

KIERKEGAARD vs. KLOGSKAB

– en introduktion af Claus Damgaard

Søren Kierkegaards forunderlige forfatterskab er blevet forvandlet til spekulation og klogskab. Det bliver i dag ofte analyseret i stumper og stykker.

Speculationens Opgave at rubricere, classificere, methodice ordne de enkelte Tankebestemmelser; man elsker ikke, troer ikke, handler ikke, men man veed hvad Elskov, hvad Tro er.

Johannes Climacus
Afluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Det der skal arbejdes mod, var just Klogskab. Formdl. er det derfor, at jeg, der her har Forretningen, blev udrustet med en uhyre Klogskab.

Journalen NB30:94

Kierkegaard bliver ofte betegnet som filosof og teolog men for mig er han først og fremmest kunstner – en helt særlig litterær kunstner som udviklede sin helt egen, ejendommelige form for fiktion og lyrisk prosa for at kunne betage, ryste, forundre, provokere, opløfte, opflamme, invitere, forføre, stimulere, drille, bedrage og inspirere sin læser til – selv – aktivt at undersøge hvad det i sandhed er at leve som et menneske.

Kierkegaards forfatterskab skal ikke forstås – som jeg forstår det! – det skal leves.

Intet er farligere end at hvad der skal praktiseres forvandles til lærd Viden. At lade være at gøre det er ikke nær så farligt; men lærd Viden seer ud som var det Noget og gjør Udøvelse næsten umulig.

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Kierkegaards forfatterskab bliver ofte opdelt i adskilte kategorier. Det bliver idag betragtet som god stil at skelne mellem flere forskellige "Kierkegaarde".

Men Kierkegaard var altid Kierkegaard og hele vejen igennem forfatterskabet var hans projekt altid præcist det samme. Det var altid præcist det samme han arbejdede på at få sin læser til selv at opleve.

KIERKEGAARD vs. CLEVERNESS

– an introduction by Claus Damgaard

The amazing authorship of Søren Kierkegaard has been turned into speculation and cleverness. It is today often being analysed to pieces.

Speculation serves to categorise, classify, methodically put the various mental concepts into order: you don't love, you don't believe, you don't act but you know what love, what believing is.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

What has to be worked against, was precisely cleverness. Presumably that's why, I, who have the assignment, was equipped with such a tremendous cleverness.

The Journal NB30:94

Kierkegaard is often considered to be a philosopher and theologian but to me, he is first and foremost an artist. A literary artist making use of his own peculiar form of fiction and lyrical prose in order to amaze, bewilder, unsettle, puzzle, provoke, uplift, inflame, invite, seduce, trigger, tease, deceive and inspire his reader to actively explore – for him- or herself – what living truly is, for a human being.

The work of Søren Kierkegaard is not to be understood – as I understand it! – It is to be lived.

Nothing is more dangerous than turning into learned knowledge that which has to be practised. To not do anything isn't nearly as dangerous; but learned knowledge appears as if it were something and makes practice almost impossible.

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Kierkegaards authorship is often fragmented into different categories. It is currently in fashion to talk about distinctly different "Kierkegaards"

But Kierkegaard was always Kierkegaard and all the way though his authorship the project was always precisely the same. It was always precisely the same, that he was working on making his reader experience for him- or herself.

Hele vejen gennem forfatterskabet brugte Kierkegaard sit intellekt til at gøre oprør mod intellektets herredømme. Han arbejdede systematisk på at få sin læser til at give slip på klogskab og systematisk tænkning for i stedet at åbne op for i sandhed inspireret, intuitiv intelligens og helhjertet fysisk handling.

[...] hele mit Forfatter-Liv har været en systematisk gennemført, ja med maaskee 10 Gange saa megen Klogskab som de Kløge har, gennemført Operation i modsat Retning. Journalen NB8:80

Opgaven var altid den samme, men det betyder ikke at Kierkegaard var et statisk individ. Tværtimod.

[...] hele min Forfatter-Virksomhed er, som jeg oftere har sagt det, tillige min egen Udvikling, i hvilken jeg selv har dybere og dybere besindet mig paa min Idee, min Opgave [...] S. Kierkegaard
Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed

Selv om den opgave han havde givet sig selv var den samme hele vejen igennem er det dog, på den anden side, sandt at der er fundamentale forskelle på spil i Kierkegaards forfatterskab. I forskellige dele af forfatterskabet bliver tilsyneladende uforenelige standpunkter bragt frem, alle med den samme virtuositet, lidenskab og overbevisningskraft.

Kierkegaard leger på en måde med sin læser – eller spiller teater måske snarere. Ligesom en dramatiker lader Kierkegaard fiktive karakterer med modsatrettede agendaer konfrontere hinanden. Hver af disse karakterer kæmper for hver deres synspunkt og Kierkegaard – som den eminente dramatiker – forsvaret uforbeholdent hver især og overlader konklusionen til sin læser.

Der er mange Mennesker, der kommer til et Livs-Resultat ligesom skoledrenge ; de snyde deres Lærer ved at skrive Facit ud af regnebogen uden selv at have regnet Stykket. Journalen FF:31

I vor Tid troer man, at Viden gjør Udslaget, og naar man blot faaer det Sande at vide, jo kortere og hurtigere jo bedre, sa er man hjulpen. Men at existere er noget ganske Andet end at vide.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskift

All the way through Kierkegaard used his intellect to rebel against the dominance of the intellect. He systematically worked on making his reader let go of clever, systematical thinking and open up to truly inspired, intuitive intelligence and wholehearted physical action.

[...] my entire life as an author has been a systematically executed, yes with maybe 10 times as much cleverness as the clever people have, executed operation in the opposite direction. The journal NB8:80

The task was always the same, but this is not to say that Kierkegaard was a static individual though. Quite the contrary.

[...] my entire work as an author is, as I have often stated, my own development as well, in which I myself have deeper and deeper contemplated my idea, my task [...] S. Kierkegaard
The Point of View For my Work as an Author.

Even though the assignment he had given himself was the same all the way through, it is true however, that there are fundamental differences at play in Kierkegaards works. In different parts of the authorship seemingly incompatible positions are brought forth, all with equal virtuosity, passion and persuasiveness.

In a way Kierkegaard is playing games with his reader – or playing theatre rather. Very much like a playwright Kierkegaard lets fictitious characters, with conflicting ideas and agendas, oppose each other in his writing. Each of these characters is fighting for his particular point of view and Kierkegaard – just like the eminent playwright – absolutely defends each of them and leaves the conclusion to his reader.

There are many people who reach a conclusion about life just like schoolboys; they cheat their teacher by copying the answer out of the math book without having worked it out for themselves The Journal FF:31

In our time it is believed, that knowledge is crucial, and if only one gets to know the truth, the shorter and faster the better, then one is helped. But to exist is something entirely different than knowing.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

[...] hvor let foranlediges et Msk. ikke til den Indbildning, at han virkelig kjender det, hvorfor han har Ordet. Det er den concrete Intuition som her saa let gaaer tabt.

Journalen NB 14

En vidende eller analytisk tilgang kan nemt forhindre hvad Kierkegaard kaldte "den concrete Intuition" og hvad han kaldte "Evnen til at see det enkelte i det Hele".

[...] naar jeg fE gik paa en Vei, med hvilken der med behørige mellemliggende Stykker Jord løbe 2 andre paralelle Veie, saa ville de Fleste kun see Veien, derpaa Jordstykket og saa Veien; men at see det Hele som et Stykke Tøi, med forskellige Striber i – det vilde de ei formaae.

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Som jeg oplever det, arbejder alle Kierkegaards fiktive karakterer i virkeligheden på at beskrive det samme.

Hver af karaktererne beskriver, på sin særlige måde, fra sit særlige ståsted, hans særlige aspekt af det samme.

Hver af karaktererne arbejder på at beskrive med ord noget som ikke *kan* beskrives med ord, noget som ingen – selv ikke en som Kierkegaard, der betragtede sig selv som et uovertruffent poetisk geni¹ – kunne sprogligøre.

Det Æsthetiske altsaa, der bliver incommensurabelt endog for Poesiens Fremstilling, hvorledes lader det sig fremstille? Svar: derved at det leves. Det faaer derved en Liighed med Musik, der blot er, fordi den bestandig gjentages, blot er i Udførelsens Øieblik.

Assessor Wilhelm Enten-Eller, Et Livsfragment

Kierkegaard taler ofte om ikke at tale.

Kun Den, der væsentligen kan tie, kan væsentligen tale, kun Den, der væsentligen kan tie, kan væsentligen handle.

S. Kierkegaard
En literair Anmeldelse

[...] how easily a human being is led into the delusion that he really is acquainted with that, for which he has the word. It is the concrete intuition which so easily is lost here.

The journal NB14

A knowledgeable or analytical approach can easily prevent what Kierkegaard called "the concrete intuition" and what he called "the ability to see the particular within the whole".

[...] when for instance I was walking down a road and there, with befitting pieces of land in between, are two other parallel roads, then most people would only see the road, then the piece of land and then the road; but to see it all as a piece of cloth with different stripes in it – that they would not be capable of.

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To my experience, each of Kierkegaards fictitious characters is really working on describing the very same.

Each of the characters is, in his particular way, from his particular point of view, describing his particular aspect of the very same.

Each of the characters is working on putting into words something which is *beyond* words, something which is indescribable – even to someone like Kierkegaard, who considered himself to be a supreme poetical genius.²

How, then can it be brought forth, the aesthetic, which is incommensurable even for poetical forth-bringing? Answer: By being lived. It thereby has a similarity to music, which only exists, because it continually is repeated, only exists in the moment it is created.

Judge Wilhelm
Either-Or, A Fragment of Life

Kierkegaard often talks about not talking.

Only the one, who is able to essentially be silent, can essentially speak, only the one who is able to essentially be silent, can essentially take action.

S. Kierkegaard
A literary Review

¹ Kierkegaard mente nu egentligt at han beherskede det danske sprog så ypperligt, at når han "staaer for det Uudsigelige" stille og roligt "sysler dermed i Spøg og i Alvor indtil det er udsagt"

² Actually Kierkegaard considered his artistic mastery of the danish language to be so exquisite that he "standing in front of the indescribable" was able to "gently work with it is jest and in earnest until it is described."

Den for tiden herskende tilbøjelighed til at forvandle Kierkegaards kunst til klog snak, viden og teoretisk spekulation har en lang og stolt tradition bag sig.

Allerede mens han endnu levede blev Kierkegaard mødt med stor modstand fra datidens lærde, som gjorde hvad de kunne for at nedgøre og invalidere forfatterskabet.

Ingen har dog været mere effektiv og ødelæggende end den lærde danske intellektuelle Georg Brandes, der nogle år senere blev en prominent skikkelse i København og betragtede Kierkegaard som "vel desværre vor største Mand."

The current tendency of turning the art of Kierkegaard into clever talk, knowledge and theoretical speculation has a long and proud tradition.

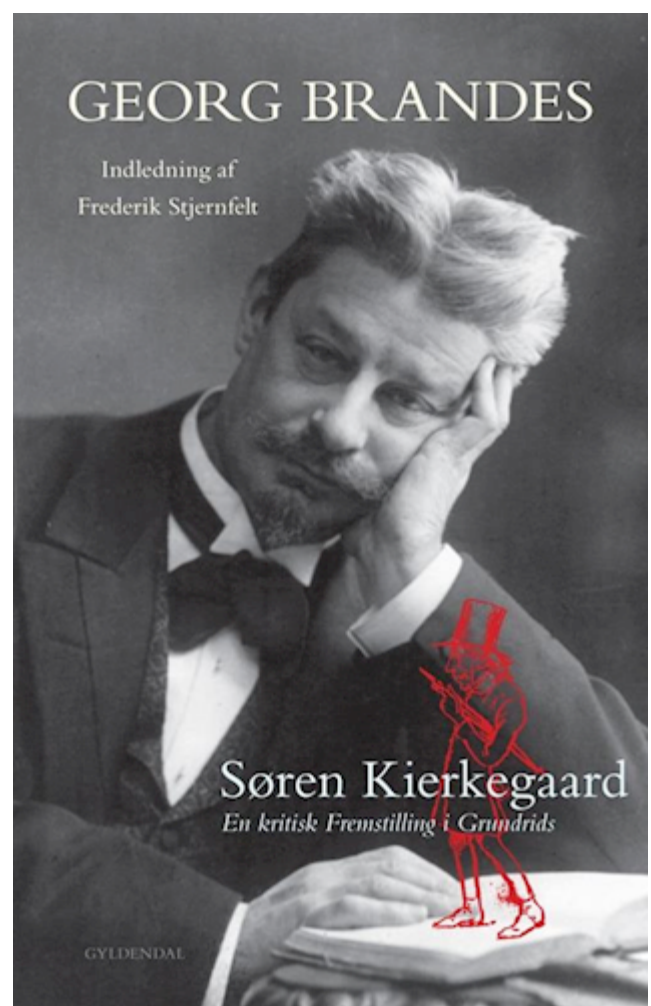
Already when Kierkegaard was still alive, his writing met a strong resistance from the learned people of the time, who did what they could to discredit and invalidate it.

No one has been more efficient and damaging though than the learned Danish intellectual Georg Brandes, who some years later became a prominent figure in Copenhagen and who considered Kierkegaard to be "unfortunately our greatest man".



The first German ed. of Brandes' book on Kierkegaard.

In 1877 Georg Brandes published a book about Kierkegaard which was a "combative text written to inhibit his influence", as Brandes himself stated it in a letter to Friedrich Nietzsche.



The latest reprint of Brandes' book on Kierkegaard.

In 1877 Georg Brandes published a book about Kierkegaard which was a "combative text written to inhibit his influence", as Brandes himself stated it in a letter to Friedrich Nietzsche.

Hvad Brandes skrev til Nietzsche:
(Kilde: "Friedrich Nietzsche, Gesammelte Briefe")

Es giebt einen nordischen Schriftsteller, dessen Werke Sie interessiren würde, wenn sie nur über übersetzt wären, Søren Kierkegaard; er lebte 1813-55 und ist meiner Ansicht nach einer der tiefsten Psychologen, die es überhaupt giebt. Ein Büchlein, das ich über ihn geschrieben habe (übersetzt Leipzig 1879) giebt keine hinreichende Vorstellung von seinem Genie, denn dies Buch ist eine Art von Streitschrift, geschrieben um seinen Einfluss zu hemmen. Es ist wohl aber in psychologischer Hinsicht das feinste, was ich veröffentlicht habe.

What Brandes wrote to Nietzsche:
(Source: "Friedrich Nietzsche, Gesammelte Briefe")

There is a Nordic writer, whose work you would be interested in, if only it had been translated, Søren Kierkegaard; he lived 1813-55 and is in my opinion one of the deepest psychologists who ever existed. A small book that I wrote about him (translated Leipzig 1879) gives no adequate representation of his genius, as this book is a kind of combative text, written to inhibit his influence. It might very well though regarding psychology be the finest of what I have published.

For godt og grundigt at hæmme Kierkegaards indflydelse gik Brandes efter manden istedet for forfatterskabet.

I sit stridskrift gjorde Brandes elegant brug af udførlige psykologiske analyser af Kierkegaards privatliv for at devaluere forfatterskabet og forvandle det til noget man trygt kan tale og skrive om uden på nogen måde at være i fare for at blive personligt engageret eller i sandhed at handle.

Medens indskrænkede og travle Mennesker bilde sig ind, at de handle og handle og handle, er det netop et Kjende paa en vis Art af intellektuelle Hoveder den Virtuositet, med hvilken de veed at undgaae at handle.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Brandes forklarer og reducerer omhyggeligt Kierkegaards værker med nuancerede, kultiverede og tilsyneladende fornuftige fortolkninger af nogle biografiske vilkår (såvel som af sladder og de rene gætterier) samt ved at antyde en direkte årsagssammenhæng mellem den tid Kierkegaard levede i og hvad han skrev.

Det er muligvis en meget almindelig og respekteret videnskabelig metode, men jeg finder det ufint og nedvurderende. Og da Kierkegaard havde været død i mere end 20 år kunne han ikke forsvare sig.

Men han havde nu overvejet det.

In order to thoroughly inhibit Kierkegaards influence, Brandes went for the man rather than the authorship.

In his combative book Brandes very elegantly made use of elaborate psychological analyses of Kierkegaards personal life in order to devalue the authorship and turn it into something one can safely talk and write about without being in danger of actual personal involvement or truly taking action.

While narrow and busy people are in the delusion that they are taking action and taking action, it is precisely characteristic of a certain kind of intellectual heads the virtuosity, with which they know how to avoid taking action.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

Brandes carefully explains, diminishes and obstructs Kierkegaards work by nuanced, cultivated and seemingly reasonable interpretations of some biographical circumstances (as well as of gossip and plain guessing) and by suggesting direct causality between the period of time Kierkegaard was living in and what he wrote.

This might be a common and well-respected scientific method, but I find it dishonest and degrading. And since Kierkegaard had been dead for more than 20 years he was unable to defend himself.

He had considered it though.

Kierkegaard forventede at intellektuelle, efter hans død, ville finde på "Gavtyvestreger" for at forhindre forfatterskabet i at have effekt. Men han kunne ikke forudsige præcist *hvordan* det ville ske.

[...] hvis det var muligt, ved at anticipere Docenternes Gavtyvestreger, som disse ogsaa ville blive anvendte med min Virken, naar jeg engang er død – hvis det var muligt ved at anticipere dem at gjøre dem umulige: ja skulde jeg skrive hele Bøger derom. [...] Men nei! Nei, man være saa opfindsom som man være vil, det er umuligt at forhindre Gavtyvestregerne.

Journalen NB30:68

Tidens Grund-Skade er [...] at den er demoraliseret ved Intellectualitet og blevet karakterløs. Det jeg derfor har at passe paa, er, at min Sag, da for Gud i Himlens Skyld, ikke bliver – alvorligt! – en videnskabelig Discussion, saa en Slump Professorer og Privatdocenter o: s: v: kunde have Lyst at deeltage i den. Nei, enten indirecte Meddelelse – eller for Alvor, om det saa var, til paa Liv og Død. Men for Alt ikke: videnskabelig Discussion.

Journalen NB29:7

Hvad Brandes gjorde var netop hvad Kierkegaard betragtede som det farligste af alt: "at hvad der skal praktiseres forvandles til lærd Viden". Jeg tror ikke det er muligt at overvurdere hvor stor indflydelse Brandes har haft på hvordan vi idag ikke forstår Kierkegaard.

Den dag i dag kan man høre Kierkegaard-forskere omtale Brandes' bog som "et imponerende værk" eller "en milesten indenfor Kierkegaard-receptionen". Den dag i dag gentager eller viderebearbejder bøger, artikler og videnskabelige forelæsninger de psykologiske forklaringer Brandes gav.

[...] doceres skulde der ikke, da vor Tids Ulykke, efter min Opfattelse, netop var, at den havde faaet for meget at vide, havde glemt hvad det er at existere og hvad Inderlighed er.

Johannes Climacus
Afluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

[...] disse kloge Tider, der ere blevne for kloge til at troe paa Viisdom.

S. Kierkegaard
Kjerlighedens Gjerninger

Kierkegaard anticipated that after his death intellectuals would come up with "rascalities" to prevent his authorship from having effect. But he could not anticipate precisely *how* they would do it.

[...] if it was possible, to anticipate the rascalities that the lecturers, also once I am dead, will exert on my functioning – if it was possible by anticipating them to make them impossible: yes I would write entire books about it. [...] But no! No, you can be as imaginative as you want, it is impossible to prevent the rascalities.

The Journal NB30:68

The fundamental damage of our time is [...] that it has become demoralised by intellectuality and has lost all character. What I therefore have to be aware of, is, that my affair, for the sake of God in heaven, does not become – seriously! – a scientific discussion, so that a few professors and private lecturers etc. could desire to take part in it. No, either indirect communication – or in earnest, if it so were, till it's about life and death. But above all not: scientific discussion.

The Journal NB29:7

Brandes did precisely what Kierkegaard considered to be the most dangerous of all: "turning what has to be practised into learned knowledge". It is impossible to overestimate, I believe, the impact Brandes has had on how we today do not understand Kierkegaard.

Still today I hear Kierkegaard scholars refer to Brandes' book as "an impressive work" or "a milestone in the Kierkegaard reception". Still today books, articles and scientific papers about Kierkegaard repeats or elaborates on the psychological explanations given by Brandes.

[...] lecturing should be avoided, since the disaster of our time, as I perceive it, precisely was, that it had received too much knowledge, had forgotten what it is to exist and what innermost being is.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

[...] these clever times, which have become too clever to believe in wisdom.

S. Kierkegaard
Works of Love

Det er ikke kun nogle Kierkegaard-eksperter, der idag er dybt påvirkede af hvad Brandes skrev og i forskellige form videregiver det til andre som autoritativ og faktuel viden.

Der går næsten ikke en dag i mit liv uden at jeg hører en eller anden version af Brandes' biografisk baserede spekulation (ofte fra folk der kun har læst en af de nyere, populære bøger som har videreført hvad Brandes startede):

“Var Kierkegaard ikke i virkeligheden bange for Regines³ seksualitet!? Var det ikke derfor han afbrød forlovelsen!? Var han ikke kun oppe i sit hoved!? Og han taler om Lidenskab! Hvorfor skulle jeg stole på en som ikke selv evnede at gøre hvad han opfordrer andre til!?”

Sludder og Sladder og Vrøvl istedenfor Handling er det dog Menneskene ville have, saa finde de det interessant.

Journalen NB:18

Klogskab [...] er Udflugter for at undgaa Handlingens og Vovestykkets Anstrængelse, og spille Sagen over i Viden og Praten.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

[...] jo nærmere Forstaaelse ligger ved Misforstaaelse, desto lettere bliver den i Almindelighed.

S. Kierkegaard
Opbyggelige Taler i Forskjellig Aand

Folk forstaae mig saa lidt, at de ikke engang forstaae mine Klager over, at de ikke forstaae mig.

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[...] de have ikke forstaaet det, thi havde de i Sandhed forstaaet det, saa udtrykte deres Liv det ogsaa, saa gjorde de hvad de havde forstaaet.

Anti-Climacus (parafraaserende Socrates)
Sygdommen til Døden

Det skal nævnes at Kierkegaard nu også er meget nem ikke at forstå.

It is not only a few Kierkegaard scholars, who today are profoundly biased by what Brandes wrote and in different forms pass it on to others as authoritative and factual knowledge.

There almost does not pass a day in my life where I do not hear some version of Brandes' biographically based speculation (often from people who have only read one of the more recent, popular books echoing what Brandes initiated):

“Wasn't Kierkegaard actually afraid of Regines⁴ sexuality!? Wasn't that why he broke his engagement to her!? Wasn't he all head and no body!? And he talks about passion! Why should I trust someone who was not himself capable of practising what he tells others to do!?”

Babble and gossip and jabbering instead of action is indeed what the human beings want, then they find it interesting.

Journalen NB:18

Cleverness [...] is excursions to avoid the strain of the action and the venturing, and send the matter over into knowledge and conversation.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

[...] the nearer understanding is to misunderstanding, the easier it will generally become.

S. Kierkegaard
Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits

People understand me so little, that they do not even understand my complaints, that they do not understand me.

Paper 121

[...] they have not understood it, for if they in truth had understood it, then their lives would express it as well, then they would do what they had understood.

Anti-Climacus (parafrasing Socrates)
The Sickness unto Death

It should be mentioned though, that Kierkegaards is very easy to not understand.

³Hvad Brandes skrev om “det sexuelle” har haft en særligt ødelæggende effekt, tror jeg. Efter adskillige spekulative analyser vedrørende “den sande Forklaring” for Kierkegaards brud med sin forlovede Regine Olsen konkluderer Brandes at “Denne Modsigelse, sammenholdt med alle de foregaaende Udtalelser, peger hen i Retning af det Seksuelle”

⁴What Brandes reasoned about “the sexual” have had an especially devastating effect, I believe. After several speculations about “the true explanation” for Kierkegaards breakup with his fiancée Regine Olsen, Brandes offers his conclusion: “this contradiction viewed together with all the earlier statements, points in the direction of the sexual”

Dele af Kierkegaards forfatterskab er (måske i kraft af at han ville bekæmpe klogskab med klogskab) meget nemt at forvandle til abstrakt og kompleks teori, men hvad han inderligt ønskede at hans læser ville blive i stand til – og få lyst til – fysisk selv at opleve er i virkeligheden meget enkelt – når først det er oplevet!

Den enkelthed kan dog være ekstremt kompliceret at komme til at (gen-)opleve for de af os som betragter os selv som intelligente voksne, de af os som regelmæssigt tager del i “den moderne Tids Vildfarelse og Forvirring” og “fra Barn ere vant til den Raisoneren”.

Livets Udvikling er en besynderlig Tilbagegang; Barnet bryder sit Hoved med at forstaae de vanskeligste Ting, den Ældre kan netop ikke forstaae de allersimpleste.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

[...] saa maadelig en Existents det er, naar Manden har bortskaaret enhver Communication med Barndommen, og fragmentarisk er Mand, saa daarlig en Existents er det ogsaa, naar en Tænkende, der jo tillige er en Existerende, er gaaet fra Phantasie og Følelse, hvilket er ligesaa galt som at gaae fra Forstanden.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Menneske, Menneske, forhærdede Menneske-Forstand, vil Du da aldrig af Fuglen lære at gaae fra Forstanden for at blive Menneske!

S. Kierkegaard
Dømmer selv! Til Selvprøvelse

Jeg skal bestræbe mig for at være saa dum som muligt, for om muligt ikke at have en Eneste Forudsætning uden min Uvidenhed, at jeg kan lære desto mere.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

[...] det Ethiske og Ethisk-Religieuse er saa saare let at forstaae, men til Gjengjeld saa saare vanskeligt. Et Barn kan forstaae det

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Parts of Kierkegaards work are (since he wanted to fight cleverness with cleverness maybe) very easily turned into abstract and complex theory, but what he was really hoping his reader would become able – and feel inspired – to physically experience for him- or herself, is quiet simple actually – *once* it is experienced!

This simplicity though can be extremely complicated to (re-)experience for those of us who consider ourselves to be intelligent adults, those of us who on a regular basis take part in “the derangement and confusion of the modern age” and “from childhood have become accustomed to this reasoning”.

The course of life is a peculiar walking backwards. The child is tormenting its brain to understand the most difficult of matters. The grown up cannot understand the very simplest.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

[...] as mediocre an existence it is, when the man has cut off all communication with the childhood, and fragmentarily is man, equally poor an existence it is, when someone thinking, who after all is also someone existing, has lost imagination and emotionality, which is just as bad as having lost the mind.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

Human being, human being, hardened human mind, will you never learn from the bird to loose your mind in order to become a human being!

S. Kierkegaard
Judge for Yourselves! For Self-Examination

I must aim at being as dumb as possible, so that I if possible do not to have one single precondition except my not-knowing, so I can learn the more.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

[...] the ethical and ethical-religious is so very easy to understand, but then again so very difficult. A child can understand it.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

At forstå Kierkegaards forfatterskab er, tror jeg, først at acceptere ikke at forstå det og så kaste sig ud i at leve det.

Det Ethiske begynder ikke med Uvidenhed, som skal forvandles til Viden, men begynder med en Viden, og fordrer en Realiseren. Det gjelder her at være ubetinget consequent, een eneste usikkerhed i Attituden, saa har den moderne Forvirring taget os. Hvis En ville sige; jeg maa jo først vide hvad det Ethiske er. Hvor bestikkende, især da vi fra Barn ere vante til den Raisoneren. Men det Ethiske svarer ganske consequent: Slubbert vil Du gjøre Udflugter og søge Udflugt. Vil En sige: der er jo ganske forskellige Begreber i forskellige Lande og til forskellige Tider om det Ethiske. [...] hvad vedkommer det Dig, Du skal gjøre det Ethiske i ethvert Øieblik, og er ethisk ansvarligt for ethvert Øieblik Du spilder.

Papir 365:7

At forstå Søren Kierkegaard med hvad han kalder "Forstandens Smaalighed" er ligeså umuligt som at benytte sig af den til i sandhed at leve som et menneske.

At skulle existere ved Hjælp af den rene Tænkings Veiledning, er ligesom at skulle reise i Danmark efter et lille Kort over hele Europa, hvor Danmark ikke er større end en Staalpen - ja det er endnu umuligere.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Den i Verden så meget prisede Livs-Klogskab [...] alt det Satans Meget af gode Raad og kloge Vendinger.

Anti-Climacus
Sygdommen til Døden

Systematikere og de Objektive have ophørt at være Mennesker og ere blevne Speculationen.

Johannes Climacus
Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift

Tag et ved Klogskab demoraliseret Individ. Et saadant Individ har altid en stor Klogskab i Retning af at passe paa, at han da ikke kommer til at handle afgjørende [...] Først og fremmest: ud af Klogskaben maa han. Og saaledes ogsaa med en heel Tid.

Journalen NB29:96

To understand Kierkegaards authorship is, I believe, to first accept not understanding it and then to start living it.

The ethical does not start off with a lack of knowledge which has to be turned into knowledge, but starts off with a knowledge, and calls for a realisation. What's important here is to be absolutely consistent, one single insecurity in the attitude, then the modern confusion has gotten hold of us. If someone were to say; I must first know what the ethical is. How tempting, especially since we from childhood have become accustomed to this reasoning. But the ethical answers fully consistent: Scoundrel do you want to go of on excursions and seek excursion. If someone were to say: there are indeed quite different concepts in different countries and at different times of the ethical. [...] what is that to you, you must do the ethical in each moment, and are ethically responsible for each moment you waste.

Papir 365:7

To understand Kierkegaard by only making use what he calls "the pettiness of the mind" is just as impossible as making use of it to truly live as a human being.

To exist with the assistance of pure thinking is like having to travel in Denmark with a small map of Europe, on which Denmark is no larger than a steel pen-point - yes it is even more impossible.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

This in the world so highly esteemed cleverness about life [...] All the devilish lot of good advice and clever phrases.

Anti-Climacus
The Sickness Unto Death

[...] those who are systematic and objective have ceased to be human beings and have become the speculation.

Johannes Climacus
Concluding Unscientific Postscript

Take an individual demoralised by cleverness. Such an individual will always have great cleverness in direction of taking care, that he will not incidentally take decisive action [...] Before anything else he has to get out of the cleverness. And that's also how it is with an entire age.

Journalen NB29:96

Skulde man concentreret i eet eneste Ord betegne den moderne Videnskabs ell. ret egl. den moderne Tids Vildfarelse og Forvirring [...] saa maatte man sige: den er uredelighed. Uredelighed – Mangel paa Naivitet – Papir 365:2

Naivitet er frelsende [...] mod det Tillærtes Aandløshed. Paper 366:1

Istedent[or] at sige om den moderne Tids Uredelighed at den er Mangel paa Naivitet, kunde man ogsaa sige den er Mangel paa Primitivitet, og dette Ord vil jeg helst dvæle ved. Papir 369

Kierkegaard bruger mange ord på at få sin læser til at opleve noget der ligger udenfor – eller før! – ordenes rige, bruger mange ord på at få ham eller hende til at genopleve en visdom gemt i hans eller hendes primitivitet, bruger mange ord på at inspirere ham eller hende til først og fremmest at have hans eller hendes eget oprindelige, upolerede, organiske, primære eller præ-civiliserede selv som den primære kilde til viden.

Enhver msklig Existents skal have Primitivitet. Men den primitive Existents indeholder altid en Revision af det Fundamentelle. [...] at revidere det Almene-Msklige, de fundamentelle Spørgsmaal*. Dette er i dybeste Forstand Redelighed. Og ganske at mangle Primitivitet og altsaa det Reviderende, ganske uden videre at tage Alt som given Skik og Brug, og lade det være sig nok, at det er Skik og Brug, altsaa at unddrage sig Ansvar for at man gjør ligesaa: er Uredelighed. Papir 371:2

Hvad jeg vil? Ganske simpelt: jeg vil Redelighed. S. Kierkegaard
Artikkel "Fædrelandet"

Jeg gentager: Kierkegaards projekt var, som jeg oplever det, hele vejen igennem det samme: at få sin læser til i sandhed at lytte til en visdommens stemme dybt inde i ham eller hende selv ... og tro på den! ... ved at udføre hvad den synes at fortælle ham eller hende ... uden på forhånd at have den mindste viden om resultatet ... med helhjertet lidenskab – med hvad han kalder "Evighedens Lidenskab" i øjeblikket.

If concentrated in only a single word one were to characterise the derangement and confusion of the modern science or actually of the entire modern age [...] then one would have to say: it is disingenuousness. Disingenuousness – lack of naivety –

Paper 365:2

Naivety is rescuing [...] from the spiritual deprivation by the acquired learning.

Paper 366:1

In stead of talking about the Disingenuousness of modern time as a lack of naivety, one could also say it is lack of primitivity, and this word I prefer to dwell on.

Paper 369

Yes, Kierkegaard does use a lot of words to make his reader experience something which is beyond - or prior to! – words, uses a lot of words to make him or her rediscover a wisdom hidden in his or her primitivity, uses a lot of words to inspire him or her to first and foremost have his or her own original, unmannered, organic, primary or pre-civilised self as the primary source of knowledge.

Every human existence must have primitivity. But the primitive existence always contains a revision of the fundamental. [...] to revise the universally human, the fundamental questions. That is genuineness in the deepest sense. And entirely to lack primitivity and thus the revision, entirely to take everything unquestioned as a given common practice and let it be enough that it is common practice, which is to evade the responsibility for doing likewise: is disingenuousness. Paper 371:2

What I want? Quite simply: I want genuineness. S. Kierkegaard
Article in "Fædrelandet"

I repeat: Kierkegaards project was, to my experience, the very same all the way through: to make his reader become able to truly listen to a voice of wisdom inside him or herself ... and believe in it! ... by carrying out what it seems to be telling him or her to do ... with absolutely no knowledge of the outcome ... with wholehearted passion – with what he calls the "passion of eternity" in the moment.

For forstanden, kan Kierkegaards fordringer til sin læser virke som urealistiske, ekstreme og upraktiske overdrivelser. Det er måske derfor Kierkegaard bestræbte sig på ikke kun at tale til forstanden.

Min kjere Læser, læs om muligt høit.

S. Kierkegaard
Dømmer selv! Til Selvprøvelse

Kierkegaard forestillede sig altid en læser der læste hans værker højt og dermed fik den lyriske prosa til at leve og blive direkte sanseligt mærkbar for ham eller hende.

[...] hiin Enkelte, som jeg med Glæde og Taknemmelighed kalder min Læser [...] hiint velvillige Menneske, der læser høit for sig selv, hvad jeg skriver i Stilhed, der med sin Stemme løser Skriftegenes Fortryllelse, med sin Røst kalder frem, hvad de stumme Bogstaver vel ligesom have paa Munden, men ikke formaae at udsige uden megen Møie, stammende og afbrudt, i sin Stemning frelser de fangne Tanker, der længes efter Befrielse.

S. Kierkegaard
Tre opbyggelige Taler

Musikaliteten i Kierkegaards sprog er, tror jeg, afgørende og væsentligt betydningsbærende. For at gøre det muligt for sin læser at opfange både melodien og rytmen – og dermed energien – i sine tekster havde Kierkegaard udviklet sin helt egen tegnsætning.

Det der især beskæftiger mig er [...], at der paa eengang for Øiet viser sig den Sætningernes Proportion, som igjen for Stemmen, naar man læser høit, er Rythmen – og jeg tænker mig bestandigt en Læser der læser høit. – Deraf kommer det igjen at jeg stundom sparer meget paa Brugen af Comma. [...] I denne Henseende lever jeg i en stadig Strid med Sætterne, der velmenende sætte Comma overalt og derved forstyrre mig Rythmiken. De fleste danske Stilister bruge Punktum i mine Tanker paa en aldeles urigtig Maade. De opløse al deres Tale i lutter smaae Punktumer;

The Journal NB:146

To the mind, it might seem like unrealistic, extreme and impractical exaggerations, what Kierkegaard was hoping to make his reader venture. Maybe that is why Kierkegaard made an effort to not only talk to the mind.

My dear reader, if possible do read aloud.

S. Kierkegaard
Judge for yourself” For Self-Examination

Kierkegaard was always imagining a reader reading aloud and thereby making the lyrical prose come alive and become directly – sensuously! – perceivable to him or her.

[...] that single individual, whom I with joy and gratitude call my reader [...] that good-willed human being who reads aloud to himself, what I write in silence, who with his voice undoes the spell of the written signs, with his vocalisation calls forth, what indeed the mute letters in a way have on their lips, but are unable to express without great struggle, stammering and stuttering, who in his attunement rescues the captured thoughts, which long for liberation.

S. Kierkegaard
Three Upbuilding Discourses

The musicality of Kierkegaards writing is essential and carries much of the meaning, I believe. In order to make it possible for his reader to pick up on both the melody and the rhythm – and thereby the energy – of his writing Kierkegaard had developed his very own punctuation.

My chief concern is [...], that it shows itself to the eye at once this proportionality of the sentences, which again for the voice, when one reads aloud, is the rhythm – and I am always imagining a reader reading aloud – this again is why I at times am very sparing in my use of the comma. [...] Regarding this I am in a constant battle with the typesetters, who well-meaningly insert commas everywhere and disturb the rhythm for me.

It seems to me that most Danish stylists use the period altogether incorrectly. They dissolve all their discourse into purely tiny periods.

The Journal NB:146

Kierkegaard havde – igen som den eminente dramatiker – som William Shakespeare for eksempel – placeret hints og vejledninger implicit i sine tekster.

For Alt maa jeg gjentage, at jeg tænker mig Læsere, som læse høit og som da baade ere øvede i at følge hver en Tankes Svingning i det Mindste og igjen i at kunne eftergjøre det med Stemmen. Jeg vil ganske roligt underkaste mig den Prøve, at en Skuespiller eller en Taler, der er vant til at modulere læser til et Forsøg et lille Stykke af mine Taler: og jeg er overbeviist om, at han skal tilstaae, at Meget, som han ellers selv maa bestemme, Meget, som ellers oplyses ved instruerende Vink af Forf., vil han her finde givet ved Hjælp af Interpunktionen.

Journalen NB:146

De oversættelser du kan se i højre spalte er dog på ingen måde shakesperiansk engelsk. Jeg er ikke engang sikker på om de kan siges at være engelske. De er oversættelser foretaget af en dansk – og uvidenskabelig! – Kierkegaard forsker oprindeligt uddannet som scenekunstner, som har villet være absolut loyal overfor den oprindelige tekst – absolut loyal overfor ordenes konkrete betydning og ikke mindst den rytme, den melodi, den komiske timing, den kropslighed, den følsomhed, den spiritualitet, den kunstneriske opfindsomhed, den fejlfylthed – ja, den oprindelighed! – den oprindelige danske tekst har når den i sandhed bliver læst højt.

Kierkegaards ord kalder på at blive kropsligt udtalt og kropsligt hørt, så de kan få kropslig effekt, skabe resonans og forhåbentlig lyst til kropsligt at eksperimentere med konkret udlevelse i dagligdags praksis.

Kierkegaard var ofte selv ked af ikke at blive praktiseret noget mere.

Mangen Gang kan der dog være for mig noget Vemodigt i, at jeg, med alle de Forudsætninger som er mig forundte, bestandigt skal stå udenfor som en Overflødighed en upraktisk Overdrivelse.

Kierkegaard had – again just like the eminent playwright – like William Shakespeare for example – placed hints and directions to his reader, hidden implicit in his texts.

Above all let me repeat, that I imagine readers, who reads aloud and who are practised both in following every fluctuation of a thought in the smallest detail as well as being able to reproduce it with the voice. I will be quite at ease to submit myself to a test were an actor or an orator, who is accustomed to modulating his voice would try reading a short selection from my discourses: and I am convinced, that he will admit, that much, of what he otherwise would have to decide for himself, much, of what he is otherwise informed of in instructive notes by the author, he will here find given to him by the punctuation.

The Journal NB:146

These translations admittedly are in no way Shakespearean english though. I am not even sure they can be said to be english. They are translations made by a danish – and unscientific! – Kierkegaard researcher originally trained as a stageartist, who has wanted to be absolutely loyal to the original text – absolutely loyal to the concrete meaning of the words as well as the rhythm, the melody, the comical timing, the physicality, the emotional sensuousness, the spirituality, the artistic inventiveness, the impropriety – well, the originality! – of the original danish text when truly spoken aloud!

The words of Søren Kierkegaard are to be physically spoken and physically heard, so that they can have a physical impact, create resonance and hopefully create an urge for physical exploration in physical everyday practice.

Kierkegaard himself was often sad that he wasn't really put into practice.

Often times I find it quite sad, that I, with all the qualifications I have been given must always stand outside as a superfluity an impractical exaggeration.

Sagen er ganske simpel. Forholdene er endnu langt fra forvirrede nok til at man ret vil benytte mig [...] Men de skulle få at se, at det dog ender med, at Forholdene blive så desperate, at de må benytte sådanne desperate Folk som mig og mine Lige.

Journalen NB22:65

Nu! – i år 2020 eller hvad har vi – forekommer det mig at vi er mere end rigeligt desperate og forvirrede til for alvor at begynde at leve Søren Kierkegaards litterære kunst

Jeg ved ikke hvad der er så fantastisk ved at se noget land og nogle veje som “et Stykke Tøi, med forskellige Striber i”, men jeg kan med overbevisning sige, at Kierkegaard Concert ønsker at give dig – hvem end du er – en musikalsk og sanselig oplevelse af det hele billede, af hvad jeg oplever som konstant i hele Kierkegaards forfatterskab. Kierkegaard Concert ønsker at gøre dig bedre i stand til at “at see det enkelte i det Hele” og forhåbentligt give dig lyst til efterfølgende selv at give dig i kast med at læse og leve Kierkegaards kunst.

Koncerten har måske nok et urealistisk bredt fokus, men den har samtidigt et meget begrænset og smalt fokus: at give dig en musikalsk og levende fortolkning af netop *dette* stykke tekst.

Leve Posthornet! det er mit Instrument, af mange Grunde og fornemmelig af den, at man aldrig med Sikkerhed kan aflokke dette Instrument den samme Tone; thi der ligger en uendelig Muelighed i et Posthorn, og den, der sætter det for sin Mund og nedlægger sin Viisdom i det, han skal aldrig gjøre sig skyldig i en Gjentakelse, og den, der istedetfor Svar rækker sin Ven et Posthorn til behagelig Afbenyttelse, han siger Intet, men forklarer Alt. Priset være Posthornet! Det er mit Symbol. Som de gamle Asketer satte et Dødningehoved paa Bordet, hvis Beskuelse var deres Livsbetragtning, saaledes skal Posthornet paa mit Bord altid minde mig om, hvad Livets Betydning er. Leve Posthornet!

Constantin Constantius
Gjentagelsen

God fornøjelse! ... med lidelsen.

The whole thing is very simple. The state of things is still far from being confused enough for them really to make use of me [...] But it will all end, as they shall see, with the state of things getting so desperate that they must make use of desperate people like me and those like me.

The Journal NB22:65

Now! – in 2020 or what have we – it seems to me we have reached a level of desperation and confusion more than sufficiently high to really start living the literary art of Søren Kierkegaard.

I do not know what is so fantastic about seeing some pieces of land and some roads as “a piece of cloth with different stripes in it”, but I can say that the Kierkegaard Concert wants to give you – whoever you are – a sensuous and musical experience of the whole picture, of what I believe to be constant throughout all of Kierkegaards writing. Kierkegaard Concert wants to make you better able to “see the particular within the whole” and hopefully feel an urge to read and explore the the art of Kierkegaard for yourself.

Even though the focus of Kierkegaard Concert might be an unrealistically broad one, it is at the same time a very narrow and limited one: to give you a live musical interpretation of *this* particular piece of text

Long live the post-horn! It is my instrument, for many reasons and principally because one can never be certain of coaxing the same tone out of it, for there is an infinity of possibility in a post-horn, and the one, who puts it to his lips and lays down his wisdom in it, he will never be guilty of a repetition, and the one, who instead of giving an answer hands his friend a post-horn to make pleasurable use of, he says nothing, yet explains everything. Praised be the post-horn. It is my symbol. Just as the ancient ascetics had a skull placed on the table, and the sight of this was their view of life, likewise the post-horn on my table shall always remind me of, what the meaning of life is. Long live the post-horn!

Constantin Constantius
Repetition

Do enjoy! ... the suffering.