

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist, eds. *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*. Volume 6. Princeton University Press 2012. 705 pp. \$165.00 USD (Hardcover ISBN 9780691155531).

Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Alastair Hannay, David Kangas, Bruce H. Kirmmse, George Pattison, Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Vanessa Rumble, and K. Brian Söderquist, eds. *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*. Volume 7: Journals NB15 - NB20. Princeton University Press 2014. 807 pp. \$150.00 (Hardcover ISBN 9780691160290)

(For reviews of the first five volumes of *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks*, see *Philosophy in Review* 30.2, 105–108; 31.2, 107–10; and 32.6, 485–488.)

Selections from Kierkegaard's journals, notebooks and assorted unpublished papers have been available in English translation for some time. Until now the most complete edition available was the six-volume edition edited and translated by Edna and Howard Hong that was begun by Indiana University Press in 1967. The Hong's edition—which is still in print and still widely used—was much more extensive than all previous English translations of Kierkegaard's journals and papers, but it was still far from complete. The Hong's selected the material that they considered most significant and then, based on their interpretation of these texts, they organized the entries thematically. Consequently even though English readers were given six large volumes to explore, a great deal of material was left out, and the thematic organization adopted by the Hong's made it impossible to get a sense of the context and the development of the ideas expressed in Kierkegaard's journals and papers.

This new edition of *Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks* (hereafter *KJN*) corrects those deficiencies. English readers can now study these texts in exactly the form in which Kierkegaard left them, with no thematic interpretations or structural changes imposed by editors. For example, it was Kierkegaard's practice to crease each journal page vertically to create two columns: in the larger column (generally about 2/3 the width of the page) he entered the main text, while the smaller column was reserved for subsequent commentary—reflections or additions relevant to his original thoughts. Sometimes this smaller column is empty; sometimes it contains just a few remarks; sometimes the afterthoughts in the secondary column exceed the original remarks in the primary column. Occasionally Kierkegaard wrote only a few short notes in the main column and left most of the page empty. *KJN* reproduces all of these features of the original manuscript, including complete pages that are almost entirely blank—and several photographs of Kierkegaard's handwritten text are interspersed throughout each volume to remind us of how photographically faithful this translation is to original. All other textual idiosyncrasies are preserved in this translation, including Kierkegaard's misspellings and abbreviations, and his many techniques for adding emphasis to a word or phrase (single underline; double underline; double underline plus a third wavy underline, etc.). Most importantly, no attempt has been made to clean up, organize or systematize Kierkegaard's writing. The texts are presented exactly as Kierkegaard left them. Footnotes refer the reader to a large collection of explanatory notes that are found in roughly the final third of each volume, but these notes concern only historical, geographical or biographical facts relevant to the journal entries—no attempt is made to interpret or analyze Kierkegaard's writing, and of course the reader can just ignore these notes completely if she chooses.

The technical accomplishment of *KJN* is truly remarkable. The books are a marvel to behold: beautifully bound and printed on archival quality paper with large margins that provide plenty of room for notes. These volumes are not inexpensive, but they are undeniably elegant. (It should be noted that the production of this series has been supported by significant grants from the United States National Endowment for the Humanities, the Danish National Research Foundation, the Danish Ministry of Culture, and Connecticut College.) Critical and scholarly apparatus in these volumes is likewise impeccable. Tools for scholarship are readily available but carefully integrated in a way that doesn't overshadow the text itself. The editors have succeeded in making Kierkegaard's journals, notebooks and papers completely available in English translation, finally, in a form that allows readers to judge the contents of these texts for themselves.

To appreciate fully the long, strange trip that Kierkegaard's journals, notebooks and assorted papers have traveled in order to arrive finally in the complete and elegant form we see in this new edition, I strongly recommend the book, *Written Images: Søren Kierkegaard's Journals, Notebooks, Booklets, Sheets, Scraps, and Slips of Paper* (hereafter *Scraps*), by Niels Jørgen Cappelhorn, Joakim Garff, and Johnny Kondrup (trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse, Princeton UP, 2003). This fascinating book narrates 'the story of packets and sacks of paper covered with writing, which after a vagabond existence, first in a couple of apartments in Copenhagen, then in the bishop's residence in northern Jutland, finally landed in the Royal Danish Library, where they are today guarded with the greatest of care' (*Scraps* 7). There was tension and controversy right from the start concerning what to do with the enormous quantity of papers that were found in Kierkegaard's apartment after his death in November 1855. Kierkegaard's brother Peter, who became the reluctant custodian of this large and unruly collection of paper for many years because no one else wanted it, was of the opinion that at most a selection of twenty or thirty pages should be published because the collection as a whole was so wildly unsystematic and disorganized that no one could make sense of it if it were published in its entirety, and also because much of the material was spiritually dangerous and would 'ensnare many individuals in perdition' (*Scraps* 39-40). (Peter Christian Kierkegaard was a bishop in the Danish Lutheran Church at the time and he was also the subject of many critical remarks in his brother's journals and papers.) When H. P. Barford published the first volume of his selections of the journals and papers in 1869 the reviews were almost universally negative. Barford expressed his frustration with the situation thus: 'Some people urge me in the strongest possible terms to publish absolutely the whole of Kierkegaard's literary remains, every single line, every jot and tittle. Others wish to have only to have a particular aspect of his inner life or activity illuminated, and still others wish to have precisely that aspect excluded from discussion' (*Scraps* 55). With the publication of *KJN* the trajectory of Kierkegaard's journals and papers has finally reached its terminus and the longstanding argument about what to do with these strange texts has been settled. Finally every single line, every jot and tittle, has been published.

Each volume of *KJN* is derived from two volumes of *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter* (hereafter *SKS*), the exhaustive Danish edition, initiated in 1997, of everything that Kierkegaard ever wrote. Both *KJN* and *SKS* are works in progress. When *SKS* is completed it will number fifty-five volumes: 28 volumes of Kierkegaard's own writing and 27 volumes of commentary on that writing (there are 27 volumes of commentary for the 28 volumes of text because the commentary on *SKS* 2 and 3, which contain the texts of *Either/Or*, was combined into a single volume). *KJN* will have eleven volumes in all when it is completed, and it follows the organizational system introduced by *SKS*, which divides Kierkegaard's writing into four categories: (1) works published by Kierkegaard during his lifetime (*SKS* 1-14 are the original texts, and *SKS* K1-K14 are the corresponding volumes of

commentary); (2) works that appeared to be finished and ready to publish, though Kierkegaard did not publish them in his lifetime (original texts are in *SKS* 15-16 and *SKS* K15-K16 are commentary volumes); (3) journals, notebooks, and loose papers that were found in Kierkegaard's home after his death (*SKS* 17-27 contain Kierkegaard's writing and *SKS* K17-K27 are commentary); (4) letters and biographical documents (*SKS* 28 with commentary in *SKS* K28). The eleven volumes of *KJN* correspond to the eleven volumes of Kierkegaard's writing that *SKS* assigns to category (3). Each volume of *KJN* includes the translated text of the corresponding volume of *SKS* 17-27, along with most of the explanatory notes contained in the volumes of commentary on the texts of category (3) (*SKS* K17-K27), plus some additional explanatory notes that the *KJN* editors thought would be useful for non-Danish readers unfamiliar with 19th Century Danish culture and history.

Kierkegaard's writings that are assigned to category (3) in *SKS* consist of four distinct groups:

- (1) Ten journals that were labeled 'AA' through 'KK' by Kierkegaard. (There is no journal labeled 'II'.) These journals are reproduced in *SKS* 17 and 18; the corresponding volumes of *KJN* are 1 and 2.
- (2) Fifteen notebooks that have been numbered by the editors of *SKS* according to the order in which Kierkegaard wrote in them. The Danish texts of all these notebooks are collected in *SKS* 19 and the English translation is found in *KJN* 3.
- (3) Thirty-six journals that Kierkegaard labeled NB1 - NB36. These journals are found in *SKS* 20-26, and eventually they will all be translated in *KJN* 4-10 (volume 8 was published in August 2015; volumes 9-10 are not yet completed).
- (4) An assortment of loose papers which are collected in *SKS* 27 and which will eventually make up volume 11 of *KJN*.

Volumes 6 and 7 of *KJN*, which are the focus of this review, are drawn from the journals Kierkegaard labeled NB11 - NB14 and NB15 - NB20 respectively, along with commentary from the *SKS* volumes K22 and K23.

There has always been a tension concerning what sort of authority should be assigned to Kierkegaard's journals and papers, especially since Kierkegaard was so meticulous about undermining his own authority as an author through the project he called 'indirect communication'. Confronted by a labyrinthine, indirectly communicated work such as the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, written (we are told) not by Kierkegaard but rather by a certain 'Johannes Climacus' who doesn't exist, but who nevertheless informs us that what he has written 'contains the notice that everything is to be understood in such a way that it is revoked, that the book has not only an end but has a revocation to boot' (619), a reader naturally feels disoriented almost to the point of panic. In such a disoriented condition we desperately want to find someone who is in charge—some voice of authority that can tell us what this unruly text means. There is a long tradition of looking to Kierkegaard's journals and papers for this authoritative voice based on the assumption that here we will find no indirect communication: here we can finally lift the veil and observe the author's true intentions and therefore the true meaning of his complicated texts.

Perhaps the best example of this approach is the fact that Kierkegaard's brother Peter chose to publish exactly one text from the journals and papers when they were in his exclusive custody: the

essay ‘The Point of View for My Work as an Author’, which is helpfully subtitled, ‘A Direct Communication, Report to History’. It’s not hard to imagine why Peter chose this essay. It seems to present itself as a guide for the perplexed, a straightforward answer book for everyone who is puzzled by the bizarre menagerie of books that were attributed to pseudonymous authors and which speak in such a cacophony of conflicting voices. And the direct communication that this essay provides also has the virtue of returning Kierkegaard’s work to a comforting place within the status quo, since it announces that everything Kierkegaard wrote was part of a single, univocal project: the purpose was religious from beginning to end. It’s easy to see why Peter thought that this essay was all that needed to be published from the enormous collection of journals and papers that his brother left behind, and why so many other readers since that time have turned to the journals and papers in the same spirit in search of a final authority.

But the more one studies the journals and papers as a whole, instead of singling out one comforting text, the more difficult it becomes to think of these works as the last word in Kierkegaard’s authorship or the key to clarifying or systematizing the questions posed by that authorship. In the twenty NB journals reproduced in *KJN* 6 and 7 Kierkegaard returns over and over again to questions concerning the very idea of summarizing or explaining the entirety of his authorship in a single authoritative voice or from a single point of view, and every entry on this question only complicates it further. In these journals Kierkegaard first considers and then rejects the idea of publishing ‘The Point of View for My Work as an Author’, and his many reflections on this project suggest that Peter’s interpretation of that text was a misunderstanding. For example, Kierkegaard makes the following entry, which he titles, ‘On the Completed Work Concerning Myself’, in *KJN* 6:287: ‘The difficulty with publishing the pieces about my writings is and continues to be that I have really been used without really knowing it myself, or without knowing it fully; and now, for the first time, I understand and can see the whole of it—but then of course I cannot say “I” But this is my limit: I am a pseudonym’. Or consider this entry, to which Kierkegaard has given the title ‘On My Writings’, in *KJN* 6:312: ‘The heterogeneity must by all means be maintained: here we have an author, not a cause in the objective sense, but a cause for which an individual has stood on his own’. And in *KJN* 7:124 Kierkegaard writes: ‘On the Publication of Writings about Myself. “The Accounting” cannot be published now either. As I have always understood, there is a poetic element in me which precludes me from including myself in the account.... One single word concerning myself then a *metabasis eis allo genos* has been made and I will be unable to stop’. These and many more journal entries complicate and destabilize any attempt to use the journals and notebooks as a direct communication with clear, unambiguous answers. The ‘Søren Kierkegaard’ who speaks in these texts might be just as much of a pseudonym as Victor Eremita, Johannes Climacus, or any of the many other pseudonyms that Kierkegaard deployed in his authorship.

Though many readers will no doubt continue to turn to Kierkegaard’s journals and papers in search of a way to systematize and simplify this authorship, the pseudonymity and polyvocality of these texts will frustrate such efforts. As the history of these documents illustrates, a reader must always make choices concerning how to understand them. The fact that *KJN* finally gives English readers access to the entirety of Kierkegaard’s posthumous papers only adds to the richness and the range of choices at the reader’s disposal.

Stuart Dalton, Western Connecticut State University