruth.[22](#)

Yet, as Kierkegaard claims in a gloss on this passage found in his journals, this emphasis on relation does not give the believer a blank check. The tendency which he exhibits in his more theoretical works to keep from direct talk of Divine reality is driven by his "epistemological modesty"[23](#) and does not arise out of any doubt on his part about the truth of God. He believes that there is such a truth, but this truth can only be grasped in the course of transcendent relations; it cannot be established ahead of time. For

the remarkable thing is that there is a How with the characteristic that when the How is scrupulously rendered the What is also given, that this is the How of faith. Right here, at its very maximum, inwardness is shown to be objectivity.[24](#)

In short, the only person with whom one can have a God- relationship is God, and the only way to the truth of God is through God-relationship.

Back once more to the Book on Adler. Kierkegaard speaks of "an erring *Wissenschaft*" which confuses Christianity. "*Esprit* and spirit, revelation and originality, a calling from God and ingeniousness, an apostle and a genius, all coalesce in one and the same thing".[25](#) Even so does postmodern reading, the *Wissenschaft* of normative erring,

confuse Christianity in our age. Theologians like Cupitt, and philosophers like Mark C. Taylor, take Derrida - who in Kierkegaardian categories is the ultimate premise-genius, at play in the field of the signifier - *Derrida* of all people, as a prophet of Absolute Truth.

But Kierkegaard's substitution of existential epistemology for substance-metaphysics, and his ironic and dialectical use of serious philosophy and theology, are proof against Derridean mis/reading. Kierkegaard had already shown this in his unfinished student work *Johannes Climacus, or De Omnibus Dubitandum Est*. The text is a travesty on the theme of the existential impossibility of philosophical reading: Johannes is a student of philosophy who goes mad in the attempt to existentially appropriate Descartes' universal doubt.<sup>26</sup> Were Johannes around today his trouble would clearly be with Derrida not Descartes. But it would be the same problem, with the same result. The semeiotic sense demonstrated in that work shows that Kierkegaard will not mistake Derrida's shop for a tailor's, despite the sign in the window: "Pressing Done Here".<sup>27</sup>

### **Kierkegaard and Feminism I: "That Individual"**

At first glance Kierkegaard's relations with feminism are even more tenuous than his connection to postmodernism. To the extent that he comments on the "woman question," Kierkegaard adopts a patronizing patriarchal point of view. Indeed, Kierkegaard's implied 'individual' (the audience of his books) is masculine and bourgeois. But this fact raises a dialectical puzzle. For the origin of Kierkegaard's category lies in his need to communicate with his ex-fiancée, Regine Olson. In short 'that individual' was a woman, a particular woman. Thus much of the time, at least in the early pseudonymous works, Kierkegaard's intended audience is a woman - although of course she is not the explicit audience of the pseudonymous authors. Yet both historical and textual evidence shows that, in relation to this particular audience, Kierkegaard signally fails at the task of communication as he sets it for himself *ex post facto* in *The Point of View*: to find the reader where [she] is, and begin there.<sup>28</sup>

Despite this irony, Kierkegaard's focus on the individual, his reader, is very important. As Kierkegaard came to appropriate the category of the individual in his writing, he redefined the notion of audience. Indeed he redefined this concept in a way which has some connection with the framework of contemporary feminism. Virginia Held speaks of feminist ethics as addressing the domain "between the self and the universal."

What feminist moral theory will emphasize, in contrast, will be the domain of particular others in relations with one another.

The region of "particular others" is a distinct domain, where it can be seen that what becomes artificial and problematic are the very "self" and "all others" of standard moral theory. In the domain of particular others, the self is already closely entwined in relations with others, and the relation may be much more real, salient, and important than the interests of any individual self in isolation.<sup>29</sup>

Thus feminism implicitly rejects the two frameworks of classical ethics, 'individual rights' and 'universal duties'. For all his stress on individual existential appropriation, Kierkegaard too places his focus "between the self and the universal" by stressing the mode of personal Socratic dialectic. In so doing he rejects the philosophical modes of communication which were dominant in his time: solipsistic reflection (Descartes) and didactic systematization (Hegel). In short, Kierkegaard talks like a feminist: *from* his own experience, or praxis, *to* individual others, and without attempting to make any individual's experience normative for others with different stories. (I can't review the arguments here, but many Kierkegaard scholars have recently questioned the reading of Kierkegaard's "stages" as normative and developmental.) Kierkegaard's project is

maieutic, and we would do well to recall the philosophical differences between midwives and obstetricians.

## **Kierkegaard and Feminism II: Relational Ethics**

Another important key to the feminist side of Kierkegaard is his category of the 'teleological suspension of the ethical,' which forms the framework for his reading of the Abraham story. Ironically, this is the passage in all Kierkegaard's work which feminists, indeed women generally, unite in rejecting. But before taking offense, it is worth clarifying the reasons for this offense.

It is common to take the call for a teleological suspension of the ethical as a demand for the metaphysical rejection of the world in the interest of obtaining unchanging Truth. Such an interpretation is in danger of forgetting that the Truth involved is not a humanly constructed thesis, but a revelation.

Here it is important to remember Kierkegaard's formulation of the categories 'genius' and 'apostle' in terms of communicative authority. What is essential in the command to Abraham is not the content, but the authority behind it. What is essential about it for us is our relation to that authority, a person, God. If we bemoan the unfairness and injustice of the Divine request, we have missed the transformation that has occurred before our very eyes. In his teleological suspension of the ethical, Abraham has sacrificed abstract rational justice (Kantian patriarchal ethics) and received back an ethics of relation. Or rather, since the earlier history of Abraham implies that he already lives an ethics of relation, it is Johannes de Silentio and his Kantian readers who are challenged to undergo this transformation. In *Fear and Trembling* Kantian universal ethics, the bourgeois ethics of *Either/Or's* Judge William, is slain once and for all. What replaces it should look familiar to readers of Held and Gilligan: it is an ethics of relation, an ethics of care.

Feminists may still be outraged at the Abraham story. But their offense at the particular lesson about relation which this story suggests should not blind them to the fact that Kierkegaard is here a fellow traveler. And of course he too is offended. The dialectical question is what happens after that.

It may be worth pursuing this story further. Kierkegaard's idea of an absolute relation, which is the touchstone for all other relations, does not make other relations "less important" in some universalistic sense. Indeed it may provide a needed corrective to an ethic of caring. Nell Noddings suggests that one need not care for those one doesn't know.<sup>30</sup> Virginia Held rebels against this, and resolves the problem by admitting a mixture of universal rational laws and relational caring.<sup>31</sup> But if there is a touchstone relation, an absolute relation, and one which is by its very nature only possible with regard to one Other, then a pure ethic of relation may be possible. Then Kierkegaard may have a serious contribution to make to feminist ethics.

## **Kierkegaard and Feminism III: Women's Experience**

It is worth noting in this context that Kierkegaard is not completely oblivious to women's experience. In a footnote, he reminds us of a woman whose experience parallels Abraham's: Mary. Far from being an empty receptacle (as some feminists have claimed), Mary also receives a revelation which forces a radical choice and demands a teleological suspension of the ethical - a rethinking of what relationships are really important.

When the angel had announced to Mary that by the Spirit she should give birth to a child - no, this whole thing was a miracle, why then did this child need nine months like other children? O what a test for faith and humility! That this is the divine will, to need the slowness of time! Behold, this was the cross.<sup>32</sup>

Abraham's ordeal is quickly over. But Mary's endures for nine months, and longer. And while we don't hear about what Abraham (or Isaac) thought about the ordeal afterward (and as far we know Sarah never learned of it), we do know that "Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart." At first glance this appears as "hidden inwardness." But it is precisely this kind of pondering about the Incarnation which can so easily lead - has often led - to a theology of liberation.

Can Kierkegaard be a resource for feminist Christianity? Consider:

Kierkegaard's God rejects the rational universal in favor of an ethic of relation. Is not this a feminist God? Kierkegaard's God asks that we be prepared to make sacrifices for the sake of personal relation. Is not this asking true to the facts of human relationality? Kierkegaard's God provokes us to consider which relations are dearest to us. Is not this a God speaking to women's experience? Kierkegaard's God speaks only to individuals, and demands that our faith arise out of individual experience. Is not this a feminist God?

### Envoi

I hope to have shown that various echoes of postmodern and feminist positions are present in Kierkegaard. Like many postmodern and feminist writers, he proposes and uses a model of the self which is founded on relation rather than metaphysical essence. His unique contribution lies in his emphasis that relations are personal, and grounded in a transcendent relation. These key features of Kierkegaard's theocentric Christianity make it a valuable point of departure for Christian analysis of selfhood in the present age.

Yet for Kierkegaard analysis, however abstruse, is only useful in the context of lived resolution. This, I think, is the reason for the initially surprising fact that Kierkegaard is in many ways more closely related to feminist praxis than to postmodern play. It also requires his serious readers to be more interested in praxis than play. To make this point I want to end with a famous passage from Kierkegaard's Journals.

What I really need is to get clear about *what I must do*, not what I must know, except insofar as knowledge must precede every act. . . . the crucial thing is to find a truth which is truth *for me*, to find *the idea for which I am willing to live and die*. Of what use would it be to me to discover a so-called objective truth . . . if it had no deeper meaning *for me and for my life?*[33](#)

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### Notes

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2. Don Cupitt, *The New Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1988), 1.
3. Ibid., 6.
4. Ibid., 85.

5. Ibid., 87.
6. Ibid., 82.
7. Ibid., 91.
8. Søren Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 3-12.
9. Ibid., 110.
10. Ibid., 3-6.
11. Ibid., 6-10.
12. Ibid., 11.
13. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. XIX, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 13.
14. Ibid., 14.
15. D. Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), 12.
16. Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling; Repetition*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. VI, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 41.
17. Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967-1978), sec. 2123.
18. Ibid., sec. 4056.
19. Ibid., sec. 2125.
20. Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. XVI, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 5.
21. Cupitt, 91.
22. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to "Philosophical Fragments"*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. XII, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), I:199.
23. A term I first encountered in C. Stephen Evans, "Kierkegaard on Subjective Truth: Is God an Ethical Fiction?," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 7 (1976), 288-99.
24. Kierkegaard, *Journals*, sec. 4550.
25. Kierkegaard, *On Authority*, 104.
- 26.

- Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments; Johannes Climacus*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. VII, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 264.
27. See Kierkegaard's dismissal of philosophy on these grounds in Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard's Writings, no. III-IV, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), I:32.
28. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View for My Work As an Author: A Report to History*, ed. Benjamin Nelson, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), 27.
29. Virginia Held, "Feminism and Moral Theory," in *Women and Moral Theory*, eds. Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (Savage, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987), 117.
30. Nell Noddings, *Caring* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 91-94.
31. Held, 119-20.
32. Kierkegaard, *On Authority*, 50n.
33. Kierkegaard, *Journals* sec. 5100.