Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal
Volume 32, Number 2, 2012

Søren Kierkegaard and the Problem of Pseudonymity

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1.

First-time readers of Kierkegaard have always been charmed when they hear intriguing names such as Victor Eremita, Constantin Constantius, Johannes de Silentio, Johannes Climacus, Vigilius Haufniensis, Nicolaus Notabene, Hilarius Bogbinder, Inter et Inter, or Anti-Climacus. To the modern mind there is something both amusing and puzzling about Kierkegaard's use of these odd *noms de plume*. Readers industriously try to figure out the meanings of these strange names and their relations to the works ostensibly authored by them. This leads to perplexing questions: What does the Watchman of Copenhagen have to do with the doctrine of original sin and anxiety? What does the sixth-century Christian monk John of the Ladder have to do with the doctrine of the paradox or the infinite god becoming finite? Instructors teaching Kierkegaard dutifully puzzle over these questions in the first five minutes of class, only to give up on them and hasten on to the text itself. They often feel duty-bound to draw this aspect of Kierkegaard's writings to the attention of their auditors, but rarely can they manage to make anything substantial out of it.

There are generally speaking two extreme views on Kierkegaard's use of the pseudonyms. One view argues that it is utterly irrelevant and uninteresting for a proper understanding of his writings. The other argues that observing the pseudonyms meticulously is the alpha and omega of the correct interpretation of Kierkegaard's thought, and anyone who associates Kierkegaard with one of his pseudonyms completely misses the point of his work. I wish to argue that the correct methodological disposition lies somewhere in the middle ground between these two poles. While one should of course be attentive to his use of the pseudonyms, there is nothing in the philological evidence that indicates that he carefully developed the pseudonyms to be entirely discrete and

autonomous entities. This does, however, raise the more difficult question of what one can say positively about the pseudonyms.

The first tendency is represented by the earlier periods of Kierkegaard studies, where his use of pseudonyms was regarded as an amusing curiosum, but in the end it was not something taken seriously by philosophers or theologians. It was usually dismissed as Kierkegaard's frivolousness or self-indulgence that ultimately served merely to get in the way of a proper understanding his works. Earlier commentators thus assured their readers that this dimension of his authorship could be safely disregarded. For example, the early American translator Walter Lowrie (1868–1959) writes in the introduction to his translation of *The Concept of Dread*, "We need not therefore apply to this book S.K.'s emphatic admonition not to attribute to him anything that is said by his pseudonyms. This was his first completely serious book, and everything we find in it may safely be regarded as his own way of thinking."[1] Lowrie's summary brushing aside of the pseudonym Vigilius Haufniensis is typical of Kierkegaard research during this period.

2. The Importance of the Pseudonyms in Recent Kierkegaard Literature

By contrast, it can be said that today the question of pseudonymity occupies a fairly central place in international Kierkegaard research. Indeed, it is one of the main issues discussed in the literary reception of his writings at present. On this point Kierkegaard studies has been influenced by recent trends in literary theory. Advocates of this research area see a family resemblance between Kierkegaard and the important theorists of postmodernism.[2] They associate his employment of the pseudonyms as a nineteenth-century version of the modern conception of the death of the author. Such a view also seems to fit well with Kierkegaard's refusal to represent any authority and his constant criticism of those who purported to speak in the name of the church or Christianity. These interpreters seize on aspects of Kierkegaard's early works that seem to suggest a form of subjectivism, relativism or even nihilism. For example, his theory of irony seems to deny any notion of a fixed, immutable truth. Similarly, his notion of the ineffable nature of religious belief points to a subjective, nondiscursive locus of truth. His concepts of indirect communication, humor, and many others can be used in the service of the same kind of interpretation.

In the context of this research paradigm, it is natural that scholars are interested in underscoring Kierkegaard's use of the pseudonyms. Specifically, they claim that this holds the key to properly understanding his work and thought. According to this view, Kierkegaard had a

carefully conceived plan with his use of the pseudonyms, and so, as readers, they are respecting his true goals and intentions by taking this seriously—a point that, as will be discussed below, collides with the postmodern criticism of the idea of the privileged interpretation of the author. The guiding belief is that nothing that Kierkegaard wrote under the guise of a pseudonym can be properly ascribed to him as an author. He conceived the elaborate network of pseudonymous positions as a ruse and a puzzle for his reader, and each pseudonym represents something unique and different from the others.

One of the leading exponents of this view is Roger Poole (1939–2003), who with his *Kierkegaard: The Indirect Communication* in many ways led the way toward creating a new sensitivity towards the pseudonyms.[3] However, to be sure, Poole is by no means alone in his view but rather represents an entire body of research that includes scholars such as André Clair,[4] Jan Holmgaard,[5] Jacob Bøggild,[6] Sylviane Agacinski,[7] Louis Mackey,[8] and Lars Bejerholm.[9] For the sake of simplicity I simply take Poole's work to be representative for this general paradigm of research. Poole argues that the individual pseudonymous authors must be taken each on their own and separated from Kierkegaard himself. In his polemical moments, Poole brands his opponents as "blunt readers" when they associate Kierkegaard himself with some view presented in a pseudonymous work.[10] These readers make the mistake, according to Poole, of seeking in Kierkegaard's writings some final truth that they are anxious to ascribe to him, thereby quickly casting aside the pseudonym as an irrelevant or obfuscating misdirection. These are people who belong to "the bad old tradition of seeking univocal meaning" (KI 7). Such a foundationalist, positivistic pursuit is only the occupation of simple-minded and naïve readers, according to Poole. Such readers will never be able to grasp Kierkegaard, who wrote as if to taunt and make fun of them and their misguided undertaking.

Poole takes as his point of departure Derrida's concept of "différance" (KI 6; RR 396f.). He explains, "Trained in the school of Romantic irony, Kierkegaard was an adept at displacing and 'deferring' meaning. Indeed, it is Kierkegaard, a century ahead of Derrida, who demonstrates that a meaning can be so long deferred that it would finally be merely naïve to ask for it" (KI 2). He argues that Kierkegaard uses one form of this concept in order to demonstrate "the undecidability of a text" (RR 397). Kierkegaard's goal is not to set forth some single, definitive truth or meaning that the secondary literature never tires of trying to discover, but rather designs his texts in order to undermine this very attempt, that is, to frustrate all efforts to fix any determinate meaning. Poole claims, "The aim of the aesthetic texts [sc. the pseudonymous works] is not to instruct, or to inform, or to clarify, but on the contrary to divert, to subvert, and to destroy clear biographical intelligibility" (KI 9).

(It will be noted here in passing that this issue of deferring meaning or eschewing any fixed truth is one that is independent of the question of pseudonymity. While the use of a pseudonym might be a part of this, it need not be, and an author need not write under a pseudonym in order to create a text, the meaning of which is undecidable. Indeed, Poole himself mentions examples of nonpseudonymous works such as Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* [RR 398f.], which also displays this feature.)

Poole explains, "It is my contention that the extreme literary complexity of the pseudonymous texts has as its aim to make impossible a reading which . . . is obvious, fixed, and capable of being agreed upon by all. The reading required by Kierkegaard has to be a personal reading, and the literary complexities are there to ensure that this is the only kind of reading on offer" (RR 397). Poole then goes on to show how *Fear and Trembling* is set up in such a way as to undermine any clear and definitive meaning or any agreement of interpretation.

According to this view, Kierkegaard ironically sets up different views in his works only in order to undercut them. He seduces the reader into accepting certain arguments, but then he lets these arguments implode upon themselves, leaving the reader confused or in despair. Thus, for Poole, the entire 600-page *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* is simply one big elaborate joke on the reader. Instead of setting up a view that he wants to defend, Kierkegaard has his pseudonyms put forth views that he wants to refute covertly by means of a kind of grand *reductio ad absurdum* strategy.

This way of approaching Kierkegaard's texts is attractive to some readers, especially those who do not feel comfortable with his religious message. It has long been a strategy in Kierkegaard research simply to dismiss as "ironic" anything that one finds in Kierkegaard's texts that seems to run contrary to the interpretation that one wishes to ascribe to them. This is a convenient way to get around any possible text-based objection. Poole's view in a sense takes this to extremes since he regards everything as merely ironic or a joke on the positivist or foundationalist reader. But if this is true, then it raises the question of why Kierkegaard needed several different pseudonyms or, indeed, so many different books and so many pages just to make this same point. In this sense Poole's view seems to shoot over the mark. If everything is ironic, then there is never a case of something serious that cannot be seen without irony. But this would seem to undermine the very concept of irony, which relies on the fact that there are some instances in which things are to be taken seriously. Only in this context can something ironic unexpectedly appear and make its odd impression on the reader's or the interlocutor's intuitions.

Poole is right to point out that in *The Concept of Irony* Kierkegaard discusses at some length the notion of Romantic irony, which bears a family resemblance to the way in which irony is used among the postmodernists.[11] After first exploring Socratic irony, Kierkegaard treats the different versions of Romantic irony, which he takes to be the second important historical manifestation of the concept. However, what Poole fails to appreciate is that Kierkegaard's treatment of Romantic irony is not laudatory but critical. He does not recommend to his reader the irony of Friedrich Schlegel, Johann Ludwig Tieck or Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger, but rather criticizes them. The appeal to Kierkegaard's treatment of this form of irony is confused since it ascribed to Kierkegaard a conception of irony that he himself explicitly rejects.

Moreover, Poole's approach seems to run afoul of one of the key points of dogma in postmodernist theory, namely the denial of any form of authorial intention and the view that the author has a privileged position of interpretation vis-à-vis his or her own works. Indeed, Poole's whole theory is based on a view that he believes is most firmly in accordance with Kierkegaard's own authorial intentions as stated primarily in "A First and Last Explanation."[12] He thus privileges Kierkegaard's own view in a way that he himself calls naïve when referring to interpretations of other commentators. While his goal is to escape to a kind of interpretative relativism via a constant deferring of meaning, Poole ends up in an old-fashioned dogmatism by asserting the absolute truth of Kierkegaard's own statements about his use of the pseudonyms. While he mercilessly criticizes others for trying to find some stable, univocal meaning or truth in Kierkegaard's texts, Poole rests complacently in the certainty that he has discovered just such a truth in "A First and Last Explanation."

Poole claims that fundamentalist readers seek an absolute, univocal truth that cannot be disputed. This is, however, a strawman. No serious interpreter claims to have discovered the final truth about Kierkegaard that will put an end to or render superfluous all further discussion in the secondary literature. There is always disagreement about the ideas of any thinker or philosopher, even ones who do not write in pseudonyms. Poole thus posits as his opponent an ideal position that no one really holds, and he then dutifully goes on to refute it. But this seems to miss the point since the whole genre of secondary literature involves the attempt to interpret a primary text and to argue for that interpretation as best one can. While one tries to make one's interpretation plausible to the reader, this in no way implies that the author believes that this interpretation is the final, definitive one that has reached interpretative bedrock and can never be called into question. Ironically Poole's assertion that Kierkegaard's texts are con-

sciously designed to undermine all meaning, continuity, and truth starts to sound like just the kind of foundationalist claim that he attributes to his opponents. While the attempts of the other interpreters to find meaning in Kierkegaard's texts are derided as naïve, Poole himself nonetheless clings to the notion of the constant undermining of truth and meaning as *the truth* in those texts.

Kierkegaard's own texts are also constructed in a manner that is more complex than the simple use of pseudonyms. He has embedded different authors within different texts, as in *Either/Or* or *Stages on Life's Way*, which thus cannot be regarded as the work of a single author. And if one wishes to go further, Kierkegaard constantly makes use of different voices in his writing, often imagining the response of an opponent or a curious or confused reader and thus creating brief exchanges or even dialogues.[13] One could also claim that the status of these different voices should be taken into account if one wishes to distance Kierkegaard from the views presented in his works. Thus, when the matter is seen in this way, it seems arbitrary to stop at the level of the pseudonyms themselves and claim that this is the supremely important level of interpretation.

3. Pseudonymity as a Literary Practice in Kierkegaard's Time

Giving a fair assessment of the current interest in Kierkegaard's pseudonyms means going back and understanding how pseudonyms were generally used in Europe and specifically in Denmark in the first half of the nineteenth century. Some people are surprised to learn that the use of pseudonyms was not anything particularly new with Kierkegaard. Indeed, the employment of pseudonyms and anonyms was standard practice in Golden Age Denmark, and most all of the major writers of the period used a pseudonym at some point in time. Indeed, in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century a large percentage of all works published bore the name of pseudonyms.

When one looks at H. Ehrencron-Müller's *Anonym- og pseudonymlexikon, for Danmark og Island til 1920 og Norge til 1814* or even Uffe Andreasen's useful "Pseudonymliste" in his photomechanical reproduction of Johan Ludvig Heiberg's *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*,[14] one is startled to see the extent to which pseudonyms were used in the Danish Golden Age. One is further startled to see the diversity and creativity of the pseudonyms that were used. There were writers, who simply employed their initials or letters from their names, such as D.G.M. for the politician and bishop Ditlev Gothard Monrad (1811–87) or P.-M. for the pastor Jens Paludan-Müller (1813–99). One clever variant on this was employed by Bishop Jakob Peter Mynster (1775–1854), who was

known by the pseudonym Kts, which was formed from the middle letters from his first, middle and last names. Some pseudonyms were simply individual letters that did not immediately seem to have any further meaning, such as Y.Z. for the critic Nathan David (1793–1874). The young Kierkegaard employed the simple letter "A" as his pseudonym for his early article "Another Defense of Woman's Great Abilities"[15] and "B" for his two polemical articles against *Kjøbenhavnsposten*.[16] Variants on this were Greek letters, such as a capital delta Δ for Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791–1860) or ΨY for the litterat and critic Peder Hjort (1793–1871). Similarly, authors also made use of enigmatic numbers as pseudonyms, such as 219 for Fru Gyllembourg (1773–1856) or 2123 for Peder Hjort. More imaginative were of course fictional names such as Christen Trane, Thermophilos, Simplex Sinecura (all Heiberg), or Celestinus, Clara, Jota, Laertes, and Polonius (all Fru Gyllembourg).

It should also be noted that the use of pseudonyms extended beyond simply literary texts to include many different forms of writing. For example, many of Mynster's theological articles were published under his familiar pseudonym; likewise, many works commenting on the politics of the day were published under assumed names. Thus it would be a mistake to assume that pseudonyms were used exclusively in literary texts for the sake of some complex theory of aesthetics.

There were several different reasons, mostly rather banal ones, for why authors found it useful or convenient to conceal their identity or pretend to do so. One reason presumably had to do with fact that at the time Copenhagen was by no means a large city that could be compared with London, Berlin or Paris. Rather it still maintained an aspect of being a provincial marketplace with little by way of cosmopolitan pretensions.[17] This aspect was so pronounced that Johan Ludvig Heiberg publicly complained about it and made it a part of his program to cultivate his fellow citizens in order to raise them up to the level of culture and sophistication of the Parisians and Berliners.[18] In this context Heiberg comments on the effects of a small town in the literary world. This made polemics more complicated due to the fact that everyone was personally acquainted with everyone else. In a small town, a pseudonym was simply a useful tool to avoid the personal nature of some literary attacks. In this context the use of the pseudonym thus played a role in the highly polemical literary climate of the period. For unpleasant and acerbic polemics, the true identity of the author could be discreetly hidden behind a pseudonymously or anonymously published piece. While it was sometimes well known who the famous authors were who stood behind certain pseudonyms, critics were nonetheless obliged to keep up the façade and address their polemics to the pseudonym and not the actual author.

Another reason for the rampant use of pseudonyms had to do with the censorship laws and the ongoing battles about the freedom of the press. The Danish Royal house was deeply concerned about the events of the French Revolution spreading to the rest of the continent. As a result new censorship laws were introduced in order to prohibit the dissemination of seditious political opinions. These new laws unleashed a constant debate about freedom of speech that went on throughout the decades leading up to 1848. Journalists, editors, and owners of newspapers were particularly vulnerable to the government's persecutions since it was directly forbidden to print anything critical of the government.[19] As a result, a number of creative ways were invented to distance oneself from what one had published; this included having articles published anonymously or paying individuals to be proxy owners of newspapers so that those who were actually responsible could not be fined or imprisoned. In this context, the use of a pseudonym could prevent an author from being punished for writing something that was regarded as offensive or critical of the authorities. This was a fairly standard reason for the use of pseudonyms in this period, and it recalls the quite frequent use of them by authors of the eighteenth century when they were treating sensitive issues such as religion and politics.

Female authors represent a special case of the use of pseudonyms that was accompanied by a special set of reasons for doing so. In the wider European context one can mention figures such as Jane Austin whose *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) was signed merely "By a Lady." Her next work *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) was signed "By the Author of 'Sense and Sensibility,'" and then her next book after that, *Mansfield Park* (1814), was signed "By the Author of 'Sense and Sensibility' and 'Pride and Prejudice.'" In this way the readers knew that there was a single author responsible for these works without knowing who it was. This practice was followed in Denmark by Thomasine Gyllembourg.[20] Her "Story from Everyday Life" became a surprise success, and subsequently her works were signed "By the Author of 'A Story from Everyday Life.'" The reason why women of the period made use of pseudonyms was presumably the fact that such a vocation for women was not something that was universally accepted at the time. Thus, women writers were anxious to avoid attracting attention to themselves and tried to conceal their identity. Another reason was presumably that they felt that the fact that they were women would undermine the works that they were writing since some readers would be disinclined to take seriously a work penned by a woman. One solution to this was that some female writers used fictional names of men for their pseudonyms, for example, Charlotte Bronte (Currier Bell), Mary Anne Evans (George Eliot), and in Scandinavia, Victoria Bendictsson (Ernst Ahlgren), or in later times Karin Blixen (Isak Denison).

Thus, when the question of pseudonymity is seen in its historical context, it might appear at first glance that Kierkegaard was far from doing anything innovative or even particularly creative with his use of pseudonymous authors. He was instead simply following a quite well-established literary practice at the time. However, when one reviews these cases, it is difficult to escape the feeling that Kierkegaard's use of the pseudonyms was something rather different from the examples listed. His use of pseudonyms was not motivated by a desire to avoid political or religious persecution; indeed, his works were not controversial in such a way that he could have been subject to it. There is something far more subtle in Kierkegaard's employment of pseudonymous authors, and to understand this, one must look for his forerunners among the authors that he knew so well from the broad movement of German Romanticism.

4. The Use of Pseudonyms in German Romantic Literature and Its Critics

Many writers in the German literature of the day made use of pseudonyms and problematized the notion of the author in ways that inspired Kierkegaard's use. The *Auction Catalogue* evidences that Kierkegaard owned many of the works of these authors, and his works, such as *The Concept of Irony*, clearly show that he read them with great interest. He made extensive use of writers such as Achim von Arnim (1781–1831), Eichendorff (1788–1857), E.T.A. Hoffmann (1776–1822), Novalis (1772–1801), Jean Paul (1763–1825), Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), and Tieck (1773–1853). Moreover, he was familiar with the theoretical works of the leading authors on aesthetics and literary theory of the time such as Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), Heinrich Gustav Hotho (1802–73) and Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger (1780–1819).

One important influence for the German writers of the day (among many others, such as Kant's *Critique of Judgment*) was Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's (1714–62) conception of the author in his *Reflections on Poetry*, a work often hailed as the foundation of the field of aesthetics.[21] According to Baumgarten, the key is the distance between the author and his or her creation.[22] He draws an analogy between the divine creative practice and that of the artist: God creates a world, just as the writer creates a fictional world in a novel or a poem. There is thus a distance between Creator and Creation. So also there is a proper distance between the author and the work of art that must be observed. It was this question of distance that was a central point of discussion for the Romantics. One way to distance oneself as author

from one's work was by means of a pseudonym, but there were various other strategies that the Romantics experimented with as well. These included embedding stories within stories, or relegating the ostensible author to the role of an editor and thus ascribing the work to another author, or having the individual characters in the stories take over the authorial role, etc.

These discussions about the proper role of the author vis-à-vis his or her subject matter were not lost on the leading theorists of the Danish Golden Age.[23] It was argued that distance was the key since it was required for the author to control the interactions and collisions of the characters and the development of the plot. It was regarded as a great sin to be too close to the characters or events that one was portraying. This constituted a central element in the landmark cultural dispute between the Danish Romantic poet Adam Oehlenschläger (1779–1850) and his critic Johan Ludvig Heiberg.[24] According to Heiberg, Oehlenschläger was an "immediate" poet who placed no real distance between himself and what he was writing. As a result, his works often ended up being tedious and sentimental. By contrast, Oehlenschläger's great rival Jens Baggesen (1764–1826) had, according to Heiberg, achieved the requisite distance to the content of his works. The young Kierkegaard followed these discussions with avid interest, and it is no surprise that he uses these basic categories to evaluate other authors. For example, in *From the Papers of One Still Living*, he criticizes Hans Christian Andersen (1805–75) for not having sufficient distance. Instead, Andersen, according to Kierkegaard, just writes about himself by placing himself in the role of the protagonist. In the work under review, *Only a Fiddler*, Andersen uses his middle name "Christian" for that of the lead character, through whom he tells the story of his own difficulties in coming from the province and trying to make a name for himself in big city. Kierkegaard, following Heiberg, sees it as a great artistic weakness when an author is unable to create any distance between himself and his work. One of the key terms used to describe this distance was "irony," and these discussions clearly constituted the background for Kierkegaard's interest in this concept, which became the topic of his master's thesis.[25]

To be sure, the question of the use of pseudonyms and other distancing authorial strategies in the German literature of the day is a very complex one simply because there were so many different figures who were all working to develop their own innovative practices and techniques. Of course, not all of these can be seen as relevant for Kierkegaard. For example, Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg's use of the pseudonym "Novalis" is quite different from that of Kierkegaard's use. In its more banal explanation Hardenberg takes this from the for-

mer family name of his ancestors, "De Novali." More interestingly, however, he takes this pseudonym, meaning "clearer of new land" to refer to a more general cultural program that he proposes of a spiritualized Europe. Similarly, Johann Paul Friedrich Richter's use of the pseudonym "Jean Paul" was something quite different from Kierkegaard's practice. Richter's pen name was intended to associate him with his idol Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[26] Thus instead of choosing a name that had little or no predetermined meaning for the reader in the way Kierkegaard did, Richter chose one that was already rich with well-known associations. Kierkegaard's pseudonyms were suggestive but ultimately somewhat enigmatic, whereas the pseudonym "Jean Paul" is intended to have a determinate meaning. Moreover, the names "Novalis" and "Jean Paul" serve as authors for a number of different works, whereas Kierkegaard created a world with a number of different individual pseudonyms, each with their own texts and voices.

Despite the many differences, some of the German Romantic authors clearly paved the way for Kierkegaard by making use of different kinds of ploys and masks to distance themselves as authors from their works. One good example of this is E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Life and Opinions of Tomcat Murr* from 1819.[27] In his foreword to the book Hoffmann presents himself not as author but merely as editor. He explains that a friend asked him to help a great young writer to publish his book, and after agreeing to do so, Hoffmann found out that the author was a cat by the name of Murr. He nonetheless manages to convince the publisher to print the book, but then a further complication arises. The cat had used the torn up pages of another book, taken from his master's library, as paper for his own composition. But the printers, failing to recognize the problem, also printed parts of that text, a biography of one Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, interspersed in the story of the Murr the cat. Thus, Hoffmann as editor distances himself from the work by presenting it as the product of two ostensible authors, the cat and the biographer of Johannes Kreisler. Further distance (and confusion) is created by the intrusion of a number of typographical errors, which Hoffmann also notes in his foreword. These are often very odd and distort the original meaning. When reading Hoffmann's foreword it is difficult to avoid thinking of Victor Eremita who purports to publish a text by other authors that he by chance came into possession of.

Another example of this kind of strategy can be found in Clemens Brentano's (1778–1842) novel, *Godwi oder Das steinerne Bild der Mutter*.[28] This work appeared under the pseudonym "Maria," but yet the matter is far from straightforward since this figure dies in the course of the novel and another figures takes up the narrative of the story. Later, yet another fictional character writes letters to Brentano,

by means of which the story is further conveyed. Here one can see a conscious playing with different levels of text and different roles of the author in a very convoluted manner that reminds one of the kinds of strategies that Kierkegaard uses to distance himself from the content of his texts, partly by means of the pseudonyms but also partly by other rhetorical means.

5. Kierkegaard's Parallel Authorship

Kierkegaard did not simply casually take up the habit of using pseudonyms as his contemporaries did. It is something that he clearly thought carefully about. His use of them was clearly to some extent planned and considered; but the question remains to what degree. According to the view that wants to see the pseudonyms as essential for the interpretation of Kierkegaard, his use of them is meticulously planned and conceived. On this account, at some point after he completed his master's thesis *The Concept of Irony*, he worked out the idea for a general strategy for his authorship. This is what he later refers to as the "comprehensive plan in the entire production."[29] (Perhaps this idea was planned when he was in Berlin in 1841–42 after completing his degree and contemplating his future. At this time he was working on his first pseudonymous book, *Either/Or*.)

But when Kierkegaard reflects upon this later in his *The Point of View for My Work as an Author* and *On My Work as an Author*, he clearly does not want to take credit for this plan. Rather he ascribes the responsibility for it to divine "governance" steering his writings in a special way in accordance with a plan that he himself did not realize. Kierkegaard explains that the divine plan was not to create a single authorship but rather two different authorships that would run parallel to one another. One of the strands would be a religious authorship, consisting in edifying discourses and published in his own name. The other one would consist of more aesthetic or philosophical works published under a series of pseudonyms. The religious authorship is intended to reach a broad reading public and is designed to be read without great difficulty. By contrast, the pseudonymous authorship is considerably more complex and at times has a more academic look to it. In the religious authorship Kierkegaard employs direct communication with his reader, whereas in the pseudonyms, he uses what he calls "indirect communication." With respect to content, the two authorships treat many of the same issues, but in different way in accordance with the different genres and styles. Thus, for each edifying work there is ideally supposed to be a corresponding pseudonymous work that appears at the same time and treats the same constellation of issues.

Kierkegaard describes this parallelism in his work up until 1846 in these terms: "*Two Edifying Discourses* (1843) is in fact concurrent with *Either/Or*. And in order to safeguard this concurrence of the directly religious, each pseudonymous work was accompanied concurrently by a little collection of 'edifying discourses'—until the *Concluding Postscript* appeared."[30] When he writes this in 1848 it is clear that Kierkegaard did not see himself as carefully making this plan at the beginning, back in 1842 or 1843. Rather it is something that gradually emerged in the course of time in a way that he only retrospectively became aware of.

In this scheme Kierkegaard regards the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* as occupying a special place. He refers to the *Postscript* explicitly as "the turning point" in his work.[31] His early works *From the Papers of One Still Living* and *The Concept of Irony* do not figure in his account. Instead he claims that his real authorship began with the publication of his first pseudonymous book *Either/Or*. After this famous work there followed a number of pseudonymous texts: *Repetition*; *Fear and Trembling*; *Philosophical Fragments*; *The Concept of Anxiety*; *Prefaces*; and *Stages on Life's Way*. These works finally culminate in the *Postscript* in 1846.

The special role of the *Postscript* is apparently that it is intended to bring together the two strands of the authorship. Kierkegaard scholars have often noted that the *Postscript* contains many elements from the earlier works. An attractive text to use in the classroom, it seems to synthesize in a compact manner much of what had been said before at greater length. But Kierkegaard seems to mean more than just this when he refers to the special role of this work. He writes, "The first division of books is aesthetic writing; the last division of books is exclusively religious writing—between these lies the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* as *the turning point*" (PV 31; SV1 13, 523). One important point is that the there are elements of the *Postscript* which would clearly seem to place it under the rubric of pseudonymous works but others that seem to draw away the veil of the pseudonym.

There is some degree of speculation about what biographical motivations Kierkegaard might have had to lead him to this understanding of his authorship. Perhaps the most convincing is his obsession with the idea that he would die in 1846 after he reached the age of 33.[32] Since he was convinced that he would die, he conceived of the *Postscript* to be his final, culminating written statement to the world. For this reason he uses it to sum up the entirety of his authorship up to that point. It is "concluding" not just in the sense that it is the sequel to the *Philosophical Fragments* but in the broader sense that it is the conclusion of his authorship as a whole. This conviction is presumably what led him to reveal his authorship of the various pseudonymous works that he had

written previously. He does this in dramatic fashion at the end of the work, but in the body of the text, he has carefully prepared the ground by having his pseudonymous author Johannes Climacus review his other pseudonymous works in the section "A Glance at a Contemporary Effort in Danish Literature."

This scheme clearly shows that Kierkegaard believed that governance was guiding his hand to develop a very elaborate publication strategy that involved a series of pseudonymous writings that went well beyond the old custom of publishing individual texts pseudonymously. Only when he was convinced that his death was immanent did he decide to reveal himself as the author responsible for the various pseudonymous works.

6. Kierkegaard's "A First and Last Explanation"

In discussions of Kierkegaard's own understanding of his use of the pseudonyms, scholars often point to the text "A First and Last Explanation," which is a short statement that Kierkegaard appended on unnumbered pages at the end of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*.[33] Here, somewhat surprisingly he reveals that he, Søren Kierkegaard, is the author behind the various pseudonymous writings. This is surprising given the great care that he had taken up until that point not to disclose this fact. As noted, in the work itself Kierkegaard keeps up the façade of the pseudonyms as he has his pseudonymous author go through and review his previous pseudonymous works. In "A First and Last Explanation" Kierkegaard declares,

> For the sake of form and order, I hereby acknowledge, something that really can scarcely be of interest to anyone to *know*, that I am, as is said, the author of *Either/Or* (Victor Eremita), Copenhagen, February 1843; *Fear and Trembling* (Johannes de silentio), 1843; *Repetition* (Constantin Constantius), 1843; *The Concept of Anxiety* (Vigilius Hauniensis), 1844; *Prefaces* (Nicolaus Notabene), 1844; *Philosophical Fragments* (Johannes Climacus), 1844; *Stages on Life's Way* (Hilarius Bookbinder—William Afham, the Judge, Frater Taciturnus), 1845; *Concluding Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (Johannes Climacus), 1846, an article in *Fædrelandet*, no. 1168, 1843 (Victor Eremita); two articles in *Fædrelandet*, January 1846 (Frater Taciturnus).[34]

While he openly acknowledges that he is the author of these works, which most people probably knew anyway, he then goes on to distance himself from them in an interesting way. He claims, "My pseudonymity or polyonymity has not had an accidental basis in my *person* . . . but an *essential* basis in the production itself" (CUP 1, 625; SKS 7, 569). He thus clearly indicates that his use of the pseudonyms was not merely an *ad hoc* invention at the spur of the moment that he made use of as

the occasion presented itself. Rather it is a part of a much larger plan for his authorship in general. The pseudonyms have some substantive role to play in this literary production.

He then insists that the individual pseudonymous authors should be regarded as autonomous and not associated with himself as author:

> What has been written, then, is mine, but only insofar as I, by means of audible lines, have placed the life-view of the creating, poetically actual individual in his mouth . . . . That is, I am impersonally or personally in the third person a *souffleur* [prompter] who has poetically produced the authors, whose prefaces in turn are their productions, as their *names* are also. Thus in the pseudonymous books there is not a single word by me. (CUP 1, 625f.; SKS 7, 569f.)

This would seem to imply that Kierkegaard is simply using the different pseudonymous authors to set up specific world-views that are instructive in various ways. But what is interesting is that he disowns any association with them and claims that his own views are not present there at all. This is the rather counterintuitive implication that most scholars have had a difficult time accepting. But by making this claim, Kierkegaard is perfectly in line with the aforementioned current literary theory of the day, according to which the author must distance himself from his works. Here, by means of the pseudonyms, Kierkegaard claims to have followed this dogma, indeed, to have done so to such an extent that nothing of himself can be found in these works.

Foreshadowing the well-known theory of the death of the author, he claims that he as writer has no more knowledge or insight into these works than anyone else. He is in exactly the same position towards them as any other reader: "I have no opinion about them except as a third party, no knowledge of their meaning except as a reader, not the remotest private relation to them" (CUP 1, 626; SKS 7, 570). As author, he has no privileged position vis-à-vis his own text. His view is simply one of a plurality of interpretations with no end.

Given this, he enjoins his reader to ascribe to the pseudonyms and not to himself whatever views they find in these works: "Therefore, if it should occur to anyone to want to quote a particular passage from the books, it is my wish, my prayer, that he will do me the kindness of citing the respective pseudonymous authors' name, not mine" (CUP 1, 627; SKS 7, 571). While it has taken a long time in the secondary literature, it can be said that today scholars generally heed Kierkegaard's request and refer to the individual pseudonyms when discussing his works. At Kierkegaard conferences and seminars one often hears the names of Johannes Climacus or Johannes de Silentio mentioned as often as that of Søren Kierkegaard. In this sense it would seem that Poole and the advocates of the importance of the pseudonyms have won the day.

7. Philological Kierkegaard Scholarship

It should be noted that Kierkegaard in fact does take great care to keep up the appearances of the pseudonymous authors. For example, when Heiberg mentioned *Either/Or* in a critical fashion in a review article in his journal *Intelligensblade*,[35] Kierkegaard responded with the article, "A Word of Thanks to Professor Heiberg."[36] Instead of signing this article with his own name, Kierkegaard responds in the name of his pseudonymous editor Victor Eremita. Similarly, in connection with the polemic with *The Corsair*, when *Stages on Life's Way* was being criticized, Kierkegaard responded with articles signed by the editor of that work, "Frater Taciturnus."[37]

Modern Kierkegaard scholarship has much to thank Poole and the postmodern interpretations for. They have made scholars and general readers more sensitive to Kierkegaard's pseudonyms than has ever been the case before. However, one might argue that the case has been overstated. The problem is that they have ascribed to Kierkegaard a much more carefully planned and intentional use of the pseudonyms than is really the case. When one looks more closely at the actual composition and publication of the texts, it becomes clear that this does not follow any meticulously planned strategy. Rather, what emerges is a much more *ad hoc* and accidental development than one might think. There are a number of texts where this is evident.

The Concept of Anxiety represents a good example.[38] This text is ostensibly written by Vigilius Haufniensis, and according to the view forwarded by Poole and others, this means that this was a part of Kierkegaard's carefully conceived plan. The entire text should then represent a single world-view or perspective that is attributed to Vigilius Haufniensis, and the person Søren Kierkegaard has nothing to do with it. But a closer examination of the matter shows that the matter is considerably more complicated than this. In fact, Kierkegaard wrote the work under the idea that it would be a signed text, and only at the last minute did he change his mind and add the pseudonymous author. In the various drafts of the text which are extant, Kierkegaard's own name figures on the title page as the author. It was only in the final version, the so-called "clean copy" that Kierkegaard made the change, by cutting off the bottom of the page under the word "by," thus cutting out his own name. Then he added on the right side of the page the name of his new pseudonym, Vigilius Haufniensis. This was something that happened at the last minute, right before he submitted the clean copy to the printer. Presumably at the same time, he made a similar change to the motto that followed the title page of the text, by crossing

out his own initials and replacing them with the name Vigilius Haufniensis.

These quick changes were apparently made in haste and at the last minute. But given this, it was impossible for Kierkegaard to go back and revise the entire work in accordance with the new idea that it should be attributed to a pseudonymous author and not to himself. Naturally enough there were elements in the text that referred to himself as author since this was how it had been conceived all along, but when he decided to change the authorship to the pseudonym, he apparently forgot this. In one passage he refers to his presence at the famous lectures by Schelling that he attended in Berlin in 1841–42.[39] This is clearly a self-reference and only makes sense as such, but it seems somewhat odd when ascribed to a pseudonymous author, especially if that author is not supposed to have anything at all to do with Kierkegaard himself.

Another example of the same confusion concerns the dedication to the work that appears on the page after the aforementioned motto. Kierkegaard dedicates the work to "the late Professor Poul Martin Møller," who had died in 1838 (SKS 4, 311; CA 5). This is not a simple, neutral one-line dedication, but it is rather a deeply personal statement of a more intimate relation with the man whom he regarded for a time as a kind of mentor. This dedication only makes sense as Kierkegaard's own personal expression of friendship, but it strikes one as quite odd coming from the pen of a pseudonymous author. This is made even more clear when one considers how rarely Kierkegaard dedicates his works to anyone, and when he does so, the dedications are to people who stand or once stood in a close personal relation to him.

From these examples, it seems clear that it is difficult to see how the strategy of pseudonymous writings, ascribed to Kierkegaard, really makes sense in the case of *The Concept of Anxiety*. Since he originally intended the work to be signed and not pseudonymous, but changed his mind about it at the last minute, leaving behind traces of the original conception, this would seem to imply that the line separating Kierkegaard and his pseudonymous author is in fact a very thin one indeed. These examples should make one critical about views that see Kierkegaard's plan for his authorship as being carefully and meticulously worked out. This evidences the fact that his plan was not so fixed and consistently developed as one might be led to believe. Instead, there is a large degree of fluidity and spontaneity in his decisions about how to frame the individual texts.

One might argue that *The Concept of Anxiety* simply presents an anomalous case, but it is not enough to discredit the clear general tendency in Kierkegaard's works and intentions. But this argument is

problematic since the story of the genesis of *The Concept of Anxiety* is by no means unique or anomalous in Kierkegaard's authorship. On the contrary, a similar story can be told about *Philosophical Fragments*.[40] Like *The Concept of Anxiety*, this book was originally written with the idea that it would be a signed and not a pseudonymous text. On the title page of the extant clean copy of the *Fragments* Kierkegaard's name is written as the author. Once again he decided, apparently at the last minute, to make a change. This time he added the name Johannes Climacus as the pseudonymous author, while he moved his own name from author to editor of the work. The status of Kierkegaard as editor poses another puzzling problem in relation to pseudonymity, but this has not attracted attention in the literature. In any case, it is clear that in this case as well Kierkegaard did not carefully and meticulously plan the work as a pseudonymous one from the start with all that implies. This would seem to suggest that one should not ascribe to the pseudonym too much importance since the work was clearly originally conceived and indeed developed along quite different lines.

Another text whose genesis poses problems with regard to the pseudonym is *Prefaces*.[41] This book appeared under the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene, and, according to Poole and the advocates of his view, this would mean that the work is intended to represent a whole that reflects the view of this fictional figure. At first glance, this might appear to have a degree of plausibility since much of the text is dedicated to a humorous polemic again Johan Ludvig Heiberg, and this seems to give the work a sense of unity and purpose. However, a closer examination of the history of the composition of this text quickly undermines this view. As it turns out, the text itself never was an organic whole; rather, it is an aggregate of a number of shorter texts that Kierkegaard had written over the course of the years and for one reason or another never published. These texts were written at different times and for different purposes, with no real connection among them. Only at a very late stage did it occur to Kierkegaard to make use of these different texts by bringing them together in *Prefaces*. In order to explain the rather odd nature of this *ad hoc* collection of texts, he hit upon the idea of the story of Nicolaus Notabene, whose wife had forbidden him from writing books, and so instead he wrote prefaces to books. This humorous story allows Kierkegaard to bring together texts that originally had no connection with one another.

But this situation poses puzzling questions about the pseudonyms and Nicolaus Notabene in particular. The text that ended up being Preface II was a book review that Kierkegaard wrote of Christian Winther's *Four Novels*.[42] Like his earlier book review, *From the Papers of One Still Living*, and his later one, *A Literary Review of Two Ages*,

this was also conceived to be a signed text. But then, after the text had been written and shelved for awhile, Kierkegaard decided to use it in *Prefaces*. What is striking here is that Kierkegaard can simply make this move and use a signed text without further ado in a new context, where it appears as a pseudonymous text. This again seems to suggest that the pseudonym is not a carefully crafted figure with his own style, position and world-view, but rather is an *ad hoc* construct. It also suggests once again that the distance between Kierkegaard and his pseudonym in this case is not very far.

Preface VII presents another complex problem for understanding the role and nature of the pseudonyms. Kierkegaard first wrote this text to be the preface to *The Concept of Anxiety*. After some deliberating he decided to remove it and wrote up an entirely new one, which ended up being the final version published in that work. Then with this unused preface in hand, Kierkegaard hit upon his idea for a humorous book of prefaces. As was seen above, *The Concept of Anxiety* was originally conceived to be a signed text, and thus this draft of the preface was also not intended to be pseudonymous. Here again we have a case of a signed work without further ado being transferred into a different text and assuming a pseudonymous status. The author of the same text goes from being Søren Kierkegaard to being Nicolaus Notabene without any substantial changes being made to the content of the text itself. This would seem to raise the question of why it is of absolutely tantamount importance to ascribe Prefaces to Nicolaus Notabene and not to Kierkegaard himself. Kierkegaard's free use of the material from very different contexts seems to indicate that he has not worked with the idea of each individual pseudonym as intensively as some commentators would have one believe.

Another problematic example comes from Preface VIII, where Kierkegaard ostensibly has Nicolaus Notabene write, "any younger person would feel flattered by the mere thought of the literary prestige of having the honor of being a contributor to Prof. Heiberg's journal, which no young person understands this better than I, who still am often reminded of how once at the time the youthful mind felt intoxicated by daring to believe that a contribution would not be rejected."[43] This is clearly an autobiographical reference. As noted above, as a student Kierkegaard published four articles in Heiberg's *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*.[44] Moreover, he submitted his book review of Hans Christian Andersen's *Only a Fiddler* to Heiberg's journal *Perseus*, and when it was rejected Kierkegaard published it as an independent monograph as *From the Papers of One Still Living*. Thus the "I" in the passage quoted above clearly refers to Kierkegaard himself and his own experiences as

a "young person" in awe of the power and influence of Heiberg's journal. This autobiographical reference hardly makes sense when it is applied to the pseudonym Nicolaus Notabene.

This is not the only problem in Preface VIII. Only shortly after the passage quoted above, Nicolaus Notabene reflects on the possibilities of his philosophical journal succeeding, when that of Heiberg failed. There one reads, "The prospects, then, are not the best; my position in no way advantageous. I am not Prof. Heiberg. Indeed, not being Prof. Heiberg, I am even less than that, I am only N.N."[45] With this Kierkegaard makes a joke, since the initials N.N. ostensibly stand for the work's pseudonymous Nicolaus Notabene. But yet these same initials were at the time a common abbreviation for the Latin expression *nomen nescio* or "I do not know the name," which was often used in different instances, for example, where a work was authored anonymously. Even though this only appears shortly after the apparently autobiographical passage quoted in the previous paragraph, Kierkegaard seems here to want to point out and emphasize the pseudonym with the word play. So here there is a degree of confusion about the relation between Kierkegaard and Nicolaus Notabene. The matter reaches utter confusion when one learns that in the clean copy of the manuscript, Kierkegaard wrote not "N.N." but rather his own name, "Mag. Kierkegaard" (P supp. 120; PP V B 96.18), which he only changed at the last minute.

Another example of a case of confusion between signed and pseudonymous texts can be found in *The Book on Adler*. This is a text that Kierkegaard continued to return to and rework over a fairly long period of time without ever publishing it. The work is constructed as a kind of extended book review of four books by Danish pastor Adolph Peter Adler (1812–69). As Kierkegaard worked on his manuscript, he went back and forth about whether or not it should be a signed or a pseudonymous book. In its first version at the beginning of 1847 Kierkegaard's own name appears as the author on the title page. This version bears the title under which we know the work today: *The Book on Adler*. Shortly thereafter he changed his mind and modified the intended title of the work to read: *The Religious Confusion of the Present Age Illustrated by Mag. Adler as a Phenomenon, a Mimic Monograph*, but this time he attributes the work to Johannes Climacus, the well-known pseudonym from *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Postscript*, and relegated himself to the role of editor.[46] However, in 1848, Kierkegaard decided to change the title again—this time, to *A Cycle of Ethical-Religious Essays*—and once again to make it a signed work, thus reinstating his own name as the author. In other drafts, one

can see Kierkegaard constantly playing with possible pseudonyms for the work: “Petrus Minor,” “Thomas Minor,” “Vincentius Minor,” “Ataraxius Minor” (PP VIII-2 B 26 [NB]) in addition to the more familiar “Johannes Climacus” (A supp. 224; PP VIII-2, B 24; A supp. 223; PP VIII-2, B 21). The fact that Kierkegaard constantly wavered on the issue of whether or not this text should be a pseudonymous work again raises the question about how seriously this should be taken and to what degree the intended pseudonymous author in fact differs from his own views.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that Kierkegaard did ultimately publish a part of the *Book on Adler*, namely, the section entitled, “On the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle,” in *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* from 1849 under the pseudonym H.H. Here we have yet another example of a text that Kierkegaard has extracted from a specific context and published a rather different one with a different pseudonym. Given this, it is difficult to know how much to make of the fact that *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* is ostensibly penned by one H.H.

One can also say that with respect to content, it is somewhat problematic to keep the pseudonyms strictly separate. One of the basic premises of those who wish to argue for the identity and integrity of the individual pseudonyms is that they each represent distinct voices, arguments and standpoints. According to this view, Kierkegaard’s goal is to create a deafening polyphony of voices that undermines all possible certainty about a final truth or a definitive position. But a closer examination of the authorship shows that this is simply not the case. On the contrary, throughout different pseudonymous works there are many repetitions and points of overlap. Indeed, several different pseudonyms repeat the same handful of criticisms and formulations. One famous example of this is the repeated charge that Hegel’s pretentious system, while claiming completion, in fact, lacks an ethics. According to the advocates of the pseudonyms, we should expect this charge to appear and be developed in one of the works of one of the particularly philosophical pseudonyms. But this is not the case. On the contrary, the same charge can be found in the works of several different pseudonyms, appearing in *Fear and Trembling*;[47] *Stages on Life’s Way*;[48] the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (SKS 7, 115, 116, 125f., 270n., 279n.; CUP 1, 119, 121, 133f., 296n., 307n.), and also in the journals and papers.[49] If the point of the grand plan for the authorship is that we as readers are supposed to be very careful to distinguish the individual pseudonyms and insist on keeping them separate from one another,

why then would Kierkegaard have them advocate the same criticism, often with virtually the identical formulation? This clearly speaks against the pseudonyms as being entirely discrete entities.

Another example of this same tendency can be found in Kierkegaard's frequent references to the section "The Good and Conscience" from *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. He begins by quoting from this text in his own name in his master's thesis, *The Concept of Irony*, from 1841.[50] Then two years later he refers to it again under the guise of Johannes de Silentio at the beginning of the first "Problema" in *Fear and Trembling*.[51] In 1847 he refers to the same idea without mentioning Hegel's text explicitly in his *Journal NB2* (SKS 20, 207, NB2:166; JP 2, 1613). Finally, in 1850 he refers to it again as Anti-Climacus in *Practice in Christianity*.[52] While there are some differences in his use of this text by Hegel, there are also substantial points of continuity that run through these different texts, some of which bear Kierkegaard's own name and some of which purport to be the work of pseudonymous authors. Indeed, despite the differences in pseudonyms and time periods, the point that he wants to make with this reference is by and large the same. One can find many examples of this kind of repetition through the pseudonymous works, and I have simply taken a few convenient examples from my own area of research.

These examples show a degree of consistency in positions and continuity in style that leads the reader involuntarily to attribute them to Kierkegaard himself. To ascribe them to a specific pseudonym would seem somewhat arbitrary given that they appear in the works of different pseudonyms. The consistency in these passages seems to suggest that the pseudonyms are a somewhat artificial invention that does not really necessarily reflect any substantial difference in content. This would seem to imply that to insist on the autonomy and distinctness of the individual pseudonyms is somewhat misguided, or at a minimum such an approach has severe limitations and cannot be regarded as the ultimate key to the interpretation of Kierkegaard's complex authorship as a whole. While Poole is vehement about not allowing people to use passages from one text to illuminate another, insisting that each text be treated as its own isolated atomic unit, there are many cases where such comparisons can be illuminating since Kierkegaard is in effect making the same point or elaborating it in a slightly different way. In such cases it would seem counterproductive to insist on the discreteness of the individual pseudonyms.

8.

It is difficult to know what ultimately one should conclude about Kierkegaard's use of the pseudonyms. But one thing seems clear: the two extreme views seem to miss something. On the one hand, it is problematic to simply ignore Kierkegaard's use of the pseudonyms entirely, as the earlier research tended to, and to conflate everything with his own opinions and views since he clearly had something in mind with them and was clearly inspired by the German Romantic writers and the strategies that they developed to distance themselves from their writing. On the other hand, it would be naïve to ascribe to Kierkegaard a carefully worked out plan for the authorship since the philological evidence presents a much less meticulously planned view than what Poole and other interpreters wish to convey. Given that Kierkegaard only decided to make some of the works pseudonymous at the last minute, it is difficult to see how they can be thought of as wholly presenting the views of the fictional author. Moreover, given that Kierkegaard could so easily simply replace his own name with that of a pseudonym seems to suggest that the distance between the views of the pseudonym and his own is not ultimately very great. Thus, while one should of course take into account that a given work is written by a pseudonym, this cannot be regarded as the hidden key that unlocks all of the secrets of Kierkegaard's writings. It is, like so many others, one aspect of a very complicated authorship.

In the end it would seem that the true test of the importance of the pseudonyms lies in what the interpreter can manage to make out of them. In other words, if by keeping the pseudonyms apart, the interpreter is led to a particularly insightful and interesting reading of the texts that reveals aspects that previous interpretations had overlooked, then this would be the strongest possible case that one could make for the importance of the pseudonyms. But if, by contrast, the only point that comes out of an interpretation that insists on separating the pseudonyms is a flat, old-fashioned relativism that makes the texts less instead of more interesting, then it is not clear that anything substantial is really won by taking this interpretative approach. If in the end Kierkegaard's only real point in using the pseudonyms is simply to make fun of his foundationalist readers, then this is hardly a message that does justice to the richness, creativity, and depth of his authorship.

NOTES

Parts of this article were originally delivered as a paper on December 8, 2009, at the Seminar, "Skriva som en Annan: ett symposium om litteraturens pseudonymer," at the University of Stockholm. I would like to thank my gracious hosts on that occasion: Ulf Olsson and Jesper Olsson. I would also like to thank Brian Söderquist and Markus Kleinert for their useful insights and suggestions for this article.

1. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. x.
2. See, for example, Martin J. Matustík and Merold Westphal, eds., *Kierkegaard and Post/Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).
3. Roger Poole, *Kierkegaard: The Indirect Communication* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993); henceforth KI, followed by page number.
4. Clair's book, *Pseudonymie et paradoxe: La pensée dialectique de Kierkegaard* (Paris: Vrin, 1976), can be seen in many ways as the forerunner of Roger Poole's work. Clair wants to maintain that there is some kind of unity throughout all the pseudonymous writings, yet that each work has its own specific individuality that needs to be respected (ibid., pp. 22, 23). This seems in some ways to square better with what Kierkegaard says in *The Point of View*, when he characterizes the pseudonymous writings as one half of his authorship. This seems to imply a kind of unity with regard to form or methodology.
5. Jan Holmgaard, *En ironisk historia* (Stockholm: Aiolos, 2003).
6. See, for example, Jacob Bøggild, *Ironiens Tænker: Tænkningens Ironi. Kierkegaard læst retorisk* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2002).
7. Sylviane Agacinski, *Aparte: conceptions et morts de Søren Kierkegaard* (Paris: Aubier, 1977); *Aparte: Conceptions and Deaths of Soren Kierkegaard*, trans. Kevin Newmark (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1988).
8. Louis Mackey, *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971).
9. Lars Bejerholm, *Meddelelsens dialektik: Studier i Søren Kierkegaards teorier om språk kommunikation och pseudonymitet* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1962), esp. pp. 211–42.
10. See Roger Poole, "Towards a Theory of Responsible Reading: How to Read and Why," in *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2002*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Hermann Deuser (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002), pp. 413ff.; henceforth RR, followed by page number; "The Unknown Kierkegaard: Twentieth-Century Receptions," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, ed. Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 58–66.

11. See Ernst Behler, "Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony* with Constant Reference to Romanticism," in *Kierkegaard Revisited*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn and Jon Stewart (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), pp. 13–33.
12. See, for example, Poole, "The Unknown Kierkegaard," pp. 62f.
13. Helle Møller Jensen has demonstrated how easy it is to construct dialogues based on Kierkegaard's texts. See her article "Freeze! Hold It Right There," in *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2002*, pp. 223–39.
14. Holger Ehrencron-Müller's *Anonym- og pseudonym-lexikon, for Danmark og Island til 1920 og Norge til 1814* (Copenhagen: H. Hagerup, 1940); Uffe Andreasen, "Pseudonymliste," in vol. 4 of *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post*, ed. Uffe Andreasen (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Boghandel A/S, 1984), pp. 600–1.
15. Søren Kierkegaard ("A"), "Ogsaa et Forsvar for Qvindens høie Anlæg," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post, Interimsblad* 34 (1834), pp. 142–3; translated into English as "Another Defense of Woman's Great Abilities," in *Early Polemical Writings*, trans. Julia Watkin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 3–5.
16. Søren Kierkegaard ("B"), "*Kjøbenhavnspostens* Morgenbetragtninger i Nr. 43," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post, Interimsblad* 66 (1836), pp. 309–11; translated into English as "The Morning Observations in *Kjøbenhavnsposten* no. 43," in *Early Polemical Writings*, pp. 6–11; "Om *Fædrelandets* Polemik I," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post, Interimsblad* 82 (1836), pp. 333–6; "Om *Fædrelandets* Polemik II," *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post, Interimsblad* 83 (1836), pp. 337–8; translated as "On the Polemic of *Fædrelandet*," in *Early Polemical Writings*, pp. 12–23.
17. See George Pattison, *"Poor Paris!" Kierkegaard's Critique of the Spectacular City* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999).
18. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Om den i det offentlige Liv herskende Tone," in *Kjøbenhavns flyvende Post* 86 (1828), pp. 1–2; reprinted in vol. 8 of Heiberg's *Prosaiske Skrifter* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1862), p. 452. "It is well-known that in a good many respects our good Copenhagen answers poorly to the concept of a large and populous capital city. Daily we are made the subject of laughter among foreigners, who look with amazement at how we here are all birds of the same feather, where everyone knows everyone else, to the extent that it is even fashionable to call strangers, persons quite unknown to one, gentlemen and ladies alike, by their first names."
19. For accounts of this see, for example, Christian Kirchhoff-Larsen, *Den danske presses historie*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Berlingske, 1942–62); Jette D. Søllinge and Niels Thomsen, *De danske aviser 1634–1989*, 3 vols. (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 1988–91); Harald Jørgensen, *Trykkefrihedsspørgsmaalet i Danmark 1799–1848: Et Bidrag til en Karakteristik af den danske Enevælde i Frederik VI's og Christian VIII's Tid* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1944); Andrea Scaramuccia, "Jens Finsteen Giødwad: An Amiable Friend and a Despicable Journalist," in *Philosophy, Politics and Social Theory*, pt. 1 of *Kierkegaard and his Danish*

Contemporaries, vol. 7 of *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 13–34; and Julie K. Allen, "Orla Lehmann: Kierkegaard's Political Alter-Ego," in *Philosophy, Politics, and Social Theory*, pp. 85–100.

20. See the useful lists of pseudonyms for Danish women writers of Kierkegaard's time in Lise Busk-Jensen's *Romantikkens Forfatterinder*, 3 vols. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 2009), vol. 3, pp. 1484–8.

21. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (Halle: Grunert, 1735); translated into English as *Reflections on Poetry*, trans. Karl Aschenbrenner and William B. Holther (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954.)

22. See ibid., §68.

23. See K. Brian Söderquist, *The Isolated Self: Truth and Untruth in Søren Kierkegaard's "On the Concept of Irony"* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 2007), pp. 177–84.

24. See Tonny Aagaard Olesen, "Heiberg's Initial Approach: The Prelude to his Critical Breakthrough," in *Johan Ludvig Heiberg: Philosopher, Littérateur, Dramaturge, and Political Thinker*, ed. Jon Stewart (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008), pp. 211–45. See also his "Heiberg's Critical Breakthrough in 1828: A Historical Introduction," in *Johan Ludvig Heiberg*, pp. 247–307.

25. See Soderquist, *The Isolated Self*, pp. 177–81.

26. See Markus Kleinert, "Jean Paul: Apparent and Hidden Relation between Kierkegaard and Jean Paul," in *Literature and Aesthetics*, pt. 3 of *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, vol. 6 of *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources*, ed. Jon Stewart (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 155–70.

27. For the connection between E.T.A. Hoffmann and Kierkegaard, see Judit Bartha, "E.T.A. Hoffmann: A Source for Kierkegaard's Conceptions of Authorship, Poetic-Artistic Existence, Irony and Humor," in *Kierkegaard and his German Contemporaries*, pp. 115–35. See also Stefan Egenberger, "The Poetic Representation of the Religious in Kierkegaard's *Postscript*: Climacus's Humoristic Style against the Backdrop of E.T.A. Hoffmann's Understanding of Humor," *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2005*, ed. K. Brian Soderquist, Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, and Hermann Deuser (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 113–36.

28. Clemens Brentano, *Godwi oder Das steinerne Bild der Mutter: Ein verwilderter Roman*, 2 vols. (Bremen: Friedrich Wilmans, 1800–1).

29. Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967–78), vol. 6, n. 6346; henceforth JP, followed by volume and entry number; and Søren Kierkegaard, *Journalerne*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Jette Knudsen, and Johnny Kondrup, vol. 21 of *Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Gad, 2003), p. 276, NB10:38; henceforth SKS, followed by volume, page, and, where relevant, entry number.

30. SKS 13, 14; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 8; trans mod.; henceforth PV, followed by page number.

31. PV 55; Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Værker*, ed. Anders Bjørn Drachmann, Johan Ludvig Heiberg, and Hans Ostenfeldt Lange (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1901–6), vol. 13, p. 31; henceforth SV1, followed by volume and page number. See also PV 31; SV1 13, 523; and SKS 21, 278, NB10:40.

32. SKS 20, 122f., NB:210: "It is strange that I have become 34 years old. It's wholly unfathomable; I was so sure that I would die before that birthday or on it that I could really be tempted to assume that my birthday has been recorded wrong." See also Hans Brøchner's recollections of Kierkegaard: "K[ierkegaard] once told me—it occurs to me in referring to his age—that as a young man he had for many years had the firm conviction that he would die when he reached the age of thirty-three. (Was it Jesus' age which also was to be the norm for Jesus' imitator?) This belief was so ingrained in him that when he did reach this age, he even checked in the parish records to see if it really were true; that was how difficult it was for him to believe it" (cited in *Encounters with Kierkegaard: A Life as Seen By His Contemporaries*, trans. and ed. Bruce H. Kirmmse [Princeton: Princeton University Press 1996], p. 240).

33. See Finn Gredal Jensen and Kim Ravn, "The Genesis of 'A First and Last Explanation,'" *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2003*, ed. Hermann Deuser, Christian Fink Tolstrup, and Jon Stewart (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), pp. 419–52.

34. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to* Philosophical Fragments, 2 vols., trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), vol. 1, p. 625; henceforth CUP, followed by volume and page number; SKS 7, 569.

35. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, "Litterær Vintersæd," *Intelligensblade* 2:24 (1843), pp. 285–92.

36. In SKS 14, 55–7; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Corsair Affair: Articles Related to the Writings*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 17–21; henceforth COR, followed by page number.

37. SKS 14, 79–84; Søren Kierkegaard, "The Activity of a Travelling Esthetician and How He Still Happened to Pay for the Dinner," in COR 38–46; and SKS 14, 87–9; "The Dialectical Result of a Literary Police Action," in COR 47–50.

38. Søren Bruun, "Tekstredegørelse" to *Begrebet Angest* in SKS 4, 307–39. See also Søren Bruun, "The Genesis of *The Concept of Anxiety*," in *Kierkegaard Studies Yearbook 2001*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Hermann Deuser, and Jon Stewart (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), pp. 1–14.

39. SKS 4, 364n; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*, trans. Reidar Thomte in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 59n.; henceforth CA, followed by page number. See also SKS 4, 328n.; CA 21fn.

40. Jette Knudsen and Johnny Kondrup, "Tekstredegørelse" to *Philosophiske Smuler*, in SKS 4, 171–96, esp. 192–3.

41. See Johnny Kondrup and Kim Ravn, "Tekstredegørelse" to *Forord*, in SKS 4, §3, "Tilblivelseshistorie," 542–64.

42. I.e., Christian Winther, *Fire Noveller* (Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzel, 1843). See Søren Kierkegaard, *Papirer*, 16 vols., ed. P.A. Heiberg, V. Kuhr and E. Torsting (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1909–48; supp. ed. Niels Thulstrup [Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1968–78]), vol. 5, §B, p. 81; henceforth PP, followed by volume, section, and page numbers.

43. SKS 4, 508f.; Søren Kierkegaard, *Prefaces*, trans. Todd W. Nichol (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 47; henceforth P, followed by page number.

44. SKS 18, 9–10; Kierkegaard, "Woman's Great Abilities," pp. 3–5; SKS 18, 13–6; Kierkegaard, "The Morning Observations," pp. 6–11; SKS 18, 19–26; Kierkegaard, "On the Polemic of *Fædrelandet*," pp. 12–23; SKS 18, 29–35; Søren Kierkegaard, "To Mr. Orla Lehmann," in *Early Polemical Writings*, pp. 24–34.

45. SKS 4, 509; P 48; trans. mod. In his rendering of this passage Nichol translates "N.N." as "John Doe."

46. PP VIII-2 B 21; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 223; henceforth A, followed by page number.

47. SKS 4, 173; Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 83: "Accordingly, this examination must constantly wander into the territory of ethics, while in order to be of consequence it must seize the problem with aesthetic fervor and concupiscence. These days, ethics rarely involves itself with a question like this. The reason must be that the system has no room for it."

48. SKS 6, 215: Søren Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 231: "Basically, it is easy enough except for someone who has been lent the helping hand of the privateer-wealth of the system and thereby in turn the beggar's staff. Only if one is so circumspect as to want to construct a system without including ethics does it work; then one obtains a system in which one has everything, everything else, and has omitted the one thing needful."

49. See P supp. 207; PP V B 41, 96; JP 2, 1611 (SKS 20, 44, NB:42); PP VII-2 B 253, 162, 214f.; JP 1, 654; PP VIII-2 B 86, 171f.

50. SKS 1, 270; Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 227–8.

51. Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, p. 54 (SKS 4, 148–9). See also ibid., p. 68 (SKS 4, 160–161); and ibid., p. 82 (SKS 4, 172).

52. SV1 12, 83; Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice in Christianity*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 87.