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The Different Faces of the German *Kierkegaard Renaissance*

Komise pro obhajoby doktorských disertací v oboru: filosofie

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1. Introduction

1.1 Context and Theme

The submitted dissertation consists of three chapters that were published within the framework of the large-scale research project *Kierkegaard Research: Sources, Reception and Resources* (2007-2017). This collective research project was initiated and realized by the Søren Kierkegaard Research Center at the University of Copenhagen. Its outcome is the largest book series in the history of Kierkegaard studies consisting of 58 volumes published in the UK first by Ashgate (2007-2015) and then by its successor Routledge (2015-2017). From 2008-2009 I was member of the Advisory Board and from 2009-2017 I was member of the Editorial Board of the series. I wrote eight individual chapters for the series, co-authored two volumes of bibliographies and co-edited five volumes of bibliographies.

The three chapters which form the present dissertation are the following:

- “Martin Buber: ‘No-One Can so Refute Kierkegaard as Kierkegaard Himself’”
- “Theodor W. Adorno: Tracing the Trajectory of Kierkegaard’s Unintended Triumphs and Defeats”
- “Romano Guardini: Between Actualistic Personalism, Qualitative Dialectic and Kinetic Logic”

The chapters were published in the second part of the series (*Reception*), which examines Kierkegaard’s influence on philosophy, theology, literature and criticism, social sciences, and social-political thought. The first chapter was published in the volume *Kierkegaard and Existentialism*, the second chapter in the volume *Kierkegaard’s Influence on Philosophy* (Tome I: *German and Scandinavian Philosophy*) and the third chapter in the volume *Kierkegaard’s Influence on Theology* (Tome III: *Catholic and Jewish Theology*). The first chapter was published in 2011, the other two in 2012.

The three chapters form a thematic whole as they explore the influence of Søren Kierkegaard on three key figures of German intellectual life in the interwar and postwar period. As I have argued elsewhere,¹ the Germanophone world experienced in the years 1909-1945 the *Kierkegaard Renaissance*, during which an intensive debate about Kierkegaard unfolded in different areas of intellectual life. A broad range of thinkers associated with various traditions and schools of thought joined the debate: K. Jaspers, M. Heidegger, P. Tillich, C. Schmitt, K. Barth, R. Bultmann – to name just a few.

¹ See especially my monograph *Kierkegaardovská renesancia. Filozofia, náboženstvo, politika*. Bratislava: Premedia 2016.

The three thinkers I focus on played a crucial role in introducing and promoting Kierkegaard's thought in intellectual communities that often stood for radically different, even mutually opposed ideas. In this way they reflect the diversity of the Kierkegaard Renaissance. Martin Buber instigated a long-lasting debate about Kierkegaard in dialogical philosophy, Theodor W. Adorno promoted Kierkegaard's intellectual legacy among the thinkers associated with the Frankfurt School, and Romano Guardini was an important voice in the lively discourse on Kierkegaard in the Catholic *Hochland Circle*. Buber's, Adorno's and Guardini's confrontations with Kierkegaard's philosophy constitute a vital part of the German Kierkegaard Renaissance.

1.2 Methodology and Aim

From the methodological point of view I focus on *history of reception*, whose central component is *critical analysis*. Thanks to this approach I provide for the first time a *comprehensive* account of Buber's, Adorno's and Guardini's Kierkegaard-receptions. The account is not limited to a specific period, work, theme or perspective. My aim is to map each thinker's entire reception as exhaustively as it is possible in the given format. I trace the *chronological* trajectory of the thinker's relation to Kierkegaard and show *in what way* his work was impacted by Kierkegaard. On the basis of a thorough research of his textual *corpus* I present the overall framework of his confrontation with Kierkegaard's intellectual legacy. I situate his Kierkegaard-reception in the respective historical context, document the sources of his knowledge of Kierkegaard and identify his exposure to the contemporary debates about Kierkegaard. In this way my approach differs from general comparative studies that map the similarities and differences between two thinkers in a purely conceptual, ahistorical way.

My contribution concerns three figures of the Kierkegaard Renaissance, thus it is only a partial probe into a complex phenomenon involving dozens of figures. It is not my aim to make general statements about the entire phenomenon, but rather to provide a well-researched analysis of its segment. My choice of figures rooted in three different intellectual traditions makes it possible to view the phenomenon from complementary vantage points.

1.3 Structure

From the structural point of view, each chapter begins with a brief overview of the examined figure's life and oeuvre. Subsequently I describe the figure's early encounters with Kierkegaard. In this step I lay the foundations for the complex portrait of the overall reception, which in all the three cases spans several decades. I map the reception from the thinker's earliest reflections on Kierkegaard to his last explicit use of Kierkegaard's motifs. I take into account both the thinker's published works, *Nachlass* and correspondence as far as these are available. I identify and explore the primary and secondary sources that were at his disposal, and draw attention to his principal interlocutors on Kierkegaard.

In each chapter I devote special attention to the analysis of the thinker's most intensive engagements with Kierkegaard's thought. I elucidate the contexts in which these occurred and highlight the main ideas, motifs and structures around which they revolved. I identify the relevant primary and secondary sources. I pay close attention to the interplay of affirmation and criticism (positive and negative reception). When analyzing the *translatio* of concepts I explain how the adopted concepts were refashioned in order to fit new purposes. I highlight the cases in which Kierkegaardian motifs were used for tackling the problems of the thinker's own time and for confrontations with contemporary intellectual agendas. Such highly productive reception made Kierkegaard's concepts and ideas topical for the debates of the 20th century.

When assessing the thinker's overall reception of Kierkegaard I track both the moments of *stability* and *evolution*. On the one hand I attempt to reconstruct the figure's "core message" about Kierkegaard by locating those lines of interpretation which remain largely consistent throughout his oeuvre. On the other hand I trace important shifts of accents in interpretation, as well as reconsiderations of earlier positions. Given the fact that some parts of the reception are quite well-known, while others are not, I show how the different parts of the reception are interrelated.

In the cases when the figure's Kierkegaard-reception provoked debates I present their dynamics as well as the positions of the individual protagonists. Such a reception of a reception reflects contemporary trends in Kierkegaard-interpretation.

An integral part of each chapter is a threefold bibliography. The first section contains an exhaustive list of the writings in which the figure makes use of Kierkegaard. The second section contains a list of sources of the figure's knowledge of Kierkegaard. The third section lists secondary literature on the figure's relation to Kierkegaard.

2. Description of the Texts Forming the Dissertation

2.1 Martin Buber: "No-One Can so Refute Kierkegaard as Kierkegaard Himself"

Although it is well known that Kierkegaard was among Buber's early philosophical influences the literature discussing the relation of these two thinkers pays little attention to Buber's early Kierkegaard-reception. My research fills this lacuna by elucidating basic facts and circumstances of the early stages of Buber's reception. On the basis of Buber's little-known essay *A.M. und Constantin Brunner* (1912) I propose that Buber's first encounter with Kierkegaard probably took place in 1897. At that time Buber was still a university student and my analysis of his curriculum and the publications of his teachers shows that he may have encountered Kierkegaard in the courses taught

by Emil Reich, Wilhelm Wundt, and Wilhelm Dilthey. Kierkegaard was also a topic in Buber's early correspondence with Hugo von Hofmannsthal and György Lukács. It is almost certain that in the first decade of the 20th century Buber came across Kierkegaard in the works of the Austrian writer Rudolf Kassner. The Kierkegaard Renaissance began shortly before World War I and was partly due to two important literary events: the publication of the first edition of Kierkegaard's collected works in German (1909-22) and the founding of the journal *Der Brenner* (1910) which played a key role in popularizing Kierkegaard. Both of these events had an impact on Buber's reception.

Buber's first explicit references to Kierkegaard stem from the early 1910s. His terminological indebtedness to Kierkegaard, however, goes back to 1902-06. It concerns especially the terms *absolute* and *relative*. Kierkegaard's name does not appear in Buber's early philosophical dialogue *Daniel* (1913), but his correspondence links the treatment of *personation* in this dialogue to Kierkegaard. This is an important instance of Buber's explicit acknowledgement of Kierkegaard as a source of inspiration for his dialogical concepts. Buber's famous work *Ich und Du* does not reference Kierkegaard, but contains several lines of thought that are later at the core of Buber's polemic with Kierkegaard. Buber criticizes: 1. The concept of an asocial and acosmic religious individual; 2. The separation and hierarchization of *the religious* and *the ethical*; 3. The concept of the social based on a generalization of degenerate features of social structures; 4. The dichotomist view of God the Creator and creation.

Buber's most intensive engagement with Kierkegaard's thought takes place in *Die Frage an den Einzelnen* (1936). This work focuses on the category of the single individual (*der Einzelne*), which Buber adopts from Kierkegaard. Buber's evaluation of the Kierkegaardian category is positive in three respects: 1. Becoming single individual is an existential task which necessarily involves an entry into a relation. In this way it corresponds to Buber's conception of *personation*; 2. Kierkegaard's description of the single individual is incompatible with theories that obliterate either the I or the You (mysticism/individualism); 3. The category of the single individual entails a notion of existential truth which is to be confirmed by lived responsibility. The largest part of Buber's work is, however, devoted to a polemic against Kierkegaard, which proceeds in two steps: Buber *criticizes* and *refashions* the category of the single individual. He sees the Kierkegaardian category as deeply unbalanced, as it presupposes that an *essential* relation to God requires a *non-essential* relation to fellow humans. One is to relate *with one's whole being* exclusively to God. According to Buber, the act of *renunciation* of all essential relations to fellow humans makes the category *acosmic* and has detrimental effects on Kierkegaard's approach to the *ethical* and *political* spheres. Kierkegaard's personal rejection of marriage and deprecatory description of the body politic as *the crowd* are evidence of this problematic approach. The latter prompted Kierkegaard to define the category of the single individual in strictly

apolitical terms. To Buber this is a tragic mistake as it renders the category harmless in the contemporary struggle against coercive political collectivism. For this reason he refashions the category according to dialogical principles. First and foremost, he replaces the exclusivist view of the God-relationship with a view that harmonizes exclusivity and inclusivity in a *complexio oppositorum*. This opens the possibility for drafting a vision of an ethically and politically engaged single individual who represents a challenge to antipersonalist political leveling. Buber's treatment of the category of the single individual represents a point of departure for his later confrontations with Kierkegaard.

In *Das Problem des Menschen* (1943) Buber again highlights Kierkegaard's emphasis on the concrete relating person. He presents it as a major corrective to German idealist subsumption of the individual person in the dialectical processes of the universal reason. He suggests, however, that Kierkegaard's acosmic single individual became a substantial inspiration for Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*. Heidegger further radicalized the category by eliminating its only dialogical relation – the God-relationship – and thus proceeded from *acosmism* to *monologism*.

In his essay *Gottesliebe und Nächstenliebe* (1940-43) Buber reflects on the relation between love of God (religion) and love of the neighbor (ethics). He subscribes to the Hasidic position that from the point of view of moral pedagogy the latter takes precedence, but ultimately the two need to be integrated and permeate each other. He contrasts this position to Kierkegaard's position which he describes as dichotomist: the spheres of religion and ethics are separate with the former being superior.

This line of polemic continues in the essay *Von einer Suspension des Ethischen* (1952) in which Buber comments on Kierkegaard's interpretation of the biblical story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. He criticizes Kierkegaard's concept of the *teleological suspension of the ethical*, which he interprets as a generalization of Abraham's unique situation. He protests against the idea that in a direct and exclusive relationship God can sanction the single individual's breaking through the God-established ethical order. Buber sees this as yet another example of Kierkegaard's separation and hierarchization of religion and ethics and warns that political false absolutes are ready to misuse teleological suspension of the ethical for their own purposes.

Kierkegaard appears in several other of Buber's writings from the 1950s which largely follow the argumentation developed in the works from the 1930s and 1940s. The last work in which Buber explicitly engages Kierkegaard is *Der Chassidismus und der abendländische Mensch* (1956).

When evaluating Buber's overall reception of Kierkegaard, the interplay of positive and negative elements can be summarized in the following way: 1. The main claim of Buber's *positive* reception is that Kierkegaard drew attention to the anthropological crisis caused by the apersonal philosophy of German idealism. He attempted to resolve the crisis by reinstating the concrete relating

person in the center of philosophical inquiry. In this respect he counts among the precursors of dialogical philosophy. 2. The main claim of Buber's *negative* reception is that Kierkegaard's thought is fundamentally dualistic and introduces a separation and hierarchization of extracosmic alterity (God) and intracosmic alterity (fellow humans), religion and ethics/politics, the single individual and the crowd. In the sphere of relations this leads to the two-tier structure of essential and non-essential relations, with the former reserved for the single individual and God. Thus, Kierkegaard's thought is not merely apolitical, it is even acosmic, which inadvertently brings it close to the early Christian dualistic heresy of Marcionism. Buber corrects these tendencies by introducing the Hasidic emphases on integration, unity and communion.

Buber's interpretation of Kierkegaard's philosophy has sparked a lively debate with a wide range of reactions. The debate has been dominated by three types of interpretations: 1. Affirming interpretations, some of which radicalize Buber's criticism; 2. Critical interpretations that aim to correct Buber's reading of Kierkegaard; 3. Interpretations that emphasize the overlaps and convergences between the two thinkers. Buber's *philosophical encounter* with Kierkegaard has substantially stimulated the international reception of Kierkegaard's thought and has directed it toward ethical issues. Nonetheless, Buber's *picture* of Kierkegaard has not received sufficient support so as to become a broadly accepted interpretation.

2.2 Theodor W. Adorno: Tracing the Trajectory of Kierkegaard's Unintended Triumphs and Defeats

Adorno's early Kierkegaard-reception is closely linked to his long-term philosophical dialogue with his older friend Siegfried Kracauer. Kracauer attests to Adorno's knowledge of Kierkegaard's works as early as 1923. Adorno's study stay in Vienna in 1925 brought him into contact with yet other intellectuals with whom he would continue to discuss Kierkegaard, most notably György Lukács and Alban Berg. Adorno's earliest literary pieces dealing with Kierkegaard appeared in *Frankfurter Zeitung* and *Anbruch* in 1930. At that time Adorno was working intensely on his *Habilitationsschrift* about Kierkegaard which received positive evaluation from Paul Tillich and Max Horkheimer and was defended in 1931. Brief reflections on Kierkegaard continue to appear in Adorno's writings from the early 1930s and in 1932 he conducts a seminar on Kierkegaard at the Goethe University in Frankfurt.

Adorno's earliest major confrontation with Kierkegaard takes place in his *Habilitationsschrift*, which appeared in 1933 under the title *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*. From the point of view of *Quellenforschung* the book is characterized by a marked asymmetry: on the one hand, Adorno draws extensively on the German edition of Kierkegaard's collected works; on the other hand, he largely disregards German literature on Kierkegaard, which – as we know from his correspondence – he was well-acquainted with. Adorno's

critical distance from the German Kierkegaard Renaissance led him to an idiosyncratic approach to Kierkegaard's thought, which would prove highly controversial. The point of departure for Adorno's interpretation is his view that Kierkegaard correctly diagnosed the latent problems of early high-capitalist society. These consisted in the reification of social life and the alienation of the individual from the world in which he was perceived primarily as an exchange article on the labor market. Kierkegaard's response to this problem was a proposal of a withdrawal into the sphere of inwardness, which he saw as the only sphere free from reification. Adorno considers such a withdrawal from society ultimately impossible, as it presupposes an unrealistically weak interrelation of subjectivity and objectivity. Nonetheless, the consequence of attempting such a withdrawal is radical depreciation of the "outer world" and "otherness". Adorno sees Kierkegaard's philosophy as self-defeating also in two other respects: 1. Kierkegaard claims to reinstate the concrete historical individual obliterated by German idealism. However, by disconnecting the human self from objective history he arrives at an isolated absolute self that is the sole determinant of reality. He remains within the philosophical tradition of abstract idealism that fails to come to terms with the concrete human being embedded in history. His definitions of the self as "existing infinite spirit" and "relation that relates itself to itself" are symbols of this failure. 2. Kierkegaard is confident that the single individual's personal relation to God safeguards the concreteness of his anthropology. Adorno, however, suggests that Kierkegaard's definition of God as *the strictly different* and his claim that one reaches God through an act of self-negation of reason prove that the Kierkegaardian "God" is not the self-revealing God of Christianity. Rather, this "God" is indeterminate pseudo-transcendence, a mere echo of absolute subjectivity. Although Adorno believes that the contradictions inherent in Kierkegaard's philosophy make the *system* he envisioned untenable, the *aesthetic* images and metaphors contained in his works remain useful and provide rich philosophical inspiration. Thus, Kierkegaard's contribution to philosophy goes along completely different lines than he intended.

Adorno's monograph provoked an intense and polarized debate. His critics argued that his interpretation was a "construction of Kierkegaard," a thorough desubstantiation of his philosophy. It perverted Kierkegaard's original aims by making central elements marginal and vice versa. Favorable reviews – including those of Kracauer, Benjamin and Tillich – praised both the independence and originality of Adorno's thinking and his novel approach to the aesthetic content of Kierkegaard's philosophy. They supported the interpretation of Kierkegaard's anthropology as a form of the idealist philosophy of absolute spirit.

In 1938 Adorno entered into a controversy with Jean Wahl, which was part of his longtime polemic against the reception of Kierkegaard in German philosophy of existence and neo-ontology. In his two reviews of Wahl's *Études*

kierkegaardianes and in their mutual correspondence Adorno maintains that Jaspers and Heidegger neutralized the potential of social non-conformism contained in Kierkegaard's philosophy. This paved the way for the appropriation of Kierkegaard by adherents of Nazi political irrationalism. Adorno criticizes Wahl for not mentioning this development in his book.

Kierkegaard's diagnosis of the malaise of his age resurfaces in Adorno's essay *On Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Love* (1940). Adorno draws a parallel between Kierkegaard's description of the leveling of the individual by means of collective mechanisms of domination and contemporary Nazi propaganda. Although his reception in this text is more positive than in the *Habilitationschrift* he repeats the criticism that Kierkegaard's remarkably apt social diagnosis results in the unproductive call for a withdrawal into inwardness. He extends this criticism to Kierkegaard's doctrine of Christian love of the neighbor. He claims that the universal and non-preferential character of such love commands complete disregard for the particular features of the neighbor. Thus the neighbor loses all concreteness and becomes a mere variable in the process of love. Such love is only concerned with the loving subject and amounts to a quality of pure inwardness.

The main thesis of Adorno's essay *Kierkegaard noch einmal. Zum hundertundfünfzigsten Geburtstag* (1963) is that Kierkegaard's historical success came at the expense of the neutralization of his philosophy. This *triumph as defeat* was partly due to the problems inherent in Kierkegaard's philosophy. Kierkegaard's doctrine of the single individual is on the one hand a powerful criticism of the profit-oriented reductionist view of the human being, on the other hand, its emphasis on radical inwardness contains latent contempt for the world. Existential philosophy, which popularized Kierkegaard's thought, downplayed the elements of social criticism and Christian moral correction. Its "reinvention" of Kierkegaard was subsequently adopted by the collectivist ideology of National Socialism that extended the contempt for the world to the single individual.

Kierkegaard's influence on thinkers associated with existential philosophy and modern ontology is further discussed in a series of Adorno's texts from the 1960s: *Verhältnis zu Kierkegaard* (1961), *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (1964), *Negative Dialektik* (1966). Adorno follows the *translatio* of the concept of inwardness into contemporary philosophy and points out the Kierkegaardian roots of Heidegger's *existentials*. He links Kierkegaard's notion of the *choice of oneself* to the Heideggerian concept of authenticity, which was in Adorno's days popularized to the point of vulgarization.

A recurrent theme of Adorno's reception is the relation of Kierkegaard's Christian thought to anti-semitism. Adorno comments on this issue in *The Psychological Technique of Martin Luther Thomas' Radio Addresses* (1943), *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947), and *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950). Adorno notes that Christianity's strong emphasis on spirit makes it resistant to

ideologies based on natural determinants, such as race or ethnicity. This emphasis becomes effective when it is internalized by the individual believer. Kierkegaard's thought is in line with this emphasis and some of its sympathizers adopted clear stances against anti-semitism (e.g.: K. Barth or P. Tillich). However, Kierkegaard's religious subjectivism does not contain any positive imperative to actively oppose political authoritarianism with an anti-semitic agenda.

Adorno's longtime Kierkegaard-reception was an important contribution to the German debate on Kierkegaard's place in modern philosophy. Adorno promoted Kierkegaard among his influential friends and colleagues and his controversial interpretation led to several polemics. Adorno's core message about Kierkegaard rests on two claims: 1. Kierkegaard combined apt social criticism with a genuinely idealist theory of selfhood which bound the single individual to the sphere of isolated inwardness. The idealist elements of Kierkegaard's philosophy largely paralyzed its Christian elements. 2. 20th-century philosophers of existence disregarded Kierkegaard's social criticism and Christian correction and presented a version of his philosophy that appealed to collectivist ideologues. Especially in his later writings Adorno insisted that Kierkegaard's self-defeating notion of the single individual facilitated this development. Neither Adorno's claim about the independent life of aesthetic moments of Kierkegaard's authorship, nor his ethical point concerning Kierkegaard's doctrine of love play any role in his later writings.

2.3 Romano Guardini: Between Actualistic Personalism, Qualitative Dialectic and Kinetic Logic

Guardini's early Kierkegaard-reception unfolded in the Catholic intellectual milieu which played an active role in the Kierkegaard Renaissance. Although German Catholic Kierkegaard-reception began as early as the 1850s it gained an unprecedented momentum in the interwar years. The translator of Kierkegaard's works Theodor Haecker converted to Catholicism in 1921 and became a dedicated promoter of Kierkegaard's philosophy in Catholic circles. Several Catholic periodicals, such as *Hochland*, *Die Schildgenossen*, *Stimmen der Zeit* and *Theologische Revue* joined the debate on Kierkegaard. The epicenter of the Catholic reception was The Hochland Circle, a group of intellectuals associated with the journal *Hochland*. Among its members, who wrote on Kierkegaard, were Theodor Haecker, Alois Dempf, Peter Wust, and Romano Guardini.

Guardini's writings and his private library show a wide range of acquaintance with Kierkegaard. Although he comments on a broad variety of Kierkegaard's works, at the top of his *personal hierarchy* were *The Sickness unto Death*, *The Concept of Anxiety*, and *Philosophical Fragments*. Not only does he describe these as most important, but their implicit inspiration in his own writings is substantial. The focal issues of these works, such as the self, nature

of opposition, authenticity of existence, or contemporaneity, are crucial for Guardini's own thinking.

Guardini's first systematic confrontation with Kierkegaard's philosophy takes place in *Der Gegensatz* (1925), in which he develops his theory of opposition. Guardini presents a set of fundamental oppositions and argues that each pole of an opposition stands underivable and unconvertible in itself, yet the poles are inseparably connected. He aims to correct two theories of opposition that he considers one-sided: Romantic/Hegelian mediation dialectic and Kierkegaardian qualitative dialectic. The former emphasizes the relatedness of the poles to the point of their fusion, the latter defines their difference as total otherness. Guardini presents Kierkegaard as a thinker of radical discontinuity, who formulated counter-concepts to the idealist philosophy of continuity.

Guardini's image of Kierkegaard as a philosopher of discontinuity comes into full view in his essay *Gedanken über das Verhältnis von Christentum und Kultur* (1926), in which he reflects on the relation between Christianity and culture, the Christian-divine and the natural-cultural. He attempts to design the relation in such a way that it would be characterized by neither assimilation nor dominance. He develops his ideas in opposition to Kierkegaard, to whom he ascribes the position of absolute dualism of religion and culture, grace and nature. According to Guardini, Kierkegaard correctly insists on the qualitative difference between the two, but fails to acknowledge their relatedness.

In the second half of the 1920s Guardini authors a series of texts in which he develops the concept of *person* which is the corner-stone of his anthropology. He develops it vis-à-vis the concepts of *self* and *spirit* which he adopts from Kierkegaard. In *Über Sozialwissenschaft und Ordnung der Personen* (1926) he argues that person is characterized by both a *static* and a *dynamic* moment. He goes on to outline theories of personhood that downplay one of these moments. With reference to Kierkegaard's description of the structure of the self in *The Sickness unto Death* Guardini claims that Kierkegaard is a proponent of *dynamic personalism*. In this view the existence of a person is dependent on the performance of *personal* acts. A person is constituted when an individual acts in an ethically and religiously responsible way. Thus, a fulfilled task is a precondition for the acquisition of personhood. Guardini argues against this view of personhood, which he deems restrictive and suggests that the definition of person should be independent of ethical and religious requirements. He continues this line of criticism in *Lebendiger Geist* (1927) and *Der Ausgangspunkt der Denkbewegung Sören Kierkegaards* (1927), in which he claims that *person* is an ontic given, a category of *being*, rather than *becoming*. He insists that the overly dynamic view obliterates the static aspect when it sees person as a result of a well-executed choice. At the same time he explains that Kierkegaard's ethical-religious emphasis is a reaction against the fluid self of Romanticism. He resumes the idea of Kierkegaard as a philosophical corrective to his age highlighting four distinctive signs that set his philosophy apart from

Romanticism and German idealism: 1. Kierkegaard's concept of *qualitative decision* accentuates the fact that the single individual's life is not merely an outcome of fluent processes of *mediation* and *transition*; 2. The concept of *the moment* confirms the uniqueness of the single individual's action vis-à-vis the determinist world-historical view; 3. *The single individual* is a category of emancipation aimed against the integrativist view of the human person as primarily a part of a bigger whole; 4. *Existential thinking* is opposed to neutral objective knowledge that does not demand that the single individual become him- or herself.

In 1935 Guardini published *Christliches Bewußtsein. Versuche über Pascal* in which he examined three ways of manifesting God's existence: Anselm's ontological proof, Pascal's wager and Kierkegaard's doctrine of the absolute paradox. Although Kierkegaard distanced himself from classical proofs of God's existence, he developed a line of thought which according to Guardini belongs to this philosophical tradition. In *Philosophical Fragments* Kierkegaard suggests that the highest passion of thought is to discover something that thought cannot think. This striving brings the understanding into the contact with the ungraspable which leads to the understanding's collapse. The striving is, however, not entirely futile, as the self-negation of thought makes one aware of the proximity of the absolutely incommensurable, the absolute paradox. Kierkegaard identifies this paradox with God. Guardini considers this notion of God utterly one-sided, since God is seen as pure transcendence – the totally other – and is stripped of all immanent presence in finitude. Nonetheless, Guardini sees a positive element in Kierkegaard's *kinetic* argument for God's existence in that it prompts the individual to an existential movement towards God.

The common feature of several of Guardini's writings from the 1930s – 1950s is that the implicit reception of Kierkegaard markedly outweighs explicit reception. Guardini's reflections on personhood/selfhood are in continuity with his deliberations in earlier works. In *Welt und Person* (1939) he contrasts his concept of person to an actualistic concept, which he previously associated with Kierkegaard. Opposition to actualistic personalism resurfaces also in *Freiheit, Gnade, Schicksal* (1948), but this time implicit reception also has positive overtones: Guardini integrates Kierkegaard's principle of *becoming oneself before God* into his anthropology. In *Die Annahme seiner selbst* (1953) Guardini polemicizes against the German idealist conflation of the finite human self with the infinite spirit. He avails himself of the Kierkegaardian doctrine of a finite self that is *a gift* of the Infinite.

Guardini's last explicit confrontation with Kierkegaard in *Die Kirche des Herrn* (1965) concerns the theological concept of *contemporaneity*. Guardini rejects the original Kierkegaardian version, but adopts the concept in a modified form. According to Kierkegaard an authentic decision for Christian life must be based on an encounter with Christ as he chose to appear to his contemporaries. One must disregard the story of his posthumous triumph and approach him as a

sign of contradiction: a poor man who claims to be God. The situation of contemporaneity presents one with only two options: *offense* or *faith*. Guardini rejects Kierkegaard's idea of contemporaneity as an impossibility, because it calls for an immediate encounter with historical Christ, while only a mediated encounter through the church is possible. He points out that even the book of the New Testament was produced by the church, thus, there is no encounter with Christ as an isolated figure. He applies the concept of contemporaneity to the individual's encounter with the church: the two options remain: either offense or faith.

Guardini's reception follows several continuous lines of interpretation. 1. He describes Kierkegaard's concepts and structures as correctives to the ideas proposed by Romanticism and German idealism. Against the emphasis on continuity, mediation, and evolution Kierkegaard poses the emphasis on discontinuity, qualitative decision, and the moment. In Guardini's view Kierkegaard replaces one extreme with another. 2. Guardini argues that Kierkegaard constructs a deficient form of personalism, in which the title of person is dependent on an ethical and religious act. This dynamic personalism creates imbalance by neglecting the static aspect of person. Despite criticism Guardini appropriates several elements from Kierkegaard's theory of selfhood. 3. Guardini dismisses Kierkegaard's notion of Christianity as purist and criticizes it for turning the qualitative difference between religion and culture into incommensurability. 4. Guardini reformulates Kierkegaard's concept of contemporaneity and incorporates it into his own ecclesiology.

3. Zhrnutie (Summary)

Predkladaná dizertácia skúma vplyv Sørensa Kierkegaarda na tri kľúčové postavy *kierkegaardovskej renesancie*: Martina Bubera, Theodora W. Adorna a Romana Guardiniho. Táto renesancia sa rozvinula v nemecky hovoriacom priestore v rokoch 1909-1945² a vyznačovala sa veľkou vlnou záujmu o Kierkegaardovo myslenie v širokom spektre ideových prúdov. Do diskusie o Kierkegaardovej filozofii sa zapojili popredné osobnosti intelektuálneho života ako K. Jaspers, M. Heidegger, K. Barth, P. Tillich, C. Schmitt a mnohí ďalší.

Protagonisti kierkegaardovskej renesancie, ktorým sa venujem v dizertácii, pôsobili v rôznych myšlienkových prostrediach. Buberova recepcia Kierkegaarda značne ovplyvnila dialogickú filozofiu, Adornova recepcia rezonovala u mysliteľov, ktorí sa v rôznej miere spájali s Frankfurtskou školou a Guardini bol ústrednou postavou recepcie Kierkegaarda v katolíckom prostredí, najmä v intelektuálnej platforme *Hochlandský kruh*. Výskum recepcie týchto troch mysliteľov umožňuje vidieť fenomén kierkegaardovskej renesancie z komplementárnych perspektív. Cieľom dizertácie nie je zhodnotiť tento

² Časovým vymedzením sa zaoberám v monografii *Kierkegaardovská renesancia. Filozofia, náboženstvo, politika*. Bratislava: Premedia 2016.

fenomén v celom rozsahu, ale dôkladne osvetliť jeho zvolenú časť.

Z metodického hľadiska sa venujem *dejinám recepcie*, ktorých dôležitou súčasťou je *kritická analýza*. Vďaka tomuto postupu ako prvý predkladám celkový výklad Buberovej, Adornovej a Guardiniho recepcie Kierkegaarda. Môj výklad sa neobmedzuje na nejaké obdobie, dielo, tému alebo perspektívu. Mojm cieľom je čo najdôkladnejšie zmapovať celú recepciu jednotlivých mysliteľov, nakoľko to daný formát umožňuje. Vo všetkých troch prípadoch sledujem *chronologickú* trajektóriu mysliteľovho vzťahu ku Kierkegaardovi a vysvetľujem, *akým spôsobom* Kierkegaard ovplyvnil jeho tvorbu. Na základe výskumu jeho textového *korpusu* predstavujem celkový rámec vyrovnávania sa s Kierkegaardovým myšlienkovým dedičstvom. Jeho recepciu Kierkegaarda situujem do príslušného dejinného kontextu, uvádzam zdroje jeho znalosti Kierkegaarda a skúmam, ako ho ovplyvnili súdobé diskusie o Kierkegaardovi. Môj postup sa líši od všeobecných komparatívnych štúdií, ktoré mapujú príbuznosti a rozdiely medzi dvoma mysliteľmi čisto konceptuálnym ahistorickým spôsobom.

Buberova recepcia Kierkegaarda sa vyznačuje pozitívnym i negatívnym momentom. Buber na jednej strane tvrdí, že Kierkegaard upozornil na antropologickú krízu, ktorú spôsobila apersonálna filozofia nemeckého idealizmu. Túto krízu sa pokúsil vyriešiť tým, že do centra filozofického skúmania umiestnil konkrétnu vzťahujúcu sa osobu. V tomho ohľade je predchodom dialogickej filozofie. Na druhej strane Buber poukazuje na to, že Kierkegaardovo myslenie je dualistické a zavádza separáciu a hierarchizáciu extrakozmickej alterity (Boh) a intrakozmickej alterity (druhí ľudia), náboženstva a etiky/politiky, jedinca a davu. Vo vzťahovej oblasti Kierkegaard vytvára dvojúrovňovú štruktúru bytostných a nebytostných vzťahov, pričom prvý typ vyhradzuje pre jedinca a Boha. Kierkegaardovo myslenie je nielen apolitické, ale aj akozmické, a tým sa podobá na ranokresťanskú dualistickú herézu marcionizmu. Buber koriguje tieto tendencie dôrazom na integráciu, jednotu a spoločenstvo, ktorý preberá z chasidizmu.

Adornova interpretácia Kierkegaardovho myslenia spočíva na dvoch základných presvedčeniach. Po prvé, Kierkegaard sformuloval výstižnú spoločenskú kritiku doby, ktorá je aktuálna aj pre 20. storočie. Súčasťou tejto kritiky je však požiadavka, aby sa jedinec oslobodil od zvecňujúceho tlaku tým, že sa stiahne do sféry izolovanej vnútrajškovosti. Popretím relevancie objektívnych dejín Kierkegaard vytvára fantómovú absolútnu subjektivitu, ktorá má idealistickú povahu. Idealistické prvky jeho filozofie sú v napätí s kresťanskými prvkami a paralyzujú ich. Po druhé, filozofie existencie 20. storočia neutralizovali Kierkegaardovu spoločenskú kritiku aj imperatív kresťanskej existenciálnej korekcie a spopularizovali jeho filozofiu v radikálne zredukovanej podobe. Túto zredukovanú verziu si následne osvojili nacistickí kolektivistickí ideológovia. V neskorších dielach Adorno tvrdí, že Kierkegaardov rozporuplný pojem jedinca prispel k tomuto vývoju.

Guardiniho recepcia sleduje štyri základné interpretačné línie. Po prvé, Kierkegaardove pojmy a štruktúry sú korektívom ideí romantizmu a nemeckého idealizmu. Proti dôrazu na kontinuitu, sprostredkovanie a evolúciu Kierkegaard stavia dôraz na diskontinuitu, kvalitatívne rozhodnutie a okamih. Nahrádza tak jednu krajnosť druhou. Po druhé, Kierkegaard vytvoril dynamický personalizmus, v ktorom titul osoby závisí od vykonania etického a náboženského činu. Takýto personalizmus nezohľadňuje statický rozmer osoby a predpokladá, že osoba existuje len v *osobotvorných* výkonoch. Napriek tejto kritike si Guardini osvojuje viaceré prvky Kierkegaardovej teórie ľudského Ja. Po tretie, Kierkegaardova koncepcia kresťanstva je puristická, lebo kvalitatívny rozdiel medzi náboženstvom a kultúrou chápe ako nesúmerateľnosť. Po štvrté, Guardini preberá Kierkegaardov pojem *súdobosti*, v ktorom nahrádza moment bezprostredného stretnutia s historickým Kristom momentom sprostredkovaného stretnutia v spoločenstve historickej cirkvi.

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- BA *The Book on Adler*, vol. 24, 1995.
- CA *The Concept of Anxiety*, ed. and trans. Reidar Thomte, in collaboration with Albert B. Anderson, vol. 8, 1980.
- CD *Christian Discourses*, vol. 17, 1997.
- CI *The Concept of Irony*, vol. 2, 1989.
- CUP1 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, vol. 12.1, 1992.
- CUP2 *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, vol. 12.2, 1992.
- EO1 *Either/Or*, part one, vol. 3, 1987.
- EO2 *Either/Or*, part two, vol. 4, 1987.
- EUD *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, vol. 5, 1990.
- FT *Fear and Trembling*, vol. 6, 1983.
- JC *Johannes Climacus*, vol. 7, 1985.
- LD *Letters and Documents*, vol. 25, 1978.
- M *"The Moment" and Late Writings*, vol. 23, 1998.
- PC *Practice in Christianity*, vol. 20, 1991.
- PF *Philosophical Fragments*, vol. 7, 1985.
- PV *On My Work as an Author, Point of View for My Work as an Author*, vol. 22, 1998.

- SLW *Stages on Life's Way*, vol. 11, 1988.
 SUD *The Sickness unto Death*, vol. 19, 1980.
 TA *Two Ages: A Literary Review*, vol. 14, 1978.
 TDIO *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, vol. 10, 1993.
 UDVS *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, vol. 15, 1993.
 WA *Without Authority*, vol. 18, 1997.
 WL *Works of Love*, vol. 16, 1995.

Danish editions of Kierkegaard's writings are abbreviated as follows:

- Pap. *Søren Kierkegaards Papirer*, ed. Peter Andreas Heiberg, Victor Kuhr, and Einer Torsting (Copenhagen: Gyldendal: 1909-1948). Second, enlarged edition by Niels Thulstrup, with index vols. 14-16 by Niels Jørgen Cappelørn. (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1968-1978.)
 SKS *Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter*, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn, Joakim Garff, Johnny Kondrup, et al. Published by the Søren Kierkegaard Research Center and G. E. C. Gads (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1997-2013).
 SVI *Samlede Værker*, ed. A. B. Drachmann, J. L. Heiberg, and H. O. Lange (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1901-1906).

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 — "Zur gesellschaftlichen Lage der Musik," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, vol. 1, 1932, nos. 1-2, p. 115.
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