TÄNKARENS MÅNGFALD

Nutida perspektiv
på Søren Kierkegaard

REDAKTÖRER
LONE KOLDTOFT, JON STEWART
& JAN HOLMGAARD

Utgiven i samarbete med
Centrum för Danmarksstudier
vid Lunds universitet

MAKADAM FÖRLAG
2005
THE INFLUENCE OF WERDER'S LECTURES AND LOGIK ON KIERKEGAARD'S THOUGHT

Jon Stewart

The story has often been told of Kierkegaard's trip to Berlin in the fall of 1841. His stay in the Prussian capital lasted from October 23, 1841, to March 6, 1842. It has traditionally been assumed that the trip was motivated by his desire to attend the lectures of Schelling (1775–1854). By that time near the end of a long and distinguished academic career, Schelling had been appointed to the University of Berlin in 1841 by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia (1795–1861) for the express purpose of extinguishing the dangerous spark of Hegelianism before it caught fire and spread.¹

In the letter to Schelling offering him a prestigious professorship at the university, the King's representative Karl Freiherr von Bunsen (1791–1860) makes reference to the King's desire to marshal Schelling's intellectual power and reputation into service against "the dragon seed of Hegelian pantheism."² Since Schelling's lectures were often highly critical of Hegel, it is often claimed that one of Kierkegaard's main motivations for attending them was to obtain new weapons for his anti-Hegelian arsenal³.


3. For example, Kaufmann: "Kierkegaard's attacks were not based on his own reading of Hegel and were usually as wide of the mark as his remarks about Goethe. His image of Hegel was derived from the lectures of the old Schelling who had developed a profound resentment when Hegel's name eclipsed his own." Walter Kaufmann, Hegel: A Reinterpretation, Notre Dame: 244
ticizes, for example, the principle of mediation, the idea of movement in logic, the presuppositionless beginning, dialectical transitions from category to category, the pretension of Absolute Knowing, the unity of being and thought, and the speculative critique of the Aristotelian laws of contradiction and excluded middle. Given this apparently unambiguous negative assessment of Hegel’s logic, it seems somewhat odd that, when in Berlin, Kierkegaard would be interested in attending lectures on Hegel’s logic by a Hegelian logician. Niels Thulstrup suggests that Kierkegaard’s notes from Werder’s lectures are critical in nature and thus evidence an anti-Hegelianism. Thulstrup’s view seems to be that while Kierkegaard had not yet fully developed his objections to Hegelian logic at this point, they are nonetheless already present implicitly in his lecture notes to Werder’s course. But neither the tone nor the content of the actual notes supports Thulstrup’s position. In this article I will argue, contrary to Thulstrup, that Kierkegaard’s comments concerning Werder’s logic are generally uncritical and offer no evidence to support the position that Kierkegaard was an anti-Hegelian at the time of their writing. Further, there are a number of quite startling and surprising points of influence of the relatively unknown Werder on Kierkegaard.

I. Werder and the German Hegelians

Karl Friedrich Werder was born in Berlin on December 13, 1806. He studied philosophy under Hegel in the late 1820s during the period of Hegel’s greatest influence. He was presumably in attendance at one or more of the lecture courses on logic that Hegel gave every summer semester in Berlin from 1819 to 1831. In 1834, i.e., three years after Hegel’s death, Werder completed his Habilitationschrift with the title De Platonis Parmenide. After that he held the position of Privatdocent at the University of Berlin, and in 1838 he became außerordentlicher Professor. He was never to attain the position of ordinarius due to unfavorable political conditions.

Perhaps in part because he had no chance of advancing his career, Werder did not restrict his efforts to a narrow field of academic specialization. In addition to being a philosopher, he was also a dramatist and a critic. He wrote tragedies which never enjoyed more than moderate success. By contrast, he gave a series of highly popular lectures on the dramatic works of Shakespeare, Schiller, and Lessing among others.


A volume of lyric poems was published posthumously.\(^{24}\) Werder lived a long life and ultimately died in his home city on April 3, 1893.

Werder enjoyed a modest reputation among the German Hegelians but was by no means one of the leading figures. This can probably be explained by the varied nature of his output and the limited role that philosophy played in it, taken as a whole. His early work on Plato’s Parmenides and his Logik were his only published works of philosophy. Further, despite his friendship with the Hegelians Eduard Gans (1798–1839) and Heinrich Gustav Hotho (1802–73), he was never a member of the inner circle of Hegel students as is evidenced, for example, by the fact that he was never a member of the prestigious editorial board of Hegel’s Werke,\(^{25}\) the first collected edition of Hegel’s writings. Nor was he ever actively involved in the Jahrhücher für wissenschaftliche Kritik, the Hegel journal that began publication in Hegel’s lifetime.\(^{26}\)

In histories of Hegelianism, Werder is usually summarily treated with a single line.\(^{27}\) He is mentioned briefly by, for example, Franz Anton Staudenmaier (1800–56),\(^{28}\) Johann Eduard Erdmann (1805–92),\(^{29}\) and Kuno Fischer (1824–1907).\(^{30}\) From these accounts it seems that Werder amounts to little more than a footnote not just in the history of philosophy but even in the history of Hegelianism. His philosophical efforts seem to have been regarded with great reservation by at least some of his contemporaries involved in the debates surrounding Hegel’s philosophy. This again evokes the question of what it was about Werder’s lectures that interested Kierkegaard.

II. Werder’s Logik and Hegel’s Works on Logic

To appreciate the significance and scope of Werder’s Logik, it will be necessary to say a few words about Hegel’s works on logic and their reception. Hegel’s main statement on logic is of course his massive Wissenschaft der Logik, which was published in three successive volumes in 1812, 1813 and 1816. Each volume contains one “book” or main section: “The Doctrine of Being,”\(^{31}\) “The Doctrine of Essence,”\(^{32}\) and “The Doctrine of the Concept.”\(^{33}\) A second edition was planned, but Hegel managed to revise only “The Doctrine of Being” before his death on November 14, 1831. This revised text was included in the second edition, which was published in 1832.\(^{34}\) This second edition was the text that was used when the Wissenschaft der Logik was republished as a part of Hegel’s Werke.\(^{35}\) This text was edited by Leopold von Henning (1791–1866) and appeared in three volumes from 1834–35.\(^{36}\) This was the text of Hegel’s Logik that
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Gabler (1786–1853), and Erdmann. Hegel’s conception of logic as speculative was extremely controversial, especially for its criticism of the laws of Aristotelian logic. These scholars did their best to defend this new view against its critics, including Schelling, Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg (1802–72), Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), and Immanuel Hermann, “the younger,” Fichte (1797–1819).

Hegel’s logic also drew considerable scholarly attention in Denmark. Johan Ludvig Heiberg’s (1791–1860) Outline of the Philosophy of Philosophy or Speculative Logic, was, like Hegel’s Encyclopädie, a textbook used by its author as the basis for his lectures (given originally in 1831–32). This work, the first of its kind in the Danish language, is a more or less complete paraphrase of Hegel’s Wissenschaft der Logik. Also worthy of note is Heiberg’s shorter work, “The System of Logic,” which appeared

46. Johann Friedrich Herbart, De principio loci excludi antidormitoria non negando commentatio, qua ad audiamur orationem... invariat, Göttingen 1813.

Kierkegaard owned. Hegel’s other principal statement on logic is the first volume of his Encyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften, which was originally published in Heidelberg in 1817. A final work worthy of mention is Hegel’s Philosophical Propaedeutic, sometimes referred to as the Nürnberg Propaedeutic. This work is a series of lecture notes discovered by Karl Rosenkranz (1805–79) who edited and published them for the first time in 1840 as a part of Hegel’s Werke. Some of the material overlaps significantly with that of the Wissenschaft der Logik. This text is not of great significance in Hegel’s corpus when compared to the Wissenschaft der Logik or the first volume of the Encyclopädie, but it is worthy of note for our purposes since Kierkegaard owned a copy of Rosenkranz’s edition of it, which he alludes to in Notebook 13.

Werder’s Logik: Als Commentar und Ergänzung zu Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik was probably published shortly before Kierkegaard’s attendance at the lectures that were based on it. The first book of Hegel’s Wissenschaft der Logik, “The Doctrine of Being,” is divided into three main sections: “Quality,” “Quantity,” and “Measure.” Werder’s Logik covers only the first section, i.e., “Quality,” and thus deals with only one third of the first book. It ends with the transition to “Quantity.” That Werder originally planned on continuing the work is evident from the fact that on the title page the book is designated as “Erste Abtheilung.” This first part, however, turned out also to be the last, for no continuation was ever published.

Werder’s interest in and work on Hegel’s logic was by no means exceptional. At the time there were a number of other German scholars who wrote extended works explicitly on or in the spirit of Hegel’s logic. The most notable are Christian Hermann Weisse (1801–66), Georg Andreas Hegel’s Werke. ASKB 532–554. In JIH, vols. 4–5. A second edition of this text was published in unaltered form in 1842.
40. The date of publication for the work is 1841, but it is not known when in 1841 it appeared. Werder’s lectures began sometime after October 17 of that year.
as an essay in the second number of his journal *Perseus* in August of 1838.\(^{49}\) Heiberg's great philosophical critic, Frederik Christian Sibbern (1785–1872) gave extensive critical discussions of Hegel's logic in his *Remarks and Investigations Primarily Concerning Hegel's Philosophy, with Regard to our Age.*\(^{50}\) Also significant for the Danish reception is Adolph Peter Adler's (1812–69) highly readable work, *Popular Lectures on Hegel's Objective Logic* (1842),\(^{51}\) which covers the material corresponding to "The Doctrine of Being" and "The Doctrine of Essence" from Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*. This work was published after Adler lectured on this topic at the University of Copenhagen in the Winter Semester of 1840.\(^{52}\) The Professor of Philosophy, Rasmus Nielsen (1809–84), published two works on speculative logic. The first was his *Speculative Logic in its Essentials*,\(^{53}\) which appeared in four installments from 1841–44. This work was presumably the butt of Kierkegaard's ongoing ridicule of an incomplete system,\(^{54}\) for the last installment stops in mid-sentence in the middle of "The Doctrine of Essence." But this criticism is not entirely fair given that

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\(^{52}\) For an account of this work see Carl Henrik Koch, *En Flue på Hegels udelede næse el ler om Adolph Peter Adler og om Søren Kierkegaards forhold til ham*, Copenhagen: C.A. Reitzels Forlag A/S 1990, pp. 66–108.


and Staudenmaier's *Darstellung und Kritik des Hegelschen Systems*, both of which treat Hegel's logic extensively. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when he acquired each of these works, and thus it is not easy to say whether his interest in Hegel's logic antedates Werder's lectures or whether it arose later, perhaps as a result of them in the mid 1840s. At any rate, these works were published and available prior to or at the time of Werder's lectures. Later he developed an interest in Trendelenburg and acquired his *Logische Untersuchungen* and *Die logische Frage in Hegels System: Zwei Streitschriften*. He also owned the works of the Hegel critic Immanuel Hermann Fichte and most of the Danish works on Hegel's logic mentioned above. Thus, his interest in Werder's logic seems to be consistent with his continuing interest in the discussions surrounding Hegel's logic that were taken place in the 1830s and '40s.

**III. Werder's Lectures**

The catalogue of courses at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin for the Winter Semester 1841–42 (which began on October 17, 1841) lists two offerings by Werder. The one Kierkegaard attended was entitled, "Logik und Metaphysik mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die bedeutendsten älteren und neuen Systeme," the title of which recalls the courses on "Logik und Metaphysik" regularly offered by Hegel. Werder's course was given Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 11:00–12:00. Marheineke's course was offered five days a week from 10:00–11:00, i.e.,

65. ASKB 843 and 846.
66. ASKB 907 and 908.
67. See ASKB 385, 596, 699, 778.
68. *Versuchungen der Vorlesungen, welche an der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin im Winterhalbjahre 1841–42 vom 17. Oktober an gehalten werden*, University Archive of the Humboldt University, Berlin. The course which Kierkegaard chose not attend had the cumbersome title, "Geschichte der neueren Philosophie von Cartesius an als Quellenstudium behandelt, mit besonders ausführlicher Darlegung des Schellingsehen Systems und einer einheitlichen Uebersicht der gesammten Geschichte der Philosophie." The course was given in the afternoon every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3:00–6:00.


an hour earlier than Werder's. This explains why the most extensive part of Kierkegaard's notes to Werder's lectures appears in the same notebook (i.e., Notebook 9), in which he took notes to Marheineke's lectures. Since Kierkegaard apparently went first to Marheineke's lecture and then to Werder's, it was convenient to use the same notebook to take notes for both courses. Werder's course is listed in the catalogue as "privatium" (a variant of the usual *privatissime*), meaning that it was not a large public lecture, which was in principle open to anyone who wanted to come, but rather was intended for a smaller, more select or advanced group, who presumably had to obtain Werder's consent and pay a small fee in order to attend.

Although Werder's lectures seem to be based primarily on his *Logik*, there are some significant differences. As noted, Werder's book covers only the first third of the first book of Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Kierkegaard's lecture notes, however, include an outline of the categories that covers all of Book One and most of Book Two. Kierkegaard's notes contain individual reflections on some of the categories from the outline, which go beyond the material covered in Werder's book. The final entry in Kierkegaard's notes before that with the outline of categories treats the fact in itself [*die Sache an sich*] and condition [*Bedingung*]; these categories come from the last part of the chapter on "Ground" in Book Two of the *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Werder's lectures thus advanced much further into the Hegelian system than did his book. Kierkegaard's notes on the categories, which are introduced in the second half of Hegel's logic, are at best fragmentary and suggest that Werder ended his lectures

72. For example Kierkegaard has notes on the categories of quantum (SKS, vol. 19, Notg 95, pp. 278f), measure (SKS, vol. 19, Notg 26, p. 279), identity and difference (SKS, vol. 19, Notg 7, p. 279), and the fact in itself [*die Sache an sich*] and condition [*Bedingung*] (SKS, vol. 19, Notg 8, p. 279), none of which are treated in Werder's book.
73. SKS, vol. 19, Notg 8, p. 279.
in Winter Semester at that point. A continuation of the course was announced in the catalogue for the subsequent summer semester, but by then Kierkegaard had returned to Copenhagen. The scope of Werder’s book and the lectures which Kierkegaard attended thus compare to Hegel’s logic as a whole as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hegel’s Book</th>
<th>Werder’s Lectures</th>
<th>Werder’s Book Logik: Als Commen-ner und Ergänzung zu Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wissenschaft der Logik</td>
<td>Logik und Metaphysik</td>
<td>Erstes Buch: Seyn Erster Abschnitt: Qualitat Zweiter Abschnitt: Quantitat Dritter Abschnitt: Das Maß</td>
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Given the fact that Werder stopped at almost the exact midpoint of the material from the Wissenschaft der Logik, it is likely that he originally conceived these lectures as a two-semester course.

Werder apparently enjoyed some celebrity. In the Winter Semester 1845, some four years after Kierkegaard’s visit, his fellow Dane Peter Michael Stilling (1812–69) attended Werder’s lectures, apparently on the same subject. In a letter dated February 14, 1845, to Sibbern, Stilling writes,

Werder’s...lectures on “Metaphysics” were ultimately the only ones which were worth hearing; for another thing, his exercises in disputation were an excellent school for dialectical suppleness. Of all the logicians of the Hegelian school, Werder is actually the only one who possesses a little freedom and mobility of spirit. Leopold v. Henning – and especially Gabler – have made an impression on me more or less like an old horse, who with old age is now just trotting along; he is indescribably dry and boring, a man of reason, wholly lacking imagination. He can ... as Werder fittingly said of him “certainly say a, b, c, but not ABC.” He can admittedly distinguish the moments in the movement of thought, but he has no eye for the concrete, speculative whole, nor does he have the ability to speak about it, for he lacks imagination.76

It is natural for Stilling to compare Werder to von Henning and Gabler since they were also Hegelian logicians.

Another contemporary report comes from the philologist and linguist Caspar Wilhelm Smith (1811–81),77 who was in Berlin at the same time as Kierkegaard in fall 1841 and even mentions him in his letters.78 In a letter dated July 13, 1841, to his half-brother Johannes Fibiger (1821–97), Smith writes the following of Werder’s lectures: “In philosophy I have begun to read Hegel’s Encyclopädie, but I cannot say that I have advanced very far. I am attending a lecture on the history of philosophy by Werder, an instructor who attracts all the students, for which reason the philistine world is trying, to the best of its abilities, to throw mud on him ...”79 Regarding Werder’s lectures, Smith continues, “With what concerns Werder, he brings together a lively lecture and an extraordinary thoroughness, in which he surpasses our [sc. Danish] instructors, at least in my opinion. His lectures and those of Schott are the only ones which I attend with regularity and interest.”80

Further useful information and interesting impressions come from Hans Brøchner (1820–75), who attended Werder’s lectures on logic in 1846. On May 1, 1846, in his first letter after his arrival in Berlin, he writes the following to the historian Christian Molbech (1783–1857):

78. Ibid., pp. 111, 112.
79. Ibid., pp. 96ff.
80. Ibid., p. 97.
Among the professors, I have until now only visited Werder, whose lectures on logic I am attending. He is a very interesting man and, as far as I know, one of the only ones here who gives a truly free lecture. The instructors here usually make no distinction between an oral lecture and a written treatise; they do not give helpful overviews but the entire mass of information signed and sealed; in fact, they give scholarly monologues and they do not even think of the listeners sitting opposite them, who are supposed to appropriate the lecture. Many of them read directly from their notes. Werder, by contrast, has the skill of being able to present the material in a fresh manner without repeating himself, and thus he is able to create a rapport with his auditors. They must always follow along, and the irony which he inserts here and there forces them to stay awake. He has a remarkable interest in his field; he told me that he was now lecturing on logic for the 21st time in 21 semesters, and he still lectures on this subject with life and energy as if it had the charm of something completely new for him. With great willingness he made me the offer that I should come to him as soon as there were points either in what he was teaching or in his field in general, about which I might wish elucidation, and he encouraged me to remain here at least for the winter since the lectures in general are more refined and the stay more pleasant.81

Like the other reports Brochhner unambiguously testifies to Werder’s skills as a lecturer, especially when compared to the other instructors at the university. Also of interest is the fact that Werder had lectured on Hegel’s logic for 21 semesters running. This makes one wonder why the further installments of his book never appeared, given the fact that he had ample opportunity to continue his work on the subject. In another letter from July of the same year, Brochhner names Werder’s lectures explicitly among the benefits of his stay in Berlin. Consistent with his assessment in the previous letter, he refers to this course as “perhaps the only real lecture which is given here.”82

84. LD, 51; BfA, p. 77.
85. The other person mentioned by Kierkegaard is Otto Friedrich Gruppe (1804–76), from 1844 Professor of Philosophy in Berlin and from 1865 the Secretary of the Academy of Arts. Why he is considered one of the “notable people” here in 1841 is unclear. See Max Lenz, Geschichte der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 186f.
ted and extremely popular. Moreover, during that same semester Werder himself was teaching a course "mit besonders ausführlicher Darlegung des Schellingischen Systems." Werder’s course was by necessity confined to treating Schelling’s early work, but he would presumably also have been interested in Schelling’s more recent philosophical views.

The second letter is dated about a month later on December 15, 1841. Kierkegaard writes to Sibbern, his old dissertation advisor, of his enthusiasm for Werder’s lectures:

So here I am in Berlin going to lectures. I am attending lectures by Marhei- neke, Werder and Schelling . . . Werder is a virtuoso; that is all one can say about him. I suspect that he must be a Jew, for baptized Jews always distinguish themselves by their virtuosity and of course do participate in all fields nowadays. Like a juggler, he can play and frolic with the most abstract categories and with never so much as a slip of the tongue even though he talks as fast as a horse can run. He is a scholastic in the old sense; he has found in Hegel what they found in Thomas Aquinas, not just the *summa* and the *summa summae* but the *summa summorum*. In this respect he is almost a psychological phenomenon for me. His life, his thought, the richness of the outside world almost seem meaningful to him only when they have reference to Hegel’s *Logik*. It is, however, very advantageous for the young people studying at the University to have such a man.87

Here Werder seems to be praised primarily for his rhetorical abilities, i.e., for his mastery of the technical jargon of Hegel’s philosophy and for his ability to employ it without hesitation or flaw in his analysis of the categories. The observation that Werder “talks as fast as a horse can run” may explain why Kierkegaard’s notes to his lectures are not particularly detailed. It would have been difficult for him to note much more than fleeting observations and general headings, given that, in addition to the intrinsic difficulty of the subject matter itself, Werder was speaking so quickly in a language that was not Kierkegaard’s own. This letter also evidences a slight ambivalence towards Werder. Although Werder seems to be “almost a psychological phenomenon” due to his obsession with Hegel’s logic and his tendency to interpret everything through its prism, his teaching is nonetheless lauded as “very advantageous for the young people studying at the University.” Thus, Werder is by no means made the object of Kierkegaard’s scorn as a blind Hegelian parrot as, for example, Heiberg and Martensen are later.

The third and final letter is again addressed to P.J. Spang and dated January 8, 1842. There Kierkegaard writes at the end of the letter,

Werder juggles with the categories as the strong man in Dyrehavn juggles with balls weighing twenty, thirty, forty pounds. It is terrifying to watch, and as in Dyrehavn one is sometimes tempted to believe that they are paper balls. He is not only a philosopher but a poet as well. He has written a monstrously long play called *Christopher Columbus*, which lasts from 5:30 to 10 p.m. despite the censor’s having deleted some 600 lines. Yet, in another sense it lasts even longer, for it spans fourteen years, and that being so, one should praise his brevity. It was performed for the first time last night, but it was impossible to get a ticket. My time is up, and I have Werder’s example warning me to strive for brevity.88

In the first part of this passage Kierkegaard repeats more or less what he said to Sibbern a month earlier, comparing Werder with a juggler. What is new is the second half. Here Kierkegaard alludes to an entirely different aspect of Werder’s activity, namely his drama *Christopher Columbus*.89 Here there is a tone of satire regarding the length of the piece, but Kierkegaard seems rather restrained in his critique. Moreover, this satire has nothing to do with Hegel’s logic.


87. *LD*, 55; *BéA*, p. 84. Translation slightly modified.


89. This was the work with which Werder hoped to establish himself as a major dramatist in the German language. It was performed for the first time here in 1842, with subsequent performances in 1847 at the Charlottenburg Schloßtheater, in 1852 in Mannheim, and finally again in Berlin in 1892. Unfortunately, this work never attained the critical acclaim that Werder had hoped for. See Albert Küster, “Karl Friedrich Werder,” in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, op. cit., Vol. 44, pp. 482–483.
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first triad of Hegel's logic consists of the categories being, nothing and becoming. The transition in question is that between this initial triad and the second one, which consists of determinate being (Daseyn), finitude and infinity. In this transition the category of becoming is conceived as having two aspects or "moments": coming-to-be (Entstehen) and ceasing-to-be (Vergehen). Each of these expresses the concept of becoming in its own direction or with its own vector, so to speak. Coming-to-be is becoming directed towards being, while ceasing-to-be is becoming directed towards nothing. Their unity leads to the next category, determinate being. This is what is expressed in the passage with the otherwise cryptic statement: "Entstehen (Nichts in Seyn) and Vergehen (Seyn in Nichts) are in each other."97

The second aspect of this transition is when these two moments of the category becoming, i.e., coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, are considered to be at rest. This is when determinate being arises. All determinate beings are mutable, i.e., they are always in a process of change somewhere in the movement of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be. But these movements often take place over long periods of time and are not always clearly discernable. Thus, when a thing is considered in this way, i.e., as being at rest in this process, it is determinate.98 It has come into being without yet having ceased to be. Kierkegaard notes this in the passage thus: "this expressed as rest, as product, is consequently not werden but was geworden ist, i.e., Daseyn." This wordplay appears at this transition in Werder's text and in Hegel's Encyclopädie, albeit in the student additions.99

pp. 119–121. See also EL, §§ 88–89; Jwb. vol. 8, pp. 209–217. The second transition noted in the passage is that from changelessness to unchangeableness or finitude to infinitude and clearly corresponds to the section, "Auflösung der Veränderung" in Werder's book: Werder, Logik, pp. 146–164. This corresponds in Hegel to SL, pp. 129–156; Jwb. vol. 4, pp. 147–153. See also EL, §§ 92–95; Jwb. vol. 8, pp. 199–227. (EL = The Encyclopædia Logic: Part One of the Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences, trans. by E.F. Gerards, W.A. Suchting, and H.S. Harris, Indianapolis: Hackett 1991.)

97. Hegel explains this as follows in a passage from the Wissenschaft der Logik quoted in Werder's Logik, p. 98. "Both [sc. coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be] are the same, becoming, and although they differ so in direction they interpenetrate and paralyze each other. The one is ceasing-to-be being passes over into nothing, but nothing is equally the opposite of itself, transition into being, coming-to-be. This coming-to-be is the other direction: nothing passes over into being, but being equally sublates itself and is rather transition into nothing, is ceasing-to-be" (SL, p. 106; Jwb. vol. 4, p. 119). See also Hegel, SL, p. 606; Jwb. vol. 4, p. 197: "... becoming is the vanishing of being in nothing and of nothing in being ..."

98. "The intended contrast here is clearly with the previous category of being, which is unchanging and eternal. Pure being does not come-to-be or cease-to-be. It is. It exists eternally."

99. Werder, Logik, pp. 108ff: "Verschwundenseyn seiner selbst, sein eignes: also ein Aufheben
Kierkegaard’s comment on this first part of the entry is as follows: “This sounds good enough, but it involves sheer play with the concept of time, which is not given and which I think cannot be given in logic anyway.” The reference to “sheer play” seems to be to the last part of the passage: “this expressed as rest, as product, is consequently not werden but was geworden ist, i.e., Daseyn.” Kierkegaard seems to object to the word-play involved in the verbal forms “werden” and “geworden ist,” which, as noted above, also figures prominently in Werder’s book. The claim that the concept of time cannot be captured in logic seems to anticipate what might be called the existential aspect of Kierkegaard’s later thinking, i.e., his belief that the scholarly fields of “objective thinking” cannot in principle capture the existential aspects of the life of the individual.

To return to Kierkegaard’s original comment about the possible significance of these categories for dogmatics, his concern appears to be with the dogma of the incarnation, which will become so important for him later in works such as Philosophical Fragments. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that in the other entry where Werder appears in this notebook (discussed just below), he is mentioned in connection with Marheineke’s das innerhalb des Werdens bleibt; das Werden verschwindet ... aber nur in sich. Es härt auf, es vergoht, als Werden. Das heißt: es ist das vergangene Werden[,] es ist: Geworden. Was geworden ist, das ist da. Dados Pritertum ist im Geiste ein Präsens. Werden als Geworden ist Daseyn.” Ibid., p. 109: “Im Werden ist die unbestimmte Ruhe, das Sein, das abstracte Entstanden, aufgehoben; darum ist es rastlose Bewegung: Vergeh... welches als rastlose Bewegung selbst vergeht, und als die Bewegung des sich-selbst-Produzierns Entstehen und somit bestimmte in sich bewegte Ruhe: Geworden, Daseyn ist.” Hegel, El., § 89, Addition; Jb. vol. 8, p. 217: “Das Resultat aber dieses Processe ist nicht das leere Nichts, sondern das mit der Negation identische Sein, welches wir Daseyn nennen, und als dessen Bedeutung sich zunächst die erweist, geworden zu sein.” N.B. This wordplay does not appear in the Wissenschaft der Logik (at least not at this transition).


101. Later in The Concept of Anxiety he objects to a similar wordplay from Hegelian logic with the words “Wesen” and “gewesen”: CA, p. 1212, SKS, vol. 4, p. 1201n.: “Wesen ist das ist gewe- sen; ist gewesen ist ein tempus praetestum von Sein, ergo, Wesen ist das aufgehende Sein, the Sein that has been. This is a logical movement! If anyone would take the trouble to collect and put together all the strange pixies and goblins who like busy clerks bring about movement in Hegelian logic (such as this is in itself and as it has been improved by the school), a later age would perhaps be surprised to see that what are regarded as discarding witticisms once played an important role in logic.” See SKS, vol. K4, p. 363. The wordplay in Hegel see El., § 112, Addition; Jb., vol. 8, p. 263: “As for the further significance and use of the category of essence, we can recall first at this point how the term ’Wesen’ is employed to designate the past for the German auxiliary verb ’sein’, for we designate the being that is past as ’gewesen.’” See also PHS, p. 62; Jb., vol. 2, p. 88: “The ’Wesen’ as it is pointed out to us, is Now that has been, and this is the truth; it has not the truth of being. Yet this much is true, that it has been. But essentially has been [gewesen ist] is, in fact, not an essence that is [kein Wesen]; it is not, and it was with being that we were concerned.”

In contrast to the first part of this entry just treated, this passage after the dash has much more the look of an actual note written during the lecture itself. The passage refers to the way in which the categories of something (Etwas) and other (Anderes) are related to one another dialectically in Hegel’s logic. The point is quite simply that any something implies an opposite, i.e., something else, and conversely for something else to exist implies that it is compared with a previous something which was the original point of departure. The two concepts thus mutually determine and imply each other.


104. Cfr. Werder, Logik, pp. 126–133, especially pp. 132f.: ”Das Etwas ist für Andere und das lectures of dogmatics. There Kierkegaard names the doctrine of the incarnation explicitly. The connection seems to be something like the following: the idea that a transcendent God can become incarnate and appear in time corresponds to the movement from the category of being to that of determinate being. The category of being is, like the divine, eternal. By becoming incarnate, God becomes temporal, just like determinate being. To put it in purely speculative terms, the incarnation would be the coming-to-be and the crucifixion the ceasing-to-be, i.e., in time. Kierkegaard has his pseudonym Johannes Climacus treat this in some detail in the Fragments, where he objects to claims for the purported dialectical necessity of such transitions. Thus, his claim that the concept of time cannot be captured in logical seems to anticipate, among other things, his later doctrine of the paradox.

(B) There follows a dash to indicate a break after which Werder treats two further categories: something (Etwas) and other (Anderes). Kierkegaard writes the following:

Etwas and Andere are not merely in each other, but Etwas is only insofar as it is Andere, and Andere only insofar as it is Etwas; they fashion each other. The movement is a redoubling. On one side Etwas. As an sich it is Etwas; as being for another it is Andere – Andere is an sich Andere, as a being for another it is Etwas. But thereby Etwas – consequently is – through Andere; and consequently Etwas is not only Andere but nur Andere, and this is expressed by Andere, but this expressed as unity is change.
being the expression of their unity is also found in Werder’s book.\textsuperscript{105}

(C) There is a third point at the end of this entry that Kierkegaard also notes: “Finitude is what am Ende ist; consequently the finite is was gewesen ist. But infinitude? It is finitude which is not itself (nonfinitude – both); consequently it is infinitude; was nicht gewesen ist.”\textsuperscript{106} This too has the look of an actual lecture note. What is at issue here is the dialectical relation that exists between finitude and infinity in Hegel’s logic.\textsuperscript{107}

Hegel constantly polemicizes against what he refers to as “the bad infinity” (sometimes translated as “the spurious infinity”).\textsuperscript{108} This understanding of the concept is the common sense conception of adding or repeating a term endlessly in the sense that we tend to think that numbers are infinite since we can always add one more. Hegel disapproves of this notion since it is not dialectical. Thus, it leads nowhere and causes the dialectical movement to come to a halt, only to be replaced with a mechanical repetition. The true conception of infinity is one whereby infinity is conceived in its determinate opposition to finitude. In other words, the finite could not exist without the infinite and vice versa. This is expressed in the passage where Kierkegaard writes, “It is finitude which is not itself (nonfinitude … both); consequently it is infinitude.”\textsuperscript{109}


109. Compare this to the way it is phrased in Werder’s Logik, p. 152: “So kann man sagen: Das Endliche selbst ist das Unendliche … und man sagt so, wenn man weiß, was man sagt. Das passage can be explained as follows. A finite series of numbers is one which is complete or at an end, or, as is written in the passage, “Finitude is what am Ende ist.” By contrast, an infinite series of numbers is one which has not yet been completed or “was nicht gewesen ist.”

Kierkegaard’s critical comment on this is as follows: “Insofar as this is to be the expression for the significance of finitude, it manifestly has not received its due.”\textsuperscript{110} He seems to be dissatisfied with the conception of finitude as being merely the opposite of the infinite. His dissatisfaction perhaps stems from the fact that such an account of finitude fails to consider sin, which he clearly regards as essential in the conception of finite human beings.

(2) The other entry about Werder from this notebook refers to some of the categories mentioned in the previous one and thus serves to shed light on the previous discussion. Here Kierkegaard writes,

The doctrine of revelation as presented by Marheinecke in his Dogmatik serves to illuminate the philosophic volatilization of Christian doctrinal concepts – the logical proposition that the finite is the infinite, together with the explanation Werder gives, that the stress is on the last word. All this must be gone through meticulously in order, if possible, to bring clarity into the confusion. The doctrine of the image of God according to Marheinecke’s lecture is also such a volatilization.\textsuperscript{111}

Here he refers to the final part of the previous entry concerning the dialectical relation of infinity and finitude. Kierkegaard’s objection to both Werder and Marheinecke is to their dialectical conception of infinity, which makes it in a sense dependent upon finitude. This undermines it as an absolute other since it always stands in relation to the finite, as its


opposite. Thus, it is easy to understand Kierkegaard’s objection to the paradoxical formulation that “the finite is the infinite.” In Werder (and Hegel) this formulation is simply meant to capture the dialectical interrelatedness of the two categories. But to formulate it in this way is, for Kierkegaard, to risk the danger of understanding it literally, which would mean that there is no difference between the two. This would of course have catastrophic consequences for dogmatics, which, for Kierkegaard, requires an "absolute difference" between God (infinity) and human beings (finite) or God and the created world.

The two entries in this notebook manifest clearly Kierkegaard’s agenda. Although they appear in a section entitled, "Notanda. ad philosophiam pertinentia," these notes on Werder’s analyses of the logical categories are to be understood primarily in terms of their relevance for theology. This could also explain why Kierkegaard’s notes are not more extensive than they are. He only bothered to take notes for the categories which seemed to have some relevance for dogmatics. The other ones were simply not relevant or interesting for him.

C. Notebook 9

The actual notes that Kierkegaard took at Werder’s lectures appear in Notebook 9, which, as stated, also includes his notes to Marheineke’s lectures (which are continued in Notebook 10). Like the entries on Werder in Notebook 8, these seem to be regarded as an independent section, although there is no distinct title or heading to introduce them. This is reinforced by the fact that the notes to Marheineke’s lectures were written from the front of the notebook, while those to Werder’s lectures were written from the back. There are in all only eight entries from Werder’s

lectures. The last of these is a fragmentary overview of the categories. Kierkegaard seems not to have made any attempt to take systematic notes to Werder’s lectures in the way he did for those of Marheineke and Schelling. Kierkegaard’s notes follow the same general sequence as both Werder’s book and Hegel’s Wissenschaft der Logik, but there are a number of intermediary categories missing for which he took no notes.

These notes are too extensive to be treated exhaustively here, and so I will confine myself to examining just two of them of particular importance. The one entry is rather cryptic and runs as follows: "Identity ist der mit sich identische Unterschied – Unterschied ist der von sich unterschiedene identity," Here one can see Kierkegaard’s fondness for paradoxical formulations. What is at issue here is Hegel’s critique of the law of identity as nonsensical. Statements such as, “The plant is the plant,” ultimately say nothing. The first part of the statement, “The plant is...” seems to promise a meaningful predicate which will provide new information, but the completion of the proposition disappoints this expectation. Hegel thus claims a new conception of identity is needed. He argues that the concept of identity is inherent in the propositional form itself, for example, “The plant is green.” Here, he claims, an assertion of identity is made by simply attributing the predicate to the subject. Thus, “The plant is green,” is a statement of identity, but one which contains a difference within itself since the plant also has other properties and is not, as such, identical with the color green. This is the meaning of the first half of the statement: "Identity ist der mit sich identische Unterschied.” The speculative concept of identity contains the concept of difference.

The second half of the statement concerns the category of difference, which is central for Hegel’s famous criticism of the law of contradiction. Parallel to his discussion of identity, Hegel argues that the concept of difference contained in the classical notion of contradiction is ultimately empty. When one says, “The rose is not red,” one has not said anything
determinate since the rose could be any number of other colors. The correct speculative understanding of difference is that of opposites or contraries (Gegensätze), whereby a given thing is not its opposite, i.e., north is not south, and being is not nothing. But in these complementary pairs, one can easily see a higher dialectical unity; the one is the mirror image of the other, and the one necessarily determines the other. This provides an aspect of identity to the concept of difference, i.e., north is not south, but it is identical with south when considered as longitudinal direction. This is what is meant with the second half of Kierkegaard's note, "Unterschied ist der von sich unterschied[e]n identity." The speculative concept of difference is thus one that contains the concept of identity.

The final entry is an elaborate table of categories. I have attempted to reconstruct this table with some slight modifications in order to make clear the relation between this table and Werder's Logik and Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik. The words that appear in bold are the ones that appear in Kierkegaard's entry. For the sake of simplicity I have changed Kierkegaard's Danish spellings of the German words to the standard German orthography of the day. Moreover, for the few times where Kierkegaard has written the categories in Danish, I have taken the liberty of changing them to the German as they appear in Werder and Hegel. I have added in square brackets the missing chapter headings or categories, following Werder's Logik (until the point where it ends) and then Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik. These appear in normal script. This arrangement makes it easy to see what Kierkegaard left out from his notes. On the right I have referenced the corresponding sections in Werder's Logik (until it ends) and then Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik.

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121. It has, of course, rightly been pointed out that this is not an accurate statement of the Aristotelian law of contradiction, which states that it is not possible for a given thing to both have and not have the same property (at the same time and in the same respect). Thus, it is not possible for a given rose to be both red and not red. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book IV, Chapters 3–6; Book XI, Chapters 5–6.


123. The references to Hegel's Wissenschaft der Logik are all to vol. 4 in Jah.
The Influence of Werder’s Lectures and Logik on Kierkegaard’s Thought

D. Further Allusions to Werder

The Nachlass contains only two further references to Werder. The first appears in Notebook 13, which Kierkegaard names “Philosophica.”124 As the title indicates, this is where he collected his reflections on philosophy along with the notes that he took while reading philosophical texts. The complete entry is as follows:

In the doctrine of being everything is which does not change. (This is something which even Werder admitted. See the small books.)

In the doctrine of essence there is Beziehung. – The irregularities in Hegel’s logic.

Essentially this segment is only dichotomies – cause-effect – ground-consequent –

Reciprocal effect is a problem, perhaps belongs somewhere else.

The concept is a trichotomy.

Being does not belong to logic at all.

It ought to begin with dichotomy.125

By “the small books” Kierkegaard is presumably referring to Notebook 8 and 9. The claim attributed to Werder seems to be limited to the first sentence and presumably does not include the rest of the entry. This original claim that “In the doctrine of being everything is which does not change,” refers to Hegel’s contrast between the categories in “The Doctrine of Being” and those of “The Doctrine of Essence.”126 The former are considered alone in their immediacy; they simply exist. By contrast, the so-called categories of reflection are characterized not by the verb “to be” but rather “to have” since they have reciprocal parts. For example, an effect has a cause; a thing has properties. It is odd that Kierkegaard says that this is something that Werder “admitted” given the fact that Hegel states it himself more or less explicitly. Perhaps the meaning of this is to be found in Kierkegaard’s critical remarks in this entry. He makes a couple of cri-

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tical comments about this organization of the categories, for example, that reciprocal effect [Vedvirkning] does not belong to "The Doctrine of Essence," that "Being does not belong to logic at all," and that logic "ought to begin with dichotomy." Thus, to say that Werder "admitted" the point about the categories in "The Doctrine of Being" is a way of saying that Werder is in agreement with this general way of organizing and understanding the categories and thus that he too is open to these criticisms.

The second direct allusion to Werder, which is no less cryptic than the first, appears on an undated loose paper. There, based on a point in Hegel's logic, Kierkegaard compares the works on logic of Adler, Werder and Heiberg. He writes:

Hegel in the logic at the transition from the doctrine of measure.
Adler says: when the quantitative determination is indifferent, then a new quality appears — when?
Werder is more correct.
Heiberg's Perseus cf. a pencil mark in the margin to the first §§ of the logic. 127

This entry, though undated, must have been written during or after 1842 since Adler's Popular Lectures on Hegel's Objective Logic did not appear until that year. 128 Moreover, the entry's context suggests it was written in connection with the discussion of the leap that appears in The Concept of Anxiety, which of course appeared in 1844. 129

The first sentence fragment refers to Hegel's discussion of the doctrine of measure, which constitutes the transition from quantity to quality. This transition was important for Kierkegaard as a source for his celebrated doctrine of the leap. For Hegel, measure involves the quantitative increase or decrease in certain properties or aspects of a thing. These quantitative changes have, however, a natural limit. There can only be quantitative changes up to a certain point after which there is a radical

128. Adolph Peter Adler, Populære Foredrag over Hegels objective Logik, Copenhagen 1842. ASKB 383.
general assessment of Werder. As noted in the introduction, Thulstrup and others have regarded Kierkegaard as being highly critical of Werder, qua Hegelian logician. But this assessment does not square with the passages discussed here. The times when Werder is mentioned in his letters, Kierkegaard is generally quite positive. There is a slightly ironical tone regarding Werder, but despite this he is still larded with no trace of irony. In the actual lecture notes themselves in Notebook 9, there is no criticism whatsoever, either positive or negative. Further, regarding the two allusions to Werder in the passages just examined, the first is too cryptic for one to say with certainty whether it contains a criticism. In the second Werder's account of the transition of quantity to quality is praised in comparison to that of Hegel and Adler. Although the reference is too cryptic to allow an interpretation of why Kierkegaard thinks that his account "is more correct," nonetheless there can be no doubt that this is a positive criticism. Given this, it seems that only in the two comments on Werder's lectures in Notebook 8 do there appear critical remarks. In any case, it seems that Thulstrup's claim is highly oversimplified. While Kierkegaard is critical of some individual aspects of Werder's logic, he is by no means overly critical or dismissive. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence of his appreciation of Werder's work and abilities.

V. The Possible Influence of Werder's Logik on Kierkegaard's Later Works

Kierkegaard's published authorship contains no direct references to Werder or his Logik. Thus, in contrast to the documentation just explored about Werder's lectures, any discussion of the importance of Werder's book for Kierkegaard must remain in large part guesswork. However, given that Werder may be presumed to have used the book in his lectures and that Kierkegaard is known to have owned it, it is reasonable to assume that Kierkegaard was familiar with the book as well as the lectures. This assumption is supported by various points of contact between Werder's Logik and Kierkegaard's works which seem to suggest a significant influence.


The Influence of Werder's Lectures and Logik on Kierkegaard's Thought

A. The Either/Or

It was during his stay in Berlin that Kierkegaard began work on Either/or, which he ultimately completed upon his return to Copenhagen. The title of this famous work was inspired by the on-going debates about Hegel's logic and specifically by Hegel's criticism of the Aristotelian law of excluded middle. However, Werder's use of this formulation seems also to be in the background for Kierkegaard.

In a letter from Berlin dated February 6, 1842, when he was presumably still attending Werder's lectures, Kierkegaard wrote to his friend Emil Boesen (1812-79) about the title of the book that he was currently working on: "Either/Or is indeed an excellent title. It is piquant and at the same time also has a speculative meaning." By this Kierkegaard seems to refer to the implicit criticism of speculative mediation contained in this expression. The work presents two opposed positions, that of the aesthetic and that of Judge Wilhelm. These positions are presented as being in fundamental opposition to one another such that no mediation or compromise between them is possible. The reader must presumably opt for either the aesthetic or Judge Wilhelm. The pseudonymous editor of the work, Victor Eremita, writes the following in his preface:

As papers contain a multiplicity of approaches to an aesthetic view of life.

...B's papers contain an ethical view of life. As I allowed my soul to be influenced by this thought, it became clear to me that I could let it guide me in determining the title. The title I have chosen expresses precisely this.

The contrasting views cannot be reconciled or sublated into a single higher position by means of Hegelian mediation. The work ends in a kind of aporia, and no resolution ever comes about. The organization of
Either/Or, captured so succinctly with the title, can be seen as a part of a polemical dialogue with Hegel's criticism of the laws of classical logic and his doctrine of speculative mediation.

The formulation "either/or" had long been used as a kind of shorthand for the law of excluded middle before Hegel.\textsuperscript{140} Hegel himself often employs the term in a critical context. He argues that thinking characterized by the "either/or" is one-dimensional and fails to see that opposites are necessarily dialectically related to one another. Instead, such thinking insists on one-sided dichotomies: one is either free or determined, the world is either finite or infinite, etc. The very goal of Hegel's speculative method is to grasp the whole of the world's conceptual structure through an awareness of the necessary connections between opposing concepts of this kind. In the \textit{Encyclopädie}, Hegel denigrates "either/or" thinking as "dogmatism," which distorts the true meaning of concepts by isolating them. He writes,

But in the narrower sense dogmatism consists in adhering to one-sided determinations of the understanding whilst excluding their opposites. This is just the strict "either-or," according to which (for instance) the world is \textit{either} finite or infinite, \textit{but not both}. On the contrary, what is genuine and speculative is precisely what does not have any such one-sided determination in it and is therefore not exhausted by it; on the contrary, being a totality, it contains the determinations that dogmatism holds to be fixed and true in a state of separation from one another united within itself.\textsuperscript{141}

According to Hegel, dogmatism fastens on to the one or the other side of such opposite determinations and declares it to be the final truth. By contrast, speculative philosophy grasps the higher truth of such opposites by realizing their conceptual relation. It thus returns these concepts to their original dialectical context and restores them to their proper relation.

Prior to Weder's lectures, the formulation "either/or" was known to Kierkegaard if not from Hegel's primary texts, then certainly from the Danish debate about mediation that took place primarily in 1836,\textsuperscript{142} in which participants on both sides of the issue employed the expression. The Hegel critics, Frederik Christian Sibbern\textsuperscript{143} and Jakob Peter Mynster (1775-1854),\textsuperscript{144} used the Latin version of the expression \textit{aut aut}, while tors about in abstractions, whereas the man of experience does not get caught up in the abstract \textit{either-or}, but holds onto the concrete." EL, § 65; Jdb., vol. 8, p. 170: "This standpoint is not content when it has shown that mediate knowing, taken in isolation, is inadequate for the [cognition of] truth; its particularity is that immediate knowing can only have the truth as its content when it is taken in isolation, to the exclusion of mediation.—Exclusions of this kind betray that this standpoint is a relapse into the metaphysical understanding, with its \textit{either-or}." EL, § 149; Addition 2: Jdb., vol. 8, p. 280: "Instead of speaking in accordance with the law of excluded middle (which is a law of the abstract understanding), it would be better to say, 'Everything stands in opposition.' There is in fact nothing, either in heaven or on earth, either in the spiritual or the natural world, that exhibits the abstract \textit{either-or} as it is contained by the understanding. Everything that exists at all is concrete and hence is irrevocably distinguished and self-opposed." Translation slightly modified. (My italics.) See also Jbf., vol. 1, p. 410.


Heiberg used it in Hegel’s defense.145 Hegel’s other champion, Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–84) used not only the Latin but also the Danish expression which became Kierkegaard’s title.146

Through this debate Kierkegaard was doubtless familiar with this expression and its meaning as a slogan critical of Hegel’s doctrine of meditation. While the formulation itself is absent, the idea is clearly there in an entry from the Journal EE in 1838.147 Moreover, the Latin formulation, albeit not in any polemical context, appears in his dissertation The Concept of Irony which was of course completed immediately before his trip to Berlin.148 It is thus clear that Kierkegaard was familiar with this slogan and its meaning before he attended Werder’s lectures. Yet it was not until his stay in Berlin that he formulated and began work on Either/Or, and for this reason it seems that Werder must be privileged, if not as the original source, then as the proximate source for Kierkegaard’s use of it. Although Werder’s book does not reach the section in Hegel’s Wissenschaft der Logik where the laws of classical logic are criticized,149 he uses the formulation “either/or” in a polemical manner in other contexts.

It will be recalled that Werder wrote his Habilitation on Plato’s dialogues, the Parmenides, which Hegel had hailed as a masterpiece of dialectical argumentation.150 In one passage from his Logik, Werder quotes a rather large section of the dialogue.151 A part of this quotation reads as follows: “But there is no time during which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest.”152 This is a typical formulation of the law of excluded middle, which states that a thing must have either the predicate P or not-P, but not both. Thus, a given rose must be either red or not red. In a footnote to this quotation, Werder writes, “Das fixirte Entweder oder das fixirte Oder ist der Charakter der Endlichkeit.”153 By this he seems to mean, with Hegel, that the kind of thinking characterized by this kind of “either/or” constitutes the finite understanding: speculative thought, by contrast, is infinite since it forms a circle of concepts, without stopping at any particular one.

On the next page Werder, still quoting Plato, speaks not only of the “either/or” but also of the “neither/nor.” Here he cites the following from the Parmenides: “it [sc. the moment] occupies no time in making it [sc. the transition from a state of rest to a state of motion] and at that moment it cannot be in motion or at rest.”154 Werder’s comment on this is the following: “Dies Weder- Noch ist das absolute Entweder-Oder, die Mitte des Begriffes, die ewige Grenze.”155 Here the formulation “neither/ nor” is applied to the Platonic concept of the moment, which is neither in motion nor at rest. The moment itself is not in motion when it is taken as an isolated entity; however, a series of moments is clearly in motion. It might be argued that these formulations have a relatively minor significance since they appear as footnotes, which Werder uses to comment on

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147. Jpa, vol. 2, 1758; Sks, vol. 18, pp. 342–343; “EEsq: ‘All relative contrasts can be mediated; we do not really need Hegel for this, inasmuch as the ancients point out that they can be distinguished. Personality will for all eternity protest against the idea that absolute contrasts can be mediated (and this protest is incommensurable with the assertion of mediation); for all eternity it will repeat its immortal dilemma: to be or not to be—that is the question (Hamlet).’”

148. Cf. p. 81; Sks, vol. 1, p. 136: “On the front of the stage, then is Socrates—not as someone who rashly brushes away the thought of death and clings anxiously to life, not as someone who eagerly goes toward death and magnanimously sacrifices his life, but as someone who takes delight in the alteration of light and shadow found in the syzygic autistic, when it almost simultaneously manifests broad daylight and pitch darkness, manifests the infinitely real and the infinitely nothing.” Cf. pp. 81–83: Sks, vol. 1, p. 140: “At the end of the Apology, however, an attempt is made to show that to die is a good. But this observation is once again an autistic, and since the view that death is nothing whatever emerges in conjunction with the one autistic, the extent to which one can share the joy that encircles both these continua like the ocean becomes somewhat doubtful.”


150. Hegel, Hist. of Phil., vol. 1, p. 595; Jah, vol. 17, p. 308: “Plato, in one of his dialogues, likewise accorded the chief part to Parmenides, and puts in his mouth the most lofty dialectic that was ever given . . . .” See also Hegel, Sl, pp. 552; Jah, vol. 4, p. 93: “That which enables the Notion to advance itself is the already mentioned negative which it possesses within itself; it is this which constitutes the genuine dialectical element. Dialectic in this way acquires an entirely different significance from what it had when it was considered as a separate part of logic and when its aim and standpoint were, one may say, completely misunderstood. Even the Platonic dialectic, in the Parmenides itself and everywhere more directly, on the one hand, aims only at abolishing and refuting limited assertions through themselves, and, on the other hand, has for result simply nothingness.”


153. Werder, Logik, pp. 94ffn.


155. Werder, Logik, pp. 95ffn.
quoted material from Plato. However, these formulations appear again later in different contexts.

Werder continues this proliferation of odd formulations by introducing the “both/and” later in the work. Discussing the concepts of something and other, he writes:

Hier aber galt es zu vergessen, welch ein Gepräge Etwas und Anderes und Weder-Noch und Sowo[h]l—Als auch im Verkehr der Sinnlichkeit empfunden haben; darauf kam es an, um ihrer Erinnerung bewußt zu werden.

Die Veränderung als das Weder-Noch des nur Etwas und des nur Andern ist ihr Sowo[h]l—Als auch, ist die Einheit beider.156

The point here is much the same as before. The problem is how to explain change. First, a given thing must display some new aspect or property for change to have been said to take place at all. The assertion that a thing always remains itself appears to rule out the possibility of change. However, when a given thing changes it does not simply become something else since then it would not be the same thing that changed. Thus, change is likewise not simply the introduction of something else. Change thus requires a thing to be “both” itself “and” the thing it changes into. Everything that changes has first an aspect of self-identity, i.e., it must be the same thing that experiences change, and then an aspect of difference, i.e., it must display some new aspect in order for change to be said to have taken place. The both/and is the unity of these two aspects.

Werder avails himself of the same formulations a few pages later in his discussion of finitude and infinity. There he writes,


This is a difficult passage, full of wordplays. The point seems to be that it

156. Werder, Logik, p. 156.

is a mistake to think of finite things just as finite things. They are instead the incarnation or revelation of the infinite since the infinite expresses itself concretely in finite things. One must be attentive enough to recognize the infinite in the finite. In this way a given thing is “both/and,” i.e., both finite and infinite. In the background of the discussion is clearly the Christian Revelation as evidenced by the theological language of the wordplay that Erklärung (explanation) is Verklärung (transfiguration). Thus, Christ is both finite, i.e., a human being, and infinite, the divine. Needless to say, this is a highly significant issue for Kierkegaard in a number of different texts. It is obvious that he would be highly attentive to it here given that he was explicitly looking for things from Werder’s logic which he could use in a dogmatics.158

Here one can see Werder’s love for catchy formulations such as either/or, both/and, and neither/nor. While Hegel uses formulations of this sort occasionally, he does not do so with such frequency and certainly not with precisely these formulations. Only the expression “either/or” is used by Hegel with any frequency, and its meaning is considerably more limited than in Werder’s discussion. Thus, it is highly probable that Werder’s playful use of these formulations helped to inspire Kierkegaard in selecting the title for the work that he himself designates as the beginning of his authorship.159

B. The Moment

The “moment,” sometimes translated as “the instant,” is a key concept in Kierkegaard’s oeuvre. Many commentators have assumed that he adopted it directly from the Parmenides where it was introduced and discussed by Plato.160 Yet Werder, whose Habilitation had been on that very dialogue, shared Kierkegaard’s interest in Plato, and it is reasonable to assume

159. PW, p. 103; SVS, vol. 33, p. 521.
that Kierkegaard, who had just completed his master’s thesis on Socratic irony, would have been attentive to Werder’s views on the subject. While there is no reason to doubt that Kierkegaard was familiar with this concept in Plato’s dialogue, it may have been Werder who first brought its full philosophical and theological implications to his attention.\footnote{161}

In the passage mentioned in the previous subsection, Werder quotes from the Parmenides at length.\footnote{162} There he quotes the following discussion of the moment from Plato:

The word “moment” appears to mean something such that from it a thing passes to one or other of the two conditions [sc. being at motion or at rest]. There is no transition from a state of rest so long as the thing is still at rest, nor from motion so long as it is still in motion, but this queer thing, the moment, is situated between the motion and the rest; it occupies no time at all, and the transition of the moving thing to the state of rest, or of the stationary thing to being in motion, takes place to and from the instant.\footnote{163}

A few pages later, Werder refers to the concept of the moment again in a discussion of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be, the constituent parts of the category of becoming. He writes,

Soll die Sache in ihrer Tiefe ergriffen werden, so muß es folgendermaßen geschehen: Werden ist Entstehen und Vergehen – denn es ist Seyn durch sich selber, das heißt Entstehen, Entstehen als unendliches als alles Entstehen, als logischer Geist des Entstehens aufgefaßt, wie es hier aufgefaßt werden muß. Und es ist Vergehen, denn es ist nichts als Übergehen (Platons “Augenblick”).\footnote{164}

Here one finds the wordplay between ceasing-to-be (Vergehen) and transition (Übergehen) that Kierkegaard notes above. This is significant since

Kierkegaard notes precisely this transition\footnote{165} and precisely this wordplay.\footnote{166} Most importantly, the understanding of the moment as transition (Übergehen) is precisely the point that Kierkegaard makes about this concept. Later, in The Concept of Anxiety he writes explicitly, “the moment becomes the category of transition.”\footnote{167}

As a part of the same analysis, Werder continues his wordplays, this time with the German word for “the moment.” He writes,


Here Werder makes more or less the same point, again referring to the moment as a transition (Übergehen). However, the first sentence, where instead of writing the German word for “the moment,” i.e., “Augenblick,” he uses a somewhat poetic verbal construction, which recalls the etymology of the word as “a twinkling of an eye”: “Nur ehe des Werdens ewiges Aug’ blickt aus dem Nichts,” i.e., “Before the eternal eye of becoming looks out of the nothing…” It is clear that Kierkegaard would have been attentive to this kind of a formulation.

In another passage towards the end of his analysis, Werder speaks for the first time of “moments” in the plural form. He here makes a point about the nature of dialectical opposites, indicating one sense of the German word “Moment.” He writes,

Nimmt man hingegen Momente in der Bedeutung von Schöpfungsmomenten, von Augenblicken, in denen die Totalität, das Unendliche – denn nur die Totalität ist oder Alles und Jedes ist nur als Totalität, als Unendlichkeit – sich erblickt, so ist der Ausdruck allerdings – der eigent-
The Influence of Werder’s Lectures and Logik on Kierkegaard’s Thought

Kierkegaard’s main discussion of this concept comes in The Concept of Anxiety, in which his pseudonymous author polemizes against the Hegelian concepts of transition, negation and mediation, which are, of course, of central importance for Hegel’s conception of speculative logic. It will be recalled that Werder frequently uses the term “transition” (Übergehen) in the passages quoted above in his description of the dialectical relation to the categories. Kierkegaard then has Virgilius Hauflniensis juxtapose these concepts to Plato’s notion of “the moment”:

The term “transition” is and remains a clever turn in logic. Transition belongs in the sphere of historical freedom, for transition is a state and is actual. Plato fully recognized the difficulty of placing transition in the realm of the purely metaphysical, and for that reason the category of the moment cost him so much effort. To ignore the difficulty certainly is not to “go further” than Plato.

This reference to “the moment” is supplemented by a long footnote with a detailed discussion of this concept in the Parmenides. In this footnote it becomes clear why Kierkegaard places so much emphasis on this concept. He has his pseudonym write: “This category [sc. the moment] is of utmost importance in maintaining the distinction between Christianity and pagan philosophy, as well as the equally pagan speculation in Christianity.” It will be recalled that much of Kierkegaard’s polemical rhetoric against philosophy concerns the untoward encroachment of philosophical thinking into areas of religion. The footnote goes on to explain why he thinks the concept of the moment can perform this function:

Here again the importance of the moment becomes apparent, because only with this category is it possible to give eternity its proper significance.

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177. For a more detailed examination of this see Jon Stewart, Kierkegaard’s Relations to Hegel Reconsidered, op. cit., pp. 405–411.
179. CI, p. 84ff., SSK, vol. 4, p. 387ff.
ce, for eternity and the moment become the extreme opposites, whereas
dialectical sorcery, on the other hand, makes eternity and the moment
signify the same thing. 180

The idea seems to be that the concept of the moment maintains the
essential opposition of eternity and temporality. How this opposition is
overcome in the incarnation is simply a paradox which cannot be under-
stood. Kierkegaard opposes speculative philosophy’s claim that the etern-
al and the temporal, or the eternal and the single moment are simply
dialectical opposites which display a conceptual unity. This seems to be
what Kierkegaard most violently objects to. He finds dialectical medita-
tion of the two opposites inappropriate because it confuses the essential
distinction between Christianity and secular philosophy. Needless to say
this is far removed from the original context of this concept in Plato or
later in Werder.

It has been noted that Hegel lauds the Parmenides for its dialectical
argumentation. It is also in this sense that Werder makes use of it, i.e.,
to illustrate the speculative nature of logic. Specifically the paradoxical
nature of the moment as being both in motion and at rest is intended to
demonstrate the limitations of traditional logic and the need for specu-
lative logic. It is thus curious to observe that when Kierkegaard uses
this concept it is not to support speculative logic but instead to criticize
it. As was noted above, he favorably compares this concept to the notion
of mediation or transition in Hegel’s speculative logic. Kierkegaard thus
uses the Platonic concept not as an indication of the need for a specula-
tive logic but rather as designation of the limit of reason per se. This
indicates a fundamental disagreement between Hegel and Kierkegaard.
For Hegel, the paradox of the moment is a call for a new conception of
logic as speculative, whereas for Kierkegaard it indicates that all attempts
to grasp such a concept with reason must fail. He is thus critical of specu-
lative logic which he regards as a failed attempt to solve with reason what
in principle cannot be resolved. This is why he seems in some passages to
regard speculative logic straightforwardly as sleight of hand. In this way
Kierkegaard can regard himself as being genuinely Socratic in the sense of
claiming to know nothing and ending in aporia, in contrast to Hegelian

180. CA, p. 84n.; SKS, vol. 4, pp. 387n.–388n.

philosophy which takes up the challenge generated by the paradoxical con-
cept and attempts to work out a logic more suited to it than classical log-

Given the chronology of Kierkegaard’s references to this concept, it
seems to have been Werder who first made him aware of it in Plato. Kier-
kegaard himself then went on to develop it and use it in his own way
in the mature authorship. The original concept in Plato is clearly phi-
losophical and, for obvious reasons, has nothing to do with Christian
dogmatics. Likewise, Werder uses this concept in order to illustrate the
categories of coming-to-be and ceasing-to-be and in order to highlight
the methodology of speculative logic in general. While Kierkegaard is of
course sensitive to these original contexts, he invariably makes use of the
concept in a profoundly theological context. This is clear in, for example,
the passages discussed from The Concept of Anxiety, where Haufniesis
begins with a discussion of the moment specifically in Plato’s Parmenides
and ends with the claim (one quite foreign to Plato) that the moment “is
of utmost importance in maintaining the distinction between Christianity
and pagan philosophy.” 181 Thus, Kierkegaard’s interest in Werder’s
lectures appears to have been stimulated, at least in part, by a search for
ideas he could apply in furthering his own agenda in the context of a

dogmatics.

The difficulty of Kierkegaard’s notes to Werder’s lectures and the other
entries in which he is mentioned has discouraged research into this
relation. However, a simple prejudice about Kierkegaard’s presumed
negative relation to any Hegelian doubtless also played a role. Given
the general view of Thulstrup, i.e., that Kierkegaard was in a constant
polemic with Hegel and Hegelians and that he wholeheartedly rejected
anything having to do with Hegel’s philosophy, one could hardly have
any great motivation to explore the entries on Werder examined here.
To be sure, in Kierkegaard’s universe of thought Karl Werder was only a
minor constellation in comparison with, for example, Hegel or Schelling.
Despite this there are at least hints of a more lasting influence of Werder
on Kierkegaard. Moreover, that influence seems to be far more positive
than Thulstrup would like to admit.

181. CA, p. 84n.; SKS, vol. 4, p. 387n.
The original question of why Kierkegaard was interested in attending Werder's lectures finds its answer in the analyses above which indicated his interest in using the categories for logic as they were relevant for dogmatics. This is wholly in line with his later use of them in works such as Philosophical Fragments and The Concept of Anxiety. This insight helps to shed light on an old question that has periodically exercised Kierkegaard research, namely, to what degree, if at all, was Kierkegaard a philosopher. During the hegemony of analytic philosophy, he was regarded with grave suspicion among mainstream Anglo-American philosophers.

He was considered guilty by his association with the French and German existentialist thinkers, who were dismissed as artists or writers and not philosophers. This has continued to be a topic of interest to more recent Kierkegaard research, which has been anxious to rehabilitate him and cast him in the role of a true philosopher in every sense of the word. However, the analysis presented here makes clear that Kierkegaard's interest in Werder's lectures was not in the first line philosophical. He was not interested in Werder's discussion of the categories for their own sake or in terms of their significance for the history of philosophy. Instead, he was interested in them only as they applied to theology, specifically dogmatics.

Here we see a fairly common case of a theologian using philosophy for his own purposes. This seems to undermine the claim that Kierkegaard, at least at this at this early stage, was primarily a philosopher.

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