

The Journals and the Works of 1843 with Particular Reference to *Either/Or*

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In this paper I would like to examine the problem of the interpretation of Kierkegaard's Works with particular reference to *Either/Or* and the hermeneutical key or standpoint from which to undertake an interpretation. Specifically I want to look at a problem that is presented in the Preface to *Either/Or*, investigating it from different perspectives to see what light is shed on both the problem itself and the problem of interpreting Kierkegaard's authorship generally. It is all too apparent that for many who begin their reading of Kierkegaard with *Either/Or* the experience may prove a daunting one because of the book's complexity, while Kierkegaard's own explanations concerning *Either/Or* and the authorship have not gone unchallenged.¹ Certainly the introductory preface by the book's alleged editor, Victor Eremita, seems to indicate concealment as much as

¹ See, e.g., JOAKIM GARFF: "The Eyes of Argus The Point of View and Points of View With Respect to Kierkegaard's "Activity as an Author" in *Kierkegaardiana*, Journal of the Søren Kierkegaard Society Denmark and the Department of Søren Kierkegaard Research, Copenhagen University. C.A. Reitzels Forlag, Copenhagen, No. 15, 1991, p. 29-54. See also SYLVIA WALSH in "Kierkegaard and postmodernism", *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 29: 113-122, 1991. Walsh points out that Kierkegaard has been taken up by postmodernists in two ways: the subjection of his authorship to deconstructive analysis and the attempt to use features of his authorship as "a forerunner and point of departure for the deconstructive project itself, especially the overthrow of metaphysics and any form of foundationalism."

revelation, with its romantic tale² of papers in a hidden drawer, read in the deep secrecy of the forest. Thus I shall, in what follows, attempt to give an interpretation of *Either/Or* on the basis of the book alone, then I will look briefly at the factor of contemporary review of *Either/Or* before going on to examine Kierkegaard's public treatment of the book and finally seeing what his *Journals* can tell us.

In the Preface to *Either/Or*, Eremita the editor tells us concerning the papers that one author, A, has written "a number of esthetic essays of varying lengths", together with some "aphorisms, lyrical utterances and reflections", and the other author B, alias Judge William, has written "two long studies and a shorter one, all with ethical content...and in the form of letters", which letters are addressed to the first author, the aesthete A. Victor Eremita further tells us that he is publishing A's papers in the order he found them with the loose scraps (the "Diapsalmata") first, because there is no clear intrinsic order, while B's papers are given the natural sequence of the "three letters". A problem Victor Eremita is at pains to present to us through his examination of text and psychological attitude,³ is

² SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Either/Or* I-II, ed. & translated by Howard & Edna Hong, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987 (in the series *Kierkegaard's Writings*), Preface, I p. 3-15. Marginal references to the Danish text in this edition are to *Søren Kierkegaards Samlede Værker*, udg. A.B. Drachmann, J.L. Heiberg & H.O. Lange, Copenhagen, 1901-1906. References to Kierkegaard's Journals are to: Søren Kierkegaard: *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, ed. & tr. Howard & Edna Hong, 7 vols., Bloomington & London, Indiana University Press, 1967-1978 = *JP*. Danish Journal references in this edition are to *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, udg. P.A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr og E. Torsting, 2. forøgede udg. v. Niels Thulstrup, I-XIII, Copenhagen, 1968-1970. Index v. N.J. Cappelørn XIV-XVI, Copenhagen 1975-78 = *Pap*.

³ Victor Eremita bases his thought that the aesthete is author of the diary on the literary fact of the earlier theme of seduction in A's papers (Don Juan)

that "The Seducer's Diary"⁴ - despite A's claim that he found it - is probably a fictional work by A and thus not a genuine copy of a genuine diary as A asserts.⁵

Eremita also lets us know in the preface that "A's papers contain a multiplicity of approaches to an aesthetic view of life" (which, he says, cannot be presented as one coherent view), whereas "B's papers contain an ethical view of life", a fact that gives Eremita the inspiration for the title of the published papers, "*Either/Or*". Eremita furthermore regrets that it is impossible to see which viewpoint wins out, since he is unable to inform us whether A wrote his material before or after receiving the Judge's letters. Thus, in the published material, "only the points of view confront each other".⁶

While Victor Eremita does not mind discussing possibilities concerning the authorship - for example, that one author might have written everything,⁷ what he strangely fails to mention is that (if we are to believe Judge William) he also has another piece of heterogeneous material, namely a Sermon sent to the aesthete, allegedly written by a rural Jutland pastor, who intends to preach the sermon the following year.⁸ Victor Eremita in his preface, however, has, as we have seen, told us that the Judge's papers consist of ethical material in the form of letters and in the

with the suggestion of a reflective seducer as counterpart, and on his psychological observation that the aesthete ought to be glad to encounter his conception of such a seducer carried out in real life, but is instead afraid. See *Either/Or* I p. 8-9, 45-135.

⁴ *Either/Or* I p. 303, 311.

⁵ *Either/Or* I p. 8-10, 303.

⁶ *Either/Or* I, p. 13-14.

⁷ *Either/Or* I p. 13, cf. 9. Presumably the different handwriting would be an authorial deception.

⁸ "The Upbuilding That Lies in the Thought that in Relation to God We Are Always in the Wrong", *Either/Or* II p. 339-354.

handwriting of a businessman, namely Judge William.⁹ Thus we may wonder whether the Sermon might really be Judge William's corresponding attempt to A's, trying on the garb of a pastor instead of that of a seducer and we may also well wonder why Victor Eremita ignores this possibility. The discerning reader may in any case want to know why a work that contrasted aesthetics and ethics,¹⁰ should include a Sermon at the end, tacked on, as it were, to the Judge's final and very short epistle, which latter has no other purpose than that of serving as an envelope for the Sermon.¹¹

There is thus a problem to be taken into consideration here, since we have to ask what is to be made of the Sermon and Victor Eremita's failure to mention it. It is not only an omission of the culminating point of the entire Work, it is also apparently an omission of the religious as yet another possible life-style besides aesthetics and ethics. Why should Victor Eremita omit the religious when the Judge introduces it as the climax of the Work?¹² In what follows, I would like to examine this difficulty and the significance of the Sermon¹³ trying out the

⁹ *Either/Or* I p. 7. It is of course possible that the Judge copied the Sermon for A and does not mention this in his letter, since it would be obvious to A, but this still does not alter the fact that the Sermon is a heterogenous element in the third letter.

¹⁰ *Either/Or* I p. 13.

¹¹ *Either/Or* II p. 337.

¹² That he is an aesthete outside categories of religion and ethics is inadequate as an answer, since the aesthetes A and the Seducer within the work show clearly their knowledge of the Bible and Christianity.

¹³ There are, of course, other possibilities when choosing to begin one's investigation of *Either/Or* with the Preface. One might, for example, have embarked upon an examination of Victor Eremita's allusion to Hegel ("that familiar philosophical thesis that the outer is the inner and the inner is the outer" I p. 3) and Hegelianism as a key to understanding the Work. Cf. e.g. Hegel's *Science of Logic*, tr. A.V. Miller, New York, Humanities Press,

aforementioned reading perspectives.

First, let us imagine a reader who has access only to *Either/Or*, and preferably a reader with sufficient education and knowledge to be at least fairly familiar with works mentioned by *Either/Or*'s characters. Here, one can think of a reader who knows, for example, the story of "Don Giovanni" and of Antigone, and, since the problem of the Sermon concerns the religious, particularly a reader who knows Bishop Balle's Lutheran Catechism.¹⁴ Such an investigation would be hyper-immanent in that it would be an interpretation of the meaning of *Either/Or* on its own, that is, it would be a purely immanent interpretation of the meaning of the entire work within the framework of the work and its textual allusions (as opposed to the framework of the entire authorship or other standpoints).

The reader, then, encounters a pastor and his Sermon, the familiar religious life-style, at the end of Part Two, something for which Victor Eremita's Preface has in no way made preparation. Assuming that our reader is sufficiently alert, he or she will be curious about the relation of the Sermon (allegedly by a Protestant Lutheran pastor) to Judge William the ethicist. Or, to put it another way, Victor Eremita has spoken only of two life-styles, and now, at the end of *Either Or*, religion, specifically Christianity, makes its appearance. The perceptive reader may, however, see the Sermon as an indicator of the solution to the problem of the basis of Judge William's ethical life-style. For in *Either Or* the main problem would seem to be not so much the number of life-styles in the work as what is meant by "ethical".

If we follow the hints given by Victor Eremita in the Preface to

1969, p. 524.

¹⁴ NIKOLAI EDINGER BALLE: *Lærebog i den Evangelisk-christelige Religion indrettet til Brug i de danske Skoler* [Catechism in the Evangelical-Christian Religion, for use in the Danish Schools]. Copenhagen. 1791ff.

Either/Or, it is possible to see in Part One the aesthetic life-style defining itself existentially through fragmented variations on a theme, the theme of the failed attempt to live for the satisfaction of the life of the senses, an amoral existence that, carried to its logical conclusion, appears immoral to an ethical outsider.¹⁵ In Part Two of *Either/Or*, Judge William then clearly emerges as addressing one living a life steered by feeling and mood in relation to the beautiful and pleasant, and the core of his ethical position is summed up in his definition of "Either-Or" as the choice by which one chooses existentially to make a distinction between right and wrong.¹⁶

The Judge's letters, filled with good advice to the aesthete on how to choose, are thus practical instructions about how to be ethical,¹⁷ but as the reader will realize, there is a difficulty when one comes to consider that the meaning of "right" varies in different cultures, as Judge William himself sees.¹⁸ The reader is not left in the dark, however, about the basis of Judge William's ethics, since the Judge clearly admits and demonstrates throughout his letters that he bases his ethics on Christianity and he refers to Balle's Catechism with its detailed explication of the Christian's beliefs and duties.¹⁹ For Copenhageners in Kierkegaard's time, Balle's Catechism could prove itself to be a particularly strong key to the problem and to the entire Work, in that it was the most widely-read book in Denmark after the ABC and the Bible, and its contents would be known by all who read

¹⁵ "The Seducer's Diary", *Either/Or* I p. 301-445, esp. p. 312-313, 445.

¹⁶ *Either/Or* II, p. 169.

¹⁷ *Either/Or* II p. 208-219, 229-230, 257-8, 270.

¹⁸ *Either/Or* II, p. 263, 265.

¹⁹ I deal with the question of the basis of Judge William's ethics fully in "Judge William - A Christian?" coming in ROBERT L. PERKINS, ed.: *International Kierkegaard Commentary* vol. *Either/Or* II, Mercer University Press.

Either/Or.²⁰ Finally, the Sermon at the end of the work can be seen as indicating the same solution: Although the *Either/Or* is between the aesthetic and the ethical, the ethical is here rooted in the Christian world-view and its codes.²¹

Widening the interpretative framework slightly, if one happened to know or guess (despite Kierkegaard's public disclaimers)²² that Victor Eremita came from the pen of Søren Kierkegaard, one might want to consider in relation to *Either/Or* the two volumes of *Edifying Discourses*²³ published by Kierkegaard in 1843 under his own name, in which, in the preface, Kierkegaard addresses himself again to the reader and lets us understand that the discourses are not sermons because he lacks the authority of an ordained pastor.²⁴ This would at least

²⁰ One can note that the Judge, instead of preaching the Catechism at the aesthetic, uses the book as an existential example of how to be ethical. It is also presupposed that the aesthete is familiar with the content of the Catechism. *Either/Or* II p. 266-267, 323.

²¹ One might note here the Judge's insistence on the importance of the ethical link with the religious as well as with the aesthetic. Religion without ethics is rejected: *Either/Or* II p. 147, 241-250.

²² See HONG, *Either/Or* I, Historical Introduction, p. xv-xvi.

²³ *Either/Or* was written in the period Oct. 11 1841 - end. Nov. 1842 and published on Feb. 20 1843. *Two Edifying Discourses* was written in the period Dec. 1842/Jan. 1843 - Feb./Mar. 1843 and published May 16, 1843. *Three Edifying Discourses* was written in the period June 1843 - Aug. 9 1843 and published Oct. 16 1843 on the same publication date as *Repetition and Fear and Trembling*. See here *Kierkegaardiana* IX, 1974: ALASTAIR MCKINNON and NIELS JORGEN CAPPELORN: "The Period of Composition of Kierkegaard's Published Works", p. 133-146.

²⁴ SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, ed. and tr. by Howard & Edna Hong, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990 (in the series *Kierkegaard's Writings*), p. 5-101. On Kierkegaard's view of pastoral authority, see, for example, his *Tvende Ethisk-Religieuse Smaa-Afhandlinger*, SV XI, p. 101 ff.: "Authority is either the specific quality of an apostolic call or of ordination."

give the reader a hint about the Sermon in *Either/Or*, that Kierkegaard perhaps refused to let it appear unambiguously as a Sermon because he did not, either as himself or Judge William, have a pastor's authority. Hence on the one hand he allows the Sermon of *Either/Or* to have come from a real (within the context of the book) ordained priest to convey a notion of authority, yet he takes away the impression of pastoral authority by permitting the ambiguity in the Preface. We can also note that the pastor in question has not yet officially delivered his sermon.

Whether or not the reader has read Kierkegaard's *Two Edifying Discourses*, an important consideration concerning *Either/Or* must be the aim and intention of the author, assuming the author has one. Here, it would not be too difficult, in the light of the Preface, to see that the author wished the reader to consider both the life-styles presented, to expect that the reader be repelled by the heartless seduction²⁵ and encouraged by the edification of the Sermon. Much, however, would depend on the precise character and background of the reader, since the reader might well conclude that the aesthetic life-style, despite its despair, was more fun than that of the Judge. Another unavoidable possibility with such a complex Work would be, of course, that the reader missed the Preface's hints at the book's inner hermeneutical key and misunderstood or failed to understand the point or points at issue.

This brings us to a second perspective on the problem of understanding *Either/Or*, namely comments made on the published Work by reviewers who would be, or ought to be, familiar with the cultural background of *Either/Or*. Chief among these must be Johan Ludvig Heiberg²⁶ leading literary critic, and

²⁵ Note that Victor Eremita uses the loaded word "demonic" of the Seducer, *Either/Or* I, p. 9.

²⁶ Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791-1880), poet and esthetician and introducer of

it is his review that I will take as an example of the reviewer's perspective. Heiberg's review of the Work appeared in his own paper *Intelligensblade* in March 1843,²⁷ a little over a week after the book's publication. Heiberg here speaks of *Either/Or* as "a monster of a book" that has suddenly struck the reading world "like a bolt of lightning from a clear sky". He is impressed by the "two big, fat volumes" (864 pages) that strike him as unpleasantly large. The title suggests to Heiberg not so much the book's contents as the either/or of attempting to read the many pages or of letting it alone. He speaks of finally taking the plunge to read the book, "reading a little here and there in order to get a taste of it", that may help one decide whether or not to read further. Heiberg lets us understand that he has started with Part One: "one goes about in *Either* before one goes about in *Or*." Heiberg complains about *Either*, that the reading of it is an unpleasant experience since one feels that one doesn't want to spend as much time on it as the author did. He tells us that one encounters "many piquant reflections; some of them are perhaps even profound, though one isn't sure, because where one thinks one sees a point...one gets disoriented again". Heiberg also complains that the author's exceptional brilliance, learning and stylistic ability is not united with "an organizing power, that could let the ideas emerge clearly. Everything seems dreamlike, unclear and vanishing." Heiberg then speaks of his attempt to find a clear vantage point in *Either/Or's* review of Scribe's comedy "The First Love", but reports that here, too, the author has transformed what was clearly given by the piece into "his own castle in the air" by trying to make a masterpiece out of "a

Hegel's philosophy to Denmark; playwright, critic, translator, and director of the Royal Theatre Copenhagen.

²⁷ *Intelligensblade*, Nr. 24, 1. Marts, 1843 in "Litterær Vintersæd", p. 285-292, mentioned on pp. 288-292.

pretty little nothing" against the comedy's intention. "One now hastens to 'The Seducer's Diary'" says Heiberg, in the hope that this will be "more creative than critical". He reports that in a way one isn't disappointed, but one is "repelled, made sick, roused to indignation, and asks oneself not whether it is possible that a person can be like this seducer, but whether it is possible that an author can be so constituted that he can take pleasure in putting himself in the shoes of such a character". The net result of the *Either* for Heiberg is that one closes Part One and says "That's that! I've had enough of *Either*, I won't have anything from *Or*." However Heiberg then adds that "when the first unpleasant feeling is past", one thoroughly enjoys the thought of the cries and denunciations that will arise against the book "from the prudes, coy pieces and cowardly moralists" and thinks it will do them good. Heiberg then speaks of those who go on to sample Part Two of *Either/Or*. Here, the situation is different. "Such readers will everywhere encounter such flashes of thought, illuminating entire spheres of existence, that they will suspect that there is here an organizing power that makes the entire work into a genuine whole". These readers will then read the whole of *Or* from start to finish, says Heiberg. "During the process they will be so captivated by the book that they will scarcely be able to put it down, feeling themselves to be constantly influenced by a rare and highly-talented mind, which, from a deep speculative abundance spreads before their sight the most beautiful ethical view and criss-crosses his piece with a stream of the most piquant wit and humor."²⁸ Heiberg finally concludes by suggesting that

²⁸ Heiberg at the end of his review says that *Either Or*. "far from refuting the proposition that the principle of contradiction is annulled...is on the contrary one more proof of its correctness", a statement that suggests that he views the Work not so much in terms of the individual's existential choice between lifestyles as a description of them in the historical stream of ideas.

Part Two will inspire readers to return to Part One, a careful reading of which will enable them to form a firm view of the meaning of the entire Work.

Interesting about Heiberg's review is his description of what happens when the reader first tries to read *Either/Or* by dipping into Part One. The fragmentary nature of the first part proves to be an obstacle to seeing it as a unity, "The Seducer's Diary" is easier going but repellent reading. Part Two is "beautiful ethics" suggesting a basis for the book's unity. Nowhere, however, does Heiberg suggest that he has read the Preface, let alone given it serious consideration. Of the other reviews of *Either/Or* it can be stated briefly that they share with Heiberg's the characteristic of comment rather than of detailed analysis, although some are more substantial.²⁹

²⁹ Meier Goldschmidt of *The Corsair* comes nine days later with his review of *Either/Or* in which he comments that of the reviews that have already come out, all concentrate their comment on the fatness of the book, whereas some review it as if it were the thinnest book in the world. Goldschmidt makes it clear that *Either/Or* is hailed as a marvel, even a work of genius, and himself hails its intellectual greatness, even though he, too, cannot resist comments about size. *Corsaren*, No. 129, March 10, 1843, cols. 1-3.

Particularly worth mentioning are the thorough reviews by: JOHAN F. HAGEN in *Fædrelandet*, 4. årg. Nos. 1227-28, 1234, 1241, 7, 14 & 21 May, 1843; HANS P. KOFOED-HANSEN in *For Literatur og Kritik Et Fjerdingsaarskrift*, Fyens Stifts Literære Selskab, Odense 1843, Vol. I, 4de Hefte, p. 377-405; also of interest is an anonymous review in *Forposten* 1. årg. Nos. 11-15, "Fragmenter af en Brevveksling" I-V, March 12, 19, 26, April 2 & 9, 1843, p. 41-43, 45-51, 53-55, 57-59. Both Hagen and Kofoed-Hansen draw attention to the Sermon in Part Two of *Either/Or*. Hagen points out that the Sermon is on the text for the 10th Sunday after Trinity, Kofoed-Hansen that the Jutland pastor comes as an example of the ideal person mentioned by Judge William in the second letter. *Forposten* also draws attention to the Sermon and the "deep, religious" and "Christian" spirit pervading Part Two, while a short review in *Dagen*, 41: No. 52, 22 February, 1843, also emphasizes the Sermon.

We thus may want to conclude from the reviews and from the fact that *Either/Or* was a bestseller,³⁰ that it was the kind of book every person with any pretension to culture buys, but which few give the serious reading it requires. Certainly Heiberg did not give it the reading it required, and we may fairly say that, at least in this case, the reviewer, though indicating how readers might deal with *Either/Or*, was unable to provide any form of clear outlook outside Kierkegaard and the authorship for assessing the work.

An obvious perspective that needs to be taken into consideration is Kierkegaard's own understanding of his authorship. While the deconstructive postmodern world may be sceptical about an author's stated intention, one may still want to argue that an author usually best knows the intention of the Work or Works. In considering interpretative perspectives, the author's view³¹ cannot be cavalierly set aside, not least because there is no logical reason why one or many readers' (perhaps differing and incompatible) interpretations must automatically be preferred. The author's view, where available, must thus be taken into serious account, and in Kierkegaard's case we are certainly not left without comment from his pen and that of his pseudonyms.

Kierkegaard's reaction to the reviews seems chiefly one of disappointment and annoyance. See *Either/Or* II p. 392-397, 426-429. A list of reviews of *Either/Or* is to be found in JENS HIMMELSTRØP: *Søren Kierkegaard International Bibliografi*, Copenhagen, Nyt Nordisk Forlag, Arnold Busck, 1962, p. 9-10.

³⁰ The first edition of 525 copies sold out in three years and the second edition of 1849 was printed in 750 copies. See here, HONG, *Either Or* I, p. xvi-xvii.

³¹ While one can call the author's own point of view a transcendent perspective, it can also be called immanent in the sense that the author deals with his authorship from within the totality of the Work or entire authorship. That is, it can be seen as an immanent perspective, but from the author's rather than the reader's standpoint.

The first item to be considered is the piece "Public Confession" in the paper *Fædrelandet*,³² where Kierkegaard under his own name and several months before the publication of *Either/Or*, denies he is the author of a number of articles and asks people not to regard him as author of anything that does not bear his name. Then seven days after the publication of *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard as the pseudonym A.F.... writes an article in the same paper, "Who Is the Author of *Either/Or*?", where he pretends to take a serious look at attempts to discover the identity of the author. He ends by suggesting that the author hunt is a waste of time. When one doesn't know the author's identity then there is only the book to deal with, "without being bothered or distracted by his personality."³³ From the above we can already gather that Kierkegaard wishes people to make a distinction between his views and writings and those of his pseudonyms, while through A.F.... he indirectly conveys the message that he does not want the personality of the actual author to distract the reader from a consideration of the book's content.

Further, Kierkegaard, now as Victor Eremita, rapidly replies in *Fædrelandet* to Heiberg's review in an article, "A Word of Thanks to Professor Heiberg".³⁴ Here, amid the ironic thanks to Heiberg for informing him how a person reads *Either/Or*, he comes with a criticism that is of interest since it shows the importance of the book's Preface for Kierkegaard. Heiberg is

³² *Fædrelandet*, No. 904, June 12, 1842, to be found in SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Corsair Affair*, ed. & tr. Howard & Edna Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982 (in the series *Kierkegaard's Writings*) p. 3-12, esp. 3-5.

³³ *Fædrelandet* No. 1162, February 27, 1843. See *The Corsair Affair*, p. 13-16, esp. p. 16.

³⁴ *Fædrelandet*, No. 1168, March 5, 1843. See *The Corsair Affair*, p. 17-21, esp. p. 18-20.

firmly told by Eremita: "when one finds a preface to a work, one reads it", and Eremita a page later reminds Heiberg and other readers again of what was said in the Preface about the book.³⁵ By not reading the Preface, Heiberg not only had trouble in seeing the point of the fragmented aesthetic material, he also missed any other hermeneutical hints made there by Eremita.

In *Fædrelandet* for May 16th 1843,³⁶ Kierkegaard, again under his own name, writes "A Little Explanation". The explanation has to do with a "fairly wide-spread and persistent rumour" that he is the author of the Sermon in *Either/Or*, the author of the rumour apparently detecting identity of the sermon in *Either/Or* with one preached by Kierkegaard at the Pastoral Seminary.³⁷ Kierkegaard points out that the sermons are different, and concludes by hoping that the author of the rumour won't also come to identify his published "two discourses"³⁸ with the sermon he preached at the Seminary. Here it can be noted that Kierkegaard deflects the point of the argument away from the question of who actually wrote the Sermon in *Either/Or*.

Finally, Kierkegaard, again under his own name and in *Fædrelandet*,³⁹ writes: "An Explanation and a Little More", in which he replies to a review⁴⁰ that praises his literary genius as author of *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* and *Stages on Life's Way*. The pseudonymous reviewer believes Kierkegaard is "the author of *Either/Or* and the series of books that

³⁵ He recalls what A and Judge William might have said if they had been told about the publication of their papers, *Either/Or* I p. 14.

³⁶ *Fædrelandet*, No. 1236, May 16, 1843. See *The Corsair Affair*, p. 22-23.

³⁷ Cf. *Either/Or* II p. 386: Kierkegaard did however work on the theme, which appears in his Pastoral Seminary notebook.

³⁸ *Two Edifying Discourses* were published also on May 16, 1843.

³⁹ *Fædrelandet*, No. 1883, May 9, 1845. See *The Corsair Affair*, p. 24-27.

⁴⁰ By "-n" in *Berlingske Politiske og Avertissements-Tidende*, No. 108, May 6, 1845, col. 3-4. See *The Corsair Affair*, p. 274-275.

apparently come from the same hand". He also points to the links between *Stages on Life's Way* and *Either/Or*. In his reply Kierkegaard again deflects attention from the matter at issue by denying that he is the author of this pseudonymous review. He then adds: "if I am not the author of these books, then the rumour is a falsehood. However, if I am the author, then I am the only one authorized to say that I am that."

In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* Kierkegaard as Johannes Climacus tells us of his writing intentions, that the first thing he had wanted to do was to write something that would make "*the existence-relation between the esthetic and the ethical come into existence in an existing individuality*",⁴¹ something that he to his dismay discovers has been done by the author of *Either/Or*. Similarly, as he thinks to go on to something else, he finds that each time he has been anticipated by Victor Eremita and others. In this section of *The Postscript*, Kierkegaard places himself in the role of reader of his Works, explaining them from that standpoint. It is a distancing from himself as author by which he can explain the Works to his reading public and yet maintain the pseudonymity of indirect communication.⁴²

⁴¹ SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 2 vols., ed. & tr. Howard & Edna Hong, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1992 (in the series *Kierkegaard's Writings*), I p. 251; pp. 251-300: "Appendix A Glance at a Contemporary Effort in Danish Literature".

⁴² One of the first things he shows here (*Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 252) is his awareness that an author may state his or her intention but that there may be a failure to live up to the asserted intention in the carrying out of the task. That is, one cannot take the legal relation of an author to the production as an argument to show that the resulting product must be what he says it is. This is well illustrated by Kierkegaard's "Book on Adler", where Kierkegaard's analysis of Pastor Adler's production in relation to Adler's claims demonstrates philosophical, theological and literary inconsistency. An author may be the best interpreter of his or her authorship, but the relation: conscious intention, execution and interpretation rests on

In *The Postscript*, Kierkegaard the writer through Climacus the reader gives us a detailed analysis of *Either/Or* that again mentions the Preface in Part One.⁴³ Of particular interest concerning the problem of the Sermon in Part Two is Climacus' stress on the final words of the Sermon about edifying or upbuilding⁴⁴ truth as something "remarkable".⁴⁵ He adds: "I could wish to see it [the upbuilding truth] emphasized more definitely in order that each particular point on the way to existing Christianly-religiously could become clear. The Christian truth as inwardness is also upbuilding, but this by no means implies that every upbuilding truth is Christian; the upbuilding is a wider category." There then follows a discussion of Magister Kierkegaard's edifying discourses explaining that they are not sermons because "they use only ethical categories of immanence" whereas "the sermon must be reserved for religious-Christian existence."⁴⁶ Thus Climacus agrees with Eremita in

factors other than being the bodily author, such as inspiration, insight, self knowledge and literary talent.

⁴³ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* p. 252-261. "*Either/Or*, the title of which is in itself indicative, has the existence-relation between the esthetic and the ethical materialize into existence in the existing individuality. This to me is the book's indirect polemic against speculative thought, which is indifferent to existence. That there is no conclusion and no final decision is an indirect expression for truth as inwardness and in this way perhaps a polemic against truth as knowledge. The preface itself says something about it, but not didactically, for in that case I could know something with certainty, but in the jovial form of jest and hypothesis. The absence of an author is a means of distancing." I p. 252.

⁴⁴ I use both "edifying" and "upbuilding" for the Danish word "opbyggelig" because both are used in the English translations of Kierkegaard. "Edifying" is used in the old translations and "upbuilding" by the Hongs.

⁴⁵ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 256, cf. 252, 268.

⁴⁶ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 256-257.

using "ethical" of Part Two of *Either/Or*, even though he too connects the ethical task with God and the religious.⁴⁷ The problem for Climacus is that the book does not have "a religious orientation", but only "a religious touch".⁴⁸ "Sin", says Climacus, "the crucial point of departure for the religious existence" is "not brought up in any of the pseudonymous books", a statement that at first sight seems untrue, when one considers the many references to sin in *Either/Or* and Judge William's references to it in connection with Christian teaching.⁴⁹ Further, Climacus says of *Stages on Life's Way*, a work said to include a third religious stage, that it is "nevertheless an either/or", because "the ethical and the religious stages have an essential relation to each other."⁵⁰ Yet this was also true of *Either/Or* if one considers the sermon and the clear basis of Judge William's ethics in Christianity, so how is *Stages on Life's Way* "markedly different" from *Either/Or* in its religiousness?⁵¹

Climacus clarifies his point for us by saying that the title of the Sermon in *Either/Or* "is no qualification of sin as fundamental".⁵² The "discrepancy" Climacus sees in *Either/Or*⁵³ is that Judge William appears to save himself, and he appears to

⁴⁷ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 256: "...the ethical's modest task, built up thereby, open before God and men." Cf. I p. 268: "The ethicist in *Either/Or* did indeed give a religious touch to the ethical category of choosing oneself..."

⁴⁸ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 257-258, 268.

⁴⁹ For Judge William's references to sin, see *Either/Or* II, pp. 41, 91-3, 185, 189-190, 220, 248.

⁵⁰ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 294-295. Cf. I p. 137 and 149, where Climacus speaks of the link between God and humankind as being only through the ethical, and of the ethical as being absolute and the highest.

⁵¹ See note 20 above. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 294.

⁵² See note 8 above. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 268.

⁵³ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I, p. 257-258.

save himself because the book has a practical "ethical orientation". Thus although the Judge accepts and talks about Christianity and is conscious that problems can arise in the ethical life,⁵⁴ he has not yet personally discovered the situation where he is incapable of doing the right thing by his own efforts,⁵⁵ nor is the ethical demand particularly acute. In *Either/Or* Part Two, the temporal and the eternal are brought together somewhat unproblematically. Balle's Catechism contains all the basic tenets of Lutheran Christianity, but in its long chapter on the Christian's duties⁵⁶ there is lacking the ideal of renunciation and total "dying to the world".⁵⁷ In *Either/Or* there is a "self-love that claims for its own self the same as it claims for everyone else's self."⁵⁸ In Balle's Catechism in the section "On Duties to Ourselves", there is the same. It is, for example, perfectly all right to strive to increase one's prosperity, aspire to be honoured and respected and enjoy the good things of life, as long as this causes no injury to one's neighbour.⁵⁹ Thus in *Either/Or* there is an essential relation between the ethical and the religious, even the Christian religious, regarding dogma and commandments, but not

⁵⁴ For example, the exception to marriage *Either/Or* II p. 328-331.

⁵⁵ In his literary survey, Climacus refers to *Fear and Trembling and Repetition* as indicating the problems of ethical conflict. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 261-265.

⁵⁶ Balle's Catechism in a chapter on duties devotes 38 pages to duties to God, ourselves, our neighbour and in the particular estates in life.

⁵⁷ In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 572, Climacus speaks of the "ethical interpretation" as the situation where "the underlying self is used to surmount and assert itself". This very much resembles the level of ethical demand in Balle's Catechism. There is lacking both the "self-annihilation before God" that belongs further on in Religiousness A and the situation of Religiousness B.

⁵⁸ *Either/Or* II p. 271.

⁵⁹ Balle's Catechism, chapter 6, III Care of our Temporal Well-Being, paras. 1-3.

existentially from the viewpoint of the individual's consciousness of sin and conception of ideality. So Climacus is correct to state that *Either/Or's* inadequacy "is simply that the work ended ethically",⁶⁰ but this is something different from the religious and Christianity not being present at all. The Jutland pastor's Sermon, however mildly, points forward⁶¹ to emphasis on the consciousness of sin as the starting point, and, implicit, to an essential need of salvation by the God-Man where the individual's efforts must fail.

Climacus as reader fully explains the authorship up to the point of his own work, but at the end of *The Postscript* he removes any authority his explanation might have lent the work by emphasizing again that he is not a Christian and coming with the reverse of the authoritative "imprimatur" to be found in books of Catholic origin. Instead, he tells us that *The Postscript* is in the opposite situation, it is revoked, thus once again removing any notion that the author is an authority.⁶²

Yet at the end of this same work we also come to Kierkegaard's "A First and Last Explanation"⁶³ in which, for the first time, he acknowledges his pseudonyms but he explains their use as a distancing in which the various characters have been given freedom to present their views. In that sense, there is "not a single word" by Kierkegaard present in the pseudonymous authorship even though of course all the words in another sense are his.

In 1849 comes the second edition of *Either/Or*, and it is in the period 1848-1849 that Kierkegaard now takes upon himself to

⁶⁰ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 294.

⁶¹ Points forward in the sense of open-endedness, not necessarily to a further work on the subject.

⁶² *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 617, 623.

⁶³ *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 625-630.

explain his works as author, first publishing *On My Activity as a Writer* in 1851.⁶⁴ Here, under his own name, he places *Either/Or* within the context of the entire authorship to date: “The movement described by the authorship is this: *from* the poet (from aesthetics), *from* philosophy (from speculation), *to* the indication of the most central definition of what Christianity is - *from the pseudonymous 'Either/Or', through 'The Concluding Postscript' with my name as editor, to* the 'Discourses at Communion on Fridays'...so that the authorship *integrally* regarded, is religious from first to last...”. In the following pages, Kierkegaard explains his pseudonymous works as tool of indirect communication, with direct communication “present from the first” in the publication of the first *Two Edifying Discourses* as “direct religious communication” alongside *Either/Or*. He thus rejects any notion that he has started as an aesthetic writer and become religious with the years.⁶⁵ Also of note in this Work is Kierkegaard's assertion that *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* sets the problem of the entire authorship in that it deals with “how to become a Christian”.⁶⁶

Yet Kierkegaard had already in 1848 written his posthumously published *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, partly motivated by the coming second edition of *Either/Or*⁶⁷ and partly by the urge “to explain once for all, as directly and frankly as

⁶⁴ *On My Activity as a Writer* was composed in March 1849; *The Point of View for My Work as An Author* was composed in the period Summer - November 1849, published 1859.

⁶⁵ *On My Activity as a Writer* is to be found in: SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *The Point of View for My Work as An Author: A Report to History*, tr. Walter Lowrie, New York: Harper & Row, Torchbook edition, 1962, p. 142-143, 148, 150.

⁶⁶ *The Point of View*, p. 145, cf. also in *The Point of View*, p. 41-42, where he asserts the same thing.

⁶⁷ The second edition came out on May 14, 1849.

possible, what is what: what I as an author declare myself to be". Here he affirms: "I am and was a religious author", and that his entire work as an author is related to Christianity, to the problem 'of becoming a Christian', with a direct or indirect polemic against the monstrous illusion we call Christendom..."⁶⁸ Here Kierkegaard also rejects the notion that he started as an aesthetic writer and became religious, and in a footnote he indicates the groupings of the authorship, with *Either/Or* placed as an aesthetic work with the edifying discourses as contrast, something he also affirms in the main text.⁶⁹ Further on in *The Point of View*⁷⁰ we are told that *Either/Or* "was a poetical catharsis, which does not...go farther than the ethical". *Either/Or*

⁶⁸ *The Point of View*, p. 5-6.

⁶⁹ *The Point of View* p. 10-12. It is clear from the footnote that Kierkegaard does not in fact place his edifying discourses in the aesthetic production as suggested by GARFF (*Kierkegaardiana*: "The Eyes of Argus", p. 35 cf. 34) since Kierkegaard perfectly properly uses "together" [Danish: *samt*] to indicate connection with a different category as is also indicated in the same note where he uses the *samt* to place an aesthetic work alongside the specifically "religious" Edifying and Christian Discourses. On Kierkegaard's definition of the totality of the authorship it is a harsh judgement that accuses him of "shameless inexactitude" (Garff p. 34) in not identifying "the totality of the authorship" with "the total production". From his Papers it can be seen that Kierkegaard deliberated on how to handle the problem of what should be included as forming part of his authorship as task (see e.g. *JP* VI 6202; *Pap.* IX A 167); *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* II p. 109; *Pap.* VII, 1 B 74) given that the total material includes newspaper articles, a dissertation and reviews as well as books proper.

⁷⁰ See *The Point of View* p. 18-20. Kierkegaard also here (and cf. p. 85, 96-7) tells us that only about a page of Diapsalmata existed before he began *Either Or*, writing the second part first, and that he wrote the whole in the space of eleven months. We are also told that when he began *Either Or*, Kierkegaard had already chosen the religious, the monastery, as opposed to "perdition and sensuality".

is the left-hand Work everyone acclaims, the work of an apparent man-about-town,⁷¹ the *Two Edifying Discourses* of 1843 are the right-hand Work that gets ignored. Here we thus have a different division than that presented in *Either/Or* since there is now a division placed between *Either/Or* and the *Two Edifying Discourses*. One might expect that Kierkegaard would place the latter together with the second half of *Either/Or* in opposition to the aesthetic, but he does not do so.

In a footnote in *The Point of View*,⁷² Kierkegaard speaks of the movement from the aesthetic-poetic in *Either/Or*, but says that the movement in the work, seen now from the viewpoint of the entire authorship, "has a deeper meaning than the Second part of *Either/Or* could explain....the transition made in *Either/Or* is substantially that from a poet-existence to an ethical existence". This is clear enough if one views *Either/Or* from the viewpoint of the fact of its pseudonymous authors and the concentration on how to be ethical. Where the religious appears existentially in the figure of the ordained Christian pastor's Sermon, the Sermon itself is not about sin as a fundamental condition and it takes the form of indirect communication through the Judge through the fact of the ambiguity of its presentation. Thus the whole of *Either/Or* is firmly a pseudonymous indirect communication and therefore an aesthetic production aesthetically presenting the lifestyles, whereas the *Two Edifying Discourses*, using the Bible, address themselves directly to the reader. They are direct religious communication⁷³ though not by an ordained minister

⁷¹ *The Point of View*, p. 47, 49-50.

⁷² *The Point of View*, p. 74.

⁷³ This is not invalidated by Kierkegaard's statement in 1849 (*JP VI 6431*) that his category is "the poet-category: upbuilding", since the poetic element of the *Edifying Discourses* concerns the direct poetic presentation of universal religiosity in contrast to the strong Christianity of *The Sickness unto Death*.

preaching "religious-Christian existence" with the Christian religious paradoxicality belonging to the saving Christ.⁷⁴ Both *Either/Or* and the *Two Edifying Discourses* thus address the problem of living an ethical-religious life: *Either/Or* pseudonymously concentrates on the problem of how to start being ethical, *Two Edifying Discourses* concentrates on universal religiosity. Both presuppose a basis in Christian teaching as found in Balle's Catechism.⁷⁵

Having come so far,⁷⁶ there is of course finally one more

⁷⁴ See note 46 above. In *The Point of View* footnote p. 74 Kierkegaard refers back to the comment made by Climacus in *The Postscript*, thus indicating his agreement with the view he expressed as Climacus.

⁷⁵ Since, in comparison with *On My Activity as a Writer*, *The Point of View* presents a very personal discussion of both the authorship and Kierkegaard's motives and development in the writing of it, it is hardly surprising that he had second thoughts about immediate publication, leaving *The Point of View* unpublished among his Papers. For the sake of completeness it can be mentioned that the final reference to *Either/Or* in the posthumously published *Point of View* is where we have a reference in one of the Two Notes to the Individual (See *The Point of View*, "'The Individual' Two 'Notes' Concerning My Work as an Author", p. 105-138, 2nd note p. 131-2. The first 'Note' is dated 1846, the second was written in 1847. Both were published together with *The Point of View* in 1859). Here Kierkegaard, referring to Judge William as "the ethical writer" of *Either/Or*, speaks of the tension in himself between the poetic and the ethical that prevents him from being a witness to the truth.

⁷⁶ As we can see, the further published and posthumous explanations by Kierkegaard gradually have more to explain as the authorship continues to grow. The later explanations of *Either Or* deal with its place in an authorship that Kierkegaard examines from many angles. He sees the authorship as a task in Christianity's service in "an age of dissolution", but also as his own education by Governance, an education reflected in the productivity. Also in what was to become a public document, he more than once speaks of his developing understanding of the authorship and that he could not understand the whole from the beginning, *The Point of View*, p. 73, 75, 77, 103, 130; 72, 150.

source of information about the authorship on which modern readers of *Either/Or* can draw, namely Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers, a mixed collection of material ranging from Journal material to notes of all kinds (some made in copies of his own Works), letters, and drafts and outlines of his books.⁷⁷ There is insufficient time and space here for a detailed discussion of all the material on *Either/Or*,⁷⁸ but I will here draw out some of the, in my view, more important entries.

First, in *The Point of View*, Kierkegaard speaks of "an occurrence or...fact" that preceded his "real activity as an author",⁷⁹ but it is the *Journals* that tell us about the broken engagement to Regine Olsen as the impetus for *Either/Or*. In 1841, Kierkegaard finds himself unable to write about his engagement because Regine was not the one who broke it and because of the feelings involved. Thus he did not write his planned narrative "Unhappy Love" to conclude Part II of *Either/Or*. The theme had to await the distance of *Stages on Life's Way*.⁸⁰ In 1849 we learn that *Either/Or*, especially "The Seducer's Diary" was written for Regine's sake in order to free

⁷⁷ A problem concerning the Journals is that of the extent of the fictional material and the relation between non-fictional and fictional elements. While this question cannot be adequately discussed here, my own view is that, given the amount and diversity of the material, it is by no means impossible to make distinctions and arrive at conclusions. Useful to consider here is: EMMANUEL HIRSCH: *Kierkegaard Studien*, I,1-2-II,3, Gutersloh: 1933, II p. 490-92; HENNING FENGER: *Kierkegaard The Myths and Their Origins*, tr. George Schoolfield, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1980, p. 81-131; cf. *JP* V 5092 & 5150 & notes.

⁷⁸ See here *Pap.* vol XIV (index) under *Either/Or*. Much of the material has to do with draft manuscript variations on what was actually published.

⁷⁹ *The Point of View*, p. 83-4.

⁸⁰ *JP* V 5519, 5532, 5628. One can also add that such a narrative might have secured Regine's insight into his problem so that she remained attached to him.

her of the relationship. Regine would guess he had written it and scorn him, and through his attempt to appear as an idle man-about-town, the public would view him as a heartless no-good that Regine was well rid of.⁸¹ In October 1853 Kierkegaard, who has gone over his relationship with Regine in Journals and letters innumerable times, tells us again about the genesis of *Either/Or*, that he wished to succeed in completing the work including the (in both senses of the word) repellent diary, and then take a position as a pastor in a rural parish as "a way of expressing renunciation of the world." What actually happened, as he tells us, is that *Either/Or* was hailed as a success, and "a powerful creativity" awoke in him that he could not resist. He became a religious author instead. Thus, despite his second big attempt to stop writing with *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and become a pastor he did not do so, and he came to a final definite understanding of himself as a religious author with his authorship as task.⁸²

Kierkegaard also supplies us with comment in 1843 on *Either/Or*, that it "has a plan from the first word to the last" the Preface presenting it in a joking form. Even more definitely, when he comes to draft a possible postscript to *Either/Or* in March the following year, Kierkegaard tells us that "I called the work *Either/Or* and in the preface attempted to explain what I meant by this title."⁸³ In 1846 he expands on this by saying that "each essay in *Either/Or* is part of a whole, and then the whole *Either/Or* [is] a part of a whole".⁸⁴ *Either/Or* lacks thematically

⁸¹ JP VI 6388, 6332 (Cf. *The Point of View* p. 49-50).

⁸² JP VI 6843, cf. 6356.

⁸³ JP V 5627, 5628 (notes made in a copy of *Either/Or* by S.K.), *Either/Or* II p. 420, cf. 414-429 for the whole of the intended postscript; cf. JP V 5710, 5853.

⁸⁴ JP V 5905. In his Journals Kierkegaard again tells us (cf. *The Point of View* p. 18) that *Either/Or* was written in 11 months with at most a page of

only the narrative of "Unhappy Love".⁸⁵ In his *Journals* (1843-44) Kierkegaard also toys with the idea of a Courtesan's Diary as the counterpart to *The Seducer's*,⁸⁶ but still has his problem from 1841, that he cannot "extricate himself" from the relationship with Regine.⁸⁷ In a note on the possible postscript to *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard in 1846 speaks of Quidam's Diary from *Stages on Life's Way* as the needed counterpart. It begins where the *Seducer* ends, with the task "to poetize himself out of a girl", and is the necessary "religious stage" lacking in *Either/Or*,⁸⁸ because Quidam directly, if waveringly, seeks for a religious solution to the problem of his guilt.

There is thus a big difference between the actual ending of *Either/Or* and the proposed ending that eventually comes in *Stages on Life's Way*. In *Either/Or* "the competing elements" are "the esthetic and the ethical" with the ethical as the choice; the book ends with the Sermon and edifying truth as "point of departure" for the edifying discourses and the individual's religiosity in a social context.⁸⁹ Judge William refers the individual back to the universal ethical in the concrete life of temporality, particularly to marriage as "the most profound form of life's revelation."⁹⁰ In *Stages on Life's Way*, however, Quidam

the Diapsalmata prior to the 11 months (*JP* V 5931, 5626). However in March 1843, he has told us that he had decided when he published *Either Or* not to use old material (*JP* V 5631 note made in *Either Or*). This need not be a contradiction if by "old material" Kierkegaard thinks of material preceding the few diapsalmata lying in his papers dated 1842-43.

⁸⁵ *JP* V 5628 (note from copy of *Either Or*).

⁸⁶ *JP* V 5676, cf. 5677, 5705.

⁸⁷ *JP* V 5519.

⁸⁸ *Either/Or* II p. 429-430, also *JP* V 5865, 5866, cf. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* I p. 287.

⁸⁹ *JP* V 5804; cf. note 45 above, *JP* VI 6410 p. 159; the ethicist "points to the religious" as do the other pseudonyms.

⁹⁰ *JP* VI 6410 p. 159-160; V 5634, cf. I 907, *Either Or* II p. 62; the unity of

is the "point of departure for the beginning of the religious" as the exception to the universal ethical faintly hinted at by Judge William in *Either/Or*.⁹¹ Here, there is no question of a mild choice of the self as wrong against God, but of a need for a radical acknowledgement of freedom and responsibility in sin-consciousness and repentance. Yet the Diary comes to have more in common with "The Seducer's Diary" than with the idea of the Sermon because Quidam risks becoming demonic like Johannes,⁹² though the demonic here concerns Quidam's procrastinating deliberations about the fact and extent of his guilt. The elements that constitute "the beginning of the religious" here are thus the non-fulfilment of the life of the universal, with guilt-consciousness and accompanying suffering,⁹³ but this is also what belongs to the life of one who voluntarily gives up the world for God in self-denial.

The actual and proposed ending of *Either/Or* thus indicates a question that comes to emerge clearly in Kierkegaard's writings, namely the nature of religious ideality and what the ethical-religious ideality is that the individual ought to follow as goal and endeavour. Kierkegaard lets us know that he is starting from where people are in Christendom's aesthetic paganism when he writes *Either/Or*,⁹⁴ but where is he taking us? To be sure, the ethical in Judge William is open-ended: wrongness against God is treated by Kierkegaard as "an infinite relation",⁹⁵ suggesting that the more one's sense of moral and religious perfection grows, so does one's sense of guilt and sin. With both Balle's Catechism, the

earthly and spiritual love.

⁹¹ JP V 5805; see note 54 above.

⁹² JP V 5804, cf. *Either/Or* I p. 9.

⁹³ JP V 5805: suffering as a religious category.

⁹⁴ JP V 6107, VI 6255.

⁹⁵ JP V 5616.

Sermon in *Either/Or* and the accompanying discourses⁹⁶ the individual could live the guidance to a very high level of perfection, but there is a difference between this and the life of total self-denial. It is wrong to live "poetically" as the amoral aesthete does, but Kierkegaard also accuses the pastors of "poetic" existence and denounces the elimination of "position no. 1", the life of total Christian self-denial.⁹⁷ "Behind the ethical emerges the religious again", says Kierkegaard, the living out of ideality in existence, something "only the God-Man has done perfectly",⁹⁸ but is renunciation of the universal ethical the Christian-religious ideal, or is there place for two kinds of striving, as he seems to suggest as Anti-Climacus in *Practice in Christianity?*⁹⁹

There is thus a tension here, and several tensions are indicated in Kierkegaard's life and authorship, tensions with a bearing on *Either/Or* and its element of religiosity. Briefly summed up, the tensions can be stated as follows: a tension between the elements of religiosity and genius in Kierkegaard's character, leading to a tension concerning his work in life (pastor or writer). As pastor

⁹⁶ In *Eighteen Edifying Discourses: "The Expectancy of Faith" and "Every Good and Every Perfect Gift Is From Above,"* p. 1-29; 31-48. It is interesting to note that he refers to them as "sermons" in the Journals of 1843: JP V 5644.

⁹⁷ JP VI 6300, cf. *Either-Or* II p. 210. It is to be noted that both in this entry and elsewhere (Cf. e.g. JP II 1812, VI 6809), Kierkegaard defines his own position as that of a poet in relation to Christian ideality, but only in the sense of his lack of perfection and the fact that his work is the portrayal of ideality. (He tells us that his own renunciation of marriage started with a personal problem that led him to reflect on Christian celibacy). He rejects the life of the purely aesthetic poet. JP VI 6500.

⁹⁸ JP VI 6410.

⁹⁹ SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Practice in Christianity*, ed. & tr. Howard & Edna Hong, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1991 (in the series *Kierkegaard's Writings*), p. 67-68.

he would have the authority of an ordained minister, as writer there is a growing attempt to refer the Socratic element of the authorship (and acknowledgement of it) to the will of God (Governance). Coupled with this is Kierkegaard's struggle and growing insight concerning how far he himself is meant to go in the direction of world-denial, which latter problem relates to the major problem of the nature of Christianity in its practice.

Therefore Kierkegaard can say at the time of the second edition of *Either/Or*: "I am a genius of such a kind that I cannot directly and personally assume the whole thing [that is, the authorship] without encroaching on Governance.... On the other hand, I am not a religious person of such a kind that I can directly assign everything to God".¹⁰⁰ Here, the tension emerges clearly between aesthetic genius of personality and a religiosity that is deeply conscious of God's guidance of everything.¹⁰¹ Also in this period Kierkegaard denies he is an extraordinary Christian, preferring the label "poet", and part of the anguish in his Journals of 1849 concerns the conflict between his desire to explain his authorship to a misunderstanding world and the desire to remain silent. As is clear from many other Journal entries where Kierkegaard refers to what is said in his own authorship, his Governance-led writing is essentially his own development and education,¹⁰² and in many entries he tries to explain this. In 1846 he tells us that after the problems that prevented him from

¹⁰⁰ *JP* VI 6388. Cf. *JP* VI 6407 S.K. a genius not an apostle.

¹⁰¹ As he tells us in another Journal entry from 1849: "If I had not been brought up strictly in Christianity, had not had all my mental and spiritual suffering, beginning in childhood and intensified at just the time I began my career, had I not experienced that and yet had known what I know, I would have become a poet". *JP* VI 6300.

¹⁰² *JP* VI 6388, 6390, 6500. Cf. 6361, 6325, 6346. On references to the pseudonyms see e.g. *JP* III 3130, 3638, V 5849. It should also perhaps be noted that the Danish word for poet "digter" here means "poetic writer".

marrying he has seen it as his task "in a warped and demoralized age to affirm the universal and make it lovable and accessible to all others who are capable of realizing it but are led astray by the age to pursue the exceptional, the extraordinary."¹⁰³ This belongs to the Judge William standpoint with its emphasis on life in the world and his thought that he might have stayed with Regine, but the original commitment to the religious is stronger than the poetic impulse at the time of the broken engagement and thus points him definitely away from the world to the life of the exception.¹⁰⁴ From then on one can mark clearly the conflict between personal religiousness and his own recognition of his literary genius,¹⁰⁵ his clear realization that some poetic creativity is bound to enter into his writing even when he is trying to give a straightforward account.¹⁰⁶ Yet he also firmly emphasizes in 1849 and 1850 that his writings after *Either/Or* are not as he originally planned and that his understanding of his life and authorship has developed along with development in his religious life.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *JP* V 5913.

¹⁰⁴ *JP* VI 6409, 6444, V 5664, VI 6718, 6389; cf. VI 6205, 6206, 6209: S.K. as essentially religious when he wrote *Either/Or*; cf. VI 6357.

¹⁰⁵ One can note, for example, that he sees *Fear and Trembling* alone will give him recognition (*JP* VI 6491), that he is gripped by his literary productivity (*JP* VI 6356 p. 125), that he needs to work against himself, particularly against vanity about his authorship (*JP* V 5913, 5997, VI 6325, 6361, 6593), even to the point of a possible retraction of *Either/Or* as too aesthetic (*JP* 6374, cf. 6361, 6388). He cultivates a strongly devotional private life and even experiments with personal asceticism though sees the dangers of self-justification (*JP* VI 6206, 6843, cf. III 3677 against self-torture).

¹⁰⁶ *JP* VI 6843.

¹⁰⁷ *JP* VI 6394, 6654; cf. 6823. One can also note that Kierkegaard makes a clear distinction between the problem of how far to acknowledge the pseudonymous authorship and how far he should venture towards the ideality of Christianity: *JP* VI 6390.

Already in 1843 Kierkegaard battles with the contrast between the type of Christian religiosity underlying Judge William's ethics and Christianity proper, where he points out that the incarnation is the "highest metaphysical and religious paradox", but "not the deepest ethical paradox", because "Christ's appearance contains a polemic against existence. He became a human being like all others, but he stood in a polemical relationship to the concrete-ethical elements of actuality". Christ's life in the world is "uplifting", but, asks Kierkegaard, "to what extent is this an ethical expression for a human life?...Here the most difficult problems come together."¹⁰⁸ When "Christianity does not exist at all" because it has become a matter of "objective doctrine", is it because the people are aesthetes with at most an intellectual interest in Christian doctrine,¹⁰⁹ or did Bishop Balle make a mistaken formulation of the Catechism?¹¹⁰ Although Kierkegaard in 1851 stresses that his task is to be a "corrective" by "poetically presenting the ideals", and suggests that the corrective must not be turned into the norm for the next generation,¹¹¹ the tension between Judge William the Churchgoer and the ideality of the imitation of Christ continues in the authorship through praise to blame of Bishop Mynster and to the debate about the witness to the truth.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *JP* III 3076. The tension between "the divine and this life" is reflected in Kierkegaard's analysis of the story of Abraham and Isaac in Judaism and Christianity. In Judaism Abraham receives back Isaac in this world, whereas in Christianity his sacrifice of Isaac covers the whole of life until reunion in eternity. *JP* II 2222, 2223, cf. 2217.

¹⁰⁹ *JP* VI 6842 p. 481, 6843 p. 484. Note that in *Either/Or* I, for example, A talks about Christ and the Atonement in an essay on tragedy, p. 142-143.

¹¹⁰ Balle, of course, refers to Scripture to support every catechetical proposition.

¹¹¹ *JP* I 708, 710, 711.

¹¹² *Either/Or* II p. 70, 313-314. See also SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *On Authority*

It can thus be seen that the Journals have much to give in the investigation of a problem when the scope is widened to include everything Kierkegaard wrote. Such a perspective, however, still earns the label "immanent", with the hidden implication that an author who explains an authorship is incapable of telling the truth¹¹³ and that there is some viewpoint outside Kierkegaard that will provide infallible answers or else show that there are no answers at all. Yet while it can be helpful to consider Kierkegaard's authorship from external perspectives,¹¹⁴ such perspectives are as limited as any immanent investigation and just as unable to take issue with impossible questions such as how far Kierkegaard's authorship really was guided by the God of Christianity.¹¹⁵

Finally, we can do no better than to end where we started, with

and Revelation, tr. Walter Lowrie, New York: Harper torchbooks, 1966, p. 36; SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Practice in Christianity*, p. 67-68; SØREN KIERKEGAARD: *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon "Christendom"*, tr. Walter Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 54-55, 5-15.

¹¹³ See GARFF, p. 52, cf. 30-1. Garff suggests that Kierkegaard's alleged lack of honesty "is not of an ethical character", yet it is clear that ethical and philosophical questions are raised concerning the possibility of self-knowledge and communication. In Kierkegaard's case the problem may be that he has too much self-knowledge, honesty and literary insight when trying to convey all the perspectives in his situation. There is also a big difference between one boasting an ideality he or she does not follow at all and one who honestly makes an effort.

¹¹⁴ For example, historical, philosophical or psychological (with the problem of their accuracy and validation). A valuable approach to the authorship is that of Wilfried Greve who examines the views of the pseudonyms in relation to each other: GREVE: "Assessor Wilhelm og Anti-Climacus", lecture to the Søren Kierkegaard Society Denmark, 28.1.1993.

¹¹⁵ See here GARFF, p. 47, where he suggests that Kierkegaard's writing is in fact "Governance", but how can one rule out the possibility that there is a God who has placed the "stamp of Governance" on Kierkegaard's efforts (JP VI 6227)?

the Sermon, and a note Kierkegaard made in a copy of *Either/Or*:¹¹⁶ “The aim of the sermon”, he says, “is not to lull, not to win a metaphysical position, but to motivate to action.” The ball is firmly placed in the court of the reader, who, Kierkegaard hopes, will see the point and turn from the book to a consideration of how he or she should live.

¹¹⁶ *JP* V 5634.

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