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## Dunning, KIERKEGAARD'S DIALECTIC OF INWARDNESS: A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

C. Stephen Evans

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it is worth noting that Yandell himself admits that his discussion of most of the issues in his book is not conclusive. But the difficulties in reaching justified conclusions on these matters contribute to the difficulty in showing that one conceptual system, in contrast to all the others, is justified. Yet showing this is required to make an adequate response to the challenges of skepticism and relativism.

*Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness: A Structural Analysis of the Theory of Stages*, by **Stephen N. Dunning**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. 323 pp. + vii. \$32.

C. STEPHEN EVANS, St. Olaf College.

*Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness* is an original, well-written study of Kierkegaard as a dialectical thinker. Dunning's book is a direct challenge to the thesis of Niels Thulstrup (in *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*) that Kierkegaard owes virtually nothing to Hegel. Dunning thinks that Kierkegaard's work "lends itself" to a systematic, structural analysis. Despite the fact that the *content* of Kierkegaard's work is so often anti-Hegelian, Dunning tries to show that the *form* of Kierkegaard's work is Hegelian or at least similar to Hegel. Of course from a Hegelian standpoint, at least, the relation between form and content suggests that the opposition to the content of Hegel's philosophy may not be so absolute and unqualified as many have thought.

Dunning recognizes that there are different kinds of dialectic. He wishes to focus specifically on the type of dialectic exemplified in Hegel, with three characteristic "moments." The first moment is one characterized as "in-itself," and generally connotes immediacy and externality. The second, or "for itself" moment, is associated with reflection, inwardness, and negativity. The third or "in and for itself" moment, is supposed to resolve the tension between the first two by incorporating their "truth" and suppressing what is partial and one-sided in each. This third moment then begins the cycle anew.

After an initial look at *The Concept of Irony* as an illustration of what is meant by dialectical thinking, and as evidence that Kierkegaard was trained in this kind of thinking, Dunning embarks on an analysis of the theory of the stages on life's way, as this theory is exemplified in the pseudonymous authorship from *Either-Or* to the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. In typical Hegelian fashion Dunning finds tripartite structures within tripartite structures. The three *stages* are understood in Hegelian fashion. Each stage in turn is analyzed as consisting of three-fold *movements*. Movements are in their turn analyzed as composed of *moments*, and

sometimes moments are analyzed into three *phases*, and phases into *points*.

The book concludes with a similar analysis of the *Sickness Unto Death* and *Training in Christianity*. Dunning views these works as rich mines of dialectical ore, and he claims to have shown, therefore, that even in the later Christian “second literature” Kierkegaard continued to think dialectically. Curiously, though, he says that these later dialectical progressions cannot be incorporated into the dialectic of the stages (p. 240). If one grants, however, that religiousness B of the stages is Christianity, then it is hard to see why this is so. A little of the ingenuity Dunning displays elsewhere in the book would surely suffice to show some relations here.

Certain kinds of obvious objections to Dunning’s work are forestalled by his explicit adoption of a structural approach. That is, Dunning brackets questions of authorial intention and meaning to focus on the texts themselves. It is, therefore, not significant whether or not Kierkegaard intended to construct a progressive, systematic dialectic. In fact, Dunning actually claims that Kierkegaard is usually *not* consciously aware of the dialectical structures he uncovers, and cites their deep, implicit status as evidence for this claim. This fact is used to argue against a rival explanation of the dialectical structures: that they are ironic or playful satires of Hegel (p. 5).

There are two dialectical motifs which Dunning sees as permeating Kierkegaard’s authorship. The first and dominant one is the dialectic of inwardness and outwardness—the relation between inner intention and passion and its outer expression in action. This dialectic is seen pre-eminently in *Either-Or* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, but it is also very significant in *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, and *The Stages on Life’s Way*.

The other dialectical theme is concerned with the relation of the self to an other, and it is seen as very prominent in the *Stages*, the *Postscript*, and *The Concept of Anxiety*, and is an important if not dominant theme in several other works.

One of the genuinely important accomplishments of Dunning’s work is that it does force us to recognize that Kierkegaard is not simply a philosopher of inwardness and “the solitary individual.” I found Dunning’s overall dialectical structure somewhat contrived, and there were many places where I felt the text was being wrestled into a procrustean, dialectical bed. Nevertheless, Dunning’s method does help one to see pervasive themes that are otherwise easily missed. I think he is quite right to stress that Kierkegaard is concerned with the relation of inwardness to its outer expression. He is also quite right in stressing that Kierkegaard’s understanding of selfhood is, like Hegel’s, fundamentally social and relational. The disagreement with Hegel is that Kierkegaard sees God as a genuine individual who can and should function as “the other,” not simply as an ideal reality known in and through the human community.

In terms of the analyses of individual works, I found the explorations of the earlier pseudonymous writings (*Either-Or*, *Fear and Trembling* and particularly *The Concept of Anxiety*) to be more illuminating than the work on the Climacus literature. However, even in the latter case Dunning's original approach continually produced provocative new insights and perspectives on familiar texts. All in all, this is a first-rate piece of work—well conceived and carried through.

*A Christian View of Justice*, by **Mark T. Coppenger**. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1983, 173 pages, no index, Paper \$6.95.

DAVID A. HOEKEMA, University of Delaware.

Mark Coppenger, a former member of the philosophy faculty at Wheaton College in Illinois who left the academic world a few years ago to prepare for the ministry, undertakes in the book under review to relate the pressing questions of social justice to the theological commitments of evangelical Protestantism. It is a book which will appeal both to Professor Coppenger's former philosophy students and to the Reverend Coppenger's parishioners.

Encompassing a wide range of issues in a small book, Coppenger has chosen to keep his discussion on a relatively elementary level. The five chapters of the book resemble a series of lectures which might be offered in an undergraduate course in an evangelical college, and perhaps this resemblance is more than coincidental. In the first chapter, Coppenger argues that the fatherhood of God provides the essential foundation for any Christian moral or political theory. A "father model" of ethics, he urges, rules out either hedonistic utilitarianism or strict deontological ethics. God demands obedience but at the same time intends, and ensures, human happiness in the deepest sense. In a second chapter Coppenger argues that, when we examine those moral issues which are issues of social justice, the concept of *desert* provides a basis on which we build the principles of a just social order.

In the third chapter Coppenger describes what he terms a "matrix that distinguishes among benefits and harms according to whether an individual deserves to receive or suffer them. Each of the four categories of this schema—deserved benefit, deserved harm, undeserved benefit, undeserved harm—calls for a particular response from governmental institutions. For example, governments have a duty to inflict certain kinds of harm on those who deserve it, and this is the essential character of punishment. Social institutions must also try to prevent undeserved harm. Widows and orphans, impoverished children, and others who are the victims of undeserved harm should receive benefits from the state—even