

Jon Stewart

*The Views of the Early Kierkegaard on Actuality and "Life": A Flashpoint in the Conflict of the Nature of Philosophy*

Institute of Philosophy of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, v.v.i.

Slovak Republic

e-mail: js@jonstewart.dk

In the history of philosophy, the nature and proper methodology of the discipline has always been a point of dispute. Today we know this, for example, in the conflict between analytic and Continental philosophy. The present paper focuses on one episode in this conflict. Kierkegaard is well-known for his critical view of how the speculative thinker forgets his own existence, while neglecting or misunderstanding actuality. One of his purported criticisms of Hegelian philosophy is that it is overly abstract and thus fails to capture "actuality" or "existence." I argue that the young Kierkegaard in fact is not a critic of Hegel's abstraction at all but, on the contrary, an advocate of it. This is demonstrated by an analysis of his early works *From the Papers of One Still Living* and *The Concept of Irony* as well as his reading of Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*.