

SKC Annual Conference 2016, August 17-19 Announcement and Call for Papers

Reconsidering the Existential: the Aesthetic, the Ethical, the Religious

What is Kierkegaard's thinking about? A more or less straightforward answer would be that its aim is to think what it is to exist. This answer may appear obvious, but it leaves us with open questions. What does *existential* thinking mean? Or, for that matter, what is existential *thinking*? What is to be thought – human existence – seems to call thinking into question.

The SKC Annual Conference 2016 is the second in a series of conferences devoted to Kierkegaard's existential thinking. While the Conference in 2015 opened with the title "Reconsidering Kierkegaard's Existential Approach", the 2016 Conference moves one step further by focusing on the notion of the existential.

How does 'the' existential relate to the distinction between 'the' aesthetic, 'the' ethical, and 'the' religious? This distinction has played a prominent but not uncontested role in the reception of Kierkegaard's thought. We may ask: Does the distinction capture what is meant by the existential? How is the existential to be understood when the distinction between different spheres of existence is put into the foreground? Or maybe we should begin by asking: What does it mean to speak of 'the' aesthetic, 'the' ethical, and 'the' religious? Are they ways of conceptualizing basic but different possibilities of human existence – as different forms of relating to what it is to be human? What defines each of them? How are they related? What is 'in between'? How do we come from one to the other? Are they stages of human existence? If so, what is the status of a sphere of existence? Does a human being find herself 'within' a sphere of existence?

Does speaking of 'the' aesthetic, 'the' ethical, and 'the' religious help us in dealing with the relation between aesthetics, ethics, and religion? The title of the conference should also be understood as an invitation to focus on the question of existential thinking in the arts, not least literature. This could open the wider question of existence and communication, which will be the guiding question for the 2017 conference.

Thus, the aim of the SKC Annual Conference in 2016 is to encourage a systematic reexamination of Kierkegaard's existential approach reflected in the question of the existential in relation to the ethical, the aesthetic, and the religious, as well as in particular trends in philosophy, theology, literature, and psychology. Contributions can deal with the *reception* of Kierkegaard's thought, *issues* that may be defined as existential, or with the question of *method*. Ideally, papers will combine these perspectives.

Call for Papers

In order to encourage focused discussion, the maximum length of each paper will be 30 minutes, with 15 minutes of discussion. The proposals should be concise and must specifically reconsider Kierkegaard's existential approach in relation to the aesthetic, the ethical and / or the religious, and they will be evaluated according to these criteria. The proposal should therefore be more specific than a project description.

Deadline for submission of proposals: **January 10, 2016**. Length: 300 to 400 words.