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Are Ecumenical Novel-Writers the Hope of

Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι?

**(A Study in ANDERSEN'S and
KIERKEGAARD'S Discussion on
the Importance of
a Life-View in a Novel)**

PART I

Perseus – The Journal for Positive and Independent Thought

On Thursday, August 9, 1838 at 2 a.m. Michael P. KIERKEGAARD, the father of Søren Aabye KIERKEGAARD, dies at the age of 82¹. The father's death is one in a long chain of deaths in the KIERKEGAARD family. Sadly the father had outlived not only his wife but also most of his children.

Søren's brother Peter Christian (the later bishop of Aalborg) lost his wife Maria one year earlier² and his father's death only increases the tension in his life. Søren and he did not have an easy time getting along with each other in these months.

Søren seems to need quite an acute sublimation of all the tension accumulated over the past months (years). Full of fears and sorrows and shortly before his father's death he starts writing an article about H. C. ANDERSEN.

One month before his father's death he moves home from a flat in Løvstræde where he had escaped the tense atmosphere of the home caused by the previous deaths in the family³. But now death with all

¹ TUDVAD Peter, *Homo Nekropolis, Kierkegaard og kirkegården*. Unpublished (quoted in GARFF). 62.

² Ibid. 67.

³ GARFF Joakim, *SAK, Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, En biografi*. København, 2002. 105.

her wicked games seems to be chasing him again. Sensing the upcoming death of his father he escapes into writing.

On July 20, 1838 Søren KIERKEGAARD's *only friend* Emil BOESEN⁴ reports to his cousin Martin HAMMERICH that KIERKEGAARD has written "a piece about ANDERSEN that shall go to HEIBERG's *Perseus*. It is in a bit heavy style, but otherwise excellent."⁵

Perseus has 133 subscribers and is the leading journal of the Danish intellectual elite. According to the Danish Hegelian and style-philosopher Johan L. HEIBERG (the later director of the Danish Royal Theatre), who is the editor-in-chief of *Perseus*, this journal publishes authors who are able to "express positive and independent thought in the realms of arts, religion and philosophy."⁶ As he puts it – it is the *journal for speculative thought*.

"From the Papers of One Still Living"

The title of KIERKEGAARD's article about ANDERSEN is *From the Papers of One Still Living* (Af en endnu Levendes Papirer, 1838). At first hearing, it sounds strange and early biographers have estimated it enigmatic and weird. It refers to an unknown and never-finished farce written by S.A. KIERKEGAARD at a very early stage of his writing career. HEIBERG returns the article to KIERKEGAARD asking for more readable Danish⁷. KIERKEGAARD rewrites the article and slowly but truly is beginning to realise that he is writing for his future audience – the *Symparanekromenoi* (Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι).

Whose Face is behind the Veil of Symparanekromenoi?

At first glance it can seem that this long Greek word is one of the many strange inventions of the young solitary philosopher. But in fact, *Symparanekromenoi* (Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι) are not KIERKEGAARD's invention. Or just partly. It is in the Greek satirist and

⁴ BOESEN is referred to as "the only friend" (den eneste Ven) by KIERKEGAARD himself. Cf. *Breve og Aktstykker vedrørende Søren Kierkegaard* (published by THULSTRUP Niels). Nr. 8. 40ff. In a closer study BOESEN really appears as the only lifelong friend of KIERKEGAARD.

⁵ WELTZER Carl, *Stemninger og Tilstande i Emil Boesens Ungdomsaaer*. In *Kirkehistoriske Samlinger*. 7 række. København, 1952. 413.

⁶ BORUP Morten, *Johan Ludvig Heiberg*. København, 1948. vol. 2, 174.

⁷ Cf. GARFF. 125.

rhetorician LUCIAN that he finds the name *paranekroi* (παρνεκροι), which he translates in the singular as “the one who is dead, just like me”. On January 9, 1838 he notes in his diary that this is the *special class* of people who can become his future readers⁸.

To add some clarity to KIERKEGAARD’s concept of this enigmatic circle of readers let us just say that in the context of his thinking “*to die* (at dø) means in fact *to die to/away* (at afdø) – to die to this world, to your own immediacy, in order to resurrect in the spirit’s world to a different immediacy.”⁹

So let us put two and two together. Let us put *Symparanekromenoi* (Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι) and *From the Papers of One Still Living* together. A question emerges right away – if KIERKEGAARD calls himself “the one still living” how can he be in company with those who are “dead just like him”? Can he be *still living* and *dead* at the same time?

A Novel without a Life-View

H. C. ANDERSEN is known best as a fairy-tale writer. He might be less known as a novel-writer, but it is exactly his third novel, *Only a Fiddler* (Kun en Spillemand, 1837) that inspires KIERKEGAARD to write his first published treatise¹⁰.

Some time after ANDERSEN’s novel has been published, KIERKEGAARD and ANDERSEN arrange a *rendez-vous* and after a pleasant talk ANDERSEN’s expectations appear to be high – an utterly positive critique of his book from the pen of the young theologian¹¹. In fact, in August 1838 he complains in his diary that KIERKEGAARD still has not published his critique. But the literary Providence is not asleep – in a week KIERKEGAARD’s critique is published... and ANDERSEN is shocked¹².

KIERKEGAARD attacks several aspects of ANDERSEN’s novel. He attacks the way *geniality* is pictured in the main (autobiographical) character¹³, ANDERSEN’s confusion of genres¹⁴, but most importantly he

⁸ *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer* (published by HEIBERG Pa. A., KUHR V., TORSTING E., edited by THULSTRUP Niels) II A. 690.

⁹ GARFF. 129.

¹⁰ KIERKEGAARD Søren Aabye, *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer*. In *Samlede Værker* (Bind I). København, 1995. 45.

¹¹ Cf. GARFF. 125.

¹² *Søren Kierkegaard Skrifter* (published by N. J. CAPPELØRN & Co.). København, 1997ff. 74.



attacks the fact that ANDERSEN's novel lacks a life-view, *en Livs-Anskuelse*.

The twenty-five-year-old theology student asserts in a sharp diction that ANDERSEN's novels "lack the constitutive total-view (a life-view)."¹⁴ He spiritualises his point by claiming that "a life-view is actually the Providence in the novel, it is its deeper unity that gives the novel its weight. It frees the novel from the danger of becoming accidental and aimless, as the aim is immanently present everywhere in the piece of art. When, however, such a life-view is missing, the novel tries to insinuate all kinds of theories (dogmatic, doctrinal compositions) at the expense of poetry, or enters into an infinite and accidental relationship with the writer's flesh and blood."¹⁶

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.* 55. According to KIERKEGAARD, ANDERSEN's novel is not really a novel.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 41.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* 39.

It is this last warning that applies to ANDERSEN. KIERKEGAARD believes that ANDERSEN's novel lacks what makes a novel a novel – “the immortal spirit that survives the whole.”¹⁷ He does not mind the presence of the author's opinions in the novel (on the contrary, that is what he is asking for), but he minds the “*residuum* of the writer's finite character.”¹⁸ In his diary KIERKEGAARD notes that “a writer should always give some of his personality, just like Christ feeds us with His Body and Blood,”¹⁹ but he believes that ANDERSEN goes in a wrong direction – without a life-view his literary sharing becomes an *infinite and accidental relationship with the writer's flesh and blood*. Not ANDERSEN steers the wheel of the novel but the novel takes over and picks arbitrary fragments from ANDERSEN's personality instead of illustrating the inner infinity of human richness. A flesh-and-blood-bound novel does not approach its readers *de profundis*²⁰.

KIERKEGAARD hits hard and states cruelly that “(ANDERSEN's) novels are in such a physical connection with the author that their origin cannot so much be considered a *production*, but rather an *amputation*.”²¹

He demands the detachment of the novel-writer from his novel in order to enable him to bring forward as much of his maturity as possible. Otherwise *reflection* might be replaced by images and depth by a shiny veneer. KIERKEGAARD speaks about the “temptation to produce, instead of developing oneself, to hide inner emptiness under colourful pictures” and even goes on to accuse ANDERSEN of having a “poorly developed mind.”²²

Symparankromenoi vs. Andersen?

The harsh critique of KIERKEGAARD can sound unjust especially when one inspects the hard inner fight ANDERSEN tried to depict in his novel. The novel is in ANDERSEN's own words “a truly spiritual flower that grew out of the tension I suffered from between my poet-nature and the exceedingly hard surroundings.”²³

¹⁷ GARFF. 127.

¹⁸ KIERKEGAARD, *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer*. 39.

¹⁹ *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. II A. 739.

²⁰ KIERKEGAARD, *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer*. 25.

²¹ *Ibid.* 41. / ²² *Ibid.* 32.

But to defend the other party, let us say that KIERKEGAARD as a critic is not identical with KIERKEGAARD as a reader. The last page of his treatise makes this clear and speaks about his *feeling of gratitude* towards ANDERSEN and about ANDERSEN's contribution to the poetic atmosphere of the contemporary society that KIERKEGAARD pegs as *ecclesia pressa*²⁴.

And in fact KIERKEGAARD seems to have a sense of self-criticism too. GARFF notes in his KIERKEGAARD biography that "from this perspective the title (=From the Papers of One Still Living) *can* be read as KIERKEGAARD's indirect admission that he cannot call himself dead/detached (afdød) either, that he too is still alive and just like ANDERSEN does not fulfil the desired dimension of a life-view. His critique of ANDERSEN's autobiographical work thus has to a certain degree an autobiographical character."²⁵

But let us go back to KIERKEGAARD's future friends – *Symparane-kromenoi* (ie. *Symparanenekromenoi*, συμπαρανεκρωμενοι). As we have mentioned, KIERKEGAARD found the term in the *Dialogues of the Dead* of LUCIAN of Samosata in the form of *paranekroi* (παρανεκροι)²⁶. He becomes interested in the term and looks for it in other sources. He finds it in the Bible in the form *nenekromenos* (νενεκρωμενος, Letter to the Hebrews 11, 12)²⁷. The term is also used by Greek Church fathers in yet another form – *synnekroysthai* (συννεκρουσθαι, to die away with someone).

Slowly but surely the concept becomes one of the central concepts of KIERKEGAARD's philosophy and theology. It is not possible to elaborate the far-reaching implications of this concept within the framework of this study, but some partial explanations have to be given.

But before entering the discourse on the meaning of "dying away", let us reiterate that KIERKEGAARD joins ANDERSEN in the *company of the imperfect* (GARFF: ufuldkommenhedens fællesskab) by alluding to the fact that he himself is not *dead enough* either. Thus neither Søren nor Hans Christian can see themselves as *Symparane-kromenoi* (Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι).

²⁴ KIERKEGAARD, *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer*. 57.

²⁵ GARFF. 129.

²⁶ LUCIAN of Samosata, *Dialogues of the Dead*. 2, 1.

²⁷ *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. II A. 490.

Afdøelse – Dying away (Jerusalem and Athens)

“The words Dying (to, away), to Die (to, away), One Who Has Died (to, away), are relatively rare in Danish. The Danish terms consist of forms of the verb “at dø” (to die) and the preposition “af” (from) which denotes negative movement and the actualisation of something negative. (...) Though the Danish terms have the same contents as the Latin *mortificatio*, *mortificare* and *mortificatus*, they differ from the Latin in being intransitive,”²⁸ Marie MIKULOVÁ THULSTRUP explains in her exposition of KIERKEGAARD’s terminology.

She also remarks that the Danish terms *Afdøelse*, *Afdøen* and *Afdøethed* refer rather to the ‘state of mortification’ than to the process itself²⁹.

In the Bible that KIERKEGAARD owned (Lutheran edition, published in 1824) the term “at afdø” appears in this form only twice (Colossians 2,20 and 1Peter 2,24). But KIERKEGAARD understandably enough looked for it elsewhere too.

MIKULOVÁ THULSTRUP remarks that one of the authors that definitely influenced KIERKEGAARD’s understanding and usage of the concept of dying away (to) was Johann ARNDT, whose books (written originally in German) were published in Danish in Christiania (Oslo). In one of his writings ARNDT asks God: “grant me two things: that I may die from myself and the world. For without these two things it is impossible to become a true Christian.”³⁰

Devotional literature was, however, not the only source of KIERKEGAARD’s formulation of the mentioned concept. KIERKEGAARD, who as a Lutheran theology student had to master Latin and Greek to a considerable extent³¹, did not shy away from the originals of the antique sages. In his examination of *dying away* he availed himself of PLATO, most notably of his dialogue *Phaedo*, where SOCRATES’ *process of dying* is pictured in a spectacular way. He refers to a

²⁸ THULSTRUP MIKULOVÁ Marie, *The Significance of Mortification and Dying away (to)*. In *The Sources and Depths of Faith in Kierkegaard*. København, 1980. 160.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ ARNDT Johann, *Sex Bøger om den Sande Christendom*. Christiania, 1763. 75; see also *Fire Bøger om den Sande Christendom* (translated from “*Sintenis*”) Christiania, 1829.

³¹ KIERKEGAARD read just for his graduation 11.000 verses and 1.250 pages of prose in Latin and almost ten thousand verses and three hundred pages of prose in Greek. (Cf. GARFF, SAK. 19–20.)

Phaedonic *dying philosopher* in his *Concept of Anxiety* (Begrebet Angest, 1844) where he actualises SOCRATES' words: "I am afraid that other people do not realise that the one aim of those who practice philosophy in the proper manner is to practice for dying and death."³²

KIERKEGAARD goes back to PLATO's *Phaedo* again in his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Afsluttende Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift, 1846) when mentioning dying "in a Pythagorean sense,"³³ which is a reference to the figure of PHILOLAUS whom SOCRATES suggests for study to his pupils CEBES and SIMMIAS before drinking his fatal cup of hemlock³⁴. And in KIERKEGAARD's diaries there is one more mentioning of dying like SOCRATES, which, however, remains unexplained³⁵.

It is, however, not the reflection on his own physical death that prompts KIERKEGAARD to look at SOCRATES as a *dying philosopher*. KIERKEGAARD is not CATO who reads *Phaedo* before committing suicide in order to escape CÆSAR's tyranny³⁶. Neither is he SENECA who orders the Phaedonic cup of hemlock to escape a more humiliating death by NERO³⁷. KIERKEGAARD is not in a situation of outer danger when he reads PLATO's *Phaedo*. He reads *Phaedo* in his armchair while writing his dissertation *On the Concept of Irony*. But it is exactly *Socratic irony* that makes KIERKEGAARD reflect on *detachment, dying away and emptying out*. He senses that irony produces *creative emptiness*, which is the space where *detachment* is born. "One can ask with the purpose of getting an answer (...) or one can ask without the interest in an answer; but with the aim to use the question to suck out the seeming contents and to leave emptiness behind."³⁸

In his dissertation, KIERKEGAARD bears in mind his critique of ANDERSEN and develops it in connection with SOCRATES. He presents a

³² Cf. KIERKEGAARD Søren Aabye, *Begrebet Angest*. In *Samlede Værker* (Bind IV). København, 1995. 396.; Quote from PLATO, *Phaedo*. In *Complete Works* (ed. COOPER John M.). Indianapolis / Cambridge, 1997. 55.

³³ Cf. KIERKEGAARD Søren A., *Afsluttende Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*. In *Samlede Værker* (Bind VII). Gyldendals Bogklubber, Nordisk Forlag, København, 1995. 296.

³⁴ PLATO, *Phaedo*. 53.

³⁵ Cf. *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. X, 4 A. 463.

³⁶ Cf. PLUTARCH, *Cato the Younger*. In *Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans*. New York, 1992.

³⁷ Cf. TACITUS, *The Death of Seneca*. In *The Annals of Imperial Rome*. London, 1976.

³⁸ KIERKEGAARD, Søren Aabye, *Om Begrebet Ironi*. In *Samlede Værker* (Bind I). København, 1995. 92.

comparison of three “biographers” of SOCRATES – XENOPHON, PLATO and ARISTOPHANES. And similarly to his critique of ANDERSEN he blames XENOPHON for losing the total-view of the Socratic irony. In contrast to ANDERSEN and XENOPHON, he pictures SOCRATES as a *master of detachment*. “The more SOCRATES undermined existence, the more deeply and necessarily must every expression have gravitated towards the ironic totality, which as a spiritual state was infinite, bottomless, invisible and indivisible. But this secret XENOPHON never sensed.”³⁹

It seems to be KIERKEGAARD’s interest to picture SOCRATES as a thinker who naturally cares about the *detachment of his readers* whenever he phrases his statements. In this sense, he is again contrasted to ANDERSEN, whose flesh-and-blood-bound writing style KIERKEGAARD so sharply criticised. “Just like we in nature find examples of places designed in such a bizarre way that those who stand the closest to the speaker cannot hear him, but only those who stand on a certain spot, often quite distant; so it is also with SOCRATES’ statements.”⁴⁰ It is needless to add that KIERKEGAARD believes that serious irony is a “substantial element in PLATO’s *Phaedo*.”⁴¹

As KIERKEGAARD grows older, the notion of dying away (to) assumes more and more an exclusively Christian character. He argues that only in this way one can understand that there are times when “suffering is more blessed than pleasure”⁴² or that “whenever a new quality arises, conceptions are changed.”⁴³ In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* he also speaks of “inward martyrdom” and “hidden inwardness”⁴⁴ as dimensions pertaining to the process of dying away (to).

KIERKEGAARD increasingly begins to understand that dying away (to) is a way to the spiritualisation of one’s own being. He claims that this kind of *dying* is linked with the obligation to become spirit and to understand the importance of suffering⁴⁵.

³⁹ Ibid. 78. / ⁴⁰ Ibid. / ⁴¹ Ibid. 117.

⁴² *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. X, 5 A. 79.

⁴³ Ibid. XI, 2 A. 212.

⁴⁴ KIERKEGAARD, Søren Aabye, *Afsluttende Uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*. In *Samlede Værker* (Bind VII). København, 1995. 497–498.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*. X, 4 A. 588.

⁴⁶ Ibid. XIII, II C 28. 113.

Based on the lectures of H. L. MARTENSEN that KIERKEGAARD attends in Copenhagen he notes in his diary the concept of positive/negative immortality that MARTENSEN expounds in his addresses: "In the positive immortality, the possibility changes into actuality. This begins with rebirth. This is a perpetual coming into being too, therefore we may say: 'One dies to the world.'"⁴⁶

But KIERKEGAARD (just like PLATO or ECKHART) is realistic enough to know that what he writes about is rather the end than the beginning. Thus he remarks with his distinct irony that "if anyone in Denmark were to fulfil the requirement of dying away, one would be looked upon as a madman."⁴⁷

And he does not have too many illusions about himself either: "I am he who has a conception of dying away from the world which is so painful that it makes me wince."⁴⁸

The Critics of KIERKEGAARD's Concept of Dying

KIERKEGAARD's concept of the necessity of dying away (to) as a way of detachment did not seem very convincing to several philosophers of the modern age. Let us mention just three who considered his concept of dying away (to) as dangerous for the notion of (Christian) love: Martin BUBER, Theodor W. ADORNO and Knud E. LØGSTRUP.

There is not enough space within this study to picture deeper levels of the mentioned critiques, but it might be helpful to mention some of their main concerns.

It is mainly BUBER's dialogical philosophy that sees the danger of an excessive individualisation in the concept of dying away. BUBER warns the reader that KIERKEGAARD's ideal of an *individual* (den Enkelte) is in fact not too far from Max STIRNER's ideal of a radical *individualist* (der Einzige)⁴⁹. BUBER also seems to be afraid of the potentiality that one's "dying" brings oneself away from one's neighbour and makes one a half-autistic individuality, talking just to God and oneself. For this BUBER quotes the statement of KIERKEGAARD

⁴⁷ Ibid. XI, 1 A. 166.

⁴⁸ Ibid. X, 3 A. 194.

⁴⁹ Cf. BUBER Martin, *Die Frage an den Einzelnen (Das dialogische Prinzip)*. Heidelberg, 1984. 213; See also STIRNER Max, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Stuttgart, 1972.

⁵⁰ BUBER, 215.

where he says that “everybody should chary about having to do with ‘the others’, and should essentially speak only with God and with oneself.”⁵⁰ As a detailed contextual explanation is to be found in the quoted article of Robert L. PERKINS, I will not go deeper into the sketched polemics⁵¹.

Theodor W. ADORNO presents an even sharper criticism of KIERKEGAARD’s individualised and mortified *individual*. ADORNO’s critique against KIERKEGAARD is no less sharp than KIERKEGAARD’s critique of H. C. ANDERSEN. ADORNO proceeds from criticising KIERKEGAARD’s style of writing, which he pegs as an “endless monologue” and “purposeful boredom,”⁵² to the critique of KIERKEGAARD’s interpretation of the Christian doctrine of the *love for the neighbour*. ADORNO argues that KIERKEGAARD teaches just the love for the *human* in her/his abstractness but does not care about individual human beings. The neighbour becomes just an “incentive” to love, love is transformed into “pure inwardness” and the personal subjective qualities of the neighbour are disregarded. Love becomes *objectless* (objektlos)⁵³. “There is no more neighbour” (es gibt den Nächsten nicht mehr)⁵⁴, the motto of love is *amo quia absurdum* and love is transformed into *qualityless lovelessness* (qualitätslose Lieblosigkeit)⁵⁵.

ADORNO also touches upon a very sensitive point for our discourse when he asserts that “this dialectics of love leads to lovelessness. It requires from love that it should relate to all humans as if they were dead.”⁵⁶ In fact, ADORNO goes on with an analysis of KIERKEGAARD’s treatise “How we Remember the Dead” from his book *Works of Love* (Kjerlighedens Gjerninger, 1847). He calls the love for the helpless dead *sorrowful* and even adds to it the attribute *baroque*⁵⁷.

⁵¹ PERKINS R. L., *A Philosophic Encounter with Buber*. In *Bibliotheca Kierkegaardiana* 8. København, 1971. 255.

⁵² ADORNO Theodor W., *Kierkegaards Lehre von der Liebe*. In *Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*. Frankfurt am Main, 1966. 269.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.* 270–272. / ⁵⁴ *Ibid.* 277.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.* 270–274.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 272. / ⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 290.

⁵⁸ LØGSTRUP Knud E., *Opgør med Kierkegaard*. København, 1967. 61–62.

⁵⁹ GRØN Ame, *Gegenseitigkeit in Der Liebe Tun?* In *Kierkegaard Studies*. Berlin – New York, 1998.; GRØN Ame, *The Dialectic of Recognition in Works of Love*. In *Kierkegaard Studies*. Berlin

Knud E. LØGSTRUP follows the main lines of BUBER's and ADORNO's critique. He elaborates mainly on the social aspect of KIERKEGAARD's mortified individual, whose love he pegs as *acosmic* (not world-oriented) and whose ethics he calls *worldless* (*verdensløs*)⁵⁸. LØGSTRUP is afraid that excessive mortification and individualisation would lead to the loss of interest in social and political aspects of human life and would transform the individual into a pseudo-mystical unit that ceases to be a *zoon politikon*.

It is not the task of this study to confirm or refute the mentioned critical arguments, as there are other studies which deal with such important aspects of KIERKEGAARD's *mortified love* as dialectic of recognition or reciprocity (A. GRØN⁵⁹), moral blindness and moral vision (M. J. FERREIRA⁶⁰) or the phenomenon of repetition (L. REIMER⁶¹).

Let us just close this chapter with a comment by Gregor MALANTSCHUK, concerning LØGSTRUP's socio-political concerns about the involvement of KIERKEGAARD's mortified individual, in which he touches upon KIERKEGAARD's doctrine of the *movement of the infinite resignation* which is fundamental for the understanding of detachment: "The movement towards the infinite means for KIERKEGAARD a movement towards the transcendent as a reality human is supposed to relate to. This movement means first of all a requirement to the human to renounce, ie. a certain kind of negation. This negation is necessary in order to facilitate a differentiation between the transcendence and the immanence that the human hangs on with all of her/his soul. LØGSTRUP remarks about this movement that "for KIERKEGAARD there is no access to transcendence as a positive but through annihilation."⁶² But the way in which KIERKEGAARD uses the word 'annihilation' cannot be matched with 'nothingness', as LØGSTRUP uses it in this connection."⁶³

⁵⁸ FERREIRA M. Jamie, *Moral Blindness and Moral Vision in Kierkegaard's Works of Love*. In *Kierkegaard Studies*. Berlin – New York, 1998.

⁵⁹ REIMER Louis, *Die Wiederholung als Problem der Erlösung bei Kierkegaard*. In *Kierkegaardiana 7*. København, 1968.

⁶² LØGSTRUP, *Opgør med Kierkegaard*. København, 1968. 166.

⁶³ MALANTSCHUK Gregor, *Løgstrups Opgør med Kierkegaard*. København, 1971. 176.

Death ⇒ Life-View ⇒ Novel-Writing ⇒

Symparaneκromenoi

It may seem to the reader that we have gone too far without highlighting the links between the topics we have opened. Let us go into that now.

What is the connection between the conflict KIERKEGAARD–ANDERSEN, the concept of detachment, the dying SOCRATES and the death of KIERKEGAARD's father?

SOCRATES answers this question in an implicit way in his dialogue *Phaedo*: turning the seemingly sad necessity of dying into a positive depth-fed life-view. In fact, KIERKEGAARD does the same – in the shadowy atmosphere of a family stricken by death he writes a treatise asking for a life-view in novel-writing. In fact, LUCIAN of Samosata does the same in his ironic dialogue between Charon and Hermes where he suggests ways how life-lovers can learn from death⁶⁴.

It seems that death can be viewed as a reminder. A reminder of the necessity of detachment. Detachment in turn can function as an incentive for depth-quest, which in KIERKEGAARD's opinion creates a solid basis for serious novel-writing. And serious novel-writing produces timeless novels that survive the author's temporality. Such novels are, according to KIERKEGAARD, the precious legacy of humankind and will always find readers that are scattered throughout the different ages of human history. Their name is Συμπαρανεκρωμενοι and their most fundamental requirement for a novel is its *de-profundis*-character.

⁶⁴ Cf. LÚKIÁNOS, *Šlehy a úsměvy*. Praha, 1969. 22ff.

⁶⁵ Cf. PLATO, *Phaedo*. (118a.) 100.

PART II

A Vision of the Birth of Ecumenical Novel-Writing

Starting the second part of this study, let me first of all congratulate the Slovak language on a new philosophical term that will enter into the world history of novel-writing: *ekuromán* (ecunovel). It is one of the few terms of the philosophy of arts that have been coined in Slovak.

It seems reasonable to suppose that our era is ripe for the birth of ecumenical novel-writing. It is the author's belief that in the era of postmodern and post-denominational literature it could become the herald of depth-based literary reflection inspired by genuine *detachment*, long-term *openness to dialogue* and interest in *grace* and *kenotic love*. As the connection between death and resurrection would naturally be at its core, its incorporation of the notion of the *dying novel-writer* might be an ecumenical continuation of SOCRATES' dream of the dying sage as a Phoenix that cannot be killed in an ultimate way.

Ecumenical novel-writing, based on the fruits of the personal contemplation of the author (ie. life-view), might follow the line of the medieval attitude of *contemplata aliis tradere* – 'share the fruits of your contemplation with others'. The authors of this genre – due to their respect for spiritual depth – might turn out to be some of the finest connoisseurs of irony based on *sophia*, rather than sophistry. Irony as a means of communicating depth might also be groundbreaking for the theological level of ecumenical dialogue. On the other hand, however, ecunovels would most probably only marginally deal with theological or ecclesiological issues of the ecumenical dialogue – they would rather cultivate those parts of the human soul that naturally converge towards depth-based unity, as well as they might try to elaborate new tools of ecumenical communication (eg. ironic dialectic, koan-like dialogue, etc.). These might further understanding on deeper and previously undiscovered levels of dialogue.

The author believes that *Symparaneक्रमνοι* (Συμπαρανεक्रमνοι) would become *curious* about ecunovels. A closer elaboration of the reasons for this supposed curiosity transcends the scope of this article. But to finish this study with a hint for further consideration, let us surround the mentioned curiosity with the haze of a myth. It might namely happen that if a reader of ecunovels decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of SOCRATES by bringing a cock to the temple of ASCLEPIUS⁶⁵, her/his curiosity would increase as s/he would be approaching the temple. She or he might namely start to wonder whether the line of people with baskets in front of the temple does not by chance include some of her/his fellow-*symparaneक्रमνοι*...

Suggested Reading

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