

FROM THE GARDEN OF THE DEAD:

JOHANNES CLIMACUS ON THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS INWARDNESS¹

*What is the essence of night,
if not lack, need, and longing?*

-- Schelling²

Climacus reports a scene overheard, seen in a fugitive glance through leaves as he sat on a bench at twilight in ‘the garden of the dead’, a cemetery, most likely Copenhagen’s *Assistens Kirkegård*. The scene is the grief of a grandfather mourning at the grave of his son, and speaking tearfully of the meaning of that death to a ten-year-old boy, his grandson, now fatherless. The ‘garden of the dead’, as it is called, is not at the city’s center, but at some remove, not out in the wooded parklands, but nevertheless sufficiently alive with nature’s leafy shadows and open skies that Climacus can exalt in a kind of minor ecstasy over the coming of night -- as if night were an invitation for a “nocturnal tryst”, a beautiful prelude to the more tearful tableau ahead. In his lyrical evocation, night beckons with the promise of a

tryst . . . with the infinite, persuaded by the night’s breeze as in a
monotone it repeats itself, breathing through forest and meadow, and
sighing as though in search of something, urged by the distant echo in

¹ This essay is to appear in a collection published by Cambridge University Press, edited by Rick Furtak, to accompany Alastair Hannay’s new translation of Kierkegaard’s *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs: a Mimic, Pathetic, Dialectic Compilation: an Existential Contribution*, by Johannes Climacus, Cambridge 2010. *Postscript* quotes, marked “CUP- ”, refer to the new translation.

² *The Deities of Samothrace, (Über die Gottheiten von Samothrake, 1815)*, trans. and intro. R.F. Brown, Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977.

oneself of the stillness as if intimating something, urged by the sublime calm of the heavens, as if this something had been found, persuaded by the palpable silence of the dew as if this were the explanation and infinitude's refreshment, like the fecundity of a quiet night, only half understood like the night's semi-diaphanous mist. (CUP 197)

The coming of night is only half-understood. Kant takes the sublime to be present in the only half-understood power of ocean storms or present in the vast wonder of starry heavens, both beyond straightforward representation. Climacus gives us a downscaled but still tremulous gentle sublime, far from *Sturm and Drang*. He gives the half-understood "semi-diaphanous mist" of the night, the breathing, sighing, of a breeze, the "palpable silence of the dew."

I. THE GENTLE SUBLIME OF THE NIGHT

The Kantian sublime is an awesome occasion. One feels an initial humility, even fear and powerlessness, and then a recuperative sense of uplift – *How great to be viewing* such energy or vastness! This uplifting moment before great storms or vast skies, as Kant has it, reminds us of our rational dignity.³ Climacus sketches a rather different gentle and kindly sublime, an occasion to feel the heavens' alluring repose and calm. The half-understood beckoning of the night sky awakens an echo in oneself of stillness and calm. The repose is perhaps faint, incomplete. "What is the essence of night", Schelling asks, "if not lack, need, and longing?"⁴ If a nocturnal tryst is partly expectation of refreshment, troubles stilled, nevertheless it is equally

³ See my critique of Kant's position in *The Loss of Intimacy in American Thought: Recovering Personal Philosophy from Thoreau to Cavell*, London, Continuum, 2009, Ch 4 "Death and the Sublime."

⁴ Friedrich Schelling, "The Dieties of Samothrace," *AAR Studies in Religion*, ed Robert F. Brown, Scholar's Press, Missoula, Montana, 1977, p. 18.

the night's "sighing as though in search of something", the sense of perhaps endless yearning, unquenchable thirst, despite having an intimation of what would set yearning at rest.

The twilight offers the allure of a tryst, but no tryst is without anxiety. We ride the still breeze, "sighing as though in search of something", but it is we who sigh and search, anxious should the night provide nothing. Night's restless intimations are restless intimations of the soul. And we are in the garden of the dead, where the coming of dark is the coming of death, at best intimating "refreshment" half-seen. We are in need of the promised refreshment of the infinity of the night as relief from self-torment, worry, and unnamed wounds. But this relief or salvation will not congeal as a savior seen through a dark glass, but will speak through "silence of the dew", and be seen through "semi-diaphanous mist."

This lyrical evocation of nature, where "the sublime calm of the heavens" opens toward "infinitude's refreshment", is delivered by a writer not quite a Christian, a self-described humorist, in fact, yet it bears comparison with Kierkegaard's Christian evocations of nature in his eulogy to the lilies and the birds in the three discourses of 1849. George Pattison notes that in these discourses, nature "signals a kind of transcendence" that raises "the anxiety of self-relation".⁵ In this, the pre-Christian and Christian perspectives are as one. It is as if nature impinged in the discourses, or in this cemetery night, to instruct me in the uncertain relation of myself to myself. In the discourses this is achieved by display of the repose of a lily or bird, of a contentment human spirit lacks, yet yearns for.

In this *Postscript* passage the anxiety-fraught relation of myself to myself is achieved by display of the night breeze or mist, only half-telling a story, urged by the self that half knows its

⁵ See George Pattison, "*Poor Paris!*" *Kierkegaard's Critique of the Spectacular City*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999, 128f. Marcia Robinson reports that the 4th century Ephram the Syrian sings of God as a luminous darkness.

own incompleteness and need. We should note that both Kierkegaard and Climacus avoid what Pattison calls “naïve pastoralism” or hope for a restoration of “a lost plenitude of immediacy.” The sketch of the restless night instead instills what he calls “luminous [and] dark expressions of anxiety”.⁶ One source of this “luminous and dark anxiety” is the uncertainty of its source: the restless night is propelled (“urged”) by the restless soul, yet night also has its original restlessness produce an “echo” in the soul, as if *it* -- the *night*-- were the source of unease. Our deepest yearnings flow from the night of the soul and from the night of the heavens.

The mood or atmosphere (*Stimmung*) for this lyrically dialectical meditation on death and inwardness, delivered mid-way through the *Postscript* in half-a-dozen pages, is set by the sky above and fresh grave below, and centered by a lyricist sitting on a bench, wondering if his life has direction.⁷ The mood of a serene yet restless breeze offsets noisy city bustle and frantic distraction. The lyricism is not to be set aside as merely decorative. As in *Fear and Trembling* (another “dialectical lyric”), there are dialectical displays, a play of abstractions begging to be unpacked conceptually, but the lyrical is just as essential.⁸

We can step beyond the terror of Mt. Moriah, suspend the mood as we unpack what might be meant by a suspension of ethics; or we might step beyond the restless garden of death to dispassionately unpack the expression “truth is subjectivity”, or the meaning of “indirect communication.” To leap immediately to dialectical formulations, however, and stay there, is to risk missing the animating surround. It’s the setting of mobile and varying things that speak, the fluid settings, lyrically evoked, that give abstractions life, and from which dialectical

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ The scene appears almost accidentally, begins and ends with little fanfare or warning, CUP, 197-203.

⁸ I take the subtitle’s concatenation, “a mimic, pathetic, dialectic compilation”, to encompass the lyric within mime and the deep tragic feelings of pathos (or the ‘pathetic’). And any number of passages (apart from the one focused here) are by ordinary standards highly lyrical.

formulas are at least one step removed. The necessary setting here includes the old man, grandson, and Climacus, a screen of leafy boughs, all framing a theatrical tableau, as I see it. And perhaps accompanying the speech and stage-sets that evoke the night, from the orchestra pit there floats a little night music to accentuate this anxious tryst with the infinite.

In *Sickness Unto Death*, soul or self is depicted in bare bones abstraction as “a relation to a relation that relates to itself”.⁹ *Postscript* can depict faith or “subjective truth” abstractly as “the objective uncertainty” held in “the most passionate inwardness.”¹⁰ But as we’ve seen, Climacus also reads faith’s uncertainties, and the soul it infuses, in experiential terms, as experience of the night’s yearning invitation and his reciprocal yearning. To be ensouled is rendered at this point in expansive narrative imagery of night’s breathing, urged on by stillness of soul, as if the two were in deepest communion: “the night’s breeze . . . repeats itself, breathing through forest and meadow, and sighing as though in search of something, urged by the distant echo in oneself of the stillness as if intimating something”. The sighing of night is the poetic other side of a sighing soul; and a sighing soul is the poetic other side of the night breeze, both yearning for an elusive rest, intimated in the allure of the silent dew.¹¹

II. *NOTHING SPECIAL, AT FIRST*

Climacus seeks what the *dead speak*, what death speaks *to him*. It can’t be an accident that he lingers in a cemetery at dusk. A glance ahead assures us: he will overhear a moving graveside

⁹ The passage begins with human being defined as spirit, and spirit, as self. I prefer thinking of spirit and self to be best rendered as “soul” – mainly because “self” has become a term strongly associated now with secular self-realization. See *Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Alastair Hannay, Penguin, 1989.

¹⁰ CUP, 171.

¹¹ This sense of a person’s ensoulment in and by the night is not a causal relation, as if the physiology of anxiety caused the skies to spin, or the spin of the sky caused the brain to spin. The relationship is one of poetic fit, as lightening portends a shock to the heart, and a shock to the heart portends lightening.

address on how death disrupts the living, puts the dead under judgment, and asks of the living that they heed their lives. This elegy, overheard through shadows and leaves, is not meant for him, but he nevertheless comes to *take* it as meant for him. He's taken by it and takes it up as his own. Climacus will call this (somewhat misleadingly), "appropriation". But to my ear, "appropriation" has too many overtones of stealing: "appropriation of funds," and so forth. There's an initial moment of being *taken* by something – which one *then* internalizes or absorbs as one's own. It's as if I *get appropriated* (before I appropriate).

The old man grieves for his lost son, newly buried. He fears for his son's peace, for he was caught up in the diversions of philosophical speculation. This is worse, in his view, than an idle distraction. His son, along with many of the Copenhagen intelligentsia, had been caught up in a massive illusion. He had come to mistake philosophical and historical speculation *about* faith as a substitute -- for faith. The father knows in his bones that this disqualifies his son from salvation.

Putting aside dialectical finesse, Climacus could make the point this way: objective, intellectual analysis and debate is absolutely *not* an engagement with Christianity that is higher, because more erudite, than simple Christian faith. Nothing prevents an atheist from producing a perfectly adequate analysis of Christian faith. The old man grieves at not having the requisite erudition (as he sees it) to warn his son that abandoning faith for the analysis of it has put his soul at risk. Climacus grieves at the old man's having been denied a restful old age, so anxious he is for his son as he faces God's judgment. But as we overhear Climacus overhear the old man, we might ask why the man unburdens his heart to the child -- in this way, at this time?

We might think that his first priority would be to console the boy, help him through the trauma of having lost his father, and through his fears -- now that he has neither father nor

mother nor other family to care for him, save only an old man, with limited years. Apparently the old man is less sensitive to the immediate pain of the child than to the urgent need, as he sees it, to warn him of his father's perdition, and to ask for a promise from the child that he will resist the temptation of that seductive but dangerous path. Though he failed to save his son, he might save his grandson. Nevertheless, this seems like an inopportune time to make his plea, given the child's distress.

This scene of inadvertent spying is opened obliquely. Climacus reports, quite disarmingly, "What happened is quite simple." There's nothing simple, however, about learning from the dead. A disingenuous opening makes us lower our guard. Or perhaps we're meant to see that something "quite simple" can bring the extraordinary in tow. We encounter an extraordinary transfiguration in his life, a moment of decision, brought on by thinking inwardly about death. Yet what happened in objective space was indeed, "quite simple." He sat on a bench and overheard a conversation. But however insignificant the public appearance, that moment of overhearing was the moment to receive a vocation, a sense, as he says, of direction, or more forcefully, to receive a "decisive summons to come on a definite track." (CUP, 202). The summons is well-timed. Subjectively, he is ready for this extraordinary event. As he puts it, speaking to himself, "You are after all tired of life's diversions, you are tired of girls that you love only in passing, you must have something that fully occupies your time. Here it is." (Ibid.)

Now this may seem a bit forced, stilted, or contrived. Climacus goes on to figure the riddle of death and vocation as "something like an intricate criminal case in which the very complex circumstances made pursuit of the truth difficult". (CUP 202) He speaks as if the solution to how I should live could be solved like a complex murder mystery: objectively. But

I propose that we be lenient with Climacus. He hasn't, after all, hit on just the right way to say what's going on, for him or for others. The tale is at best half-told. He is flooded by the most moving scenario he has ever witnessed, finds himself irrevocably summoned, and his response, compelled. He concedes all this, yet he is too sophisticated to admit easily to being 'swept away' by a mysterious passion. He compensates, accordingly, in a contrary direction. He pictures himself like a detective overseeing a field of possibilities. Some are eliminated. "You are tired of girls that you love only in passing". The solution to life's riddle dawns: the old man has given him a bright idea about how better to occupy himself. He will devote himself to an exposure of the fraud that is speculative philosophy. This begins to sound like a deliberate resolution. Come to think of it, I suppose a calling or vocation falls halfway between brute summons and studied resolve.

There is a further irony to mention. Climacus attests to having been given a direction by his overhearing these words. However, before he begins narrating this scene, he disavows in advance the possibility that he is given a "call". "Even if a call was issued to him [the child], in following it I myself, however, am without any call". (196) I hear this as a kind of pre-emptive self-mocking at the start of a scene that resembles Climacus' later revocation of the treatise as a whole. Here he preempts our wish to take the 'incident' as having much bearing on *him*. Yet in just a few pages, he will speak, as we know, of a "decisive summons to come on a definite track".

He downplays his readiness for "a call" in part because he is skittish about commitment. Climacus is a "humorist", aware of Christianity but not quite engaged, hovering well shy of commitment, looking in on what he understands very well. All the while, he's wryly content to be an amused outsider. In that sense it may be true that Climacus is "without any call." On the

other hand, at that moment in the garden he is most assuredly “called” to the vocation of *humorist*. His task is not to become a Christian but to engineer an exposé. He’ll expose the illusion that in the hands of philosophy, Christianity is alive and well, and far better than it would be otherwise. If there can be non-religious vocational “calls”, then he is indeed “called”. Another reason he might downplay, or qualify, this moment of receiving vocation is that he doesn’t want to report that here and now, *objectively* (as it were) -- *directly imparted* -- is the straightforwardly identifiable moment of his “conversion” or “call”.¹²

From an *objective* angle, “what happened” was simple: He sat down and overheard an intimate conversation by the fresh earth of a grave: no Heavens rained fire, nor Whirlwinds spoke, nor Ghosts rose from their graves. Yet by relating “the most affecting scene I have ever witnessed”, Climacus positions himself, at least for the moment, as a subjective thinker, one who is affected by grief and death and moved by their lyrical expression.¹³ As author of this great tome, a “postscript” laid out in multiple sections and chapters in over 600 dense pages, Climacus appears largely as an objective thinker, making a more or less objective case for the truth of subjectivity. But ever and again, as in this graveside scene, he slips into a confessional and witnessing modes of thinking and address that will place him (at those moments) well *within* subjective space, and not just describing it from without.

In the space of subjectivity, Climacus is subject to the intimations of the night mist, and to an onslaught of earnestness about the direction his life should take. Far from simple, what happened might display in but a few pages large pieces of what *Postscript* portends and declares by longer, dialectically quite intricate means. Readied by the yearning breeze, he becomes privy to the pleading words that will speak to his yearning. Hidden by trees, afraid to

¹² See Hannay’s discussion of revocation and humorist in his contribution to this volume, XXX.

¹³ See Hannay’s essay in this volume, p. XXX.

move lest he disturb the pair, Climacus takes in the graveside effusion, and takes in the words as addressed especially to him. Subjectivity includes the capacity to see and feel from the standpoint of other subjectivities. As Climacus confides, he is sequentially the old man who sees the ruse of philosophy pretending to surpass faith, the child who is overcome with the grandfather's demand that he pledge his life in a direction opposite to his father's, and the silent, invisible, but haunting corpse, the one whose silence speaks of a life squandered and now facing perdition. (CUP 200)

The old man, hair chalked white with age, enacts a faith that flows in a social space that links three generations, that includes an invisible listener, an utter stranger, as well as an invisible corpse. This social play of faith and faithlessness all starts with a dead son who prompts the inwardness of the old man, who seeks to prompt the inwardness of the child, a concatenation of affect prompting the inwardness of Climacus. It manifests a riddle: the space of inwardness and subjectivity is at first blush solitary but it is also a shared, social, space. As Climacus will put it, "inwardness [is] the natural form of interpersonal association."¹⁴ (203)

Although Climacus admits he is an onlooker, a witness to a scene he observes at some remove, it would be a mistake to figure him as standing outside subjective space. He is not exterior to the events he overhears in the way an objectifying voyeur or an objective note taker gathering material for a play or a novel might be. After all, he is subjectively involved as he sets the tone of his hearing, or finds it, as poetic. He finds himself susceptible to the "fecundity" of a twilight that sighs and is "in search of something." He's wrapped in portents and persuasions of dew, in search not of something objective to which his soul might be indifferent, but of a meaning for his life. His is a place of subjective yearning – a place open to

¹⁴ I return to this enigma in section V, below.

calling. Only a person well free from the seductions of objectivity could find a place so richly promising. He waits “womanlike” for the infinite about to appear, half-appear, in “the night’s semi-diaphanous mist.” This is not the place of objective third-personal reports. Nor is it the place of a stare meant to objectify the other, the place of the reductive, masculine, other-freezing gaze.

III. *SPEECH IN A RIDDLE*

There is a further aspect to the twilight that I have yet to bring out. Before he begins the evocation of a nocturnal tryst, Climacus finds the twilight speaking a riddle. But what is the riddle of twilight – or is it two or three riddles?

Evening’s leave-taking of the day, and of the one who has lived that day, is a speech in a riddle. Its reminder is like the solicitous mother’s admonition to the child to be home in good time. But its invitation, even if the leave-taking is innocent in thus being misunderstood, is an inexplicable beckoning, as though repose were to be found only by staying out for the nocturnal tryst, not with a woman but womanlike, with the infinite . . . (Ibid.)

As evening says goodbye to the day, and to all who have lived through it, it speaks a riddle, something uncanny, incongruous. I’m convinced Climacus has more than one riddle in mind, but at the least he alludes to the enigma that night speaks yet is silent, that the “silence of the dew” can “explain” -- riddles known to the Psalmist:

The heavens tell God’s glory
and His handiwork sky declares.
Day to day breathes utterance

And night to night pronounces knowledge.
 There is no utterance and there are no words,
 their voice is never heard.

Ps. 19:2-4

There is neither voice, nor hearing, nor words -- yet heavens tell, sky declares, day utters, night pronounces.¹⁵ His readers will remember this Biblical verse as riddling speech. The heavens have inwardness and the capacity to speak expressively from the heart -- and yet do not have inwardness or expression. Climacus then frames a riddle or enigma of farewells.

For evening to say anything is a riddle but to say *farewell* quickly doubles it. Climacus assimilates the farewell of evening to the farewell of a mother who bids her child goodbye. She warns her not to stay out too late, to come home in good time. As in a fairytale, she might say, "Beware the woods, where darkness comes early". And where is the incongruous here?

A child needs the assurance of a safe return to a mother's embrace and the bravery to venture into the dark, if she will. The riddling discordance is that the mother both hides and reveals the *risk* of there being no safe return, and the knowledge that for mortals there is always one final cancellation of safe return. The child ventures out, *must* venture out, with the mother's blessing, but also with the mother's reservations, her fears. The world welcomes and repels, offers adventure and delight no child should be denied, and offers terror and danger no child should suffer. The mother who says "farewell, return in good time", delivers the child good cheer, confidence that it can set out on its own -- yet she lives also in dread that it can venture out, perhaps never to return. Her "good bye" and "until later" speak a riddle of

¹⁵ This is Robert Alter's translation. He comments, "The heavens speak, but it is a wordless language." Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*, New York, W.W. Norton, 2007, p. 60. The New American Standard reads, "There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard." To smooth out wrinkles (and riddles), The King James Version (unhappily) reworks the text: "There is no speech nor language where their voice is *not* heard" (my emphasis). I'm grateful to Marcia Robinson who heard the resonance between Psalm 19 and Climacus' riddle.

farewells.

Themes of leaving and coming home, of coming into existence and perishing, preoccupy Climacus in *Philosophical Crumbs*, as well as in *Repetition* and *Fear and Trembling*. Day follows night, and for the most part there's no riddle in that. Riddles are not always easy to spot, nor to answer with tact: a reliable riddle is liable to be misunderstood, as most disquieting enigmas are. Sarah might bid Isaac "to return in good time" hardly imagining the danger that awaits him. What shattering riddles are contained in Abraham's farewell, as he sets toward the mountain? How can the young man in *Repetition* both break off from his beloved yet yearn for her return? The possibility of earth's catastrophic destruction before dawn will hardly ever come to mind, yet can we hope to tuck aside the possibility that a child who sets out won't return – the possibility that it will meet evil or accident? The night bids the day adieu, knowing it will return, but in *Repetition* we are reminded that Job must bid his happiness adieu, not knowing it will return, yet being ready to welcome it back -- *should* it return (against all odds). A mother assures her child not to fear in the night, that it will awake in the morning, and when morning arrives, she bids her child adieu for the day.

Farewells confide that the sun will rise, that we will awake, that the world will return, that our friends will *not* enter the grave in the night, even as we know full well that a *final* farewell awaits, when there will be *no* tomorrow, when we *won't* awake, when the beloved will *not* return.

Jonathan Lear remarks that a therapist must have a lively sense of death.¹⁶ In keeping with Climacus' disquieting riddle of a mother fearfully holding yet bravely letting go in bidding her child farewell, the analyst knows that termination, and a respect for it, hangs over

¹⁶Jonathan Lear, *Therapeutic Action: An Earnest Plea for Irony*, New York, Other Press, 2003 (54-7).

developing therapeutic attachments. To “hold” a child’s (or analysand’s) anxieties is always also to anticipate the day when the child (or analysand) will depart to live in freedom. Good mothering, good mentoring, good therapy thus embodies what Heidegger calls a being toward death, an eye on termination that colors all action and thought prior to it. This is part of what Climacus displays as the unending riddle of farewells and the irrepressible hopes of return.

Climacus avers that the mother is innocent in bidding her child goodbye with thoughts for her safe return, just as a weather reporter is innocent in saying ‘til tomorrow’, and the night, innocent in bidding day goodbye. The night is more or less innocent as it welcomes Climacus to the venture of a nocturnal tryst, to be remembered happily on the morrow. In contrast, no such innocent nocturnal tryst is offered the old man. He lives in dread, under an anxious sky. He knows in his bones that he must die, that his son has just died, that his grandson must live under the cloud of his father’s death and the cloud of his grandfather’s death, must live soon enough alone and lonely, though still only a child.

The man knows he has no one to bid *him* to return in good time. He knows that it’s *false* that “the sun also rises” (as the sun now sets, and night bids day adieu); that it’s *false* that each farewell is merely a passing separation before the morrow’s safe reunion. Faith abides these riddle of farewells. It structures inwardness precisely as living safely through such objective uncertainties: the perhaps excusably innocent riddle of hoping for endless tomorrows, and the more troubling and profound riddling perplexities behind questions Climacus had asked earlier in *Postscript*: What is it to die, or to marry, or to pray? And we can now add, what is it to bid adieu, what is it to hear an invitation to a nocturnal tryst?

A “tryst with the infinite” brings love and death in tow. Love and death are at the heart of the scene unfolding under the infinite night sky, as Climacus takes in the anxious love of a

father for his dead son and takes in the grandfather's love for his shaken grandson. Love and death are also at the heart of a mother who bids her child to return in good time and knows her child will one day not return -- yet she keeps faith (or doesn't).

IV. *THE SPEECH OF THE DEAD*

In his opening paragraph where we find the gentle sublime, Climacus tells us that "What happened is quite simple". He evokes the yearning of the breeze, then sits down to enjoy the garden of the dead where, as he tells us, we find relief from the usual "see and be seen" of city streets or parkland riding and carriage paths or even church interiors on a social Sunday morning.¹⁷ People seek *solitary* communion with the dead. One glimpses "an individual vanishing among the trees, not happy to meet and avoiding contact, since he sought the dead and not the living." But Climacus can't let go of his "dialectical" focus on the riddles of farewells. He characterizes the visitors to *Assistens Kirkegård* as coming to say goodbye to their dead. Although Climacus has no particular grave to visit, the weight of his existence bears heavily. Perhaps he takes himself already to be dead, or nearly so.¹⁸ Without explicitly framing it this way, he might wonder if he (as one slightly dead) can commune with himself (as one communes with the dead). After all, the garden's visitors commune with *their* dead. This is the haunting, disturbing riddle of communing with the dead.

¹⁷ A recent (2008) visitor's guide has *Assistens Kirkegård* ". . . a popular place for people to take a stroll, look at the old graves and monuments, and to have a picnic. A flea market operates along its walls every Saturday from May to October. The yellow walls of the cemetery . . . has in recent years become the target of many graffiti painters." Regine Olsen, Poul Martin Moller, Hans Christian Anderson, Niels Bohr, and the African-American jazz musicians Kenny Drew and Richard Boone are buried there.

¹⁸ I discuss the enigma of looking at one's live from the position of having already died in "Transfigurations: The Intimate Agency of Death", *Kierkegaard and Death*, ed. Patrick Stokes and Adam Buben, forthcoming.

There is always in this garden, among the visitors, a beautiful understanding that one does not come out here to see and to be seen, the one visitor avoids the other. Nor does one need company, least of all that of a talkative friend, here where all is eloquence, where the dead greets one with the brief word placed on his grave, not like a clergyman who gives sermons on that word far and wide, but as a silent man does who says no more than this yet says it with a passion as though the dead would burst open the tomb – or is it not strange to have on his grave “we shall meet again’ and to remain down there? (CUP 197)

This is a variation of our two earlier riddles.

It’s puzzling that the night can speak without words and it’s puzzling that the dead speak, when the dead “remain down there”. How can they be so eloquent as to burst from the grave, yet remain silent and still – but a corpse? The mother says “return in good time” even knowing there will be a time of no return. And the grave says “we shall meet again!” – *meaning what?* It is frightening and riddle enough that the grave meets me once, let alone vows to meet me again. Is that a warning that I am soon to be swallowed by death?

Climacus reflects that in the garden, “the visitor’s leave-taking is again made doubly difficult.” (Ibid) Here it is not the dead saying “we shall meet again!” but the visitor saying to the dead, “we shall meet again!”. Climacus writes, rather opaquely, that “it is meaningless to say ‘another time’ because the last time is already past and there is no reason to stop taking leave when the beginning is made after the last time has passed.” I hear him as saying that *of course* we will revisit the dead, take leave of them again, even as this visit concludes. We will take leave with the words ‘another time’, even though we know that ‘the last time has passed,”

that is, that our friend or our son is dead. The dark riddle or discordance is the double thought that, dreadfully, there will be no more meeting or parting because “the last time is already past” -- yet that happily, there will be meeting and parting nonetheless.

Climacus started with the grave’s farewell to the living. Now the focus is the *living’s* farewell to the dead. Perhaps all is parting and rebirth, leaving the departed and their return, farewell and “we shall meet again”, loss and repetition (“repetition” taken as a revelation refiguring the past, bringing it alive in new ways, and reanimating the present).¹⁹ Visiting the garden of the dead, we now speak with the *risen* dead.

Each riddle, puzzle, or abyssal enigma that we’ve encountered marks an anomalous moment to be read in opposing ways. These riddles or enigmas disrupt stability of expected frames of reference. Each shows us a disturbing possibility. Our most ordinary linguistic and intelligibility frames, whether they be poetic or non-poetic, can become unexpectedly fluid and elusive, a fact of wonder and anxiety. We know in the case of the duck-rabbit reversible figure that a duck-world shifts incongruously to a rabbit-world. The riddle is that we see both, and know that both somehow exist simultaneously. The world aspects rabbitly, and then aspects duckly, and we know we must accept its capacity to aspect or reveal itself in each of these incompatible ways. The breeze aspects whisperingly, then as pure motion with no voice at all. In a more urgent and anxious riddle, the dead – *my* dead – both speak and don’t speak, both warn me to heed my life and then retreat in the aspect of resting inert, voiceless as dust and bones.

¹⁹ See my introduction, *Kierkegaard’s Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs*, Oxford World Classics, 2009, and *On Søren Kierkegaard: Dialogue, Polemics, Lost Intimacy and Time*, Burlington, Ashgate, 2007, Ch. 9.

A riddle creates a two-mindedness that resembles irony.²⁰ Kierkegaardian irony is often the tension in our “existentially essential concepts” (those that pick out what should most matter to us). It’s a tension between our objective social status or routine behavior and our presumed aspirations or hopes. Irony says two things at once. I say “I’m a Christian (or Jew)”, which might translate, “I go to church (or temple)”. But if irony is afoot (and it should be), those words will be haunted by shadows of failed aspirations. As I say “I’m a Christian” I think simultaneously “But I’m *not yet* a Christian”). I would hear the irony in my words, and others might, even if I didn’t. Or I might say “I’m *not yet* a teacher” (my aspirations are far from fulfilled) -- yet know that by public, “objective” accounts I am undeniably a teacher. If Kierkegaard says that there is not a single Christian in Christendom, that can be heard as irony. The mind oscillates between two possible hearings. By any objective measure Denmark is packed with professing Christians. It’s also true that to be a Christian is to strive for an ideal, an impossibly demanding ideal. But then, absolutely no one puts sufficient heart in living out their professions to earn the accolade “Christian.”

There can be unintended ironies. I say I’m a teacher, meaning that’s how I earn a living. Yet if Socrates is listening, he will hear an irony that I may be tone-deaf to. And irony can be inescapable for a sufficiently alert consciousness. I might say, “I *am* a Christian” or “I’m *not* a Christian” -- “I *am* a loving person” or “I’m *not* a loving person” -- “I *am* a card-carrying atheist or scholar” or “I’m *not* a card-carrying atheist or scholar”. And if I am sufficiently alert to the subtleties of speech and life, it can be true that whatever I say, there is (and should be) drenching irony afoot.

²⁰ Charles Larmore defines irony as two-mindedness in *The Romantic Legacy*, Columbia University Press, 1996. Jonathan Lear refines this, describing Kierkegaardian irony as accentuating the gap between a commonplace status See his *Therapeutic Action*.

Sometimes irony attaches less to doubts about self-characterization and more to doubts about broad evaluations of “the world”. We might think or say, “that’s not evil enough to be evil”, or “that’s too evil to be evil”. We might think “that doesn’t matter enough to matter”, or “that matters so much its mattering is beyond words”. In subjective life, that is, human life, irony is ineluctably all over. This two-mindedness (or many-mindedness) in all subjective attestation and evaluation has a partial counterpart in the double consciousness that enigmas and riddles, gentle or shattering, create and express.

As a nest of riddles becomes more complex and deep-seated, it reveals ever-deepening ambiguities and enigmas. With the nesting (or stacking) of strands and layers of riddles, one’s inwardness becomes more disturbed, unsettled -- even interrupted, disrupted, or unseated. If heavens speak or breezes whisper, this marks the first stratum of inwardness and riddle, occurring precisely when a speaking or whispering is sensed as the other side of an evident *silence* of heavens and breeze. One lives this two-mindedness just as one lives Wittgenstein’s duck-rabbit as both duck and not duck, rabbit and not rabbit.

Superimposed on heavens speaking is a *second*-level riddle, the riddle of *farewells*, whether these issue from nights or mothers or the dead. Farewells bode good tidings and swift return while simultaneously imparting a vector of anxiety. They preserve undercurrents of foreboding, fears of misadventure, ill-fortune, even the shattering leave-taking of death. In a poem that begins “My life closed twice before it closed” Emily Dickinson puts the riddle concisely:

Parting is all we know of Heaven
And all we need of Hell²¹

²¹ “My Life Closed Twice”, # 1732, Dickinson’s *Collected Works*, many editions.

Superimposed on these is a *third* complicating stratum, *address from and to the dead*. Some farewells or partings come from the dead, or are addressed to them. Gravestones and the bodies haunting them speak and listen, appreciate our visits -- and simultaneously they are the epitome of silence, the mute nullity of dust.

There is a *fourth* stratum of enigma that emerges as we take in the bi-directionality of inwardness. A deepening of spirit or self seems the paradigm of my solitude, what Climacus can call my “hidden inwardness”. Yet Climacus notes that inwardness is both a self’s relation to itself and also its outward relation to others. To lack inwardness is to exemplify “an unnatural form of interpersonal association.” (203)²² This double-minded puzzle and disquiet has my deepest passion roil secretly within -- yet also be an “inwardness” that is frankly *interpersonal*. We’ll return to this. Finally there’s a related and *fifth* riddle or enigma that spins around the fact that teaching requires revocation and *withdrawal*. Each inward-spinning stratum marks knots we can explore but not untie. Riddling inwardness seems formed by the confluence of tensed and layered experiential views that taken singly appear compelling and inescapable. Our two-mindedness (or multi-mindedness) seems intractable, making the deepening of inwardness a human fate.

V. *INWARDNESS AS INTERPERSONAL ASSOCIATION*

In the front matter to his new translation of Kierkegaard’s epic existential compilation (a most welcome rendition, true to the lively and resourceful twists and turns of the text), Alastair

²² Climacus asserts that a teacher wanting to impart objective results, and nothing more, assumes an “unnatural form of interpersonal association”. The true goal of imparting truths that matter is to impart to the learner a deepening of inwardness, exemplifying a *natural* form of interpersonal association.

Hannay comments on the unhappy fate of having to give the Danish *Inderlighed* as "inwardness".

“Inwardness” is by no means a perfect translation of “Inderlighed”. As with Hegel’s *Innerlichkeit*, the sense is not that of inward-directedness [but of] an inner warmth, sincerity, seriousness and wholeheartedness in one’s concern for what matters, a “heartfeltness” not applied to something but which comes *from* within. However, since “inwardness” has become a standard translation for Kierkegaard’s “Inderlighed” and in this sense even finds a place in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it has been retained here. (CUP XXXIX-X)

What is “inward” springs from the heart in a way that shows that what is said or done or felt is not “mere gesture”, “pro forma”, or thoughtless, perfunctory mimesis – a shallow repetition of what typically “is said or done” by the multitude or in one’s family in such circumstances.²³

Inwardness transcends shallow conventionality. We value it because we value people who have themselves, their hearts, in what they do and say and undergo -- in passion, feeling, or emotion.

Unhappily, “inwardness” evokes soul-searching or being “inner-directed”.²⁴ Or in more philosophical contexts, it evokes a Cartesian or Hegelian metaphysical divide between “inner and outer”, a private self or consciousness divided from a public world and its public linguistic and conventional performances. Yet in his graveyard meditations, Climacus brings quite another matter to center stage. The central issue is not metaphysical inner-outer distinctions, or

²³ Heidegger calls “inauthentic” a mindlessly saying or doing what “*they*”, or “*one*” says or does.

²⁴ Hannay remarks that Climacus uses “*Indvorteshed*” for inner-directedness (as opposed to heartfeltness’s outer-directedness, “*Inderlighed*”). (CUP XXXVIII). Also, see his comments in *Ethics, Love, and Faith in Kierkegaard: A Philosophical Engagement*, ed. Edward F. Mooney, Indiana University Press, 2008, p. 152.

consciousness-world divides, but the very human ways that, under the burden of death, we do and do not convey who we are to each other as we express ourselves interpersonally, and find ourselves in a world that nourishes or betrays us -- or intimates unutterable wonder.

A Cartesian inner-outer contrast would suggest that the most true "me" lives in a little box cut off from everything else, a lonely, isolated ego, or subjectivity, under constant worry that what is "most me" will never be communicated. But this is not Climacus. There are at least two ways a Cartesian inner-outer contrast can drop away or fail.²⁵ Insofar as it makes sense to keep the contrast, the boundaries are very porous: Climacus engages the whisper of a night breeze and the muffled tears of his neighbor through the trees. The scene unfolds with night stirring the soul, and the soul finding its stirring in the night. And as we've seen, Climacus becomes, in turn, the weeping grandfather, the dead son, and the abandoned child. One subjectivity can translate across outer, public space to occupy another subjectivity's space. Climacus is not solo, or in isolation. His subjectivity is not at all Cartesian. A second defect in the contrast comes out when we notice that some expressions seem to be neither inner nor outer: screaming, bawling, or shrieking seem to be neither (or both). Climacus sees a danger, for example, in "bawling out" the terror of *Fear and Trembling*.²⁶ (220) His investment in disparaging "outward bawling" is to downplay shallow public hysterics and shift attention to long-term protracted suffering that precisely *doesn't* appear as a momentary outburst.

Inwardness is an inward deepening and complexity of tensions that points outward in the way that heartfeltness or earnestness or truthfulness point outward. The heavens evoke the inwardness of the poetic imagination that completes itself in an outward attunement to the

²⁵ A Hegelian inner-outer contrast fails, too, but in rather different ways.

²⁶ Swenson and Lowrie render this as the "shriek" of fear and trembling (234), and the Hongs give it as fear and trembling's "screaming" (XXX).

heavens. A grandfather's grief and earnest admonitions betray a deepening of his inwardness and also a new openness toward the child, completing itself in his concern for *him*. And if Climacus awakens toward vocation, towards having, as he puts it, "a direction", it is because his inwardness first opens toward the scene unfolding by the fresh earth of the grave. Here the riddle of the bi-directionality of inwardness overlaps another emerging riddle, our fifth, stacked on its predecessors. Climacus is a student in the graveyard; he finds himself taught. But we have to be puzzled about this.

The teacher of truth that matters, of what my "self-relation" must be, teaches by withdrawal and reservation. A teacher, in this sense is not a skills trainer or drill instructor, but someone who has inwardness -- heart -- to impart. The riddle is that such truth is imparted by backing away, in the way that Socrates imparts knowledge by saying he has nothing to teach, or in the way Climacus says, at the end of the *Postscript*, that he revokes everything he's said. But what is it that a teacher tries to impart? What is her inwardness?

The grandfather that Climacus overhears is Climacus' teacher, but how does he teach? Paradoxically, he teaches by not talking directly to Climacus at all. In matters concerning one's soul -- one's loves or affections, one's orientation toward death or marriage, one's having a direction in life-- direct address is dangerous and 'unnatural' because disrespectful and interfering. By assuming a direct relationship to the would-be learner -- as if one's wisdom could be poured directly into the skull of the learner -- one derails any hope of awakening a *learner's* inwardness.

As an aside, we have to note that it is *Climacus* who is learning here, and the old man pours nothing into *his* skull. The old man may awaken Climacus to requisite indirections and withdrawals in imparting inwardness, but this man on the verge of his own departure fails to

exemplify reservations or indirections toward his grandson. Quite the reverse. So Climacus does not learn by taking the old man's plea as modeling the best of teaching between grandparent and grandson. He learns by internalizing a relationship he vows to embrace regarding the *content* of the grandfather's address: it's a bad thing to waste one's life on abstract system-building as if that is a viable substitute for wrestling with how one relates best to oneself and others. Climacus adopts an appropriate existential "*how*" to an appropriate objective "*what*."

He makes the point about requisite reservation and withdrawal explicit: the teacher's inwardness "is a respect for the learner precisely as one having inwardness in himself." Respect for the inwardness of another means having reservations about tampering with it, and realizing that in the long run, the other's care for their own soul is their own business. A few sentences earlier he identifies a failure to participate in the truth of inwardness as a failure to participate "truthfully" with others. In matters of the soul, a teacher who adopts the mode of direct address dangerously assumes an "unnatural form of interpersonal association." So helping another in search of a soul, in a search for a proper self-relation, is in fact helping that other to realize the natural form of interpersonal association.

Teacher-learner relations are not confined to classrooms. Something is imparted from grandfather to grandson, and something is imparted as Climacus overhears their exchange. He's moved to confess he has never witnessed such a moving scene. Climacus learns from the graveside expressions, and the grandson learns from his grandfather. Climacus requires that for respect to predominate, the grandfather ought to withdraw from tampering with the inwardness of the child. But alas, the old man's inwardness can seem shallow, something like a scream or

wail, even a crude intervention, though it's not uttered in the public square and is strictly a family matter.

Two factors can mitigate what might be seen as the heavy-handedness of his unreserved outpouring. First, he is in the moment overcome by grief, and thus not exactly self-reflectively *teaching* his grandson. He is a world of mourning into which the child is initiated. The child is assimilating a primal occasion of mourning. He is caught up in, flooded by, this unrehearsed drama, which becomes his initiation into an individual and cultural practice requisite to acquiring full human expressiveness. To be able to mourn, a child must first be included in inescapable forms of mourning that he or she may not be pleased to enter. Second, we acquire inwardness by degrees, and a ten year old is most likely largely lacking in it. The grandfather can perhaps be excused for making an overwrought emotional plea that the child promise to remain true to a simple faith – excused precisely because he is very old and addresses a child -- and cannot wait for him to mature. Such direct intervention and pleading would be impermissible were he addressing another adult. Perhaps these are extraordinary circumstances that suspend preferred protocols of respect. And it's entirely pertinent to ask, in this context, whether the child is even mature enough to *understand* the nature of the oath demanded of him. Are the grandfather's outpouring and desperate request misplaced?²⁷

Now if the old man is even *somewhat* true in the expression of his inwardness, and if Climacus finds his own inwardness awakened by the expressiveness of the old man, can it be plausible that the old man has a 'natural interpersonal association' with Climacus that facilitates that teaching of inwardness? Does the man, who does not know that Climacus even *exists*,

²⁷ We often ask children to promise (or apologize) long before they can have any real idea of what they're asked to do. We initiate children into cultural forms in rather wooden ways, trusting that refinement, and 'inner' understanding will come later. Meanwhile, we can be content with more or less rote compliance. The art comes much later and in degrees for most, and for some, never.

nevertheless *respect* the inwardness of Climacus? Well, perhaps in an extremely minimal sense he does, in that he has no *disrespect* for the inwardness of Climacus.

I can respect the inwardness of a student I barely know, lurking in the back of a crowded room. It's not implausible that I can impart something essential to the lurker in part by refusing to launch *disrespect* in his direction. I suspect that as learners we are often invisible to our teachers, and do not necessarily fare poorly as a result. We listen as if behind a screen. Many of our students learn also, *do* listen, despite the screens they erect. Kierkegaard is my teacher and respects my inwardness despite my lacking face-to-face contact. It could even be true that I would be *prevented* from learning were I to meet him face-to-face.

Kierkegaard *avored* the construction of distance between teacher and learner, evidenced by the involuted design of his writing. Apparently respect for the inwardness of another does not presuppose close contact.²⁸ Climacus is taught by what he overhears despite the invisibility and distance that separates speaker from hearer.

VI. *VARIETIES OF SHALLOW INWARDNESS*

We are all formed in cultures – families, neighborhoods, schools, places of worship – that give us modes of expression we absorb as inheritance. Kierkegaard will learn the etiquette of the playground or street, of class relations, filial piety, and dissertation presentation. He will inherit literally endless variations of what Climacus calls modes of “interpersonal association” (and their absence). Even the cultivation of solitude can be framed as a mode of interpersonal association – perhaps it is one's desire, in the expression of one's self-relations, to be less public than others would wish.

²⁸ Despite geographical and temporal distance, we learn from Kierkegaard. Part of his genius is that he can respect our inwardness despite distance – for example in his “revocation” at the finish of *Postscript*.

The fact that we inherit various forms of expression means that we can use or misuse that inheritance. It is not something merely thrust upon us as an inescapable burden. One can disown one's inheritance, to a greater or lesser extent. One becomes less Danish if one leaves the country at age five and is raised in Paris speaking French, or if one loudly withdraws from participation in the state church, or mocks the King. Clearly being Danish (or not) is more than an objective public status. Being a Christian, or a professor, beyond certain objective marks, has a deeply evaluative and subjective dimension -- a real or true professor will be a good professor, and we can argue about what that ideal entails. Being inward will have a deeply evaluative dimension. We can display the inherited outward signs of inwardness yet not be truly inward, just as we can display the outward signs of membership in the professoriate yet not be truly a professor.

While sitting in the garden of the dead and reflecting on those who visit the graves of their departed, Climacus searches reflectively for the distinction between true inwardness in grieving and "just going through the motions." There is a way to mimic the outward forms of grief that will be untrue to grief. He puts it this way: "inwardness [will be] untrue to the same degree as the outward expression, in countenance and mien, in words and assurance, is there, ready to hand for instant use." (198) To merely grab at approved routines that a culture provides "ready to hand" for grief-expression will clearly fail as a true expression of grief. Good mimes are not expressing their *own* subjectivity but a public, inherited shadow of it. Climacus worries about the distinction between authentic, owned inwardness of affect – deep subjectivity, deep inwardness – and its deceptively close relatives. As if he were prompting

Heidegger, Climacus denies that those “ready to hand” expressions of grief (for example) give us much more than a shallow “everyday understanding of inwardness.” (Ibid.)²⁹

Climacus does not say that outward expressions of grief – weeping, gesticulations, commonplace attestations of deep loss – are untrue “in themselves”, as it were. But he fears that we will take a momentary gushing of emotion as sufficient expression of grief, while true grief will last, and last long after gushing, weeping, and gesticulations have ceased. The everyday understanding of inwardness is “feminine”, he says, because it is momentary. Deep inwardness is preserved, “not as an instant’s excitement and a woman’s infatuation, but as the eternal which has been won through death.”

Climacus goes on to say, “it is not unlovely that a woman gushes over in momentary inwardness, nor is it unlovely for her soon to forget it again. But one corresponds to the other . . .” (Ibid) The problem is that in everyday inwardness we approve both the immediate expression of grief and then approve “getting over it”, “moving on”, as we say. But clearly deep grief at the loss of a son, or deep anxiety that the son will be denied heaven, are not things we “get over” or “put behind us” as we “get on with our lives.” Two things shouldn’t have to be said. Climacus can’t mean that women have a monopoly on showing a burst of grief and then setting it aside. And he knows, too, that biological women can transcend womanish expressions of grief and that biological men can fail to achieve the full measure of “man’s” grief – that is, grief, plain and simple.

²⁹ Heidegger’s terms of art *Being and Time* are largely borrowed from Kierkegaard. We have in English translation the “every day” and “ready to hand”, “being toward death” and the “they”, “chatter” and “repetition”, living authentically (or in the truth), mood and attunement, individual resolve, and so forth. Climacus’ exploration of living toward death in the passage at hand is especially resonant. Heidegger’s unacknowledged debts to the Dane have yet to be exhaustively chronicled.

How does one preserve one's inwardness past moments of evident weeping and gesticulating? Well, the weeping must go underground, as it were, become buried. As Climacus puts it, "Praise be to the one living who relates as a dead man to his inwardness." The dead do not well-up or gesticulate. But to relate as a dead man to one's inwardness does not mean there is no tumult of emotion to relate to, nor that relating impassively to it, as a dead man, is a Stoic tactic used to become free of troubling emotion.

Climacus does not describe a Stoic ideal of eradicating excessive emotion, for what he requires is the sustained *preservation* of emotion. Whether we grieve outwardly for a day, a week, or a year, the time for outward demonstrativeness will pass. Then we enter the time when the very most is at stake for its preservation. We don't want those who love us to "get over" their love for us once we're out of sight. We want that love to linger on, even become more powerful, despite not having ready at hand vehicles of outward expression. Funerals happen once per person who dies; if we still feel grief three years later, we can't redo the service to renew our grief. Weeping all day works only for a while. Yet we don't want our grief over the loss of a child to cease, even though the period for public expressiveness has passed. The outward expression of our grief may subside. It may disappear. In many cases, however, grief will not be forgotten but be driven underground as deep inwardness.

The preservation and sustaining of felt-pain can be desirable, say as the refusal to eradicate grief or an unrequited love. But to grant that is to go counter to the Stoic ideal.³⁰

³⁰ But perhaps it counters the "Stoic ideal" only as it is popularly (mis)understood. Rick Furtak argues that the Stoics in fact reject emotion as an unwanted disturbance on the grounds that what emotions reveal to us is *not true* (see his "*Wisdom in Love: Kierkegaard and the Ancient Quest for Emotional Integrity*," Notre Dame, 2005, 18-19). This means that a Stoic might be convinced that there are truths revealed to us in moments of emotion, of passionate inwardness, and that accordingly such emotions ought to be embraced by the true Stoic as giving access to truths, among those truths, the truth that emotions do not just cloud or cover over truth but display it.

Climacus mocks showy expressions of “momentary” inwardness or devotion (welling up with tears each Sunday in church, on call). But that is far from abjuring deepfelt emotion. Climacus characterizes deep or hidden inwardness extending well beyond the moment of its appropriate outward expression in this way: one preserves one’s inwardness as “the eternal which has been won through death.” I hear these words as proposing that the timelessness of one’s inwardness is its transcending the several moments of its temporal expression. It is the eternity of the grief of a mother that remains decades after the death of a child, a pain so entrenched as to have become a very mark of her identity -- unto death, before God, and sustained actively as one gradually dies to its outward expressions.

In an outward sense, it is fitting that one reenter everyday life, that one’s grief drop into a domain of the hidden. But it may still very well arise or well up in solitude, or before God.

As Climacus puts it

It has always stung my shame to witness another person’s expression of feeling when he abandons himself to it as one does only in the belief that one is unobserved; for there is an inwardness of emotion which is befittingly hidden and only revealed to God, just as a woman’s beauty would be concealed from all and revealed only to the beloved . . .

(CUP 198)

If deep emotion can be “befittingly hidden and only revealed to God”, then once again, an ‘outward reserve’ one exhibits is not evidence that Climacus endorses a Stoic characterization of emotion as an unwanted disturbance to be eradicated. One may dress as a Stoic, but as one bares one’s heart, it is clear one is not.

In Climacus' example, deep inwardness may be expressed to others in intimate settings – say, as the old man weeps in speaking alone with his grandson and dead son. It is not quite true, then, that absolutely no one knows the deep inwardness he harbors, the true depth of his feelings. He will live before many in utter silence about it, but he is not mute before all mortals. In addition, hidden grief is preserved and unhidden in its revelation to God. This reinforces the theme that inwardness is a form of interpersonal association. Natural associations are heartfelt ones. Daily prayers or meditations can be a daily expression to another of inwardness. The fundamental fact that emotions, and inwardness, are forms of interpersonal association has *this* as its limit case, the case where perduring, unbroken inwardness of affect arises outwardly only for the other who is God. Inwardness is a form of self-relation that is necessarily outwardly directed – though the necessary recipient of one's revelatory expressions need not be one's neighbor, one's priest, one's spouse, or one's friend.

* * *

In a book of battles and death, Homer pauses mid-way to describe the making of the marvelous Shield of Achilles on which a god engraves the many worlds of the book.³¹ In a book of dialectical battles and comic asides, Climacus-Kierkegaard pauses midway in a garden of death to engrave the many wondrous worlds of the book in a marvelous, miniature, lyrical-dialectic. We have the strolling critic of Copenhagen, the false-heaven of intellectualistic disputation, the true hells and redemptions of stricken fathers, and the worlds of only briefly innocent sons – the worlds of diaphanous mists and nocturnal trysts, and of the many tensed layers of the heart. Barely half-a-dozen pages, this miniature provides a vivid proof text for all that Climacus tells us elsewhere of truth and subjectivity, double reflection and indirect communication,

³¹ *The Iliad*, Book 18.

confession of faith and its revocation, the inward recesses of the heart and its outward expression, the easy chatter of the classroom and the mystery of inheritance from star-crossed fathers, of farewells from anxious mothers, of receiving word from the risen dead and knowing the costs of a soul's self-betrayal.

Here we have the worlds of the *Postscript* engraved. Or, as in Hamlet's *Mousetrap*, have a play within a play to catch our conscience by surprise, and return us to the dark suffering that is the wonder of life.

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