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Kierkegaard as an Enlightenment Thinker

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Margaret Thomson, *Cheryl's Wedding*, 2004

Introduction:

What if Kierkegaard were not a counter-Enlightenment thinker, but were a deeper enlightenment thinker? In this talk, I want to propose an interpretation of S.K.'s work under which he continues the Enlightenment, rather than discontinuing it. I will claim that Kierkegaard deepened and advanced one of the most central aspects of "enlightenment", at least as Kant and the subsequent tradition has defined it. Kierkegaard was an enlightenment thinker (lower case "e"), and therefore it is misleading to see him as opposed to the heart of the Enlightenment (upper case "E").

The Enlightenment was an historical period. But as a philosophical era, it is widely considered to be a period provoking people to become responsible authorities of their own lives in matters ethical, political and religious and to do so through the advancement of their own understanding. According to Kant, this movement from accepting external authorities to using one's own understanding was enlightenment (lower case "e"). The imperative beginning Kant's essay "What Is Enlightenment?" goes: "Have the courage to use our own understanding!"ⁱ This is an elegant restatement of the central message of Rousseau's "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" in *Emile*.ⁱⁱ On the reading of Foucault two centuries later, what the Enlightenment promoted philosophically was an anti-authoritarian ethos that was the flip-side of internalizing authority within one's own understanding. He calls this movement of authority inward "critique".ⁱⁱⁱ It is my sense that many today think of the Enlightenment as a critique of external authority – religion and monarchy- but neglect to emphasize the purpose of this critique: to develop inward authority in our own understanding. If we focus on this purpose of outward critique, we emerge with a view of the core of the Enlightenment that is, technically speaking, no different from what Husserl inaugurated when he claimed phenomenology as a rigorous science brackets claims to authority that have not been shown to make sense to our

understanding.^{iv} And we also emerge with a view that places Kierkegaard within the Enlightenment tradition.

In this talk, I want to specify in what way Kierkegaard may be placed within the Enlightenment tradition through the way to contributes to what Kant called “enlightenment” (lower-case “e”). I will work through the way Kierkegaard provokes his readers to understand for themselves, specifically through the way he draws on our voices. Thinking along with Rousseau, the philosophy of conscience, Bakhtin and Buber, I will formulate a notion I call a “heart-word” and will claim that Kierkegaard provoked us to mean what we can through our heart-words. This I will refer to as a work of “voicing”, and my final contention will be that such a work of voicing gives us rudimentary insights into how we might read his journals as provocations to voicing in everyday life. The journals conceal confidences, because gossip would distract a reader from the task of turning to one’s own life. Reality is in the meeting and not in any object you have on another.^v



Margaret Thomson, *Untitled*, 2004

Growing up by using your own understanding

How does Kierkegaard’s invocation of our voices –as co-readers of his works- continue and deepen the Kantian imperative to use our own understandings and to become “more than machines”?^{vi} More generally, how does Kierkegaard’s philosophy of voice extend the Kantian point of enlightenment –to grow up, mature or come of age?^{vii} After all, Kant defines enlightenment as exiting our “self-incurred immaturity”.^{viii}

To answer these questions, we need to begin by imagining what “self-incurred immaturity” could be. Kant’s metaphor of being a “machine” will help us here. A machine is a tool that is constructed so as to carry out tasks for others. It is mindless and receives its orders from without. It simply carries out the will of its user within the parameters of its capacity. For

Kant, humans are more than machines, because we can judge for ourselves what we should do. To suppress this capacity when we have it is immature.

“Immaturity” is understanding adopted from without. It is not really understanding for you, but is being led blindly from without.^{ix} Maturity, by implication, is being led by one’s own lights. It is understanding by you for you. “Self-incurred” immaturity, Kant goes on, is lacking internal authority when that lack comes from “laziness or cowardice” –from lack of heart.^x

Accordingly, Kant commends we have the courage to use our own understanding: he tries to hearten us.

This heartening is our clue to Kierkegaard. Fifty-nine years later, in 1843, Kierkegaard’s first pseudonymous work ends with words that, as close to his direct discourses as can be, resonate throughout his entire authorship:

Ask yourself and keep on asking until you find the answer. For one may have known something many times, acknowledged it; one may have willed something many times, attempted it –and yet, only the deep inner motion, only the heart’s indescribable emotion, only that will convince you that what you have acknowledge belongs to you, that no power can take it from you –for only the truth that builds up is truth for you.^{xi}

This famous passage speaks to two concerns. First, it addresses a reader who seeks what makes sense *to* her. It assumes an understanding whose authority has been internalized. Second, it addresses that reader’s heart: urging that what moves the reader’s heart is the place from which *her*

understanding begins. Both of these concerns repeat and assume the lineaments of Kantian enlightenment: internalized authority and the need for a movement of the heart to claim responsibility and so become mature –to grow –or “build”- up. What is responsible is the heart and what the heart does is allow one to claim the authority of one’s own understanding. That is claiming one’s capacity to mature.

Interestingly, this heart-mind cooperation repeats the understanding of conscience developed in Rousseau’s *Emile* –in the *Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar*.^{xii} Reason, the Vicar says, knows the good, but only conscience loves it.^{xiii} Conscience is “the voice” and “the instinct” of the soul.^{xiv} Its acts “are not judgments but sentiments.”^{xv} What these sentiments do is express the place where the soul *takes care*. Rousseau was interpreting here ancient Stoic *oikeiosis*: every living being’s disposition to care for itself.^{xvi} The idea in Rousseau is that conscientious understanding ought to be the goal of mature development: heartened in our understanding, we care about what we know and by so doing make it a part of our lives. That is *human* care for the self.

Note, too, that even for Rousseau as for the voice ending *Either/Or*, having a truth find one’s heart needn’t entail that one’s heart be infallible – morally or epistemologically. The point is rather that without placing

oneself in existence where one's understanding resonates through one's life, one cannot *have* a true understanding. This is Kant's concern too –although he urges us to rush our hearts up to what we can understand, rather than remarking that what we truly understand reverberates down through our hearts –good or bad though they be. The point remains the same: grow up; come of age; you must know by your own lights and such understanding expresses care for yourself. What is truly clear for you?



Criz Stoddard, Colorado Springs Action Alliance against the Iraq war, 2003

Voicing

Let me step back for a minute and run a thought by you. What draws on your conscience –your responsibility for where and when you are? Is it not being called to awareness? Conscience speaks to us as the relay to respond

to something that calls on us. It has the structure of a voice calling us because it has itself responded to a call and wishes us to respond.^{xvii} Sometimes we actually do speak to ourselves mentally out of conscience, but conscience is habitual and largely what Freud called “pre-conscious”.^{xviii} Hence its being described as a feeling is apt. It is a meaningful “gut feeling” that often we stop to check with articulation and deliberation. It is a tacit word, a message in an envelope of emotion. The reason that feeling is described as a voice is that conscience always speaks to us: it draws our attention to something significant to which we should respond. Conscience calls us to locate ourselves in the “space of meaning” –to play with a trendy phrase from Sellers.^{xix} And, as Heidegger saw, this space of meaning is saturated with care, the categorical tenor of conscience.^{xx}

The need to be located in the space of meaning as a first responsibility of care: this interests me in Kierkegaard’s authorship when considering him as an enlightenment thinker.^{xxi} I think that Kierkegaard’s elaborate voicing can be seen as a method for engaging our responsibility by provoking us at the level of our consciences. Kierkegaard tried to speak to his readers. Here is Kierkegaard in his own voice at the time *Either/Or* was published:

[My little book] finally met that single individual whom I with joy and gratitude call *my* reader, that single individual it is seeking, to whom, so to speak, it stretches out its arms, that

single individual who is favorably enough disposed to allow himself to be found....^{xxii}

My contention is that this call to the singular individuality of the reader who listens with the farthest depth of her heart is a call to the reader's conscience –one that provokes her to use her own understanding. I say “provokes” precisely, because a call elicits a response –a voice calls forth a voice.^{xxiii} My question, then, is about the specific *kind* of voice that makes such a call. I am looking for a category of voice.

Think of it. Kierkegaard's voice in the passage just read is not to be understood based on qualities it has –loud, soft, elegant, trite, cute, sharp, relevant, etc. Rather, it is the kind of voice it is because of what it does: it connects with the conscience of the single individual. That is its function or use. That's its kind. And such a kind need not be said; it can be shown. The most provocative signal of Kierkegaard's voice is not in the said but in the *saying* –in the repetitions, gaps, emphases, and silences.^{xxiv} In the body language or gesture of the writing. In a kind of doing. What kind?

The Kierkegaardian voice aims at connecting –it is a seeking-to-connect. What is being connected *with* is the heart of the addressee. This should come as no surprise. Only in the heart can enlightenment begin, for reasons we have heard. The question then is, what kind of saying is a

seeking to connect with the heart of the addressee? We have many words for it, for instance a “heart-to-heart.” Buber, I think, called it a “primary word” –the “Ich-Du”.^{xxv} I will call it “communicating.” Although we may say that many things count as communication, we reserve a specific kind for when someone really communicates with us. Communicating is the kind of saying where one tries to connect with the real location of the other.^{xxvi} In terms of this talk, it is a saying where the sayer tries to connect with the point in the other where her engaged responsibility for her location in the space of meaning will emerge: where called, she will emerge out of the shadows. Communication is provocation to enlightenment.



From Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter*, 1997

Heart-words

Buber spoke of a kind of word –a primary word. It is perhaps better to say a kind of *wording*. This is what voicing is. As I understand the term, “voicing” refers to the dialogical dimension of a text that engages –hooks onto- the response of the reader in what I will call her “heart-word.” A “heart-word” is the place in a being of speech^{xxvii} where her responsibility for the meaning in existence crystallizes around her speech. It is the locus of care in speech –the place where conscience emerges as a voice *in* our voices. Kierkegaard’s authorship (a) is a work in voicing and (b) is intended to locate the heart-word in the reader. Moreover, the intention to locate the heart-word in the reader (c) is a development of Kantian enlightenment, true to the best in that Enlightenment tradition.

Now the voice has gotten a bad rap in the last quarter century. Imagine a hasty Derridian influenced by Derrida’s reading of Rousseau in *Of Grammatology*.^{xxviii} According to this line of interpretation, Kierkegaard’s fascination and use of the spoken word –even indirectly in his pseudonyms’ theatrics- might belie a nostalgia for self-presence that attempts to repress existence’s contingency and our constitutional inability to be completely self-transparent. This interpretation would stress, for instance, how Kierkegaard repeatedly urged his readers to read aloud so that they might

hear their own voices. The idea would be that hearing your own voice activates original presence, which itself serves to make up for the contingency of meaning in speech. Voice then supplements the diffusion or scattering of meaning. *Phonos* “supplements” *logos*.^{xxix} Even though one might not understand what one reads completely and might not gather the intention of the author, one still auto-stimulates^{xxx} oneself as a giver and receiver of meaning. Yet the problem is: such auto-stimulated meaning – much like Rousseau’s famous “supplement”^{xxxix} - is empty. It’s the mere form of subjectivity without object. And hence Kierkegaardian voicing cannot work to obtain certain meaning at all. In fact, it covers over the mystery of meaning. We mean things only *with* others and only by being subjected to the grace or tragedy of meaning in our contingent existences.

What such a reading misunderstands are some obvious things, and yet there is truth in it. First, when one reads aloud, one does not read to hear oneself read. One reads to capture the gesture or act of the reading. This act helps locate one in reflection, just as both seeing and hearing the words do. Better located, one is slowed down to think more carefully, opened up to the context that comes with acting an imagined role (the “script”, so to speak, of this other), and one is better able to stop and go at the speed and ability of one’s own understanding. In short, reading aloud is part of the act of

understanding –at least in what Kierkegaard asks his readers to do. But as a means to that end, it is a form of response –not an auto-stimulation.

Yet what is true about the Derridian-inspired criticism is that speaking out loud also auto-stimulates oneself as a being in time who cares and has a presence. Doing so is an extremely basic way of feeling what Rousseau called “the sentiment of one’s own existence.”^{xxxii} But it is precisely such a sentiment enabling conscience to speak.^{xxxiii} Voicing therefore places one on the map as someone who *has* a location in care. This is formal, but it is extremely important to a view of meaning that includes *persons* in the space of meaning –singularities who organize our communication not semantically but in what Buber called “primary words” –that is, in *relationships* where meaning becomes human rather than abstract to people’s real lives.^{xxxiv} Moreover, *you* or *I* become able to engage in relationship.

Join the legos together. Voicing allows one to become responsible, both by coming to be a presence in the space of meaning and by coming to work toward understanding, receiving the “call” of the other’s words and making her meaning your own. Voicing is an extremely basic form of responsibility for the *human* kind of life lived in the space of meaning out of care. It is an activation of conscience within a context of communication. And the activation of conscience is tantamount to entering into one’s own

process of maturing, as we have previously seen. As Anne-Christine Habbard has shown,^{xxxv} Kierkegaardian selves become only *with* others. Yet *what* others do is call us to care for ourselves. That then is your own task.

On my reading, voicing provokes our heart-word. The heart word is a kind of word, a word emerging from the locus of care in conscientious speech. While it is imbued with one's love, we must remember that such love need not be pure or healthy. Human hearts are often mixed-up and sometimes corrupt. But even when they are, people who communicate from the core of their existences' relations to meaning are in positions to relate, understand or learn in a way that is true, whereas if people relate to their lives abstract from their existences' location in the space of meaning, they cannot relate, understand or learn truly at all. Heart-words are therefore the kind of elementary authenticity that allows anything truly reasonable to emerge. They are like the Socratic condition of philosophy: that we state what we truly believe, even if it is mistaken. Without being "in" our meaning, as "in" our beliefs, we can't engage *logos* properly. The Kierkegaardian idea is that your enlightenment begins when and only when your responsibility for the meaning in your existence crystallizes around your speech.



Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, *Cousins – Esther & Dave's 40th Anniversary*, 2005

Conscience in everyday life

This is a conference on Kierkegaard's so-called most intimate writings: his journals –not even his letters. The question we just touched on about how a solitary voice relates to itself is therefore redoubled. Yet Kierkegaard wrote his journals aware that they could be read by others. And when he wrote them, he wrote so as to “give away no secrets.”^{xxxvi} Here S.K. was not Rousseauian in the least. A question we may put to ourselves, then, is: what place did the journals have in his everyday life? A “journal”, after all, is an everyday reflection every day.

What I hope is constructive about my argument so far is that it gives us a way to see the practice of journaling within the large scale concerns of Kierkegaard's authorship. It is possible that the journals manifested a form of what Foucault calls "the self's relation to itself", a form of "writing the self"^{xxxvii} that allowed Kierkegaard the human being to find his heart-word, or at least the pre-condition of it: a self able to have a heart-word in actual relationships with others. Encouraged by Poole's study of Kierkegaard, I think it isn't irrelevant to imagine a man of flesh and blood^{xxxviii}, Soren Kierkegaard, who wrote at night compulsively, writing each manuscript three times and speaking it out loud each time as he went; who spent a significant portion of his days out in the streets walking and talking with the many actual people whom he knew. This man also journalled. What might these journals do –between the flesh and blood of people he met in the streets, the live connection of his letters, and the somewhat to majorly abstract constructions of his works?^{xxxix}

In the most simple terms, I think they helped get a grip –a grip on understanding where and when he was. If so, the journals were training in having heart-words. They were formations of heart. In this way, the journals seem to have been a modern, narrative, ascetic practice in the

service of Kantian enlightenment. *A technique du soi* in the service of *critique*, to echo Foucault.^{x1} A way of receiving and forming the heart.

At the same time, S.K. was sensitive enough to the eye of a future or accidental reader to make even the journals a provocation into *one's own*, not his, responsibility. Hence a pedagogical reason for keeping secrets secret: by remaining free of gossip, the reader may remain poised for the essential task –to become able to locate herself in her heart-word. In communication, as in enlightenment, as in life, we must meet up with real people and we must locate our own understanding.

ⁱ Immanuel Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”, in Schmidt, ed., *What Is Enlightenment? Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions*, London: University of California Press, 1996, 58-64, 58.

ⁱⁱ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, tr. by Alan Bloom, New York: Basic Books, 1978.

ⁱⁱⁱ Michel Foucault, “What Is Critique?” in Schmidt, op. cit., 382-398.

^{iv} See Edmund Husserl, *Philosophy as a Rigorous Science*, trans. by Q. Lauer, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, and *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. by D. Cairns, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988, meditation 1 on the *epoche* and the idea of “genuine science”. See also Jean-Luc Marion, *Reduction et donation*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989 on the “reduction” to “givenness”.

^v This paper draws from what was originally a dissertation project. My project’s idea comes from a conversation in 1991. That conversation drew a continuity between Immanuel Kant’s essay “What Is Enlightenment?” and Kierkegaard’s authorship.

During my six years of reading Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms, I became interested in how he explored what I call the “relatively incognito” dimensions of everyday human life –specifically, the ties and discoveries of morality, love, religion and psychological attunement that make daily life a scene of intense and often hidden beauty. I believe S.K.’s authorship still remains associated with what I call the “sublime romantic” tradition –of which twentieth century existentialism was a part. This tradition develops out of and in response to late 18th century *Sturm und Drang*. However, I believe S.K.’s lasting contribution has yet to be explored –and is in what I call the “everyday romantic” tradition. This tradition has found its way into some psychoanalytic work and in such works of art as Kieslowski’s film *Red*. It can also be found in the late

Wittgenstein. This tradition sees the richness in everyday life through what often goes unseen –relationships that keep the world going and which are so of the world’s fabric they are taken for granted. I believe S.K. is truest as part of this tradition and that his journals and letters, his philosophical literature, his daily walks, and his insistence on not being made a big deal of attest to how much he wanted us to learn to see the relatively incognito structure of the ethical-spiritual around us. Placing S.K.’s work in this tradition also allows us to see him as a partner to the kind of social critique Marx engaged in – through an exploration of common humanity and true human relationships- as well as an inheritor of Kantian enlightenment. How S.K.’s authorship is a romantic, everyday (literally, a “journal”) contribution to the Enlightenment tradition is part of what this paper concerns.

^{vi} Kant, 58 and 63, respectively.

^{vii} On this overall emphasis of Kant’s work, see Susan Neiman, *The Unity of Reason, Rereading Kant*, Mumbai: Oxford University Press, 1994, 5.v.

^{viii} Kant, 58.

^{ix} “Blindly” because the guidance is not understand by you.

^x Kant, 58.

^{xi} Soren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, v. 2, trans. by H. and E. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987, 354.

^{xii} It is an interesting coincidence that the minister who writes the “closing words” of *Either/Or* examined here was said to be a religious man from an isolated country place – just as the vicar is said to be.

^{xiii} Rousseau, *Emile*, 290.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, 286.

^{xv} *Ibid.*, 290.

^{xvi} See Jeremy Bendik-Keymer, *Conscience and Humanity*, dissertation accepted by the University of Chicago Department of Philosophy, 2002, chapter 2, “Rousseauian Conscience”, 44.

^{xvii} I am assuming the work of some of what is called “radical phenomenology” here. See Jean-Louis Chretien, *L’appel et la reponse*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1992; Jean-Luc Marion, *Being Given, toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 287. This work actually draws on a strange source –that of an E.N.S.-Ulm professor, Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001. Althusser has a brilliant albeit brief analysis of the call and its relation to the interior of our personal selves.

^{xviii} [I am lacking a citation at hand on the definition of the pre-conscious for Freud.]

^{xix} Sellers’s expression is “the space of reasons.” The expression was popularized in American philosophy in the 90s by John McDowell and Robert Brandom. See McDowell, *Mind and World*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

^{xx} Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by Macquarrie and Robinson, New York: Harper & Row, 1962, section 57.

^{xxi} I finally saw the importance of locating oneself in meaning as a first expression of care through a talk given by Avner Baz on Wittgenstein and Heidegger at the Colorado College, February 2004. This talk helped me understand the work of Irad Kimhi on the

same two figures. Most recently, the work of Hagi Kenaan on the singularity of speaking to and as a person promises to specify and continue this reflection on locating oneself in meaning as a first expression of care: only Kenaan seems to work on locating others as a first expression of caring to understand meaning. See his *The Present Personal: Philosophy and the Hidden Face of Language*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005. That all three of these thinkers emerged from undergraduate studies in the philosophy department of Tel Aviv University speaks to the presence of a teacher or a teaching there, perhaps of Eli Friedlander, who has just published a study on Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*.

^{xxii} Soren Kierkegaard, "Preface" to "Two Upbuilding Discourses" (1843) in *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, trans. by H. & E. Hong, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

^{xxiii} See the Latin *provocare*: to challenge forth by way of a call.

^{xxiv} Consider the morally beautiful writing, under pseudonym, in *Training/Practice in Christianity*. This work stages a moral-religious drama through the precise repetitions of expressions, the escalation of care in sudden "cuts" and in many other ways. Moreover, as Poole has shown in *Kierkegaard, the Indirect Communication* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1993), *Training/Practice in Christianity* is literally built with the architecture of his Copenhagen readers' main Lutheran church in mind. The work is both heart-breaking and love-provoking because of the extreme "materiality" of the writing. Truly reading it with one's own search for a world beyond evil, the text manages to carry one's heart through a process that reawakens one's idealism and illuminates renewed possibility for ethical action.

Post-structuralists have learned from Kierkegaard on this writerly point as well - Derrida more than most, and also Jean-Luc Nancy, although sometimes to excess. See the latter's *The Birth to Presence*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.

^{xxv} Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, tr. by R. Gregor Smith, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999, 15ff. It is also interesting to note that Buber, who was steeped in the neo-Kantianism of the Marburg School, came up with this way of speaking of a word while his contemporary Mikael Bakhtin did too. Bakhtin's most brilliant essay is called "The Word in Dostoevsky" [citation missing at present] and Dostoevsky's "word" functions very much like a primary dialogical *relationship*. Bakhtin was also schooled in the same neo-Kantianism during the same period.

^{xxvi} Again, see Kenaan's new work, *op cit*.

^{xxvii} I do not want to say "person," because divinities have heart-words.

^{xxviii} Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by G. Spivak, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

^{xxix} "Phonos" is ancient Greek for "voice" and "logos" is Greek for "reason", "understanding" or "speech". Derrida makes much of Rousseau's use of the word "supplement".

^{xxx} See Michel Henry, *Phénoménologie matérielle*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990.

^{xxxi} Derrida explores Rousseau's famous onanism as supplement: the suggestion is that Rousseau's text itself is plagued by a constitutional ideological onanism. Whether this is true or not, Rousseau's onanism is one of those infamous "secrets" he divulges in his

Confessions and which, I think rightly, one might say Rousseau has reified. We do not get any closer to Rousseau's heart by knowing about his "secrets". I do not have the space to develop this point in a comparison with Kierkegaard's *anti-confessional* practice in his journals, although I allude to it below.

^{xxxii} See Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, trans. by C. Buttersworth, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998, 5th walk.

^{xxxiii} See Rousseau, *Emile*, 291 for a hint. The full argument would take too long to work out here. It goes like this: conscience speaks for *amour de soi-meme* most basically (an *amour de soi* expanded with *pitié*). The sentiment of existence is a first expression and condition of a truly functioning *amour de soi*. Conscience therefore speaks out of the sentiment of existence, "the silence of the passions" –this being echoed in the entire phenomenology of conscience on 291 and also in the *Second Discourse* discussion of "the voice of nature".

^{xxxiv} Again, see Kenaan, *op cit*. Also consider Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. by Alfonso Ligus, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1997. Reading the prospectus of Kenaan's book really "clicked" this point about persons for me. As his commentator Karsten Harries writes, "Of course we experience persons. But the seeming obviousness of this fact loses sight of a problem that has shadowed our all too often inhumane age. Kenaan succeeds in showing how such blindness is tied to a widely accepted understanding of language and reality." See the book's dust jacket back cover.

^{xxxv} "Time and Testimony, Contemporaneity and Communication: A reading of the Ethical in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook*, 2002. See also Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, London: Routledge, 1990.

^{xxxvi} See Roger Poole's analysis of this fact in his *Kierkegaard, the Indirect Communication*, [page numbers needed].

^{xxxvii} See Foucault's *Care of the Self*, London: Vintage Press, 1986, and the remarks on Foucault in Pierre Hadot's *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1995. See also Foucault's "Writing the Self" in A. Davidson, *Foucault and his Interlocutors*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

^{xxxviii} See Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life among Men and Nations*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970, chapter 1.

^{xxxix} Even his "direct" discourses must of necessity be abstract. There is no specific other to whom he writes, even if he imagines one. Thus, although he is aware of the paradox involved, there is an impossibility in the heart of the philosophical *eros* of the direct discourses.

^{xl} See Foucault, *Care of the Self*, "Writing the Self" and "What Is Critique?" *op cit*. See also Charles Larmore *Les Pratiques du Moi*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004, winner of the Grand Prix de l'Academie Francaise for philosophy, 2004. These studies could provide a very useful starting point for a comparison between S.K.'s journaling and ancient philosophical practices of memory and "self-writing". Such a comparison would allow one to further develop the "acetic" moment in Kierkegaard: the forms of training by which he "subjected" himself to the demands of enlightenment and the commands of his religion.