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Betrayal in teaching: Persuasion in Kierkegaard, theory and performance

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Abstract. This paper explores the relationship between Kierkegaard's theory of "indirect communication," his employment of that method in the pseudonymous literature, and his explicit comments on the Teacher in *Philosophical Fragments*. My interest is principally in a pedagogical method able to serve as a solution to the problem of will formation, and so my assessment of Kierkegaard's theory and performance is essentially ethical in nature. I argue that there is at least an ambiguity, if not a contradiction, to be found in the above relationship and that as a result, in its current form, Kierkegaardean pedagogical devices do not appear to be able to offer an adequate solution.

This paper is intended as an investigation into the Kierkegaardian resources for an ethical theory of persuasion – a philosophy of education in that peculiar sense – that is able to do justice to the autonomy of the learner and, in addition, which offers a unique emphasis on the persuasion of the will. The pseudonymous works of Kierkegaard are an immediately suggestive place to turn in pursuit of such a theory, given their evident pedagogical intent and their explicit discussion of the nature of teaching and learning. Though it seems to me, as I will argue, that the appropriate assessment of these Kierkegaardian resources is, in the end, a negative one, there is to be drawn from it (as there always is) a positive lesson, a warning of dangers that extend to domains substantially removed or distinct from those with which Kierkegaard himself was predominantly concerned. This much alone should make clear that I conceive of this effort as part of a larger project dealing with the place and possibilities of education and persuasion, as a matter of fact, with their place in a critical social theory – not a task as foreign to Kierkegaard as it might at first seem, given his persistent attack on the ideology of bourgeois Christiandom. That is to say, on the other hand, that it is not written primarily as a contribution to what might – or might not – be thought a relatively circumscribed discourse within Kierkegaard scholarship. At the same time, I have drawn on a number of thinkers engaged in that literature in attempting to present an argument that Kierkegaardians, I hope, will have a difficult time simply rejecting out of hand, even

despite its ultimately divergent concern. Whether I have succeeded, of course, is for them to judge.

The argument proceeds as follows: in the first section I will argue (a) that there is at least an ambiguity in how Kierkegaard's own authorial pedagogy relates to his explicit comments on the Teacher in the *Philosophical Fragments*, and (b) that – drawing on Anthony Rudd – there is also some confusion in the distinction Kierkegaard attempts to make there between Socratic and transcendent teaching which, moreover, has implications for how we understand the conversion from the aesthetic to the ethical described in earlier pseudonymous writings. In the second section I will argue in regards to the problem of persuading another's will that (c) in the case of Kierkegaard's explicit comments on the Teacher, all forms of deception are rejected, but that (d) in the case of Kierkegaard's own authorship, the use of a kind of deception, what I will call betrayal, is pervasive. The third section deals with what I see as the problematic relationship between Kierkegaard's authorial strategy and its ultimate aim of 'provoking' (in a sense to be specified) religious conversion in the reader. Finally, I will conclude with some comments on the consequences of this investigation for the larger project mentioned above.

1. How to teach and how to learn[1] [A–B]

"Can the truth be learned? With this question we shall begin."[2] Indeed, thus does Climacus begin his *Philosophical Fragments*, with a question that he will never actually come to answer, neither in the *Fragments* nor in its absurdly lengthy addendum, the *Postscript*. Instead, he offers something after the pattern of a transcendental deduction: if it is the case that the truth can be learned, what must be prerequisite to such an event? It is the pursuit of the solution to this second question that occupies Climacus.[3] His solution, however, hinges on a concept less of learning than of teaching (though for obvious reasons, they are something of a package deal). To this end, Climacus considers first the pedagogical figure of Socrates and the Platonic doctrine of recollection.

Socrates' interest was surely the pursuit of the truth, yet he was emphatic that no one – and particularly not he himself – could *teach* the truth to another. Instead, he considered himself a "midwife, not because he 'did not have the positive,' but because he perceived that this relation is the highest relation a human being can have to another."[4] That is, if knowledge is recollection, then the most the so-called teacher can be is an occasion for that recollection, a reminder. But this, it seems, is not really

learning at all, for the truth here 'discovered' already belonged to the learner: in some sense, he or she 'knew it all along.' Learning, Climacus seems to think, is *insight*, momentous and historical: one can pinpoint the moment when it suddenly became possible to *see* the truth, as though a veil were lifted. The decisiveness of this moment requires, *contra* the doctrine of recollection, that the learner has hitherto not possessed the truth,

> not even in the form of ignorance, for in that case the moment becomes merely the occasion; indeed, he must not even be a seeker...he [the learner] has to be defined as being outside the truth (not coming toward it like a proselyte, but going away from it) as untruth.[5]

If the teacher, therefore, is nevertheless still an occasion, she cannot be the occasion for a rediscovery of a truth in fact already known; rather, it must be just the opposite, that the teacher occasions the realization that the learner is himself this 'untruth.' Through this realization, however, "the learner is definitely excluded from the truth, even more than when he was ignorant of being untruth. Consequently, in this way, precisely by reminding him, the teacher thrusts the learner away."[6] But if that is so, how can the learner ever come to truth? Climacus' answer is that the teacher must be able to bring to the learner not only the truth, but also its condition; that is, the teacher must be able to transform the learner such that they are able to receive the truth, and are no longer repelled by it.[7]

> But the one who not only gives the learner the truth, but provides the condition is not a teacher. Ultimately, all instruction depends upon the presence of the condition; if it is lacking, then a teacher is capable of nothing, because in the second case, the teacher, before beginning to teach, must transform, not reform, the learner. But no human being is capable of doing this; if it is to take place, it must be done by the god himself.[8]

At this point in the *Fragments*, Climacus deems the introduction of a series of theological concepts necessary – on the basis of what are assuredly not intended to be genuine arguments – if there is to be such a thing as learning (or teaching). Yet we might hesitate here, though Climacus himself does not, at the fact that he has overshot his mark, at least so far as learning and teaching remain correlative. As Anthony Rudd also notes, the difference between Socrates and the god is not adequately captured by saying that there is a difference with respect to the maieutic versus the transcendent concepts of teaching: "The non-Socratic 'teacher' is not really a teacher at all."[9] But if the god-teacher

– the "saviour" as Kierkegaard will call him – is not really a teacher, is therefore Socrates? What exactly would it mean, if anything, to be *just* a teacher and not also the redeemer-judge? Rudd, who does not take up this line of questioning, points out another complication: simply saying that the truth is within me, as the doctrine of recollection maintains, does not seem to entail that I owe nothing to the teacher who occasions my recollection. After all, "had I failed to meet this teacher at this time, then I might have gone to the grave without ever coming to recollect the Truth."[10] Thus, it seems that even the Socratic teacher has employment of a decisive sort which Kierkegaard has perhaps unjustly dismissed.

The unmistakably pedagogical intent of Kierkegaard's authorship both helps and hinders the understanding of this problem.[11] Like Plato's critique of writing in *Phaedrus* – a classic philosophical *text* – Kierkegaard's apparent rejection of the significance of human pedagogy is at least *prima facie* mystifying. Kierkegaard, as Timothy P. Jackson writes, is "too sanguine...about human invulnerability to communal harm"[12] as well as to communal help, so that he seems almost always to lay emphasis both on the fact that the Socratic is the highest among interpersonal relations and that the pupil owes the Socratic teacher nothing as a result of that relation. At the same time, "[a] view in which all forms of spiritual help and harm are ruled out...would undermine the point of Kierkegaard's authorship itself."[13] Jackson suggests the solution lies in distinguishing between decisive spiritual help and harm, and help and harm *simpliciter*; that we are able neither to give others faith nor deliver them to damnation does not mean that the interpersonal is, as it were, of no intra-momentous moment.[14]

Kierkegaard's (and Climacus') theory and practice of "indirect communication" is crucial in this regard. The former's use of pseudonyms, the latter's denial of authority in the opening pages of the *Fragments*, all serve to effect the kind of "voluntary effacement" later thematized by post-modern thinkers, which openly concedes and even celebrates the limits of the author/reader (teacher/student) relationship. Voluntary effacement is, as Merold Westphal writes, "a kind of self-denying ordinance in which the author, who in fact is not God [for whom meaning *is* fixed, transparent, direct, systematic], willingly agrees to play a role other than God vis-à-vis text and reader."[15] Kierkegaard accordingly characterizes himself, much as he characterizes the teacher in the reciprocal Socratic teacher/student relation, as a "fellow learner"[16] alongside the reader themselves.

This too both helps and hinders. I see no final resolution of the tension, though I do find persuasive the 'deductive' argument that if

Kierkegaard's authorship is aimed at persuasion of a human kind, then it must exemplify some form of human 'teaching' or significant (if not decisive) occasioning which therefore remains possible. For the sake of my project I am willing to take this premise for granted. At what end, then, does this teaching aim? Rudd, as we have noted, argues that the real difference between the Christian and the Socratic is not a simple question of teaching or even generally of epistemology; as Climacus' alter-ego, Anti-Climacus, observes, the crucial divergence lies in Socrates' understanding of "sin as ignorance, rather than as defiance."[17] As Climacus himself notes in the *Fragments*, "[t]he untruth...is not merely outside the truth but is polemical against the truth."[18] And Rudd pointedly adds, "one can hardly polemicise against something if one is wholly unaware of it."[19] The point of the teaching, therefore, is *not* the communication of insights, which there is some reason indeed to think would be no news to the learner. As Climacus writes in the *Postscript*, the task of 'indirect' teaching "pertains to someone who is presumed essentially to possess knowledge and who does not merely need to know something but rather needs to be influenced."[20]

> Kierkegaard teaches that in the realm of the truly important there is much for a moral teacher to do, but nothing to teach; there is no object of communication, no knowledge to be conveyed.[21]

It is not entirely clear that Kierkegaard would be inclined to accept this, blurring as it does the distinction between the Socratic and the transcendent; nevertheless, as Rudd has convincingly shown, that distinction seems all around to have been less than successful. In any case, it is surely true that irrespective of the knowledge status of the learner, the focus of Kierkegaardian pedagogy is the will and not the intellect. His deep appreciation for the defiant streak in human nature (which to this day, I would argue, remains philosophically undertheorized) is integrally tied to his theory of communication. Ralph McInerny writes of Kierkegaard,

> He would influence his fellows, but in order to do so he must be elusive and artistic; he cannot pontificate and tell them directly what they are to do. Their response might very well be the assertion that they understand him perfectly, while they remain unaltered existentially.[22]

The need for personal appropriation, which is at the heart of the argument in the *Postscript* that "truth is subjectivity," refers precisely to this need for existential rather than intellectual alteration. The question of how one goes about persuading the will of another, however, is no simple

or trifling matter: Kierkegaard tells us a great deal about what *not* to do – i.e., present the issue objectively, etc. – but he is not nearly so forthcoming (perhaps for that very reason) about what one *should* do. Investigation into the latter must, on the one hand, gather together the scattered clues that are to be found and, on the other hand, consider how Kierkegaard's texts performatively instantiate such an attempt at persuasion.

Before moving to consider this question, however, I would like briefly to note that the conclusion of the above, read backward into *Either/Or*, represents no small challenge to the traditional understanding of the aesthetic/ethical relation. That is, Judge Wilhelm, resident embodiment of the ethical in that work, seems to intend a character-type distinct from the reflective aestheticism of A, with whom he is in dialogue, when he writes,

> the person who chooses the esthetic after the ethical has become manifest to him is not living esthetically, for he is sinning and is subject to ethical qualifications, even if his life must be termed unethical.[23]

Yet is it not the case that the Judge thinks A's life is subject to ethical qualifications? Is it not moreover true that everyone – as an empirical universal – is in sin until saved by the god? And if sin is defined as being polemical toward the truth, which in turn implies some knowledge of what one is attempting to avoid, then the distinction between aestheticism and sin is no longer plausible. As John J. Davenport writes, "in *Either/Or*...the agent's awakening to the primordial responsibility to choose the ethical [is to]...a responsibility he has already shirked."[24] Thus, save (perhaps) for the case of the naïve aestheticism of children, all aesthetes are in defiance, rebellion.

2. Persuasion, self-interest, and the hither side of betrayal [C]

How does the god persuade the will of the learner to personally appropriate the truth? As Climacus sees it, he has several options; only one, however, preserves the meaningfulness of the choice, rooted in freedom. Climacus employs what he concedes to be an imperfect metaphor in the service of considering these options. In this analogy, there is a king who is in love with a lowly maiden. He has it within his extensive power to bring about the satisfaction of his love; that is, no one would dare oppose him, though the match be less than royal. Nonetheless, the king does not want the love of the maiden if it is only a love of his station; their love can only be pure if it obliterates the distinction between them. He cannot bear the thought, even though the wisdom of the world would say that he did her a favour, that the

maiden should suffer embarrassment or discomfort. He does not want to be her benefactor, but her lover. Moreover, suppose, says Climacus, she is unable to understand this anxiety.[25] Now the god, too, wants to establish a relation with a person out of love:

> [t]he god wants to be his teacher, and the god's concern is to bring about equality. If this cannot be brought about, the love becomes unhappy and the instruction meaningless, for they are unable to understand each other.[26]

This last point is crucial for Climacus: "only in love is the different made equal, and only in equality or in unity is there understanding."[27] The question, therefore, is: how will love act to bring about the equality? Option A, as Climacus calls it, is that,

> [t]he unity is brought about by an ascent. The god would then draw the learner up toward himself, exalt him, divert him with joy lasting a thousand years...let the learner forget the misunderstanding in his tumult of joy.[28]

In other words, the god would here allow the learner to be elevated such that he or she fails to notice the otherness of a god of whom this was required in order that the learner should learn. This absolute otherness of the god, the forgotten or obliterated substance of the misunderstanding, is predicated on the polemical, sinful nature of the learner. Analogously, the king too could have appeared before the lowly maiden in exalted kingly glory, "and let her forget herself in adoring admiration. This perhaps would have satisfied the girl, but it could not satisfy the king, for he did not want his own glorification but the girl's."[29] In the end, if there is to be learning, or if there is to be love, the god and the king both must reject this *deception* wherein the learner and the lover awake miraculously in the truth, without any knowledge of the profound conversion they have undergone. Above all, for neither learner nor lover could this be said to be a free choice.[30]

Option B begins where option A left off: "[i]f, then, the unity could not be brought about by an ascent, then it must be attempted by a descent."[31] That is, the god lowers himself to equality with the lowliest human being, appearing out of love in the form of a servant.

> For this is the boundlessness of love, that in earnestness and truth and not in jest it wills to be the equal of the beloved, and it is the omnipotence of resolving love to be capable of that of which neither the king nor Socrates was capable, which is why their assumed characters were still a kind of deceit...For love, any other revelation

> would be a deception, because either it would first have had to accomplish a change in the learner (love, however, does not change the beloved but changes itself) and conceal from him that it was needed, or in superficiality it would have had to remain ignorant that the whole understanding between them was a delusion.[32]

[**D**] Again, this does not positively answer the question of how the god persuades the will of the learner. It only excludes the same possibilities that Kierkegaard rejects in the human problem of the author/reader relation: the truth cannot be a matter of authority, but must be accepted on the grounds of singular, reciprocal understanding. As Climacus writes in the very opening of the *Fragments*, "if he [the reader] were to carry his gallantry [his esteem for the author] to the extreme of embracing my opinion because it is mine, I regret his courtesy."[33] The point seems essentially akin to the king's unwillingness to be loved for his station and the god's unwillingness to edify by ascent. The indirect method of communication, which for Kierkegaard, as for Plato, is a pedagogical strategy for circumventing the problem of authority, "prepares the way for a choice; it cannot, of course, insure that the desired choice will follow – the only certainty is that the message will be seen for what it is."[34] The god, too, is principally concerned that the realization of one's untruth, one's sin, occur; beyond that, one must freely choose if love is to be preserved, if understanding is to be genuinely reciprocal.

Yet the parallel may be less than perfect. In *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* Kierkegaard writes, "[o]ne can deceive a person for the truth's sake, and (to recall old Socrates) one can deceive a person into the truth. Indeed, it is only by this means, i.e., by deceiving them, that it is possible to bring into the truth one who is in an illusion."[35] In discussing his attack on the false Christianity of his day, which he termed Christiandom in contradistinction to Christianity, he writes that if you seek to persuade, you cannot begin by saying, "I am a Christian; you are not a Christian. Nor does one begin thus: It is Christianity I am proclaiming; and you are living in purely aesthetic categories. No, one begins thus: let us talk about aesthetics."[36] It is these passages which lead McInerny to characterize Kierkegaard's indirect method as "dialectical and deceiving," and the imperative behind it that "[h]e must win the ears of men; and in order to do this, he must deceive them."[37] McInerny does not evidence any worry about the legitimacy of such a method, nor about its apparently contradictory relationship to Climacus' portrayal of god teaching and the rejection of deception in the *Fragments*. Of course, it may be merely *apparently* contradictory. There seems to be room to distinguish between deception in the final reception of the truth, and deception in the preparation for that reception, though it is not obvious

that there is an ethical distinction to match. In any case, Kierkegaard's admission of his willingness to deceive is consonant with his insistence that it is the grace of God rather than the aid of men (or women, we would like to add) that will finally deliver the learner to faith. The deception involved in the indirect method is like surreptitiously arranging the meeting of an estranged couple in the hope that, if they just end up in the same room together, they might very well repair their differences. So, too, the dialectical method arranges everything and then withdraws, "so as not to witness the admission which he [the learner] makes to himself alone before God – that he had hitherto lived an illusion."[38]

The aim may indeed be noble, but the unsuspecting estranged couple would be right to call the orchestrator's actions a betrayal. Might Kierkegaardian pedagogy be similarly accused? Plato, or at least Socrates, is beyond a doubt in the background here: the philosopher who has seen the light, the sun, the Good, must return to the Cave, must *descend*, and, in order to render his message intelligible to the prisoners who remain, must couch it in a so-called 'noble lie.' This strategy, which Marcuse termed "educational dictatorship," is something Kierkegaard shares with certain forms of Marxist social- or ideology-critique; namely, the belief that social conditions are such that the individual must be "forced to be free," so unable are they to perceive the true, good path by their own lights. "But with all its truth," Marcuse adds (and there is undoubtedly truth to it), "the argument cannot answer the time-honoured question: who educates the educators?"[39] Kierkegaard's explicit answer, however, is clear: the god. Yet even if one has no misgivings about the mixing of ethics with religion (and I frankly confess such misgivings myself), this answer does not suffice when the question is posed to the implicitly pedagogical intent of Kierkegaard's authorship itself and its apparent use of deception. Can we still call Kierkegaard's method "voluntary effacement" if his true and concealed end throughout is *not* to leave the reader alone with the text, but to shock her in her expectation of solitude with the presence of an interlocutor, and one who demands the sacrifice of precisely that autonomy she thought she had been granted?[40] Climacus is clear: "self-annihilation is the essential form of the relationship with God."[41] I will return to the specifically religious question of betrayal below, but it may help to clarify the issue if we first consider this question in the context of the earlier transition between the aesthetic and the ethical, and the position of Kierkegaardian pedagogy in that debate.

In *Either/Or*, as has already been mentioned, Judge Wilhelm serves as representative for the ethical; A and Johannes the seducer (who may or may not be the same person, but in any case are subject to the same charges) speak in the voice of the aesthetic. The second volume of the

book consists of letters from the Judge to A attempting to persuade him of the desirability of the ethical life, and, perhaps more prominently, of the unsustainability of the aesthetic life. To this end, as Gordon D. Marino writes,

> the Judge explains that and why it is in an individual's enlightened self-interest to choose the ethical...The Judge argues that A has every good reason, every rational motive, for choosing to live seriously as opposed to indifferently. There is only space and call for a sample of these briefs, but each comes to this – an ethical existence is superior to and/or a cure for the ills endemic to estheticism.[42]

Another, almost syllogistic, piece of reasoning on the part of the Judge proceeds as follows: without love, no one can be happy (which A seems to recognize); but to love is to reveal oneself to another (which A emphatically does not recognize), which the aesthete cannot do because he or she lacks the (volitional) unity prerequisite to such a self-account.[43] Happiness indeed seems to be key, and Marino goes so far as to concede on Kierkegaard's behalf that there is "no reasoning with the underground man who refuses to accept happiness as his final good."[44] Marino maintains this despite the fact that he believes the Judge (and Kierkegaard through him) to be employing an essentially Kantian ethical scheme and not Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, as is maintained by scholars like Merold Westphal.[45]

The question, then, is whether an argument based on self-interest which brings about the conversion of a learner from the aesthetic to the ethical is a kind of betrayal or deception akin to the unexpected encounter with the god described above. I would argue that the answer is 'yes'. That is, if the conversion is genuine – subjectively appropriated – the convert would discover in the moment of his or her transformation that the motive for that very movement is itself excluded as illegitimate by the ethical to which the conversion delivers them. Dialectical conversion to the ethical on the basis of self-interest (of which another instance is arguably the appeal to the person living in "purely aesthetic categories" in aesthetic terms, see n. 36 above) must involve a withdrawal just as the religious did, only this time leaving the convert alone before the universal, to which they may confess the illusion of their motive. To put it crudely, it is the old bait and switch manoeuvre: the Judge appeals to the aesthete by telling him how self-satisfying the ethical life is (and indeed, it has been widely remarked that the Judge is self-satisfied), but if the aesthete resolves to convert, he finds that self-satisfaction is ethically blameworthy. One must give up self-interest and identify one's motives with the universal. Furthermore, it is not clear in this case that the debate between the

Judge's possible Kantianism and his Hegelianism makes any difference, insofar as the forfeiture of self-interest may be a shared requirement. In any case, the ethical heroes of *Fear and Trembling* unequivocally demonstrate that the apex of the ethical is reached only by relinquishing the self and its interests.[46]

Before returning to further consideration of this betrayal at the heart of persuasion and some problems attendant upon it, we would do well to note that, in the attempt to counter charges (principally by MacIntyre) that Kierkegaard renders the choice between life-spheres an arbitrary leap, several authors have provided alternate models of the means of communication (and therefore persuasion) between varying modes of life. John J. Davenport suggests that the unsustainability of the aesthetic life-view entails that,

> the aesthete at some point in life cognitively awakens, usually through some crisis, or through being challenged by other persons – to a primordial responsibility to decide what kind of person to be.[47]

As the basis of an account of persuasion, this relies on at least a partial recognition on behalf of the aesthete, in the experience of despair, that a crisis is bound to bring the issue to a head (and, therefore, on the frailty of ideological or false-consciousness): the Judge, then, exhorts the aesthete to avoid such a catastrophe by taking the initiative himself. Of course, even in the event of such a catastrophe, a genuine choice would still need to be made, but there would no longer be any place for the persuasive work of another. This model does not preclude the self-interested will, though it might be possible to be motivated out of a sense of sheer resigned inevitability. In fact, Davenport's notion of "entangled freedom," that the field of genuine choice – "live options" in Jamesian language – is conditioned by previous choices, sins, etc.,[48] dovetails with Kierkegaard's sense that one must appeal to the aesthete in terms the aesthete can understand. Self-interest is unquestionably one of those terms. McInerny similarly writes that, while no one (not even God) can persuade the will of another in the mode of an efficient cause, the will can be "indirectly influenced by the presentation of objects as good to him [the learner], by proportioning them to the recipient in such a way that they will appeal to him as an individual."[49]

Edward F. Mooney offers an account of cross-sphere persuasion that might be likened to a Venn-diagram in logic. Instead of conceiving of the life-spheres as concentric, which is the presupposition of most self-interest (including those that insist on referring to so-called 'enlightened self-interest') and all '*Aufhebung*' accounts, Mooney imagines them as distinct

but to some extent overlapping. Accordingly, terms like "happiness," "pleasure," and "despair" have common employments in both the aesthetic and ethical life-view, and so provide the currency for mutual intelligibility while remaining,

> compatible with allowing that the salience or interpretation of those terms will shift between the Judge's world and A's...Can A sense the different slant the Judge has placed on such terms of moral evaluation? If so, he can sense features of the angle of the world that the Judge assumes.[50]

The knife, of course, cuts both ways. If this is the case, Mooney argues,

> We would expect, then, that the weight of the Judge's viewpoint could gradually dawn on the aesthete. Whether or not he finally adopted the Judge's stance, he would have the capacity to do so. He would have the capacity for moral learning.[51]

The first thing to note about this option, in our context, is that the overlapping terms are precisely the language of self-interest. Though he doesn't claim the list to be exhaustive, Mooney doesn't argue, and there is little reason to suppose, that "duty," "responsibility," or "sacrifice" might also fall within the shared province of the spheres. In addition, however, isn't this "dawning" a rather mysterious thing? The obstacle or crisis postulated by Davenport makes sense of the energy of the transition, the recognition on behalf of the aesthete that the argument of the Judge in fact applies; but what is it precisely that causes the 'dawning' here? Is it simply to be chalked up to the Judge's eloquence or persistence? Mooney's focus is on establishing the bare possibility of meaningful communication, which possibility had been denied by MacIntyre, and so I don't mean to charge him with failing at a task he didn't adopt. Nevertheless, this should serve to make clear that persuasion deserves and requires its own analysis; dialogue alone will not do the job.

3. Authority and obedience, the thither side of the betrayal

To recap: we have found in the first section that there appears to be a significant tension between Kierkegaard's own authorial, pedagogical strategy, and his description of the Teacher in the *Fragments*, and also that, as Rudd argues, the attempted distinction between Socratic and transcendent teaching appears flawed in a way that has further implications for how we understand the earlier conversion from the aesthetic to

the ethical. In the second section, I argued that (c) in regards to the problem of persuading another's will, in the case of Kierkegaard's explicit comments on the Teacher, all forms of deception are rejected, while (d) in his own authorship, Kierkegaard makes widespread use of a kind of deception that I have called betrayal. It is worth recalling, however, that (d) may refer only to the preparation for the reception of the truth, while (c) refers to the reception of that truth itself; though, again, it is not evident in the absence of argument that there is a parallel moral distinction to be made. I will now return, then, to some concerns I have with the tension described in the first section above, and with the relation between the final reception of truth in faith and the preparation for faith that occurs in the ethical.

> Just as the person who by Socratic midwifery gave birth to himself and in so doing forgot everything else in the world and in a more profound sense owed no human being anything, so also the one who is born again owes no human being anything, but owes the divine teacher everything. And just as the other one, because of himself, forgot the whole world, so he in turn, because of this teacher, must forget himself.[52]

Rudd has given us reason already to doubt that the Socratic learner is so clearly in the black, but there is perhaps no problem in admitting that the transcendent learner owes it to the teacher to relativize his selfhood. In fact, we have seen that the universal or ethical, too, requires this in its own way. The parallel between such an understanding of ethics and Kierkegaard's understanding of the religious is the basis of recent attempts to explore the similarities in the accounts of subjectivity proffered by Emmanuel Levinas and Kierkegaard, respectively. This is not the place to involve myself in that investigation, though it is the place, it seems, to make use of one of its fruits.

Briefly, by way of background, the relativized self serves to frustrate the all-too-human tendency towards preferential, erosic love. In Levinas, the self is relativized through the encounter with the radical alterity of the human other, refractory to the categories of my understanding and anathema to my attempt to put the world and others at my free disposal by categorial or intentional (i.e. by intentionality) subsumption. Kierkegaard, on the other hand,

> insists that, to avoid preferential love, 'the wife and friend' are absolutely precluded from determining 'whether the manifested love is conscientious' (and, therefore, this determination must be attributed to something else – 'God'). Levinas, by contrast, will insist that conscience is absolutely determined by 'the wife and friend'

> insofar as they, by their own resistance to my preferential thematization of them, determine my responsibility.[53]

Brian T. Prosser, also citing Merold Westphal, suggests that Kierkegaard's position may be founded on a pessimistic view of "inherently conscientious human nature," in opposition to an optimism which Prosser, I think mistakenly, attributes to Levinas.[54] That contrast notwithstanding, it may well be the case that Kierkegaard felt human nature to have become so thoroughly perverted as to be incapable of vouchsafing conscientiousness for itself.[55] Indeed, this seems to be his point in his explicit consideration of the Teacher. Levinas' worry about this, which Prosser ultimately shares, is that God as interlocutor annuls the "ambiguity of conscience" that is characteristic of the experience of the human other. That is, the God-relationship – the teleological suspension of the ethical – seems to have the effect of silencing all human voices, principally by virtue of its utter unquestionability.

> This is why Levinas will insist that a genuine sense of God-relationship should always imply 'a God subject to repudiation' and should always recognize its 'permanent danger of turning into a protector of all egoisms.'[56]

It is intrinsic to conscientiousness that we be able to adopt some distance with respect to the claims laid upon us: this is the very space of responsibility. In fact, this seems to be the presupposition of the meaningfulness of decision, which emerges in Climacus' rejection of the ascent option in teaching and in his insistence that it is a failure of love if the king wins the maiden by an act of regal ostentatiousness. Yet this distance appears annihilated in the story of Abraham; certainly it is the case that Abraham could fail, could doubt – but then he is no longer the father of faith. Conversely, therefore, faith appears tied to "the voice of God as one who is absolutely *beyond question*."[57] If Kierkegaard, or someone on his behalf, countered that the voice of God is not in fact beyond question, then we would have to ask that they explain "why there should be attributed to it a validity that overwhelms the voice of other human beings, i.e., that 'teleologically suspends the ethical'."[58] For it is certainly the case that in all of the hypothetical instances wherein Abraham considers the voices of others – whether it be his lie to Isaac that it is he and not God who demands the sacrifice, so as to preserve the boy's faith, or his attempted explanations to Sarah, the poor boy's mother – he is described as falling short of faith. To put it mildly, the demand placed on Abraham that he sacrifice his son "is ambivalent, at best, about the suffering of another human being."[59]

There have been many attempts to explain the teleological suspension of the ethical as an *Aufhebung* of one sort or another, such that the ethical is not annihilated but is preserved in some recontextualized form. Even what might be taken to be a kind of crude reading, that Kierkegaard endorses a divine command theory of morality (God's decree is the highest and unquestionable determination of the Good), argues that a morality of some sort is in any case preserved. Nevertheless, it seems sufficient for our purposes to say that, from the standpoint of an appropriated ethical chooser, there has been a betrayal of personal responsibility, of subjectivity itself, wherever authority holds a trump card. Worse still, however, from the standpoint of the Kierkegaardian project of 'voluntary effacement,' the surrender of distance seems a gross hypocrisy. How can it be that a journey of inwardness and decision, which is at such pains to protect the freedom of the learner even in the moment of the final conversion to the religious (the god will not deceive us), has its *telos* in a state of unquestioning surrender? And how other than by deception could the pursuit of this state be motivated in someone whose life-view centres on ethical appropriation? Both Levinas and Kierkegaard see conscientious subjectivity arising from the relinquishing of autonomy in favour of heteronomy, and both, in fact, see teaching and transcendence as key to this movement.[60] In Levinas, however, God (merely) vouchsafes that I, too, am an other for the other;[61] in Kierkegaard, on the contrary, my own alterity appears to be endangered by God's command, and even voluntarily surrendered in the act of faith: faith is self-annihilation. Deceiving the learner into opting for the ethical and clandestinely moving her toward the confrontation with God: this is the preparation for the reception of the truth, the aim of Kierkegaard's authorship. He seems to think it a justified means on the basis of an end which is the truth itself as given by God: this truth may not be deception, but are we not justly taken aback to discover that what we receive is the demand that we surrender ethical subjectivity? Even after we have dutifully followed him through the pseudonymous literature, Kierkegaard may still legitimately claim that he has not decisively delivered us over to this act of faith, yet I would argue that we nonetheless have some reason to be disconcerted by the horns of the dilemma at which he, withdrawing, has left us. From the point of view of the ethical, it is hard not to say with Levinas and with Ivan Karamazov that, having finally arrived, we would like, respectfully, to return our tickets.[62] As we will shortly see, however, this is a response that Kierkegaard has already anticipated.

Switching from the conception of the religious-ethical transition, as portrayed in *Fear and Trembling*, to the much less clear distinction in the *Postscript*, the issue becomes more complicated still. The latter is full of

familiar admonitions against the "pious fraud of eloquence" that would try to smuggle others into faith and so, in fact, cheat them shamelessly of its very possibility.[63] Climacus writes, for instance, that,

> The most resigned a human being can be is to acknowledge the given [by God] independence in every human being and to the best of one's ability do everything in order to truly help someone retain it. But in our age such matters are not talked about, for example, whether it is legitimate, as we say, to win a person for the truth, whether the person who has some truth to communicate, if he also has the art of persuasion, knows the human heart, has ingenuity in *taking by surprise*, has proficiency in capturing slowly – whether he has the right to use it to win adherents for the truth. Or should he, humble before God, loving human beings in the feeling that God does not need him and that every human being is essentially spirit, rather use all these gifts to prevent the direct relationship and, instead of comfortably having some adherents, should he dutifully put up with being accused of light-mindedness, lack of earnestness, etc., because he truly disciplines himself and saves his life from the most dreadful of all untruths – an adherent.[64]

We should note, however, that this dilemma, which is precisely the one with which we are concerned, is here falsely construed: first of all, there is presumably a difference between winning an adherent to the truth, and winning an adherent for yourself. Second, the dichotomy is unsatisfying inasmuch as indirect communication and pseudonymity might very well save one from the misfortune of accumulating a following, but they do not rule out that deception has occurred, that persuasion, a victory for truth, does not remain the goal. It is only a different version of the truth, subjective rather than objective.

It is the insistence that the principal concern of the Christian is his or her "infinite interest" in their own eternal happiness that, unlike the common condemnation of a false persuasion, is unique to the *Postscript*. Because the issue is subjective, objective treatment of it is deception; because it is subjective, no one else can realize that interest for you; because it is subjective, a matter of appropriation, the issue can only be approached indirectly by a third party, by a pedagogue. "Faced with such an illusive, artistic communication," concedes Climacus, "ordinary human obtuseness will cry: It is egotism."[65] But Climacus is unapologetic: it is self-interest, if you require a name, but who else is supposed to be concerned with *your* eternal happiness? Fair enough. Yet it is arguably just this insistence of Climacus on the point of subjectivity, on the "how" rather than the "what" of faith, that thwarts any possible distance with respect to the content of the demands faith places upon the believer,

finally trivializing the "what" in relation to the requirement of submission and obedience.[66] This is perhaps nowhere clearer than when Climacus suggests that the devout pagan is closer to true faith than the objective-minded Christian.[67] Marino stresses the same point when he writes that,

> The inordinate emphasis that Kierkegaard lays on the how of our actions and our beliefs has its natural shadow in a delusory de-emphasis on the question of what precisely is to be done. This imbalance is nowhere more apparent than in the lack of urgency Kierkegaard shows with respect to questions of social justice.[68]

While it may be the case that there are certain "what"s which are distorted if approached through an inappropriate "how" – and this seems ultimately to be Kierkegaard's main point – it is also surely the case that the appropriate "how" is not a sufficient justification for any "what"-soever, a shortcoming which the story of Abraham amply reveals. One might attempt to argue in Kierkegaard's defence that there is implicit in his work a non-Habermasian version of communicatively engendered norms, where the "how" of indirect communication is itself already a formal, initial sort of upbuilding, a necessary prologema as well as a limitation regarding the "what" of religious discourse, such that indirect communication is in the first instance the establishment of the space in which further "what" discourses can take place. But the attempt fails in that it amounts at most to a de-legitimation of all other "how"s and perhaps several "what"s without, however, solving the problem of the break between the ethical and the religious; for ethics, too, already conforms to the norms of indirect communication and so the demand to move beyond it continues to present itself rather more as a loss than a gain. Put otherwise: 'appropriation' is simply not a sufficiently selective criterion. It is indeed plausible that, as Westphal for instance argues,[69] Kierkegaard's concern is not the elimination of the "what," but a question of relative emphasis between the "how" and the "what" in a given sphere. Nevertheless, if we are not to be assumed convinced from the outset, we need to be persuaded to accept the legitimacy of a preference in the first place. It is not, after all, obviously necessary. Moreover, there is good reason to suppose that, from the perspective of the ethical, though preference would ultimately be rejected, it would be better in any particular instance to do the good even if for the wrong reason. The ethical objection to – and persuasive shortcoming of – such a motive, as Kant clearly saw is (among other things) its unreliability. It becomes difficult to see, in this light, how an ethical subjectivity (though now in a perhaps non-Kierkegaardian sense) could be convinced to surrender the balance

or fit between the "how" and "what" that characterizes a stable ethical existence. In particular, how could such an individual accept the demand to move to faith through an ordeal wherein the "what" that is demanded from both act and belief is a contradiction of or is condemned by the "what" which is already believed? How could this central ethical dilemma be brushed aside by any consideration of a "how," no matter how voluminous or volitionally serious? Again, given that the ethical already has a qualitatively similar "how" requirement, wouldn't this surrender of the "what" inevitably present itself as a loss?

One further resource of which Kierkegaard may attempt to avail himself is his claim, in the *Postscript* and *Sickness Unto Death*, that ultimately, from the perspective of the religious, the ethical was an illusory stopping point all along. Climacus claims that "[i]n despairing, I use myself to despair, and therefore I can indeed despair of everything by myself, but if I do this I cannot come back by myself."[70] In so saying, Climacus is reflecting back upon Judge Wilhelm's presentation of the ethical in *Either/Or* as a question of self-choice that lifts one out of the fragmentation of the aesthetic life. While he is sympathetic to developing an account of the life-stages in a progressive, controlled fashion, Climacus asserts this self-choice to have been illusory: we cannot even will the ethical without God, but must rely on grace for the ethical-religious escape from aesthetic despair. As later parts of the *Postscript* stress, we can, in fact, do absolutely nothing without God.[71] But to the degree that the religiousness described there is conceded to be 'egoist,' indifferent to worldly consequences, this elision of the boundaries of the ethical seem to leave it worse off than ever. Furthermore, this suggestion is apparently contradicted when Climacus writes that the passion of the ethical is, in a sense, defined over "against the religious. In drawing to a close, the ethicist does his utmost to guard against the decisive form of a higher standpoint."[72] Climacus attempts to trivialize this gesture of defence as the mere natural inertia of an existing person, a desperate attempt to cling to relative or apparent stability when it is found, but he gives us little *reason* to suspect that it cannot, or better, *should not* be maintained.

4. Conclusion

McInerny writes of Kierkegaardean pedagogy that, "[w]hat the Dane so validly insisted upon is the need for subtlety if we are to influence another. This recognition saves us from the twin evils of casuistry and moral intimidation."[73] This is indeed a valid insistence, and if there were a genuine, ethical escape from these twin evils to be found in Kierkegaard,

we could employ that resource in the service of the social and political tasks that seemed so little to interest him. Moral intimidation, for instance, continues to prevail today as the principal instrument of a political discourse on both the left and the right, one which fails to achieve even meaningful dialogue between these (if I may so call them in indication of their disassociation) life-views. Moreover, the search for functional means of persuasion, especially of the will, remains absolutely crucial to any philosophy which hopes to speak with relevance to a world, and particularly to a Western or developed world, in which the hypocrisy arising from the disjunction of ideals and moral performance remains utterly unadulterated, unmediated, and without excuse.

It seems clear to me, however, that Kierkegaard simply does not have such an account on offer. Unfortunately, we already possess an abundant and active logic of *realpolitik*, of self-interested persuasion which, as we have seen, is one of the loci of Kierkegaard's pedagogical 'betrayal.' It is precisely because of this logic that we are already acutely aware of the more general, fundamental betrayal of self-interest – if not of the "wife and friend," then, as Levinas would say, of "the widow, the orphan, and the stranger." It is surely now beyond dispute that the invisible hand made promises it hadn't the will or interest to keep. One might wonder, if Kierkegaard's authorial pedagogy is a failure in this regard, whether his explicit comments on the god-teacher fare any better. Despite some profoundly blurred edges bordering the Socratic, the god-teacher at least seems to reject a methodology of deception. The god of the *Fragments*, however, is the God-Man of the *Postscript*, and the God who became Man and Teacher is the God of Abraham, only a little older. It is the same God who teaches subjectivity that, by Kierkegaard's lights, also demands obedience; the God in relation to whom selves become selves on the hither side,[74] will on the thither side turn and demand the unexpected and unquestioning submission of that very gift of grace. He that giveth taketh away; perhaps that is fair enough.

What is arguably Kierkegaard's most ethically sensitive writing, *Works of Love*, tirelessly reiterates this theme, which reveals, as it were, the final and perhaps worst betrayal of Kierkegaardian pedagogy. As Philip L. Quinn notes, it is a Christian ethics every bit as uncompromising and demanding in its own way as the Kantian ethics which influenced it yet from which it departs.[75] In identifying God as the mediator and normative source of all ethical intersubjectivity, it presupposes what Mark C. Taylor called 'the journey to selfhood,' mapped out in the pseudonymous writings and discussed in this paper. Without this religious mediation, Kierkegaard believes genuine ethical selfhood to be

impossible. In this connection, he stresses again and again that Christian ethics, the command of absolute obedience to God, will be an offence to Christiandom, to rational humanism, to ethical autonomy. But it is not that Christianity would therefore require defence:

> It is the people who must see to it whether they are able to defend themselves and justify to themselves what they choose when Christianity terrifyingly, as it once did, offers them the choice and terrifyingly compels them to choose: either to be offended or to accept Christianity.[76]

Offence – the response, as I said, that Kierkegaard has anticipated – is the irreducible possibility of Christianity, of the dilemma with which it is Kierkegaard's aim (apparently coming to Christianity's aid if not defence) to confront us; and he is well aware of the fear and trembling that the absolute demands of Christianity must provoke: "You will shudder; you will seek evasions; you will think that there are higher ends for which one can live. Yes, of course. And then you will turn away."[77] Insofar as it is only his task to bring about the confrontation, perhaps he succeeds; insofar as he has intended in so doing to show that there are no higher ends for which we can live, it seems to me that he has failed to persuade.[78] Quinn writes, in conclusion,

> these forms of Christian ethics are likely to look harsh and inhuman if viewed from outside a Christian worldview or if recourse to grace is disallowed. I believe this only shows that they contain within themselves the possibility of offence. Kierkegaard, I am sure, would regard this as confirmation of the view that they are authentic forms of Christian ethics. I agree with this view.[79]

As an admitted outsider, then, my objections, stated throughout this paper, can only give confidence to those on the inside, an argumentative structure Karl Popper referred to as a 'self-immunizing stratagem,' and which is common to a variety of strands of post-Hegelian philosophy, to ideology critique, psychoanalysis, and the hermeneutics of suspicion generally. For Kierkegaard, at issue is the 'false consciousness' of a Christiandom in which everyone is purportedly already a Christian, and so must be dialectically disabused of their comfortable, delusory self-understanding if they would be prepared to receive or even confront authentic Christianity as Other. In truth, however, Kierkegaard's position is even more extreme: it is not only the loss of comfort, the shock of conversion which is an offence to the unconverted; but as this paper has stressed, the content, that to which one would be converted, inspires

(or ought to) a powerful repulsion on the part of any defender of ethical autonomy, which must likewise turn out to be delusory if the Kierkegaardian strategy is to be carried through to completion.

Analogous to the formal opposition of ideological versus authentic consciousness, the Freudian analyst interprets the resistance of the analysand to an interpretation as the defence mechanism of a threatened neurosis, and so their protests only serve to confirm the analyst's belief that they are on the right track. Whether the content of Freudian insight is equally repugnant to the unconverted is perhaps an open question, but the radically asymmetrical position of the diagnostician and 'patient' is not. It is not that a system of ethics – Christian or otherwise – must be empirically falsifiable after the fashion of a scientific theory; rather, my worry concerns the structure of discourse: an ethics of persuasion that respects the autonomy of the learner must be able to give reasons that the learner could accept from their own viewpoint. As Habermas writes, and as Kierkegaard's 'voluntary effacement' initially suggests, "in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants."[80] Despite initial suggestions, however, as soon as conflict arises between the perspectives of his fully developed Christian ethics and, for instance, a recalcitrant, secular ethicist, Kierkegaard's 'strategem' gives up the engaged position of interlocutor, the equal attempting to persuade, in favour of the more detached, if not exactly objective position of the diagnostician, the authority. And, just as with the protesting analysand, every time we cry 'offence,' the Kierkegaardian becomes simultaneously more assured and less communicative. The promise of indirect communication itself is in the end betrayed; the equality or symmetry between teacher and student, and the reciprocal understanding that was the aim of the Teacher in the *Fragments*, are surrendered.[81] It is worth observing that, as a matter of fact, Kierkegaard himself eventually came to have worries about the compatibility of true Christianity with the indirect method of communication, as his journals attest.[82] Meanwhile, according to Quinn, this offence, this betrayal, is as it should be: this is Christianity. But it seems to me, for any Kierkegaardian who sees the relevance of Kierkegaard extending beyond the religious community whose limits it would otherwise confirm, either it will have to be shown that the argument of this paper misrepresents the nature of ethical-religious existence as Kierkegaard understood it, or that it is possible – in some way not evident to me – to delimit a Kierkegaardian ethics that does not entail the betrayal of ethical subjectivity. As for the larger project to which this paper is intended to contribute: while Kierkegaard's initial attractiveness stems from his attempt to offer a theory and practice of ethical persuasion that

employs formal-rational resources in the overcoming of ideological consciousness, ultimately it is only his missteps, his betrayals, that are directly serviceable, marking out at least some of the paths by which such an aim is not to be advanced.

Notes

1. I would like to thank John Davenport and Saskia Hildebrandt for their comments on an early draft of this paper; I would also like to thank the anonymous reviewer for this journal for his or her helpful suggestions.
2. Kierkegaard, Soren, *Philosophical Fragments or A Fragment of Philosophy*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 9. Hereafter, *PF*.
3. Climacus' argument is not, in fact, a transcendental deduction in the strict sense which Kant intended. The fortuitous arrival at the necessity of a host of Christian concepts, from the Incarnation to repentance for sin, is surely not intended as the fruit of a genuine argument, for that would contradict Climacus' critique of natural theology.
4. *PF*, 10. Climacus does not really argue for this point, however, and there is certainly ample textual evidence to suggest that Socratic ignorance – the lack of the positive – *was* Socrates' motivation. Furthermore, there seems to be no argument in Climacus for the latter claim that this indeed is the highest relation possible among humans. Again, it follows only as a retrospective consequence of accepting the later claim that only the god can give truth.
5. *PF*, 13.
6. *PF*, 14.
7. *PF*, 14.
8. *PF*, 14–15. It may initially seem as though this situation radically distinguishes revelatory transformation from all other empirical forms of learning, where the condition is in some sense innate but requires external stimulus. As I will observe below, however, *all* forms of conversion are subject to this paradox. It is what Marcuse understood as the problem of "educational dictatorship"; what Rousseau referred to in his claim that humans must be 'forced to be free'; what tempted Marx to privilege the revolutionary intelligentsia or elite; and what Dewey observed under the heading of the "vicious circle," rightly noting its initial dramatic origins in Plato's parable of the Cave. The principle difference, as I will also claim below, is that Kierkegaard's belief that this transformation exceeds the possibilities of human intersubjectivity is an essentially and undesirably (socially, ethically, and politically) conservative doctrine.
9. Rudd, Anthony, "The Moment and the Teacher: Problems in Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments," *Kierkegaardiana* 21 (2000): 92–115, 101.
10. *Ibid*, 99.
11. I take such intent to be patent, and there is a wealth of literature that does so as well [see, for instance, Mark C. Taylor's *Journeys to Selfhood*, and "Aesthetic Therapy: Hegel and Kierkegaard" (343–380), in *Kierkegaard's Truth: The Disclosure of the Self*, ed. Joseph H. Smith, M.D. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981)];

nevertheless, as with everything, there are dissenters. Climacus himself claims that he is a fellow learner "who then cannot want to teach others" (*CUP*, 623). It seems to me, however, that Climacus is in this section merely denying a positivistic version of teaching, of pedagogical authority.

12. Jackson, Timothy P., "Arminian Edification: Kierkegaard on Grace and Free Will" (235–256), in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 238. On the connection to Plato's dialogical method, Kierkegaard writes in his journals, "The reason why several of Plato's dialogues end without result...is an expression of Socrates' maieutic art which makes the reader, or the hearer, himself active, and so does not end in a result but in a sting. It is an excellent parody of the modern method of learning by rote, which says everything as quickly as possible and all at once, and does not have the effect of making the reader take an active part, but makes him learn like a parrot." (*The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, trans. and ed. Alexander Dru (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 155, entry 578/ VII A 74). This comment is markedly similar to Paulo Freire's critique of "banking education," which is for him as well linked to the production of false consciousness [see Freire, Paulo, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 30th Anniversary edition, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York and London: Continuum, 2005)].
13. *Ibid*, 242.
14. *Ibid*, 243. Jackson admits that Kierkegaard spends no time with this possibility, focused as he is on the decisive moment, but neither does he rule it out; in fact, accepting it seems crucial to making sense of Kierkegaard's own authorial project.
15. Westphal, Merold, *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1996), 12. Westphal also points out that the denial of authorial authority is common to both the pseudonymous works as well as the *Upbuiling Discourses* and other texts published in Kierkegaard's own name.
16. *Ibid*, 12–13. cf. *PF*, 23–24, *CUP*, 252, 626. In his journals, he writes, "My purpose in life would seem to be to present the truth as I discover it in such a way as simultaneously to destroy all possible authority. By ceasing to have authority, by being in the greatest possible degree unreliable in the eyes of man, I present the truth and put them in a contradictory position form which they can only save themselves by making the truth their own." (*The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, 117, entry 432/IV A 87).
17. Rudd, Anthony, "The Moment and the Teacher," 100.
18. *PF*, 15. This, of course, is defined as the state of sin.
19. Rudd, Anthony, "The Moment and the Teacher," 101.
20. Kierkegaard, Soren, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, Volume I*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 270. Hereafter, *CUP*.
21. Marino, Gordon D., "The Place of Reason in Kierkegaard's Ethics" (113–127), in *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre*, eds. John J. Davenport and Anthony Rudd (Chicago: Open Court, 2001), 121.
22. McInerny, Ralph, "Ethics and Persuasion: Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic", *The Modern Schoolman* 43(May) (1956): 219–239, 225.
23. Kierkegaard, Soren, *Either/Or, Volume II*, eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 168.

24. Davenport, John J., " 'Entangled Freedom': Ethical Authority, Original Sin, and Choice in Kierkegaard's Concept of Anxiety," *Kierkegaardiana* 21 (2000): 131–151, 142.
25. *PF*, 26–27.
26. *PF*, 28.
27. *PF*, 26.
28. *PF*, 29.
29. *PF*, 29.
30. As regards the lover, this is similar to Aquinas' point that were God to reveal to a human in their lifetime the Beautific Vision, it would be impossible for such a person to choose other than God – freedom would be annihilated.
31. *PF*, 31.
32. *PF*, 32–33
33. *PF*, 7.
34. McInerny, Ralph, "Ethics and Persuasion: Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic," 225.
35. Kierkegaard, Soren, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), 39–40. Hereafter, *PV*.
36. *PV*, 41.
37. McInerny, Ralph, "Ethics and Persuasion: Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic," 225–26.
38. *PV*, 25–26.
39. Marcuse, Herbert, *One-Dimensional Man*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 40.
40. Westphal, it should be noted, is explicit that Kierkegaard's intent is not to leave the reader alone, but to leave her alone before God (see *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 16). Nevertheless, it is not the case in the authorship that God is always at the front door. On the contrary, the initial question of appropriation seems to imply that the reader is alone in the house; but God, it turns out, is sitting in the kitchen with the lights off.
41. *CUP*, 461.
42. Marino, Gordon D., "The Place of Reason in Kierkegaard's Ethics," 118.
43. *Ibid*., 118. Cf. *Either/Or, II*, 160.
44. *Ibid*., 119.
45. Westphal, Merold, *Becoming a Self: A Reading of Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 24. Marino writes, "Kierkegaard certainly held that there are universal moral truths...Kierkegaard's thinking is clear and Kantian enough. Moral duties are universal" ("The Place of Reason in Kierkegaard's Ethics," 120–21).
46. By "ethical heroes" I mean literally those whom Silentio distinguishes from the knight of faith as 'heroes'. This means, of course, that I do not read the knight of infinite resignation, who has not clearly given up his interest, as the paradigm of the ethical, but rather as the limit or transition case.
47. Davenport, John J., "'Entangled Freedom': Ethical Authority, Original Sin, and Choice in Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety*," 131.
48. *Ibid*., 144–45.
49. McInerny, Ralph, "Ethics and Persuasion: Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic," 235. Incidentally, Kierkegaard seems to countenance the possibility that God *could* act through the individual, affect their will as efficient cause, etc.; what he rejects is that God *would* be willing to do it.

50. Mooney, Edward F., "The Perils of Polarity: Kierkegaard and MacIntyre in Search of Moral Truth" (233–263) in *Kierkegaard After MacIntyre*, 242.
51. *Ibid*., 242.
52. *PF*, 19.
53. Prosser, Brian T., "Conscientious Subjectivity in Kierkegaard and Levinas," *Continental Philosophy Review* 35 (2002): 397–422. It is probably ill-advised for Prosser to substitute "wife and friend" for Levinas' conventional choice, "the Widow, the Orphan, and the Stranger." The term may suggest in Kierkegaard those we are inclined to prefer, which God as the middle term will prevent; Levinas' choice, however, is to focus on those we, and perhaps our God, too, are inclined to exclude: they must defend themselves.
54. *Ibid*., 406–07. Regarding Levinas' supposed optimism, I refer Prosser to the following: "It is evident that there is in man the possibility of not awakening to the other; there is the possibility of evil. Evil is the order of being pure and simple – and, on the contrary, to go toward the other is the penetration of the human into being, an 'otherwise than being.'...I am not at all certain that the 'otherwise than being' is guaranteed to triumph. There can be periods during which the human is completely extinguished...I have no illusions; most of the time, things happen that way and it will probably recur...I have no illusions about it and I have no optimistic philosophy for the end of history...But the human consists of acting without letting yourself be guided by these menacing possibilities. That is what the awakening of the human is. And there have been just men and saints in history" [from "Philosophy, Justice, and Love" (102–121), in *Entre Nous*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 114].
55. *Ibid*., 407. For Westphal's corresponding argument, see *Overcoming Onto-Theology* (New York: Fordham University, 2001), 145–46.
56. *Ibid*., 412. The references in Levinas are to *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*.
57. *Ibid*., 412. Part of what Prosser has in mind is also the question of the authenticity of the voice, which seems to be Buber's principle worry in Kierkegaard: what if it is not really God? How would we tell?
58. *Ibid*., 412.
59. *Ibid*., 416. Levinas, despite many wrong-headed criticisms to the contrary, will not allow any such blind obedience, as he makes clear in his discussion of the third party. And he is similarly clear that there is always, without fail, a third party.
60. Wirza, Norman, "Teaching as Propaedeutic to Religion: The Contributions of Levinas and Kierkegaard," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 39; April 1996: 77–94, 79.
61. cf. *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphono Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 158.
62. Interestingly, Ivan's brother Alyosha calls this gesture 'rebellion.' Ivan, I should perhaps note, stresses that he is prepared to return his ticket straight away at the beginning.
63. *CUP*, 103. In this case, it is Hegel that Climacus charges with the fraud. Other instances include: "all those who in that way want to give a rhetorical push in order to bring one into Christianity or even to help one into it by a thrashing – they are all deceivers (49)...direct communication is a fraud toward God (...), a fraud toward himself (...), a fraud toward another human being...[it is] treason...(74–75)...vanity (78)...a forgery by which, according to one's ability, one helps any number of people to acquire a semblance of truth" (247).

64. *CUP*, 260–61. My italics. In his journals, Kierkegaard writes, "Christ concealed something from his disciples because they could not bear it. That was loving of him, but was it moral? That is one of the most difficult moral doubts; if by concealing something I can save another man from suffering, have I the right to do so, or do I interfere in his human existence? At that point lies the paradox of my life, before God I am always in the wrong, but is it a crime against mankind?" (*The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, 114, entry 427/IV A 73). Two years later, he again asks: "Have I ever (however much I may wish someone to share my point of view) the right to use my art to win over a man; is it not, in a sense, to deceive him. If he sees me moved, touched, enthusiastic etc. then he accepts my point of view, and consequently for quite a different reason than I, and for a false reason. The majority, I suppose, do not understand the question at all; if one has skill to use, then one should use it, and the man who does not use it in that way is an immoral man who does not recognize his duties, without seriousness, egotistical etc. Answer: Bah!" (*ibid*., 133, entry 490/V A 47).
65. *CUP*, 79.
66. cf. *CUP*, 199, 202, 203 for instances of the subordination of the "what" to the "how."
67. Prosser, Brian T., "Conscientious Subjectivity in Kierkegaard and Levinas," 413. Cf. *CUP*, 201.
68. Marino, Gordon D., "The Place of Reason in Kierkegaard's Ethics," 123.
69. Cf. Westphal, Merold, *Becoming a Self*, 118–19. There are certainly passages, however, which appear to exceed a mere question of emphasis; for instance, Kierkegaard writes in his journals that Johannes Climacus shows, "that there is a 'how' which has this quality, that if it is truly given, then the 'what' is also given; and that is the 'how' of faith.'" (*The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, 355, entry 1021/X2 A 299).
70. *CUP*, 258.
71. *CUP*, 467.
72. *CUP*, 295.
73. McInerny, Ralph, "Ethics and Persuasion: Kierkegaard's Existential Dialectic," 238.
74. *CUP*, 244.
75. Quinn, Philip L., "Kierkegaard's Christian Ethics" (349–375) in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, 352. That faith is prerequisite to ethical selfhood is in fact not all: according to Quinn, faith is, for Kierkegaard, actually prerequisite to the performance of a single act that would count as ethical, as 'done in the right way' – i.e., from God's command (see *ibid*., 366–367).
76. Kierkegaard, Soren, *Works of Love*, eds. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 200–201. Cf. 59, 146, 194. Clearly these comments are in no way intended to be a comprehensive consideration of *Works of Love*; they merely serve, on the one hand, to explain why it figures so little in the text (because it presupposes the journey to selfhood in faith), and on the other, to point out that it persists in a rhetorical strategy that compounds the very problems already identified, as I will explain in what follows.
77. *CUP*, 484. I should note that this is not the only way in which Christianity may offend, according to Kierkegaard: in myriad ways, its wisdom is foolishness to the (or perhaps we) Greeks.

78. This point is significant in regard to the ethical nature of my objections: even if one is inclined to argue that Kierkegaard succeeds in speaking aesthetics to the aesthete – and this is the category in which the unreflective member of Christiandom belongs – and gradually, internally as it were, revealing to them that their life is despair, is untenable, it seems that nothing similar can be said for the ethical-religious transition (and presumably this is where one finds oneself after having been disabused of one's aesthetic self-(mis)understanding). All Kierkegaard seems to have to offer here is that after one has made the transition, one will see that all along one could do nothing without God's help.
79. Quinn, Philip L., "Kierkegaard's Christian Ethics," 374.
80. Habermas, Jurgen, *Theory and Practice*, trans. J. Verteil (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 40
81. In his journals, Kierkegaard writes, "People try to persuade us that the objections against Christianity spring from doubt. That is a complete misunderstanding. The objections against Christianty spring from insubordination, the dislike of obedience, rebellion against all authority." (*The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, 193, entry 630/II A 721). The authority, of course, belongs to Christianity and not Kierkegaard himself, but his relation to the former allows him to confidently asserts this reductionistic hypothesis which presents the objector with one of two unsavoury options: continue one's objections knowing that they will automatically be reduced to more grist for the mill of Kierkegaard's strategy, or silence.
82. In 1848, Kierkegaard finally declares in his journal that it "would be inexcusable" to continue to employ the indirect method of communication common to the pseudonymous writings: "From now on I shall have to take over clearly and directly everything which up till now has been indirect, and come forward personally, definitely, and directly as one who wished to serve the cause of Christianity... The communication of Christianity must ultimately end in 'bearing witness', the maieutic form can never be final. For truth, from the Christian point of view, does not lie in the subject (as Socrates understood it) but in a revelation which must be proclaimed.

    In Christiandom, the maieutic form can certainly be used, simply because the majority in fact live under the impression that they are Christians. But since Christianity is Christianity the maieuticer must bear witness.

    In the end the maieuticer will not be able to bear the responsibility because the indirect method is ultimately rooted in human intelligence, however much it may be sanctified and consecrated by fear and trembling. God becomes too powerful for the maieuticer and so he is the witness, though different from the direct witness in that he has been through the process of becoming one." (*ibid.*, 259–60, entry 809, 809/IX A 218, 221).

    By the following year, Kierkegaard is writing about how his experience with direct communication (his responsibility for the authorship) gave him a new understanding of the indirect method, inspiring "the new pseudonymity" (*ibid.*, 348, entry 1000/X2 A 195). This ambivalence, however, has nothing whatsoever to do with the theme of deception: in the very next entry in his journal, he writes, "The *category* of my work is: *to make men aware of Christianity*, and consequently I always say: I am not an example, for otherwise all would be confusion. My task is to deceive people, in a true sense, into entering the sphere of religious obligation which they have done away with; but I am without authority. Instead of authority I make use of the reverse, I say: the whole thing

is my own education. That, once again, is a truly Socratic discovery." (*ibid*., 348, entry 1001/X2 A 196). Kierkegaard entertains very little uncertainty, it seems to me, about the ethical viability of his authorial strategy, since, as I have argued, ethical viability is in any case trumped by religious truth according to his philosophy. That said, I have nowhere disputed that practically speaking, ideological consciousness may not be unassailable by all other means, though in fact I think that would be a seriously overhasty conclusion. I would also caution that even if one was able to identify hesitations regarding the use of deception in the journals – and even if we consider the journals to be intended for posterity (and so not merely as private musing which would quite arguably not deserve equal weight alongside published works) – this would in no way obviously outweigh the unqualified endorsements of deception cited in these notes, nor would it mitigate in any real sense Kierkegaard's consistent choice of deception as a strategy throughout the pseudonymous authorship. It would be one thing if Kierkegaard were to resolve his doubts through an argumentative justification for that consistent choice: but then, such a justification would be far more interesting for the investigation than the existence of the doubts themselves.

As for the true nature of the hesitation in question, however, which ought to be indicated more clearly: it seems to me that they are patently religious rather than ethical. Kierkegaard expresses worries regarding the possible hubris of his 'mission' of bringing to his readers an awareness of true Christianity; he expresses a worry that by stressing the difficulty of the task of Christianity, he may cause people to no longer want to be Christians (that is, instead of merely convincing them that they are not already one, by virtue of their birth into a Christian nation) (X4 A 553); he worries that Christianity's demand for suffering, the exposure to persecution that comes of bearing witness, may be incompatible with his pseudonymity (this is the precise reservation expressed in the quote above) – if there is an ethical worry of any kind expressed in the journals, it once again concerns Kierkegaard's personal relationship to God and not to his readers, viz., whether his own life manifests 'witness' in accord with the demands he himself is concerned to elucidate (cf. *Soren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, Vol. 1, eds. and trans. Howard V. and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1967), 288; *ibid*., Vol. II (1970), 378–88).