

DAVID GOICOECHEA

HEIDEGGER—THE TAOISTS—KIERKEGAARD

To participate in the ringing of the ring in order to let things come forth.
—Chuang Tzu¹

If the moment is to acquire decisive significance, then the seeker up until
that moment must not have possessed the truth.

—Kierkegaard²

In what circle are we moving here, indeed, inevitably? Is it the *eukuklos*
Aletheie, a well-rounded unconcealment itself, thought as the clearing?
—Heidegger³

Wing-Cheuk Chan's paper in this volume, "Phenomenology of Technology: East and West,"⁴ provokes many questions especially because of his method of comparative philosophy. His philosophizing together with Heidegger and the Taoists about the question of technology is fruitful in stimulating further thinking about this key problem. Allan Megill has argued convincingly that just as Nietzsche faced and thought through nihilism, and Foucault faced and thought through humanism, so Heidegger faced and thought through technology.⁵ Chan shows in a surprising and convincing way that the question of technology is also a key focal point for Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu. Heidegger's phenomenology of technology is challenging because it orders with an enframing that is dangerous but also granting; not only challenging, it is shown by Chan to be done by the Taoists in a parallel fashion. In fact, Heidegger seems to have been somewhat guided by the Taoists. And yet Heidegger moves from phenomenology to thinking about origination with the Taoists in terms of a flux without substance and without causality. Heidegger and the Taoists leap into a hermeneutic circle; they leap into the assumption that the granting of art can save us from the challenge of technology. Do the Taoists with their art grant something to Heidegger as he comes to his radical hermeneutics?

Chan argues that the Taoists grant greatly to Heidegger who receives creatively. The focal point of Heidegger's theory is the link between the Ge-Stell and the Ge-viert. The Ge-Stell is the enframing that challenges

DAVID GOICOECHEA, professor, Department of Philosophy, Brock University.
Specialty: Existentialism, Postmodernism, History of Philosophy. E-mail:
dgoicoec@spartan.ac.brocku.ca.

by ordering and yet meets the challenge by granting. The *Ge-Stell* insofar as it orders is the *Ge-viert* or the fourfold. Lao Tzu wrote of the great Tao—the great sky—the great earth—the great king. Heidegger works with this as the divine—the heaven—the earth—the mortal. Taoist approaches to the opposites, art, and salvation are implied, as Chan shows, by the relation between the fourfold and the order that can ring around us and yet ring out for us as Chuang Tzu shows.

Another text that takes us into these questions is *The Sense of Antirationalism: The Religious Thought of Zhuangzi and Kierkegaard* by Karen L. Carr and Philip V. Ivanhoe.⁶ Carr and Ivanhoe compare and contrast Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi as religious philosophers rather than identify them as artistic philosophers. According to them, Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi both see a danger in rationalism. They both follow a way that is rationally negative and indirect so as to be saved from the enframing of rationalism that is a rationalization. They are not opposed to the rational that they practice but only rationalism. According to Carr and Ivanhoe, they both set up a framework that is religious as well as aesthetic so that they do not get enframed. But religiously they are very different, for Kierkegaard thinks that only the God-man can save us now. His understanding of the incarnation has implications for how to understand the enframement that is connected with technology and rationalization. It has implications for the key points that are involved in its solution: origination, nothingness, the opposites, and the hermeneutic circle. If Heidegger and the Taoists are as similar as Chan shows them to be, then they both differ from Kierkegaard in the ways Carr and Ivanhoe show Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi to differ.

FROM PHENOMENOLOGIES OF TECHNOLOGY

Chan argues that Chuang Tzu has at the center of his thinking the question of enframing. Not only Chuang Tzu's framing of the question but even his way through it is much the same as Heidegger's. Chan writes:

When Heidegger points out that *Ge-Stell* is the essence of technology, he has revealed the domination of modern man by technology. Interestingly enough, such a similar paradox has been indicated by Chuang Tzu: "The swamp pheasant has to walk ten paces for one peck and a hundred paces for one drink. Unexpectedly it is caught in a cage. Though it looks great, it is not good." As a matter of fact, the English translation for *Ge-Stell* is "enframing." Its meaning perfectly matches that of "constructing a cage." Both "enframing" and "cage-constructing" link to the increase of security. But in essence they create a new bondage.⁷

When Chan makes the comparison in this way we see that the question of Heidegger and of Chuang Tzu is the universal question of bondage and liberation. Heidegger seeks to think the question through in terms of our modern culture of technology. When we attempt to dominate through technology or something else, we become dominated by just that. When we attempt to possess, through technology or something else, we become possessed not only by a concern for our possessions but especially by our desire to possess. Plato's problem of the cave is much the same. Through forgetfulness we are at the bottom of the cave in bondage. We can get release by recollection of the bigger picture of the soul and the forms. Through proper education in literature, gymnastics, science, and philosophy we can be liberated from our enframement in the cave.

Much the same is going on in the Carr-Ivanhoe comparison of Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi. The rationalizations of rationalism are a kind of technological binding. Kierkegaard's phenomenology of madness or of the demonic is very much like Heidegger's and Chuang Tzu's phenomenology of "enframing." Kierkegaard shows how the demonic is "an enclosed reserve that unfreely discloses itself all of a sudden out of boredom."⁸

Kierkegaard's phenomenology of "enframing" or of the enclosed reserve is a description made in terms of his understanding of the person as relational and in process. He defines the person as "a relation that relates to itself and in relating to itself relates to the other."⁹ So we are an immediate aesthetic relation to other persons and things. All consciousness is conscious of something. As living bodies we can relate in dreams, wishes, and desires to other bodily beings. As an embodied soul, I relate impulsively to other persons, places, and things. I can relate immediately and without reflection and be "enframed" in the enclosed reserve of the aesthetic. However, I can also relate to myself through reflection. All consciousness is consciousness of itself and that can move from the prereflective to the reflective. If I do this, I develop my abilities for ethical behavior. Through reflection I develop activity that allows me to make decisions and hold fast to them in resolution.

Kierkegaard uses the image of a house¹⁰ in order to describe our relational personhood in process. I can live in only the basement of my house as an aesthete. But I can also move up to the first floor and live there ethically. But there are more possibilities. In my struggles to be either aesthetic or ethical, I can discover the second floor of the house. As the aesthetic moment of time and the ethical line of time collide with each other and fail and frustrate me, I can take refuge in the eternal. With infinite resignation to¹¹ the limits of the temporal, the finite, the relative, I can begin to relate to the eternal, the infinite,

the absolute. On the second floor of the house I relate to the wholly Other as Plato related to the Forms when he got out of the cave and as the Buddha related to nirvana when he detached himself from desire. I do not need to be “enframed” in the enclosed reserve of the basement or the first floor. I can be free by seeing everything from an eternal, infinite, absolute perspective. I suffered in the basement and on the first floor because I took relative relations as absolute. But in resignation to those relative limits, I can relate absolutely to the absolute and thus no longer be in the bondage of despair.¹²

However, Kierkegaard shows that we are still enframed in an enclosed reserve even if we live on the second floor of our house. Faith according to him is the double movement leap whereby we leap up into the second floor or religiousness A, but while living there we leap back and also live simultaneously on the first floor and in the basement. When we absolutely relate to the absolute and relatively relate to the relative, then we will have enough passionate inwardness so as to no longer be bored. We will no longer so enclose ourselves so that we can only unfreely disclose ourselves. To further understand Kierkegaard’s solution to the enframing problem, we must now move with Chan and Carr/Ivanhoe to the question of origination.

TO THINKING ORIGATION

Very early in his paper Chan cites Heidegger as writing:

When the Greeks characterized art as *techne*, they meant neither today’s machine technology nor what we call art, but rather a manner of revealing the emergence of the world.¹³

Heidegger, the Taoists, and Kierkegaard, each in their own way, are setting up a framework or ethos that is big and flexible enough that it does not reductively enframe us. As Chan shows, Heidegger and the Taoists are essentially the same in both the description of the problem and the thinking of the solution. An understanding of emergent origination is a key to both the problem and the solution. Chan argues that they also have similar approaches to the phenomenon of emergence. However, as Carr and Ivanhoe show, Kierkegaard is essentially different from Zhuangzi on the issue of what Kierkegaard would understand as incarnational origination and all that implies. Of course, they show that there are also important likenesses between Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi and, thus, one would think between Kierkegaard and Heidegger. We must now clearly examine the Heideggerian-Taoist likeness so that we can then appreciate the significance of the Kierkegaardian difference even to the point of seeing how it still accommodates the likeness.

To understand the nature and place of origination in Heidegger and the Taoists, some distinctions will help. Greek philosophers wanted to know the truth about the becoming of all things. They had an arche theory of origination. The world of the many, changing things came forth from an arche or an Ursprung or a source. The Taoists also think along these lines. They too are cosmologists. As Chan reminds us, Chuang Tzu claims that: “That which brings forth things as things is not a thing.”¹⁴ Furthermore, Chan cites Chuang Tzu as claiming: “The ten thousand things all come forth from the same seed.”¹⁵ The Taoists think of the source as the Tao just as the Greeks thought of it as the arche. For the Taoist origination was as much existential as it was cosmological. In order to live well we need to follow the way of the Tao and let there be a spontaneous origination in all of our thoughts, words, and deeds. If we allow the Tao to emerge within ourselves, we will have attuned ourselves to the useless that can enable us to relate properly to the useful. Now Heidegger too knows of the distinction between cosmological and existential origination. He puts the emphasis on existential emergence or what he calls *Ereignis*. Chan cites his words: “Das Spiegel-Spiel von Welt ist der Reigen des Ereignis.”¹⁶ Art, ethics, politics, and religion can let there come forth a world view. This is the point of Heidegger’s *Origin of a Work of Art*. So before we further examine the *Ereignis* of the reframing of an enframing with Heidegger and the Taoists through Chan let us do some further comparative philosophy and think about this with Kierkegaard. According to Chan, Heidegger thinks through the technology of modernity with the Greeks and the Taoists. He does that primarily in terms of art. But Kierkegaard thinks about the issue also from the Christian and religious point of view. How different is Kierkegaard’s religious approach that still includes the artistic from the Heideggerian view that brackets out the Christian point of view in uniting with the Taoists?

In explicating Kierkegaard’s philosophy, Carr and Ivanhoe rightly emphasize the incarnation. They write:

Ultimately, however, Kierkegaard believes that all such efforts at self-awareness will come to grief, unless they are transformed and informed by the Incarnation.¹⁷

We can understand the importance of the incarnation by considering how it has to do both with the problem of enframing and the solution of origination.

In *Philosophical Fragments* Kierkegaard thinks through the moment of the incarnation and its implications. The incarnation is an absurd, paradoxical, and offensive notion. That the God as understood by the Jews or the Greek philosophers could ever become man

is contradictory. The creator is not a creature and cannot be such. The perfect one is not the imperfect many and cannot be such. And yet the one who believes in the God-man believes just that, that omnipotence became an imperfect creature. Kierkegaard's philosophy is a meditation on and a living out of the dash between God and man.

The God-man is the exemplar for his understanding of personhood. The believer thinks of the God-man as eternal and temporal at once, as infinite and finite at once. According to Kierkegaard's understanding of faith, the Incarnation of the God-man gives the believer a gift and a task. The gift is the large framework or ethos of full and unreduced personhood. The task is to appropriate-reduplicate-imitate the God-man in order to live out our full personhood. If we only live in the framework of the aesthetic moment with its momentary temporal, finite basement world, then are we enframed and restlessly anxious. If we move up to the temporal, finite first floor of the ethical line of time and make resolute decisions in the framework of ecstatic time, we will still be reductively limited. But even if we become resigned to the limits of both of these and live the Godlike life of religiousness A in touch with the eternal, infinite absolute, we will still be too limited. In order to be a full person without a reductively limited enframing, we need to be in both the eternal and temporal at once. We need to appropriate the God of the God-man and the man of the God-man. We need to imitate the double movement leap of the God-man, both his becoming logos and his becoming flesh. The God-man in setting up the vast and flexible ethos lived out the paradox of duplication. He affirmed the double value of the aesthetic and the ethical. It is the task of the believer to reduplicate what the God-man duplicated and to never get enframed in just one side of the double matrix. It is the task of the believer to make the God-man one's exemplar and to imitate him in his love that loves both the absolute and the relative with a Good Samaritan love and a Suffering Servant love.

So the God-man gives the grace of the Incarnation that enables believers to not get enframed in reductivity. The incarnation affirms all of existence both the eternal and the temporal. But the moment of the incarnation is also a moment of origination, of an origination that is different from either an archeology or a genealogy. The incarnation is a special moment of human becoming. Kierkegaard thinks that a new metaphysics of repetition is revealed by the incarnation that differs from becoming in the Platonic metaphysics of recollection and from the becoming of the Hegelian metaphysics of mediation. These three metaphysics of human becoming are very important for they have to do with freedom and domination or with the problem of enframing and the way out. A citation from Kierkegaard's

Journals and Papers can help us get right to the point of incarnational origination as it differs from recollective archeology and mediational genesis. Kierkegaard writes:

The greatest good, after all, which can be done for a being . . . is to make it free. In order to do just that, omnipotence is required. This seems strange, since it is precisely omnipotence that supposedly would make (a being) dependent. But if one will reflect on omnipotence, he will see that it also must contain the unique qualification of being able to withdraw itself again in a manifestation of omnipotence in such a way that precisely for this reason that which has been originated through omnipotence can be independent. That is why one human being cannot make another person wholly free . . . only omnipotence can withdraw itself at the same time it gives itself away, and this relationship is the very independence of the receiver.¹⁸

How omnipotence withdraws and steps back in order to let the other be free is revealed by the Incarnation. The God steps back by stepping down. According to the Platonic recollection model, the escaped prisoner will come back to the cave to release other prisoners so that they too can be freed of their finitude and once again become immortal soul contemplating eternal form. There is no room in this model for a future that is new and thus for freedom. Salvation is going back to where we used to be. Recollection is all about recovering the past. It would seem that the Taoist model is more like the Hegelian model. When Chuang Tzu says that: “The ten thousand things all come forth from the same seed,” he is using a genetic model rather than an arche model. The Greeks before Anaxagoras thought in terms of a non-living arche such as water, air, fire, earth, or a platonic form. Anaxagoras started the seed model and Aristotle developed its potency-act dynamic. Hegel too works with this genetic model. There is Spirit that is simply in itself, and it unfolds by becoming concretely explicit. Becoming for him is like the oak coming from the acorn. Whatever becomes for Hegel moves up the dialectical ladder. In seed potency, it was always already there. Hegel interprets the incarnation according to the model of the Trinitarian triangle. The Father gives rise to the Son, and Spirit proceeds from that relation. There is no omnipotence becoming impotence for Hegel such that that becoming is contrary to logos. It is a rational and logically unfolding. The oak is not really new, since it was contained in the acorn. Kierkegaard’s repetition, which is a redoubling of the incarnational doubling, accounts for a moment of genuine newness so that there can be a future that permits genuine freedom. When omnipotence steps down into a position of impotence as a child born in a stable of a human mother, there is an event that is unpredictable and not contained like a tree in a seed. The incarnational moment of origination is a folly to the Greeks

and an offense to the Jews. It is antirational but liberating. To further appreciate this, we can now think of the differences between phenomenology, thinking, and hermeneutics in terms of three approaches to art as an Ereignis or as originative event.

TO A RADICAL HERMENEUTICS OF ANTIRATIONALISM

The title of Richardson's book *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought*¹⁹ seems to make a good point. Is not a distinction necessary between, say, the phenomenology of technology and the thinking of origination? Is phenomenology not a description of experience, both of what we experience and of what experience can be? Does it not refrain from speculating about causality? Thus, if the phenomenologist came to the question of origination in the Platonic sense, would he not have to think about that, but not as a phenomenologist? Heidegger can describe technology and its challenging danger as a phenomenologist. But as soon as he moves to explanation and diagnosis is he not moving into a thinking that is other than phenomenological? And hermeneutics? Is that not a thinking of the circle of the whole and the parts? Are not all philosophers hermeneuts insofar as they seek to understand the whole in terms of the parts and the parts in terms of the whole? Chan seems to work with the assumption that phenomenology, thinking, and hermeneutics easily slide into each other and that there is no essential difference between them. Is this the case for Heidegger and the Taoists? How does this stand for Kierkegaard?

In *The Origin of a Work of Art*, as Chan shows, Heidegger offers his diagnosis and remedy to the problem of technology. Let us say that a pair of farmer's shoes are a product of modern technology. Perhaps they have a steel toe for protection together with a heel and arch support to prevent Achilles heel. Let us say that because of the animal's rights movement they are not made of leather. Maybe the farmer has already stopped raising animals for food and one can behold his late technological world revealed through his artificial shoes. Now if a painter such as Van Gogh should paint these shoes, his painting would let their unique being stand out for the beholder. When it comes to origination, Heidegger is not thinking of cosmological origination. He may ask why there is something rather than nothing, but his thinking of the work of art is not concerned with that. Rather he is asking how the painting of the shoes lets the thinghood of the shoes stand out for the beholder. He is not even interested in how the painter creates the painting. Art according to Heidegger lets truth originate for the beholder of the work of art. It can work on the

beholder by revealing, as Chan shows, the worldly form and the earthly matter of the shoes. Concerning the problem of technology, the painting can reveal how the shoes present a challenging danger and a granting at the same time. A technological artifact like a modern farmer's pair of shoes may only strike us as an ordinary pair of shoes. But the painting of the shoes can reveal the whole world of those shoes with all the dangers for animals, humans, and the earth. It can also reveal the gifts that the shoes have to offer. Most of all the painting is a granting or a giving that liberates us from the domination of useful things.

Heidegger thinks about the painting hermeneutically. He thinks about the painting in terms of art itself, and of the shoes of the farmer and of truth or revealing and concealing. He says that leaping into the circle of this kind of thinking is a festive occasion. Does this leap take him beyond phenomenology? Would it be the case that in *Being and Time* his "hermeneutical as" is still phenomenological? Is that not the case because his ecstatic temporality there is still like Husserl's? Is not the Dasein of Heidegger like the intentional consciousness of Husserl with an extended present that goes into the past with retentions and into the future with protentions? But in the early Heidegger²⁰ when he was thinking about the apocalyptic temporality of Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, and in the later Heidegger, for example, in *Beiträge* did he not have a past that was more past than the past of the present and a future that is more future than the future of the present? Is not the artwork able to originate in this new sense? Is not thinking this kind of radical origination by a radical hermeneutics beyond phenomenology?

But are Heidegger and Chuang Tzu the same when it comes to the moment of origination? Chan shows that Chuang Tzu seems to have leapt into just such a circle. Pure phenomenology does not make leaps beyond experience, beyond the future of the present. Is not Chuang Tzu's origination quite different from Heidegger's? Does he not put the emphasis on cosmological origination and upon the artist's sharing in one kind of cosmological origination? Chan tells Chuang Tzu's story of artist Ch'ing who fasted seven days and then went into the woods. He passed by this tree and that tree and finally the fasting artist within him saw a bell in a certain tree. He took and carved that tree and let the beautiful bell emerge. Chan shows how Chuang Tzu thought of "the principle of creation of art"²¹ as "matching up heaven with heaven."²² The phenomenologist would see this as an explanatory leap and not see Chuang Tzu as a pure phenomenologist. Like Heidegger, Chuang Tzu seems to be leaping into the hermeneutical circle and thinking about Ch'ing's art in terms of a certain model of origination in which things come forth as though from a seed.

So Heidegger thinks that art can save us because the artwork can so work on the beholder, on the one to whom it has been granted or given, that it will take him or her from merely being concerned with using and manipulating technological things as utensils to beholding the very being of the things. It is this granting of art that lets the thing be beheld as granting. This can save. We will not be enframed if we are given the truth of things in their open granting being. But what are we to make of Chan's statement that "one can explain the Heideggerian thesis that art is the saving power in terms of this allegory of Chuang Tzu"?²³ Chan writes:

Clearly, for Heidegger, art can function as the saving power for two reasons. First, artists provide a role-model in showing how human beings should respond to nature. Second, in terms of the divine character of the work of art, modern man can be reminded of his "finitude."²⁴

But when Heidegger writes about *The Origin of a Work of Art*, is he presenting Van Gogh as an exemplar? To some extent he is. Heidegger does seem to move beyond the confining ethos of the Enlightenment, which only worked with the factual "is" of de facto descriptions and the valuational "ought" of de jure prescriptions. He does set up an ethos with saints-poets-sages-scientists. But, again, is not the focus of his thinking on how the artwork lets there originate a new beholding of the thing in its granting glory?²⁵ Is Heidegger upholding Chuang Tzu as an exemplar or is he showing how Chuang Tzu's art can show us the world in a new way? Would Heidegger recommend as does Chuang Tzu that we fast for seven days that we might see the tree with the bell in it? Or does he think that beholding Ch'ing's bell will let each bell and even the iron from which they come ring out with joy?

Chan thinks that the second reason art can function as a saving power is that the divine character of the work of art reminds modern man of his finitude. That man is finite is a key point for Heidegger. As Chan pointed out, there was Lao Tzu's fourfold: Tao-sky-earth-king. When Heidegger took this over he thought of it as divine-sky-earth-mortal. The most significant alteration is changing "king" to "mortal." Kierkegaard believes in an ethos that stresses that the person is both eternal and temporal, both infinite and finite. Heidegger takes the eternal and the infinite out of man. Apparently he agrees with Enlightenment thinking that is willing to do a phenomenology of the temporal and the finite, but not a hermeneutics of the eternal and the infinite. Even Nietzsche had an eternal, even though his eternal recurrence was durational rather than the traditional eternity of a divine mind that could hold simultaneously all past and future

moments in one perfect intuition of the present. It seems to me that Heidegger does find the solution to the problem of enframing in art. But his art is without religion in Kierkegaard's sense of the ethical religious. I do not see Heidegger as emphasizing either that artists are exemplars or that the divine character of the work of art reminds us of our finitude. Heidegger does not treat an eternal or infinite divinity.

So, is it not necessary to distinguish a post-Husserlian hermeneutics from a pre-Husserlian hermeneutics? Is not the Husserlian phenomenology different from Hegel's because it does not permit speculative metaphysics? Did not the Austrian tradition of Carnap, etc. bring Husserl to an understanding of phenomenology as a description of experience that can be verified without causal explanation? Hegel had a speculative phenomenology that explained cosmic origination along the model of Trinitarian progression. The Taoist hermeneutics of origination is much like Hegel's. It is mythological. It thinks of the way the Heaven proceeds from the Tao and the way the Earth proceeds from the Tao in terms of a developing seed. While Husserl would marvel at cosmic origination and perhaps even wonder about "why there is something rather than nothing," his phenomenology could not think about that. He would think that giving a speculative or mythological answer to it would be a wrong use of reasoning. Now Heidegger is post-Husserlian. His approach to the question of technology does not involve a cosmic origination theory but rather the thinking of artistic origination. The work of the artist bestows upon or grants to the thing more than a technical usefulness. It lets the thing be revealed in the truth of its fourfold ethos, which as Chan points out is strongly thought through by Lao Tzu. Heidegger's hermeneutics is antirational in the sense of being anti-speculative and antimythological. But it is a hermeneutic thinking as thanking that leaps into the circle of the fourfold. So how can Kierkegaard help us understand Heidegger and his differences from the Taoists and even Husserl?

TO THE LEAPING OUTSIDE HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLES

As Carr and Ivanhoe show, Kierkegaard and Zhungzi both are critical of reasoning as mere technique. They were critical not only of Confucianists and Hegelians, but also of the Confucian culture and the Danish Lutheran church that valorized only the ordinary and everyday normal. They show with many techniques such as parody, irony, and several kinds of humor how reasoning can be self-deceitful. Ivanhoe shows with clarity the many senses of Zhuanzi's

criticisms against various uses of reasoning that become rationalizations.²⁶ Carr does the same with Kierkegaard by showing how “a person in the throes of self deception is unable to heal himself.”²⁷ She too spells out the variety of Kierkegaard’s arguments against various rationalizations that can become procrastinations.²⁸

But Kierkegaard’s reasons for being skeptical are at bottom three-fold. Like the ancient skeptics, he thought of existence as being so excessive in its manifold and in its becoming that a mind could not grasp it. Like the modern skeptics, he thought of the mind as being so limited that it could always be subject to sense deception and dreaming and madness and of being so fundamentally flawed that it deceives itself. Ancient skepticism based on the argument of equipollence—that there are so many perspectives of something that you can always point out opposite ones—could be overcome with Augustine’s argument: “*Si fallor, sum.*” If I err, then I am. I can know with certainty my own existence and I can proceed from there to other certain truths. Descartes developed his way out of the skepticism of the finite mind with his: “*Cogito ergo, sum.*” That certainty was grounded in a perfect God who because he was perfect would not so deceive that I could not get out of it. However, because of his belief in the God-man Kierkegaard cannot get objective certainty in either Augustine’s ancient way or Descartes’ modern way. Because he believes in the God-man who steps down and steps back, there are all kinds of chance in his life and even in the expanding chaotic universe. If God steps back from the universe and lets stars be born by chance and lets evolution take place by chance, then even God does not know all the events that can happen. If God steps back from us and lets us be free to make decisions, then even God does not know what we will decide. The God-man not only became limited man, but he suffered and died. This means that God suffers and is no longer impassible or unmoveable and non-suffering. In moving from the Greek ethos of the Parmenidean God to the Christian ethos of the God-man who is born in a stable and who suffers and dies, Kierkegaard no longer has any hermeneutical circle that he can leap into and understand the parts in terms of the whole and the whole in terms of the parts. The image of the manifold unfolding no longer works. Because Kierkegaard decided to believe in the suffering God-man, he no longer has the orderly Tao as his way. He has decided not to leap into Heidegger’s circle of understanding that can be revealed by the artwork and its truth. Kierkegaard’s antirationalism runs so deep because of his belief in the stepping back, stepping down God-man. His suffering, relational God in process cannot halt either ancient or modern skepticism. Kierkegaard believes that all is objectively uncertain. No pre-Husserlian or post-Husserlian circle can give him understanding.

For him the old God is dead and being is running loose as a wild becoming that cannot be contained in the Heideggerian totality of authentic anticipatory resoluteness. Kierkegaard because of his belief in the stepping back of the suffering God-man could be plunged into an anxiety, a despair and an offence that are far worse than either the Taoist or Heidegger could imagine. Given their two kinds of Hermeneutic circle, the one the Taoist finds himself in and the one the Heideggerian has to leap into, they will always have understanding that can answer the problem of technology or the problem of suffering. But Kierkegaard is without either kind of understanding. His God-man has leapt out of the circle of understanding into chance and chaos and if Kierkegaard believes in him he will appropriate-redouble-imitate that same leap out of the hermeneutic circle.

But for all this Kierkegaard is given the gift and the task of a peace that surpasses understanding. Faith for Kierkegaard is belief in two objects—the incarnation and sin. There is the incarnation with its network of implications. The God becomes man so the God becomes and is relational. The God-man in stepping out of omnipotence and into impotence leaves us and the universe not only with chance, but with possibilities and opportunities. The God-man in suffering reveals that God suffers. So the believer will no longer take offence at suffering and blame God. God is right there with the suffering. Any suffering can be used by the believer to join with the suffering of the God-man for the redemption of the world. And there is sin. Because of his insight into the four stages on life's way, Kierkegaard clarifies four kinds of guilt. The aesthete is guilty because he offends himself. The ethical person is guilty because he offends other persons. The person of religiousness A is guilty because he offends God. But the person of religiousness B who has faith can sin by taking offense at the God-man. If the person is offended by the high side of the paradox and takes offense at the God-man as divine, then there is despair before God.²⁹ If the person takes offense at the low side of the God-man, then he or she is also in despair before the human side of God and the temporal values of the earth.³⁰

As Kierkegaard argues, Socrates could not really sin. Moral fault for him is based only on an ignorance that recollection could overcome. Kierkegaard thinks we do leap into offence through our ignorance, but it is an ignorance for which we are responsible through our rationalization and procrastination. We are anxious before decisions, so we make ourselves ignorant bit by bit by rationalizing and then we leap into the definiteness of either a temporal perspective or an eternal perspective. By oversimplifying life because its complexity offends us, we may deny the value of the eternal as Heidegger does. Imitating the incarnation in the double movement leap of faith for

Kierkegaard is the opportunity for the single individual to take upon himself the task of being a Buddhist-Marxist at once. The task is to work with urgency for justice for every individual and for their eternal welfare. By leaping out of the hermeneutic circle of Heidegger's aesthetic art and the hermeneutic circle of the Eternal Tao, the Kierkegaardian leaps into anxious chance. But that chance that cannot be contained by the understanding is the opportunity for justice-love-freedom-peace.

CONCLUSION (WITH ECUMENICAL LOVE)

So how does the Kierkegaardian leaping out of hermeneutical circles save us from the enclosed reserve that unfreely discloses itself all of a sudden out of boredom? If I am an aesthete living in the basement, I find that I am enthralled by my attitude toward persons-places-things. I absolutize them and think of them as saving me. I am restless and anxiously go from one thing to another. The aesthetic attitude is a hermeneutical circle. It is as Heidegger describes it. A woman, for example, might just be there in my environment. I might use and manipulate her for my purposes. But then I might see her artistically and fall in love with her. An artistic view of her might reveal her to me in the truth of her glory and I might leap into a secret enclosed reserve with her. I might understand her and my whole new world around her from an enthralled point of view. She might even fall in love with me. We might have a mutual aesthetic attitude toward each other. We might leap into a mutual circle of understanding of each other and our world from our aesthetic point of view. But this attitude is exclusive. Our preferential love for each other means that we prefer each other as absolute to all others who are only relative.³¹ Our preferential love means that we are very proud to be associated with our beloved. Preferential love is an egoism for two. In loving the other artistically and preferentially, I am only loving myself and I am caught in the confines of the basement circle like the swamp pheasant in his territory.

In our artistic love for each other as glorious absolutes, we might marry and raise a family. We might move to the first floor of our house. We might have children each of whom we love with a preferential love more than any other children. We might come to live in an ethical network of concentric circles. The father might love his son as his new absolute. So there is the hermeneutic circle of the family. Then he might see that the success of the father—son bond depends upon the circle of the extended family. Then there is the mutual dependence of family circles within the larger circle of the neighbor-

hood, and then the circle of the society, and then the circle of the state, and then the circle of the earth, and then the circle of heaven, and we have the Confucian ethical attitude or any ethical attitude.

But great stories like the *Book of Job* and the *Bhagavad Gita* reveal to us how the ethical world may collapse. The first floor is not enough and that is what the Taoists show us. They are critical of the Confucianist concentric circles as being ultimate. They will still confine the swamp pheasant. They go to the indeterminacy of the Tao to keep open freedom and flexibility. Kierkegaard agrees with the Taoists in being negative toward the absolutizing of the first floor. His first movement of the leap is with the Taoists out of the enclosed reserve of the concentric circles of the ethical that are thought to give ultimate understanding. With a Socratic ignorance and questioning that always comes to an aporia and with indirect communication, the Taoists and Kierkegaard leap into the second floor of the house. With fasting and many classical mystical techniques, one comes to absolutely love the absolute. One discovers the Tao through one's denials and indirect communication and thus the Tao is experienced and thought of as the all-powerful Nothing or No-thing that is the way. This gives rise to a new hermeneutical circle in which the Tao as the absolute gives meaning to all else which is but the offspring of its own seed.

But when Kierkegaard meets the God-man, he comes to see that even the best of religiousness A as it is evident in Taoism or Buddhism, etc. can still be an enclosed reserve. If one only stays on that second floor and does not spend one's life performing the works of love for all the single individuals who live and exist throughout all of the house, then one is still in despair and enclosed within an exclusive circle. So Kierkegaard leaps out of the hermeneutic circle of the Taoist and yet while still affirming that circle (the knight of faith must be and remain a knight of infinite resignation),³² he goes back and down to affirm as relative the previous circles of the Confucianist first floor and the Heideggerian basement.

When working out the implications of "repetition,"³³ Kierkegaard shows how it is an attitude that appropriates the eternal (that which Heidegger denies) and while doing that renews the ethnal. It goes back and repeats, but as renewed, each aesthetic way of the basement and each ethical way of the first floor and each mystic way of the second floor, insofar as they do not hold to themselves as ultimate ways of understanding. Because of radical newness that repetition affirms, such understanding is impossible.

Chan and Carr/Ivanhoe are examples of the Kierkegaardian way. Insofar as Chan is open to Heidegger and the Taoists and is bringing out the best of both worlds, he is practicing a loving ecumenism that

will not let him get caught in the enclosed reserve of the pheasant pen. Insofar as Carr and Ivanhoe are lovingly working away on even the differences between Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi they are helping us each appreciate each singular detail. The only thing that Kierkegaard and Zhuangzi say No to is No saying itself. Their protesting is always for the sake of an attesting. In their No saying retreat, the Taoists discover the No saying Nothing. That silent Nothing contains within it the great affirmation. The nothing of the Taoist does not need the complimentary Being of Heidegger. The Being of Heidegger does all the giving. But that is done by the nothing of the Tao, which is a fullness of spontaneous energy. The fullness of existence for Kierkegaard is a task which humans are given. Justice for each person can alone bring peace. It is care for social justice, which each single individual deserves, which keeps Kierkegaardians like Chan and Carr and Ivanhoe going out to the best philosophers to do them justice.

BROCK UNIVERSITY
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada

ENDNOTES

1. Wing-Cheuk Chan, "Phenomenology of Technology: East and West," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 30, no. 1 (2003): 1–18, this issue.
2. Soren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 13.
3. Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking, Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), p. 449.
4. Wing-Cheuk Chan, pp. 1–18.
5. Allan Megill, *Prophets of Extremity: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Derrida*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).
6. Karen L. Carr and Philip J. Ivanhoe, *The Sense of Antirationalism: The Religious Thought of Zhuangzi and Kierkegaard* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000).
7. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 9.
8. Soren Kierkegaard, *Concept of Anxiety*, translated by Reidar Thomte (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 118–136.
9. Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*, Edited and translated by Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 13.
10. *Sickness Unto Death*, p. 43.
11. Soren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Translated by Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 27–53.
12. *The Sickness Unto Death*. This book explicates the three kinds of despair that are related to the three ways of being in the enclosed reserve.
13. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 2.
14. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 6.
15. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 6.
16. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 6.
17. Carr and Ivanhoe, p. 77.
18. Soren Kierkegaard, *Journal and Papers*. Edited and translated by Howard and Edna

- Hong, assisted by Geger Malantschuk (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1970), vol. 2, JP 2, p. 1251.
19. William Richardson, *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought* (Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1963).
 20. John van Buren, *The Young Heidegger* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994). Kierkegaard's thought on temporality was significant for Heidegger, pp. 192–198. Concerning Thessalonian and time, see p. 171 and following.
 21. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 11.
 22. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 11.
 23. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 12.
 24. Wing-Cheuk Chan, p. 12.
 25. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, Translated by Ralph Mannheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 102–104.
 26. Carr and Ivanhoe, pp. 33–42.
 27. Carr and Ivanhoe, p. 49.
 28. Carr and Ivanhoe, pp. 75–88.
 29. *Sickness Unto Death*. Despair is the sickness unto death and in this book S.K. shows how despair is a part of sin, but not the whole of it.
 30. Soren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991). This book articulates the two different kinds of offence and shows how taking offence is essential for sin.
 31. Soren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 44–46.
 32. *Fear and Trembling*, pp. 46–53.
 33. *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*. Repetition develops S.K.'s theory of repetition, but in the Introduction to *Concept of Anxiety* (pp. 16–18), he gives a summary of Repetition and shows how the ethical or each unique culture is to be renewed.

