

## *Participación de Alastair McKinnon*

Two years ago I was asked to produce a study of *Fear and Trembling*, and that has produced the two things that I want to share with you this afternoon.

First, however, I want to try to make good on an omission from yesterday. Maria reminded me at lunch that among the many other things I failed to say was the following: my work is to produce a map of the city to be used as you walk around in the city. There are maps of the city to be used as you walk around in the city; there is no disjunction between my work and reading the text intelligently and existentially.

I was talking yesterday, and Dr. Khan was talking this morning, about dimensions. This is an account, a description or naming of the poles and dimensions, of the first eight dimensions of *Fear and Trembling* and a spacial representation of the first three dimensions. As you know, to repeat yesterday, my aim is to produce spacial representations of conceptual relations. There are, in the text, deep and profound conceptual ties, and my aim is to bring, catch those ties, to bring them out of the text and to reproduce them in space, so that we can see their relation to one another. I think that it is not necessary for me to comment on them, except perhaps to say that the fifth dimension is between chapter two and three. And, as I said yesterday, I puzzled for a long, long time and suddenly discovered that one chapter is about Abraham doing the deed as unbeliever, and the next chapter is about Abraham doing the same thing as believer. The sixth dimension is about Silentio's distinction, and it is very interesting that it is only the sixth dimension Silentio's allegedly crucial distinction between resignation and faith, instead of being above at the top. And the seventh dimension is the opposition between the two slogans, the slogan of the age 'beyond faith' and

Kierkegaard's counter slogan 'faith is the highest human passion'.

So, that is the story of *Fear and Trembling* as told by the computer program analyzed by myself. And I pass from what is simply joy and pleasure to what is now intense pain, and I'm going to share some pain with you in the hope that you can help me to resolve this pain. And the pain is so intense that it is not even ordered or very coherent. And that will become all too obvious to you as I proceed.

Kierkegaard posed that *Fear and Trembling* was his greatest work, and that if he would have written nothing else, it would assure his immortality.

In the Preface he says "if the author had known hebrew, he would not have written this book the way I've written it." Now the answer is that the author did know hebrew; he knew it very well, and he therefore knew that his account of Abraham was false.

To put it very promptly there is no way that Abraham's act could have been unintelligible to any of his contemporaries. Every one of his contemporaries would have understood perfectly well, indeed might even have applauded at Abraham proceeded to do what the Lord allegedly commanded him to do. Abraham had only to go, to do the deed, come back, and say, "the Lord commanded it." And he would have been applauded. And that is not how Kierkegaard tells the story, so we have to ask ourselves: Why does Kierkegaard used, misused Abraham in this way? What is he up to?

Well the answer, of course, is that he is up to the justification of his treatment to Regina. And that is why if you look closely at the map that the computers produced, you'll see that the text is really so much more, is at least as much concerned to defend Abraham's silence as Abraham's deed because Kierkegaard was resolutely proud of his silence. He says: "She can push me as hard as she want, I will not talk." And his silence on this matter

was for him a matter of very great importance.

In 1962 I wrote a paper called "Kierkegaard's uses of paradox" and in it distinguished six different senses in which he used the word paradox and, reading much now, getting back to the text now, I have the tools just to find the other twenty senses. But, the point I want to make now is a different and more subtle one. There is, I think, in Kierkegaard, a profound confusion. And it has to do with the paradox and with the notion of believing the paradoxical, rather with believing something as the paradox. I published a paper on this subject in *Harvard Theological Journal* in 1968.

Let me take a very simple example. I ask you: Did Lazarus raised from the dead? That's a historical question and a merely historical question. Let's confuse the question: Was there the miracle of Lazarus raising from the dead? And now we have a mixture of History and Mythology or conceptual framework. And Kierkegaard, I am afraid, in *Fear and Trembling* begins a path which he continues throughout much of the pseudonymous authorship. Namely, confusing believing something and believing it as a paradox. And the two things are totally separate. It is one thing to believe that Lazarus was raised from the dead; a totally different thing to believe that it was a miracle. And to confuse the two things is to confound confusion.

Another thing, the words 'paradox' and 'absurd' occur only in the pseudonymous writings. I repeat, the words 'paradox' and 'absurd' occur only in the pseudonymous writings. There is one exception, a form of paradox occurs in the attack on the church at the very end in which Kierkegaard refers to this paradox. But there are no uses of 'absurd' or 'paradox' in any of Kierkegaard's acknowledged writings. And I ask you to take that seriously. And I take this seriously. And there is my pain. I think the difficulties begin with *Fear and Trembling*.

What I should have said is that I have a new file, and the title

of the file is "*Fear and Trembling: self-deceit and deception*", and it gives me terrible pain. So, if you could help me to resolve the pain, I shall be very grateful.

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