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KIERKEGAARD AND THE TREACHERY OF LOVE

This is a major study of Kierkegaard and love. Amy Laura Hall explores Kierkegaard's description of love's treachery, difficulty, and hope, reading his *Works of Love* as a text that both deciphers and complicates the central books in his pseudonymous canon: *Fear and Trembling*, *Repetition*, *Either/Or*, and *Stages on Life's Way*. In all of these works, the characters are, as in real life, complex and incomplete, and the conclusions are perplexing. Hall argues that a spiritual void brings each text into being, and her interpretation is as much about faith as about love. In a style that is both scholarly and lyrical, she intimates answers to some of the puzzles, making a poetic contribution to ethics and the philosophy of religion.

AMY LAURA HALL is Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics at the Divinity School, Duke University.

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To John Fredric Utz

*“It is a joy to me to apply this as a small installment on the debt
– in which I still wish definitely to remain.”*

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Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgement, should
But judge you as you are? O think on that,
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.

Measure for Measure, II.ii. 73–79

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List of abbreviations

The following abbreviations occur in parenthetical references to works by Søren Kierkegaard:

- CUP *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. 2 vols. Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- EO *Either/Or*. 2 vols. Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.
- FT *Fear and Trembling* (published with *Repetition*). Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- JP *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*. 7 vols. Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, assisted by Gregor Malantscuk. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, vol. 1, 1967; vol. 2, 1970; vols 3 and 4, 1975; vols. 5–7, 1978.
- R *Repetition* (published with *Fear and Trembling*). Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983.
- SLW *Stages on Life's Way*. Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- WL *Works of Love*. Eds. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.

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Preface

I am grateful to my professors, colleagues, and students who have read Kierkegaard's frustrating and fruitful texts with me. Vanessa Rumble, at Boston College, was the first teacher to introduce me to Kierkegaard's work. From the first week, reading *Fear and Trembling* and hearing her engaged, close explication, I was hooked. She inspires in her students not only a love for Kierkegaard, but also a passion for the truth about ourselves. At every stage of this project, Gene Outka offered patient, persistent advice, and I learned a great deal under his guidance. May the extent to which I differ with him be a testimony to his generous, ever-charitable, teaching. Margaret Farley, David Gouwens, George Lindbeck, and Cyril O'Regan read a prior manuscript in full. Like Dorothy Day, Margaret bristles when her students at Yale call her a saint, but we do so with the prayer that there may be more like her. Margaret lives the faithful love about which she so perceptively writes. While still in course work, I presented an early version of Chapter 3 at the AAR, and, from that point on, David Gouwens has been an invaluable advisor and colleague. George Lindbeck not only taught me how to read theologically, he took my questions seriously before I even knew how to formulate them. Through his attentive encouragement, he has had an inestimable influence on my development as a scholar. To the extent that I understand Kierkegaard's work as against the tidal wave of German Romanticism, I thank Cyril. His advice and friendship helped many a weary student through her time at Yale.

My colleagues at Duke have been wonderful. Deans Willie Jennings and Greg Jones have given me time, support, and encouragement. Stanley Hauerwas has tried to keep me honest about love, and I am grateful for his friendship. Reinhard Huetter has generously read the first chapter and has tried to keep me honest about Luther. Richard Hays has graciously advised me in ministry and scholarship for eleven years. I am grateful also to Christine Bowie, Steve Chapman, and Lacey

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Warner, whose friendship during this project helped to keep me sane. The students who signed on for my very first seminar on Kierkegaard were appropriately cantankerous. Their questions and frustrations forced me ever to clarify my readings, and I am grateful for their help. I wish to thank two research assistants, Margus Sarglepp, who read numerous chapters, made substantive suggestions, and translated a portion of Pia Søltoft's book, and Daniel Barber, who closely read and so astutely commented on the final version of the manuscript. Chanon Ross graciously prepared the final proof and index. Three of these chapters appeared, in earlier forms, in other journals. Chapter 2 appeared as "Self-Delusion, Confusion, and Salvation in *Fear and Trembling with Works of Love*," in *Journal of Religious Ethics* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2000). Diane Yeager then edited out my gratitude to her, but she cannot do so now. Her careful reading was indeed a work of love. A version of Chapter 3 appeared as "Poets, Cynics and Thieves: Vicious Love and Divine Protection in *Repetition and Works of Love*," in *Modern Theology* 16, no. 2 (April 2000). I owe thanks to Jim Fodor for his careful editing and his encouragement. Finally, Chapter 5 appeared as "Stages on the Wrong Way" in Volume 11 of *The International Kierkegaard Commentary*, Fall 2000. Robert Perkins, the editor of *IKC*, has been my toughest reader, and I am grateful for his persistence. Mark Lloyd Taylor read an earlier version of Chapter 4, and made many helpful suggestions. Would but that I could name and thank all of those nameless readers who, on behalf of journals and Cambridge, wrangled with me from a distance. Please know that I am grateful for your considerable time and effort. Thank you to Lesley Atkin, who kindly read and edited the entire manuscript. I am grateful to the editors of this series for their generosity. Finally, working with Kevin Taylor has been a delight.

I wish to thank my colleagues with whom I studied (and, in some cases, organized for the union) at Yale; in particular, Jennifer Beste, Barbara Blodgett, Jaime Clark-Soles, Shannon Craigo-Snell, Bill Danaher, Eric Gregory, Steve Edmondson, Warren Smith, and Brian Stiltner. David Clough, my friend and colleague, held me accountable for completing the darned thing. Lucy Clough gave me a rhyme that I repeated daily: "She started to sing as she tackled the thing that couldn't be done, and she did it." Thank you, Lillian Daniel, for friendship beyond expectation. Thank you, Rebecca Parkhill and Robert Willett, for friendship and gracious hospitality. Mirela Moga, Betty Baisden, and Tammy Hughes taught my daughter, Rachel, while I learned and taught; thank you for your care and attention. The UMC congregations at Sierra Vista, New Canaan, First and Summerfield, and Trinity kept me in prayer.

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Fred, Paula, and Laura Lee Utz offered me a second family. Robert, Carol, Bob, and Rebecca Hall have listened to me talk overmuch about love, but loved me nonetheless. I am grateful beyond words for their encouragement and constant support. Rachel Hall Utz, who was born my first year at Yale, was not a welcome distraction. She was the point. Finally, I cannot begin appropriately to thank John, who read more against eros than any young husband should have to, who cares for our daughter more hours in one day than most fathers spend in one week, and who, in multiple ways, constantly adduces the truth of the book's dedication. There is only one to whom I owe more. To that one, may I dedicate my life.