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Review essay

Kierkegaard as socio-political thinker and activist*

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The collection by thirteen contributors, *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community*, belongs to the recent groundbreaking series of books on Kierkegaard which provide a corrective to the neglected socio-political dimension of his authorship. Many authors in the present volume, as well as in additional texts to be discussed in this essay, either challenge or outright reject Kierkegaard's presumed irrationalism, asocial individualism, and anti-political acosmism. Besides this long overdue revision of what I call *the received view of Kierkegaard*, other authors go beyond critique. They either propose new ways of reading Kierkegaard from the angle of his contribution to a critical social theory or they directly employ his existential categories to inform their socio-political theory and practice. In my discussion of these often overlapping trends I will focus on each, critiques of the received view and socio-political appropriations of Kierkegaard, in turn (vii-xi).

1. The category of the individual in socio-political theory and practice

In his 1846 critique of the present age, Kierkegaard grows suspicious that "the age will be saved by the idea of sociality, of association." Because the leveling of the individual by the herd mentality of the present age cannot be resisted directly through social union, Kierkegaard argues, "not until the single individual has established an ethical stance despite the whole world, not until then can there be any question of genuinely uniting." Viewing the revolutionary 'spring of the nations' of 1848, in his essay, "The Individual,"

* George B. Connell and C. Stephen Evans, Eds., *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community: Religion, Ethics, and Politics in Kierkegaard.* New Jersey, London: Humanities Press, 1992, xxii + 245 pp. $45.00. (All references to this volume will be given in the main body of the text.)

Kierkegaard restates this insight most emphatically: "'The individual' is the category through which, in a religious respect, this age, all history, the human race as a whole, must pass."[1]

It is statements like these that have led many a reader to portray Kierkegaard as an acommunicative solipsist and anti-social or anti-political individualist. Let me recall a few among the major objections from among the moral philosophers and critical social theorists. Adorno judges Kierkegaard's care for interiority to be a sign of a privatist concern by an individual who has withdrawn from the material strife of his age into an idealistically constructed "bourgeois *intérieur*." Buber, similarly as Lévinas later on, critiques what appears to him to be a one-sided religious individualism in Kierkegaard's stress on one's inwardness before God at the exclusion of one's ethical relationship to the world and others. The later Lukács depicts Kierkegaard as a decadent beneath whose despairing if not atheistic religiosity is masked on the one extreme an existential dandy and, on the other, a proto-fascist. Yet critical theorists like Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse often defend the individual as the last resort for revolutionary dissent against the mass culture industry and the one-dimensional, totally administered society (cf. M. Nicoletti 183f.).[2]

In order to reverse the distortions or oversights in the received view and, likewise, strengthen the critical role of Kierkegaard's dissenting individual, the authors concerned with the religious vision (Part I, 2–53) present Kierkegaard's non-fundamentalist and non-authoritarian articulation of faith. While M. Plekon rejects Kierkegaard the superprotestant (2–17), S.N. Dunning shows that authority cannot warrant faith because it can neither preclude thought nor deliver one to non-dogmatic religiosity. Kierkegaard's authoring "without authority" gives him as an author only a role of a "prompter" (18–32). Similarly, M.L. Taylor depicts Kierkegaard's narrative of Abraham's and Job's ordeals in non-fundamentalist terms: the issue here is not about ir/rationality. The issue is that neither tradition nor authority are to be dogmatically accepted but rather that they require lived, radically sober examination/repetition via one's own self-authoring/self-reading. The suspensions of the ethical provide an invitation that the readers become open/transgress to a new symbolic space not yet availed by the given social ethics (33–53).

In Part II, on Ethics (55–108), contributors to the present volume bring forth voices missing from the liberal-communitarian debate. These are the positions representing the perspectives of existential ethics. G.B. Connell argues that Kierkegaard steers the course between Kant and Hegel. The source of lived ethical obligation is more concrete than Kantian universal moral point of view and Hegel's ethical community: "the self attains the universal by becoming the particular self that is" (61). While Kantian

autonomy recognizes no constraint, Kierkegaard's "resolve to resolve" depends neither on a divine command theory nor on Judge William's overconfidence in communitarian conventions (62–67). E. Mooney clarifies this apparent transgression of both the liberal and communitarian ethics by showing that for Kierkegaard, contrary to Adorno's Buber's, and Lévinas's charges, existential self-choice occasions both a shipwreck and a return of the world, the domain of the ethical. There is a more complex ethic that emerges in this tension of receptive openness to the "uncertainty about the conferred grounds of our identity" (78). Not unlike in J. Habermas's reading of G.H. Mead on identity and individuation, Mooney distinguishes individualization through socialization from the task of radically honest identity-formation. While the former process allows us to have a proto-self (of roles, conventions), the latter repetition develops an individual capacity for self-direction under the ongoing crises of the established self. Becoming a self stirs then both a crisis of the communitarian norms, duty, transparent guideposts for moral actions and a return of the socio-ethical domain in an open mode of identify-formation (72–91). In the same direction, L.C. Keeley argues against linking acosmism with Kierkegaard's ethical individualism.[3]

One of the sources of the charges against Kierkegaard lies in the failure to distinguish between possessive and existential individualism. Here B. Kirmmse and M. Westphal offer significant clarifications.

Kirmmse defines possessive individualism by the "modern, mass-based, individualist market society," where the self-interested individual is the one against all while all are against the one (163). The present age – its media, academia, public spheres, and churches – as viewed by Kierkegaard, is a world of leveling where the affective community (*Gemeinschaft*) gave way to a contractarian society (*Gesellschaft*). Yet unlike Hegel and Marx, Kierkegaard does not long for a recovery from the present crisis via some model of early community. In place of a nostalgia or an apocalyptic view of the present age, he depicts leveling as the occasion to educate the individual. In his view of modernity, Kierkegaard strives for a self-limitation of the calculative, bourgeois-philistine, reified rationality and politics (165–169). If going to a past or to a utopian communitarian future is not possible, then the path can lead only via an intensification of the "coming of age" of the present (173).

The individual is to embody the radical category of honesty: honest atheism is preferred by Kierkegaard, says Kirmmse, to dishonest Christianity. In this view, Kierkegaard emerges more radical than the 1848 liberals and leftists who sought some compromise with conservative Christendom in order to safeguard revolutionary appeals to solidarity and cultural *ethos*. Kierkegaard calls for a total separation of the state and the

church. He does so on the basis of the secular concern, shared with his post-1789 and post-1848 age, for radical honesty and for the self-governance by common citizens. Kierkegaard's modern dissenting individual is then neither a market contractarian nor an orphan but a neighbor with honesty and a going concern for the radical equality of other individuals (174–177).[4]

In his important book, from which the above essay develops some basic themes, Kirmmse situates Kierkegaard as "a genuinely modern, post-1848 alternative to the *ancien régime* world-view of the Golden Age" – a pragmatic agnostic on the meaning of history and political arrangements and a populist individualist in relation to the locus of culture. Kierkegaard is neither a romantic lusting after another Golden Age mainstream nor a mandarin elitist who has no regard for the common human lot. When he attacks the notion of socio-political union as unfit to rescue the present age, he goes after both the liberal and the conservative "ways of being political." The requirement of honesty, says Kirmmse, informs Kierkegaard's definition of "populist individualism" in genuine deliberative politics: "Any honestly and passionately held idea which respects the individual as an integral unit and as the starting point for all further association." Kirmmse presents Kierkegaard as a "radical" existential individualist and yet argues that "politics, or unions of simple, integral individuals, would become possible."[5]

What is the political role of this dissenting individual? Not unlike the early critical theorists of the Frankfurt School of Social Criticism, Kierkegaard defends the individual against the idolized totality of the nation-state. It is this very inwardness, which Adorno branded to be Kierkegaard's privatist escape to an idealist's objectless interiority, that Kirmmse highlights as the locus from which radical political dissent against "self-deified state" becomes possible. "Thus it is the political task of the (suffering) 'inward' individual to promote spiritual openness and tentativeness in society by keeping society in a state of annoyance and self-doubt." Because this dissenting individual cannot be incorporated into professional party politics or swayed to one political or religious platform, she cannot be distracted from the political task of keeping the social and cultural realms open. A truly multicultural society would need to affirm that view of egalitarianism which respects the normative priority of the deliberative individual to that of social ethics.[6]

What is the link of the category of the individual to socio-political revolution? If 1848 represents a revolt of masses against all forms of unconditional authority, it does not mean that this rebellion could not at some point fail to be self-critical. Indeed, the revolutionary nation-state becomes a new unconditional in late modernity. Here, it is obvious that

Kierkegaard is not a socio-political reactionary since he argues against the authority of this unconditional: nationalism is dangerous because it grows insufficiently secular and revolution is dangerous when it becomes insufficiently revolutionary. The category of the individual and the domains of politics and culture require one another and call for mutual self-delimitation. Thus, this category is revolutionary in a two-fold sense: in theory it provides a corrective to the blind spots of socio-political aims; in practice, it roots revolution in an ongoing self-critical attitude of the deliberative individual. "Only by neglecting social and historical elements has Kierkegaard scholarship missed the point that his entire authorship is informed and guided by his vision of politics and society and that the concluding, polemical phase of his authorship must be understood as an expression of the requirements of that vision in the post-1848 world."[7]

Perhaps Kirmmse presses Kierkegaard's position unncessarily far into the "special" liberal-individualist position over and against what he calls Rousseau's communitarian "democracy." While Kierkegaard would agree with liberals that "the community does not have a status as a moral being," it would not necessarily mean that he would view every community as a "pragmatic association" wholly external to one being an individual. True, Kierkegaard does "value the community only in relation to the individual," but this need not mean that there is no mode of community which the individual could not value as a regulative ideal. In fact, Kierkegaard does discuss a possibility of such a dialectical, inward and not purely external, relation between individual and community: when the individuals are related to one another "on the basis of an ideal distance," then "the unanimity of separation is indeed fully orchestrated music." Scepticism about the possibility of community, ascribed by Kirmmse to Kierkegaard, is cogent if the only type of reciprocity available in modernity is that of contractarian associations or abstract universalism. Dialogic reciprocity among existential individuals, educated by deliberative honesty, allows for more than external associations of the market. The category of the individual points, politically, to that multicultural society which Hegel's concrete universal subordinated to the nation-state. Deliberative democracy calls forth dialogic, not "leveling reciprocity."[8]

Now, Westphal shows that Kierkegaard, along with Hegel, adopts dialectical but rejects compositional individualism. This thought allows me to develop my rejoinder to Kirmmse from the perspective of Hegel's critique of presocial and prepolitical individualism in social-contract, on the one hand, and Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel's communitarianism on the other. In his *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel underakes a path that M. Sandel cannot forgive J. Rawls: Hegel begins with the minimalist atomistic view of self and edifies this position into the rich fraternal self of ethical com-

munity. This community is not composed of preexisting Cartesian parts but of self-and-other relations, i.e., spirit. This is Hegel's hermenutical, post-Cartesian point against possessive compositional individualism, a view that Kierkegaard shares with him: there is no 'I' which is not always already a 'We' (i.e., related to some other, to historical and linguistic context); and there is no 'We' which is not expressed in a plurality of I's.[9]

Kierkegaard originates his critique at the end-point of Hegel's journey into the ethical life of community, and not by returning to the minimalist market-place or herd-conventional self. While Kierkegaard resists Hegel's idolized nation-state, he does not defend the possessive individualist pole of the liberal-communitarian debate. He takes Hegel's well socialized citizen of the nation-state and argues that to become ethical, it is insufficient to join a membership in a conventional community. For Kierkegaard, the individual is spirit. Yet spirit, speaking soberly and not in terms of Hegel's social ethics alone, lives through a radically potentiated self-choice *vis-à-vis* the contexts of all ascribed identities, traditions, communities, and allegiances (cf. S. Crites (149–158)). Thus, M. Nicoletti argues, Kierkegaard critiques all deified politics, rationality, and sacralized nationalisms: "All over Europe the nation is sacred and those who die for it are called martyrs of the fatherland" (187). To be sure, this new sacral pertains not only to the Europe of 1848 but with a renewed dedication to the resurgent spring of nations after 1989.

Westphal, contrary to Kirmmse and Nicoletti who argue that politics is only Kierkegaard's secondary consideration, shows that the category of the individual is inherently political and revolutionary *vis-à-vis* the established religious and secular orders that tend to elevate themselves over and against the individual as her nationally televised moral compass and unconditional ground (Nicoletti 184). Kierkegaard places the locus of radical responsibility in the one who deliberates and not in uncriticizable parameters for the public debate and policy choices. Deliberative democracy lives and dies with these loci of radical possibility.[10]

2. Critical theory and existential philosophy

The project of deliberative democracy occupies the central place in J. Habermas's moral and socio-political theory. Yet in his 1987 paper given in Copenhagen, Habermas turns to a Kierkegaardian existential self-choice in order to confront some recent nationalist attempts to waterdown the critical historical scholarship on Germany's Nazi past. He presents Kierkegaard's either/or which characterizes self-choice as a counterpoint to every nationalism and fundamentalism. In a most innovative move, Habermas transcribes the individual question of self-choice into the public debates on

the traditions and national histories. While we can never ascribe collective guilt to the individuals acting in groups, Habermas argues, we can as a community decide which of our bankrupt traditions we want to continue and which we need to jettison. In case of the new rhetoric and symbolism of hatred, this question presents us with a moral and socio-political either/or choice. Habermas depicts post-national identity and, what he calls constitutional patriotism, as more fitting for modern dissenting invididuals whom Kierkegaard addresses in his critique of the nation-state. After the resurgence of nationalist strife and hatred towards the "foreign others" in post-1989 'new world order', this mutual help shared by the existential and procedural critiques of nationalism and authoritarianism is more than welcome for mounting the urgent task of resistance.[11]

Ch. Bellinger explains existential motives for Stalinist and Hitlerian violence on the one end and for post-1989 rise of hatred on the other end. Because we must view the category of the individual in intersubjective, dialectical terms (Crites 150; Bellinger 218ff.; Westphal's *Kierkegaard's Critique*), we can employ Kierkegaard's 'psychoanalysis' of anxiety and despair in diagnosing social psychopathologies as well. The need for scapegoats, the justifications for imperial wars, the call for a 'new world order' to replace the cold war, etc. have both material grounds and existential motives. While the former calls for socio-political and economic critique, the latter requires a confrontation of the symbolic economies of self-evading and self-mastering attitudes both in individual and social establishments.[12]

Nicoletti envisions "an interior government, that of the single individual," as an ongoing corrective to the procedural democratic structures. When Nicoletti argues this Kierkegaardian post-1848 point of view that "the only place to restore government in modernity is to give a place to 'the single individual'," he echoes V. Havel's current invitation to complement professional governance with non-political politics. Havel's "living in truth," like Kierkegaard's witnessing to the truth, signifies a non-political posture insofar as in it one is not primarily a bearer of the partisan power politics. But this posture is political insofar as in renouncing absolutization of political power one fosters the politics free from domination (190–92).[13]

Havel links this non-politically corrective with another term used to designate self-transformative possibilities both before and after 1989, namely existential revolution. This revolution, not the cold war, occasioned the opening for political changes behind the Iron Curtain: likewise, only a permanent existential revolution can sustain an ongoing resistance to new hate groups in post-1989 Europe and USA. Havel names this attitude of at once political and existential revolutionary sobriety one's "general awakening of human conscience, human spirit, human responsibility, and human

reason." Existential politics and revolution need not fall outside of institutionalized political structures like so many dissenting movements that never get beyond external insurrection. The oppositional/subversive voices of permanent existential revolutions need to migrate into an interiority of governments. The counterinstitutional spaces of resistance, freed from domination, admit, what Habermas calls, permanent democratic revolution or ongoing discursive practices of deliberative democracy.[14]

Havel fits the portrait of the concrete philosopher whom the young H. Marcuse sketches in his never finished and later abandoned project of an existentially informed critical theory. In his essay on concrete philosophy, Marcuse appeals to the example of Kierkegaard's radical socio-political and egalitarian activism. (We find Kierkegaard at the end of his authorship writing and distributing to every common individual subversive pamphlets against the official Danish church and against its compromise with the elitists and nationalists of the present age.) Here Marcuse intimates in the figures like Socrates or Kierkegaard a progammatic possibility for developing an existentially transformed deliberative democracy. In Marcuse's early view this honest individualism does not disvalue socio-political and material concretion. On the contrary, critical theory becomes concrete when its economic and socio-political analyses are embodied in the material lives of existing individuals.[15]

Not only Marcuse after the rise of Nazism in 1933 but also commentators on Marcuse like D. Kellner leave the possibility to think critical theory through the categories of existential philosophy by the wayside. While Kellner thoroughly examines Marcuse's early and late positions, he does not find other contemporary proposals for linking existential philosophy with critical theory, e.g., in Marsh or Westphal, convincing. In his joint essay with S. Best, Kellner rejects Westphal's retrieval of a Kierkegaardian sociology, politics, and ideology-critique. Yet from the foregoing analysis it should be clear that while we can say that Kierkegaard did not employ a critique of political economy or develop a historically material analysis of the socio-political institutions of his time, we cannot claim that what he did not do means that he wanted to regress or flee from his modern times and social circumstances. The authors discussed in this essay also show that Kierkegaard did operate with modern notions of intersubjectivity and social relations.[16]

Westphal argues that Kierkegaard joins "the suspicion of inward spirituality with social critique." Westphal characterizes this move as an integration of "the concept of sin into ideology critique." This move also transcribes the category of motivated self-and-other-deception into "a social, this-worldly dimension." Motivated deception is not the same as finitude or fallibility. While the errors in the latter sphere can be ammended

through critical though fallibilist reflection, the former sphere occasions ongoing epistemic, motivational, and legitimation crises of our social forms of life. Yet it is reified, instrumental rationality that seems motivated to flee the precarious status of socio-political and economic arguments of which these crises are a reminder. Kierkegaard, analogically to Nietzsche, Marx and Freud, carries on a hermeneutics of suspicion "by virtue of its criticism of the theory of the modern age." Both Kierkegaard and Habermas critique what they view as "amorality of modernity's Reason" which lost all traditional forms of legitimation and yet tries to sanctify itself by the system-rationality of economy and political power. Yet, as Kierkegaard points out, systems have no moral point of view. In Habermas's words, to consider society under the angle of systems-theory alone means to exchange the performative perspective of the responsible participant in the life world for that of an abstract observer. Society that limits its self-understanding to this latter view effectively levels the individual and, thus, also all loci of moral and political deliberation. "Within this framework there is the ethics of socialization by which the individual learns to subordinate instinct and private interests to social requirements. But Eichmann and Mengele were good Germans in this sense, and apartheid is what the age demands for Africaners."[17]

Even though I am not swayed by the charges of irrational, anti-social, and apolitical individualism that many a socio-political thinker brings against Kierkegaard, there is one open question that is neither raised by critical theorists like Adorno, Kellner or Wolin nor by recent postmodern ab/uses of Kierkegaard's authorship. It is one thing to show, like Westphal, that the category of the existential individual engenders an ideology critique of the present age. It is another issue to ask whether or not Kierkegaard's category is sufficient for revisioning the oppressive symbolic economies, e.g., those pertaining to gender or to multicultural societies. Again, it is one thing to show that Kierkegaard has a long overdue place next to the hermeneuts of suspicion Nietzsche, Marx, Freud, and Habermas. It is another point to consider whether their views are sufficiently inclusive of the individuals and groups relegated to the margins.[18]

While I cannot pursue this topic in detail, perhaps two texts from the feminist perspective can show a path for further reflection. T. Lorraine argues that while Kierkegaard's authorship "tries on, and discards, several positions in the masculine spectrum" of identity-formation, he transgresses "the gender barrier" of his age only *vis-à-vis* the teleological suspension of the ethical in fear and trembling before God. The paradox of a Kierkegaardian faith, e.g., as envisioned by Johannes de silentio in Abraham's life, requires a radical decentering of masculinist identity mastered through systematizing authorship or patriarchy. Yet this "feminine position,"

Lorraine claims, by which faith challenges the self-certain strategy of the masculinist ratio, does not extend its corrective beyond the incommunicability of Abraham's faith into intersubjective relations. "Silentio's reading of gender categories makes it problematic for him to conceive of taking up the feminine position with respect to anyone except God." Kierkegaard is inconsistent, Lorraine maintains: he holds "a masculine position with respect to other human beings," yet he posits "the possibility of a feminine position with respect to God." Lorraine envisions that "social change" which would have required Kierkegaard to "translate" the teleological suspension of the ethical into the relations within this same ethical-universal. There is no reason why lovers, discussed in *Fear and Trembling*, and not just Abraham alone with God, could not recover intimacy on a decentered fiduciary ground. For this, they would have to transgress the bourgeois-philistine patriarchy of 'family values', set for the nineteenth century strictures on the institution of marriage, a move of faith that Kierkegaard did not dare to tackle directly outside of the imaginary and dramatic path through his authorship.[19]

W.W. Berry pushes Kierkegaard's critique of the present age in this direction of emancipatory praxis. She suggests that we need to work with the liberating aspects of Kierkegaard and use these as a "springboard," not an authority. Kierkegaard exhibits a tension between reforming and revolutionary relations to tradition, Berry argues. Existential repetition allows for both a critical relation to the past wrongs, such as sexism or racism, and a receptive, non-sentimentally forgiving relation to traditional communities. Further, this posture of letting go and receiving tradition back admits both an empowerment to will to be oneself and a critique of the patriarchal construction of the self through victimization or defiance. The radically honest individual is not a man or a woman isolated in subjectivity. Kierkegaard's category preserves the dialectic of individual and communal self-realizations (196f., 209–212).

Let me conclude with reviewing some of these strengths and limits in Kierkegaard's critique of the present age. Considering his entire authorship, Kierkegaard envisions a critical social theorist and an activist engaged, to cite Westphal, in "a series of teleological suspensions" of the self-sufficient forms of life. This revolutionary attitude, on guard against dishonesty and complacency of any critic or activist, is perhaps one of Kierkegaard's greatest assets. Westphal proposes that Kierkegaardian faith is not something relegated to one's secure and sentimental *intérieur*, but rather it is that position which sets one as " a danger to every established order." Thus, after all Kierkegaard brings the religious decenterings of conventional identity – transgressions of all "negotiated compromise" with secular and religious status quo – back within the finitude of our socio-political lives.

The critic and activist experiences a suspension of inwardness in an outwardness of suffering at odds with the prevalent ideologies of the age. Westphal calls this "religiousness C," a posture that dies away both from the immediacy of communitarian social ethics (religiousness A) and from all "religious" ways of "becoming irreligious" (religiousness B). This journey through teleological suspensions is interminable, its path inhabits a permanent existential revolution, and the mastery of having arrived at the ultimate stage (C) "never actually occurs" (113f., 116, 125f.).

Yet while Kierkegaard subverts the masculinist strategies of self-evading or self-mastering author, he does not question the material and symbolic structures within which cultural or gender categories are set up. We are not, however, prevented by anything in his work from freeing his category of the individual for a radically democratic, multicultural critique of the present age. For this task, we need to show that not only the motives behind identity-formation in various existential spheres (the attitudinal 'how') but also the material and symbolic economies (the 'what' of gender, race, and class) are constructed and, therefore, indeterminate. The collisions within the symbolic and material carriers of these categories, and not only collisions among the existential spheres, might call for a transgressive dissenting theory and practice. True, Kierkegaard's critique left many symbolic and material orders of his mainstream culture and epoch intact. But we are in no way blocked from employing his decentering, radically honest mode of becoming an author, communicator, critic, and activist to revision these categories in ways that neither his corrective pursued nor his century allowed.[30]

Notes

1. Søren Kierkegaard, TA: *Two Ages: The Age of Revolution and the Present Aga, A Literary Review*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978) 106; "'The Individual': Two 'Notes' Concerning my Work as an Author," in PVA: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper & Row, 1963) 128.
2. Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetics*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). Martin Buber, "The Question to the Single One," in *Between Man and Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1965) 40–82. Emmanuel Lévinas, *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), 133, 143f., 150. György Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft, Werke 9* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1974) 219–269. On the last point, cf. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1987) and Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, with a new Introduction by Douglas Kellner (Boston: Beacon Press, c1964, 1991).
3. On the liberal-communitarian debate, cf. these volumes from (Cambridge,

Mass.: MIT, 1990): Seyla Benhabib and Fred Dallmayr, eds., *The Communicative Ethics Controversy*; David Rasmussen, ed., *Universalism vs. Communitarianism*; and Michael Kelly, ed., *Hermeneutics & Critical Theory in Ethics and Politics.* Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Two Volumes, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, Vol. 1, 1984; Vol. 2, 1987), on Mead, cf. Vol. 2: V. Cf. my "Habermas's Reading of Kierkegaard: Notes from a Conversation, "*Philosophy and Social Criticism* 17/4 (1991) 313–323. Cf. also Edward Mooney, *Knights of Faith and Resignation: reading Kierkegaard's* Fear and Trembling (New York: SUNY 1991). Keeley takes issue with Louis Mackey's, "The Loss of the World in Kierkegaard's Ethics," in *Kierkegaard: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Josiah Thompson (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972).

4. Compare this essay with Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, published in the series in the Philosophy of Religion, ed., Merold Westphal (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1990) 408ff. On the category of 'neighbor', cf. Søren Kierkegaard, WOL: *Works of Love*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). Cf. C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
5. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard* 246f., cf. 264; 270f., cf. 274f.; 277f.
6. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard* 402f.
7. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard* 410ff., cf. 449–481. Kierkegaard, PVA, Supplement 157f.
8. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard* 414–419; Kierkegaard, TA 62f.
9. Merold Westphal, *Kierkegaard's Critique of Reason and Society* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1987, reprinted by Pennsylvania State University Press) 30–39, cites Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967) and *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 110. Cf. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and Its Critics* (New York University Press, 1984); and *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).
10. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard* (417): "The category of the individual has as little interest in the world, earthly reward, or honor as it has in revolutionary changes in the external ordering of society." Westphal, *Kierkegaard's Critique* (34): "... *Kierkegaard seeks to unsocialize the individual in order to un-deify society.*" In the volume ed. by Connell and Evans, on the individual cf. also E.J. Ziolkowski (130–143).
11. Jürgen Habermas, NC: *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, ed. and trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen, intro. by Richard Wolin (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989) 251–255, 259, 260ff., 266. Cf. my "Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel On Post-National Identity," *Thesis Eleven*, No. 34 (March 1993), 89–103 and my *Postnational Identity: Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermas, Kierkegaard, and Havel* (New York, London: Guilford Press, 1993), series, "Critical Perspectives," gen. ed. Douglas Kellner.
12. Bellinger's inadequate reading of Ernest Becker's integration of existential psychoanalysis (spec. his use of Kierkegaard) with critical social theory misses an excellent critique of societies and cultures as immortality-ideologies (cf. Becker's *Escape from Evil* (New York: Free Press, 1975).

13. Václav Havel, *Letní přemítání* [Summer Musings] (Praha: Odeon, 1991) 94–115; *Moc bezmocných* (1978) ["The power of the powerless," in *Living in Truth*, ed. Jan Ladislav (London: Faber & Faber, 1986–90) 36–122] in: *O lidskou Identitu* [For Human Identity] (Praha: Rozmluvy, 1990) 55–133; and "Politika a svědomí" (1984) ["Politics and Conscience," in *Living in Truth* 136–157] in: *Do různých stran* [To Different Sides] (Praha Lidové noviny, 1990) 41–59.
14. Václav Havel, *Letní přemítání* 89. On permanent existential and democratic revolution, cf. my "Havel and Habermas On Identity and Revolution," *Praxis International* 10/3–4 (1990–91) 261–277 and my *Postnational Identity*, Part III; Jürgen Habermas, "Volkssouverenität als Verfahren: Ein Normativer Begriff von Öffentlichkeit," *Merkur* 6 (1989) 465–477; and C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard's* Fragments *and* Postscript: *The Religious Philosophy of Johannes Climacus* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1983): "Climacus' attitude towards the self ... parallels the position of the left-wing Hegelians with respect to society. These 'young Hegelians' believed that Hegal had betrayed his own principle by apotheosizing the political status quo. They took seriously the Hegelian principle that progress comes through negativity and called for a continual and 'relentless criticism of everything existing'. This attitude can be seen later in Marx's call for a 'perpetual revolution', a call echoed much later in the cultural revolution of Mao's China. In a similar way Climacus' attitude toward the self could be described as a sort of 'perpetual revolution'" [162f.; Evans refers to Karl Marx, "For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing," and "The Revolution in Permanence," in Robert Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978) 12–15 and 511].

    On the "new forms of a 'politics in the first person'," and on the "counterinstitutions that develop from within the lifeworld in order to set limits to the inner dynamics of the economic and political-administrative action systems," cf. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2:396.
15. Herbert Marcuse, "Über konkrete Philosophy," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 62 (Tübingen, 1929) 111–128; cf. other works by Marcuse between 1928–1933: "Beiträge zu einer Phänomenologie des Historischen Materialismus," *Philosopische Hefte*, 1/1 (Berlin, 1928) 45–68; "Transzendentaler Marxismus?" *Die Gesellschaft*, 7 (part 2), 10 (Berlin, 1930) 304–326; "Zum Problem der Dialektik", *Die Gesellschaft*, 7 (part 1), 1 (Berlin 1930) 15–30 and *Die Gesellschaft*, 8 (part 2), 12 (Berlin, 1931) 541–557; "Neue Quellen zur Grundlegung des Historischen Materialismus," *Die Gesellschaft*, 9 (part 2), 8 (Berlin, 1932) 136–174; and *Hegels Ontologie und die Grundlegung einer Theorie der Geschichtlichkeit* (Frankfurt: V. Klosterman, 1932).
16. Douglas Kellner, *Herbert Marcuse and the Crisis of Marxism* (MacMillan and University of California Press, 1984) 66. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, "Modernity, Mass Society, and the Media: Reflections on the *Corsair Affair*," and James L. Marsh, "The *Corsair Affair* and Critical Social Theory," both in Robert L. Perkins, ed., *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Corsair Affair*, Vol. 13 (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990) 23–61, 63–83 and my review of this book in *Man and World* 26 (1993) 93–97. Cf. Marsh, "Marx and Kierkegaard on Alienation," in Perkins, ed., *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Present Age and the Age of Revolution*, Vol. 14 (Macon:

Mercer University Press, 1984) 155–174 and Westphal, "Inwardness and Ideology Critique in Kierkegaard's *Fragments* and *Postscript*," in *Kierkegaard's Critique* 105–125. For another failure to envision a fruitful encounter between critical theory and existential philosophy, cf. Richard Wolin, *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: the Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). Cf. with this position Ronald L. Hall, *Word and Spirit: A Kierkegaardian Critique of the Modern Age* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

17. Westphal, *Kierkegaard's Critique* 106, 115, 117n40, 119–123. "Habermas's own attempt to reinstate the ethical dimension into social legitimation through formalist or procedural means links his thought to that of John Rawls in a way that deserves attention. We could learn a lot about Kierkegaard's thought by staging a three-way conversation between Kierkegaard, Habermas, and Rawls" (120n50). On system/lifeworld distinction, cf. Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2; on the crisis in welfare state capitalism, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975).
18. Cf. Westphal, *Kierkegaard's Critique* 105f. On postmodern readings of Kierkegaard, cf. trans. Introduction by Williams McDonald and Foreword by Marc C. Taylor to Kierkegaard's *Prefaces: Light Reading for Certain Classes as the Occasion May Require* (Tallahassee: the Florida State University Press, 1989) and other books in the series, "Kierkegaard and Postmodernism" from this publisher; further John D. Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), "Beyond Aestheticism: Derrida's Responsible Anarchy," *Research in Phenomenology*, 18 (1988) 59–73, "Hermeneutics as the Recovery of Man" in: Brice R. Wachterhauser, ed., *Hermeneutics and Modern Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 1986), 416–445, "Hyperbolic Justice: Deconstruction, Myth, and Politics," *Research in Phenomenology* 21 (1991) 3–20, and Caputo's most recent Derridean rendition of Kierkegaard *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation with Constant Reference to Deconstruction* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); cf. with Jacques Derrida who, unlike Caputo, reads Kierkegaard along with Marx in *L'Éthique du don: Jacques Derrida et la pensée du don* (Paris: Métailié-Transition, 1992) and *Spectres de Marx. L'État de la dette, le travail du dueil et la nouvelle Éditions International* (Paris: Galilée, 1993); on the link of Kierkegaard with Marx see my "Derrida and Habermas On the Aporias of the Politics of Identity and Difference: Towards Radical Democratic Multiculturalism," *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* (forthcoming 1994) and Matustik and Merold Westphal, eds., *Kierkegaard in Dialogue* (forthcoming); for an ethically existential and critical appropriation of Kierkegaard via Sartre and the race theory, see Lewis Gordon, *Bad Faith and Antiblack Racism* (forthcoming); and Marc C. Taylor, *Altarity* (University of Chicago Press, 1987).
19. Tamsin E. Lorraine, *Gender, Identity, and the Production of Meaning* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990), 115f., 118f. Cf. Alison Brown, "Grave Voices: A Discussion about Praxis," *Man and World* 25 (1992) 5–19.
20. Cf. Kierkegaard's *Prefaces* (by Nicolaus Notabene) which ironize the self-evading and self-mastering author; the review of other pseudonyms in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (by Johannes Climacus), Vol. 1, trans. Hoard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992) 251ff.; or Kierkegaard's PVA.