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John Lippitt and George Pattison, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard*. Oxford University Press, 2013. 640 pp. \$165.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780199601301); \$50.00 USD (Paperback ISBN 9780198709794).

This collection is a welcome addition to the reference library on Kierkegaard. Up to this point the primary work of this type has been *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, which is a good collection but by no means able to meet all the primary needs of readers seeking orientation in Kierkegaard. Probably no work on Kierkegaard can fill such a role, but *The Oxford Handbook of Kierkegaard* gives the most thorough and up-to-date guide around. Until a *Blackwell Companion to Kierkegaard* comes along (and such a companion now seems rather unnecessary for a while), this volume is without peer.

This *Handbook* comprises twenty-nine chapters divided into three main parts. The chapters in Part I locate Kierkegaard in his context; those in Part II examine major themes in Kierkegaard's authorship; and Part III examines Kierkegaard's reception by subsequent thinkers and movements.

Several articles provide orientation regarding Kierkegaard's life and authorship. Steen Tullberg provides a helpful summary of the textual inheritance of Kierkegaard's authorship (Ch.1), Edward Mooney discusses the role of pseudonyms and 'style' in the authorship (Ch.10), and Alastair Hannay discusses the ongoing task of translating Kierkegaard (Ch.20). Bruce Kirmmse locates Kierkegaard's place within the artistic and intellectual flourishing of 'Golden Age Denmark' (Ch.2) and George Pattison gives an overview of the social, political, ecclesiastical and geographic particulars of Kierkegaard's Copenhagen (Ch.3). These articles will be useful to beginners, but they also provide depth that will enrich the understanding of more experienced readers.

One of the first things philosophy students learn about Kierkegaard is that he was very critical of Hegel. Some go on to discover that his critique also extends to German Idealism more broadly. But it takes more careful attention to recognize that Kierkegaard's relation to Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel was ambivalent rather than simply adversarial. Consequently, Lore Hühn and Philipp Schwab do a great service by demonstrating the influence of these figures throughout Kierkegaard's authorship. While he was indeed highly critical of the idealist tradition, Kierkegaard also productively appropriated ideas such as Hegel's emphasis on opposition and contradiction in dialectical development, Schelling's emphasis on 'the incommensurability between existence and the concept', and Fichte's ideal of 'choosing the self in its absolute "meaning"' (62). We find similar ambivalence in Kierkegaard's relation to Romanticism. Kierkegaard was especially critical of Romantic irony for its lack of ethical seriousness, but William McDonald also demonstrates Kierkegaard's Romantic occupation with such issues as aesthetics and literary criticism, self-formation, and the challenges in communicating truth that is personally transformative (Ch.5).

Another basic principle of Kierkegaard 101 is that he was severely critical of 'Christendom', i.e., the complicity of the church with the state in an unholy union. Kierkegaard insists that the worldliness of Christendom has nothing to do with the Christianity of the New Testament, which is characterized by suffering and conflict with the world. However, in his chapter on Kierkegaard and the church, Anders Holm raises a good question regarding Kierkegaard's emphasis on suffering. While it is true that the New Testament depicts suffering as an essential feature of following Christ, we might ask whether Kierkegaard's reading of the biblical text is the whole story: 'Where is the joy of the resurrection?' Holm asks (127). Kierkegaard insists that it is often necessary to argue

in a one-sided fashion in order to apply a corrective to the status quo—hence his emphasis on suffering, against the comfortable, self-satisfied religiosity of Christendom. But if a one-sided corrective is necessary to challenge the distortions of Christendom, it is also important to keep this one-sidedness in mind regarding Kierkegaard's interpretation of New Testament Christianity and the church.

There is an ample selection of chapters on other major topics in Kierkegaard's thought, including selfhood (John Davenport), cultural formation (Joakim Garff), society and politics (Merold Westphal), time and history (Arne Grøn), and irony (K. Brian Söderquist). A few chapters also examine Kierkegaard in relation to subsequent thinkers—namely, Nietzsche (Markus Kleinert), Heidegger (Clare Carlisle), Wittgenstein (Anthony Rudd), as well as postmodern and particularly deconstructive readings of Kierkegaard (Steven Shakespeare). There are also helpful chapters discussing Kierkegaard's influence on modern European literature (Leonardo F. List) and English language literature (Hugh S. Pyper), as well as a nice continuity between David Law's chapter on Kierkegaard's relation to the history of theology (Ch.9), Sylvia Walsh's chapter on Kierkegaard's own theology (Ch.15), and Lee C. Barrett's chapter on Kierkegaard's influence on subsequent theology (Ch.27).

One of the merits of this book is that it provides article-sized overviews of some of the most significant Kierkegaard scholarship of the last decade or so, such as Jamie Ferreira's work on Kierkegaard's account of love (Ch.17), which was the focus of her monograph *Love's Grateful Striving* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and several books by other scholars since. The past decade has also brought a surge in attention to Kierkegaard's concept of death, most recently and notably the essays in *Kierkegaard and Death*, edited by Patrick Stokes and Adam Buben (Indiana University Press, 2011). Here Stokes contributes a chapter discussing Kierkegaard's concept of death as well as his views regarding the possibility of an afterlife (Ch.19).

Recent years have also seen growing phenomenological interest in reading Kierkegaard, whether in reading him as a progenitor of phenomenology, a resource for phenomenological insights, or even as a phenomenologist himself. The essays in Jeffrey Hanson's *Kierkegaard as Phenomenologist* (Northwestern University Press, 2010) explore this different phenomenological readings of the Danish thinker, as does the work of such scholars as Arne Grøn and Claudia Welz, who contributes an overview of various phenomenological engagements with Kierkegaard (Ch.23). Is Kierkegaard a phenomenologist? Welz argues that Kierkegaard fits somewhere between the phenomenological approaches of German Idealism and French phenomenology: he practiced phenomenology, in the words of Merleau-Ponty, '*as a manner or style of thinking*', albeit in a more hermeneutical mode than the early ideal of phenomenology as a science freed from presuppositions. Welz sees a certain convergence between Kierkegaard and Heidegger—not in their ethical and theological concerns, but because they both had 'a sense for the abiding *questions* of phenomenology': '*the difficulty of beginning at the beginning*', '*the difficulty of not overlooking the one who is looking*', and '*the difficulty of dealing with negative experiences*' like despair and anxiety (457-58).

Finally, several chapters provide orientation in contemporary work on Kierkegaardian ethics. For Kierkegaard, ethics is a rather different discipline than much of what currently bears that name in academic philosophy. As C. Stephen Evans and Robert C. Roberts put it, 'ethics for Kierkegaard is all about personal transformation' (228). This is why Kierkegaard esteemed the ancient Greeks so highly: they understood that philosophy was an art of existing rather than a merely scholarly topic.

Thus in Kierkegaard's use, the adjective 'Greek' denotes an existentially serious, passionately interested manner of thinking (see Rick Anthony Furtak's chapter on Kierkegaard and Greek philosophy, 132-33). Evans and Roberts argue that Kierkegaard finds the source of ethical normativity in divine authority—specifically, divine commands (215, 218-23). At the same time, Kierkegaard's divine command ethics is fleshed out, so to speak, in a specifically Christian virtue ethics. Evans and Roberts point out Kierkegaard's sympathies for the ancient virtue tradition as well as his efforts to articulate and nurture specifically Christian virtues, such as the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, along with gratitude, contrition, humility, patience, and joy, and such 'trademark Kierkegaardian virtues' as soberness, earnestness, and primitivity (224-26).

Kierkegaard's status as a virtue ethicist also comes up in John Lippitt's chapter on Kierkegaard and recent themes in moral philosophy. One way in which recent moral philosophy became more hospitable to Kierkegaard is through the renewed interest in such concerns as human flourishing, meaning and purpose in human life, and the moral psychology of the virtues (Lippitt, citing an observation by John Davenport and Anthony Rudd, 506). Key figures in this expansion are Charles Taylor, Harry Frankfurt, Martha Nussbaum, Iris Murdoch, Bernard Williams, and Alasdair MacIntyre. Of this group MacIntyre has received the most attention among Kierkegaard scholars, due to his infamous critique of Kierkegaard in *After Virtue*, which reads (or misreads) Kierkegaard as advocating a radically arbitrary choice, disconnected from any sort of human teleology or narrative continuity. Several Kierkegaardians have responded by arguing that Kierkegaard is a virtue ethicist of sorts—though this position has been challenged recently by Sylvia Walsh, who argues that the category of virtue is external to Kierkegaard's authorship. Another aspect of the Kierkegaardian response to MacIntyre has been to argue that Kierkegaard presents an account of narrative identity amenable to MacIntyre's own position. This thesis has been critiqued by such scholars as Stokes and Lippitt, who give a helpful overview to the narrative identity debate (506-14), which continues to rage on in the realm of Kierkegaardiana.

In sum, this volume is an excellent introduction to the contemporary scene in Kierkegaard studies, and given its recent publication in paperback, it is also much more affordable than the earlier hardcover edition. I highly recommend it for any Kierkegaard library.

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