

Shannon Nason

Curriculum Vitae

Department of Philosophy
Loyola Marymount University
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Education

Ph.D.: Philosophy, Purdue University, 2008
M.A.: Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, 2003
B.A.: Philosophy and Ancient Greek, Calvin College, 2000

Areas of Specialization

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy

Areas of Competence

Ancient Greek Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysics,
Aesthetics

Dissertation

Title: *Motion, Change, and Activity in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard*
Advisory Committee: Martin J. B. Matušík (co-chair), Daniel Smith (co-chair), Jacqueline
Mariña, Arkady Plotnitsky

Academic Appointments

Visiting Assistant Professor, Loyola Marymount University (Fall 2008-present)

Graduate Instructor, Purdue University (2003-2007)

Research

Publications

“Opposites, Contradictories, and Mediation in Kierkegaard’s Critique of Hegel” *The
Heythrop Journal* (forthcoming)

Conditionally Accepted

“Contingency, Necessity, and Causation in Kierkegaard’s Theory of Change,” *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*

Work in Progress

“Why Does Kierkegaard Say that the Necessary Is Not Possible?” (in final preparation)

“On Kierkegaard’s Distinction between Change and Activity” (in final preparation)

“Was Kierkegaard a Compatibilist?: Divine Foreknowledge, Future Contingents, and Freedom of the Will”

“On Kierkegaard’s Reception of Leibniz”

“On ‘Epistemic Humility’: Kierkegaard and Kant on Natural Theology”

Kierkegaard’s Theory of Freedom and Action (book length manuscript)

Professional Presentations

“Why Does Kierkegaard Say that the Necessary Is Not Possible?,” Faculty Colloquium, Department of Philosophy, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA (October 2009)

“Contradiction, Opposition, and Mediation in Hegel and Kierkegaard,” at the American Philosophical Association (Søren Kierkegaard Society Meeting – *Kierkegaard and German Idealism*), Chicago, Illinois (April 2008)

“Internalizing the Moment: Kierkegaard’s Retrieval of Plato’s *to exaiphnēs*” at Purdue University Graduate Student Colloquium, West Lafayette, Indiana (November 2005)

“Absolutely Different?: Faith and Knowledge in Heidegger’s ‘Phenomenology and Theology’” at the International Conference on Faith and Identity, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana (February 2004)

“The Question of Horizons in Jean-Luc Marion’s Phenomenology,” *On Intentionality*, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (April 2003)

“Difficult Knowledge: Gadamer, Hermeneutics, and Justice to the Other,” at the Society of Christian Philosophers, Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota (March 2002)

Invited Talks

“Freedom, Necessity, and Causation in Kierkegaard’s Metaphysics of Change,” Calvin College Philosophy Symposium, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan (May 2008)

Awards and Honors

Purdue Research Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Purdue University, 2008-2009
(\$14,600 awarded for *Motion, Change, and Activity in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard* –
declined award to take academic appointment at Loyola Marymount University)

Purdue Research Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, Purdue University, 2007-2008
(\$14,600 awarded for *Motion, Change, and Activity in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard*)

Summer Research Fellowship, Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library, St. Olaf
College, 2007 (\$400 plus housing for six weeks)

Philosophy Department Travel Grant, Purdue University, 2007 (\$450 for travel to and from
the Kierkegaard Library)

Lynn Fellowship, Purdue University, 2003-2004 (\$16,000 first-year Ph.D. student
fellowship)

Department of Philosophy Outstanding Scholar in Graduate Program Award,
Loyola Marymount University, 2003 (\$1,000)

Academic Vice President Travel Grant, Loyola Marymount University, 2002 (\$600 for travel
to conference at Marquette University)

Marian Kretschmar Scholarship, Loyola Marymount University, 2001-2002 (\$6,000 to aid in
research, indexing, and bibliographic work for a faculty member)

Philosophy Department Travel Grant, Loyola Marymount University, 2001-2002 (\$700 for
travel to Society of Christian Philosophers Central Division Meeting)

Vice President, Graduate Philosophy Society, Loyola Marymount University, 2001
2002

Courses Taught

Loyola Marymount University (as Visiting Assistant Professor)

Graduate Courses

Philosophy 630: Kant (Spring 2010)

Upper Division Courses

Philosophy 352: Aesthetics (Fall 2009)

Philosophy 320: Ethics (Fall 2008)

Lower Division Courses

Philosophy 296: Freshman and Sophomore Proseminar on Kierkegaard (Spring 2009)

Philosophy 160: Philosophy of Human Nature (Fall 2008 [3x], Spring 2009 [3x], Fall 2009 [3x], Spring 2010 [3x])
Purdue University (as Instructor)

Lower Division Courses

Philosophy 225: Philosophy of Woman (Fall 2006, Spring 2007)

English 106: Composition Through Literature & Philosophy (Summer 2006, Summer 2005, Spring 2005, Fall 2004)

English 108: Advanced Composition Through Literature & Philosophy (Fall 2005, Spring 2006)

Professional Affiliations

American Philosophical Association
The Søren Kierkegaard Society, USA

References

Martin J. B. Matušík (Martin.Matustik@asu.edu)
Division of Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Studies
Arizona State University

Jacqueline Mariña (marinaj@purdue.edu)
Department of Philosophy
Purdue University

Daniel Smith (smith132@purdue.edu)
Department of Philosophy
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Rod Bertolet (bertolet@purdue.edu)
Department of Philosophy
Purdue University

Elizabeth Murray (emurray@lmu.edu)
Department of Philosophy
Loyola Marymount University

Dissertation Abstract

Attached

List of Graduate Courses

Attached

Dossier

Dossier available upon request from:

Chris McKinney, Graduate Secretary
Department of Philosophy
Purdue University
100 North University Street
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098

Motion, Change, and Activity in the Thought of Søren Kierkegaard

My dissertation is a study of the nature of motion, change, and activity in Søren Kierkegaard's writings. The project consists of a fairly simple argument which contains a subset of fairly controversial theses. The simple argument is that Kierkegaard's authorship advances from clarifying the nature of change broadly based on an Aristotelian understanding of *kinēsis* (as the actualization and resulting annihilation of a potentiality) in the "first," pseudonymous authorship (roughly from 1843 to 1846), to a kind of change that is non-kinetic in the "second authorship" (primarily in his signed writings and the Anti-Climacus works of 1847 through to the early years of the 1850's). I contend that the non-kinetic model of change is also influenced by Aristotle (particularly his conception of *energeia*—actuality—in *Metaphysics* Θ and elsewhere, characterized as a change which preserves potentiality), but just as the pseudonymous authorship's appropriation of *kinēsis* has definite existential ends, Kierkegaard grafts religious categories onto the *energeia* model. In this way, Kierkegaard's philosophy of change, motion, and activity is just one area in his overall thought where he, squarely situated within the Judeo-Christian tradition, takes significant helpings from Athens. I further examine how Kierkegaard's appropriation of Aristotle in these respects acts as a central point of reference to his critique of Hegel and the Hegelianism of his contemporary Denmark.

To this end, in chapter one I develop Kierkegaard's logical apparatus as it is polemically situated against Hegel's logical doctrine of mediation, which Kierkegaard interprets to include the view that there are *all and only* relative opposites and that these relative opposites are mediated. Inspired by Aristotle, Kierkegaard develops a trenchant critique of mediation and establishes the centrality of the principle of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded middle to existential concerns. I argue that these classical laws lay a logical foundation for his theory of change and motion.

The next two chapters develop Kierkegaard's metaphysics of change. In chapter two I argue that Kierkegaard's theory of *kinēsis* is a counter-theory to Hegel's understanding of coming-to-be as a *process* of the *necessary* and *rational* self-development of Absolute Spirit. In setting up my argument, I look to two kinds of movement implicit in Kierkegaard writings. The first is what I call the "intransitive change" related to God's creative activity and the second is the transitive change that obtains in nature and the external world more generally; this I call *mere* or *generic* coming into existence. Both kinds of movement are set up in contrast to Hegel's theory of coming-to-be.

In chapter three, I argue that, in addition to what I call generic coming into existence, Kierkegaard employs another kind of kinetic change that directly pertains to existential inwardness. This change is what Kierkegaard in various places calls a "leap" or qualitative "transition." After clarifying an ambiguity in Kierkegaard's account of the leap, I show that all leaps are changes of coming into existence, but that not all changes of coming to existence are leaps.

In the final chapter, I argue that Kierkegaard switches to a non-kinetic model of change to explain the transformation of the self in a Christian religious context. Rather than being transitive, I argue that this change is intransitive, and is made possible by God's continual creation—a granting and preserving of the possibility for being a self at each instant. I develop this view of change in light of Aristotle's notion of complete actuality in *Metaphysics* Θ.

List of Graduate Courses

18th and 19th Century Philosophy

Kierkegaard
Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*
Nietzsche
Kant's Critical Project
Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Writings

Martin J. B. Matušík, Purdue University
Martin J. B. Matušík, Purdue University
Daniel Smith, Purdue University
Jeffrey Wilson, LMU
Elizabeth Murray, LMU

20th Century Philosophy

Phenomenology
Stein, Weil, Arendt
Postmodern Philosophy (Deleuze)
Contemporary French Phenomenology
Heidegger's *Being and Time*
Philosophical Hermeneutics (Gadamer)
Pragmatism (Peirce, James, Rorty)

Daniel Smith, Purdue University
Tom Ryba/Ann Astell, Purdue University
Arkady Plotnitsky, Purdue University
James K. A. Smith, LMU
W. Scott Cameron, LMU
W. Scott Cameron, LMU
Brian Treanor, LMU

Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

Seminar on Aristotle
Platonic Aesthetics
Medieval Theories of Material Constitution
Seminar on Plato
Practical Wisdom in Aristotle,
Aquinas, and Scotus

Patricia Curd, Purdue University
Daniel Smith, Purdue University
Jeff Brower, Purdue University
Mark Morelli, LMU
Mary Beth Ingham, LMU

Philosophy and Literature

Philosophy and Literary Theory
Greek Tragedy and Philosophy
Philosophy and Scripture
Narrative and Personal Identity

Leonard Harris, Purdue University
Sandor Goodhart, Purdue University
Sandor Goodhart, Purdue University
William Matthews, LMU

Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy of Religion
Phenomenology of Religion
(Jean-Luc Marion)

Jacqueline Mariña, Purdue University
Daniel Smith, Purdue University

Social and Political Philosophy

Critical Theory (Adorno to Habermas)
Person and the Common Good

Martin J. B. Matušík, Purdue University
James Hanink, LMU