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The Don Juan *flâneur* in Copenhagen. A reading of Søren Kierkegaard's *Forførerens Dagbog*

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Abstract: The representation of contemporary Copenhagen in Kierkegaard's *Forførerens Dagbog* (The Seducer's Diary) (1843) makes the city a subject of the novel, not just the setting. It encompasses urban space and architecture, as well as the natural environment in and around the Danish capital. The novel, part of the larger unit called *Enten – Eller* (Either/Or), is the last in a series of texts that the fictional editor Victor Eremita attributes to A, the aesthetic man, before the second part begins, in which B, the ethical man, replies to A. This article attempts to analyse *Forførerens Dagbog* as an urban novel in relation to the myth of Don Juan, to the emergence of the *flâneur* in Paris, to the rise of the novel as a genre, and to the configuration of space and time in this novel. The aim is to connect these threads and shed some new light on a masterpiece of 19th-century Scandinavian literature.

Keywords: Søren Kierkegaard; *Forførerens Dagbog*; The Myth of Don Juan; The *flâneur*; Copenhagen; Spatial studies in literature

1 Introduction: Philosophy and Theology as Literature

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) is one of the great writers of modernity whose activity was at the intersection of different fields of humanities, in his case literature, philosophy and theology. His approach has led to ongoing debate about the boundaries of each discipline, and how, and whether, it is possible to define them. He regarded himself as a writer, and indeed a literary writer, operating within the Danish literary establishment of his time. Later in his career, his religious rigour could lead him to

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question his authorial identity. However, his stance was ambivalent, as he was aware of the poetic quality of his writing, which remained high in terms of style, images and rhetoric even in his most religious texts (Walsh 1994, 1–22, 167–193; Ziolkowski 2011, 3–53).

In his monograph on Kierkegaard, Georg Brandes presents him as one of the significant authors of the nineteenth century, a stylist and radical thinker who influenced subsequent generations (Brandes [1877]; Stjernfelt 2013). However, Brandes overlooks the religious dimension of Kierkegaard's oeuvre. Conversely, Theodor W. Adorno devalues Kierkegaard's literary art, in order to qualify his "construction of the aesthetic" in conceptual and philosophical terms (1933, 9–25; Gouwens 1995, 22–23). Since the second half of the 20th century, and even from the perspectives of philosophy and theology within Kierkegaard studies, there has been a growing awareness of the fact that literature is not merely an embellishment in his oeuvre, but rather the fabric of his philosophical discourse (aesthetic, ethical and religious). This can be seen as the "architecture of expression" that serves the architecture of his thought (Billeskov Jansen [1951], 10). Several facets of this interaction have been examined: composition and style; use of narrative genres; models and inspirations from the emerging European novel and from the German Romantic movement; the possibility or impossibility of viewing *Enten – Eller* as a *Bildungsroman* (novel of formation); sense of structure and fragmentation; writing and staging of the Self; metafiction and use of pseudonyms; reflection on what it means to be a producer of texts (their finder, copyist, editor or writer); a writer's readership and his vast intertextual practice.[1]

Nevertheless, other aspects remain less explored in terms of comparative literature, literary history and literary theory. For example, Eric Downing has demonstrated the pertinent intertextual trace of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* in *Forførerens Dagbog* (1993, 77–82). But here, the influence of the Don Juan myth appears as relevant, and it would seem obvious to consider it more thoroughly. To my knowledge, it has been addressed in a cursory manner in a few sources.

Forførerens Dagbog is a diary novel and, in part, an epistolary novel. It is included in *Enten – Eller* (Kierkegaard [1843a], 291–432), which is Kierkegaard's first major work and literary debut proper. It was published in two parts in 1843 and edited by the pseudonym Victor Eremita (Kierkegaard [1843a]; Kierkegaard [1843b]).[2] Johannes, the seducer protagonist of the novel, is clearly another name for Juan. The

1 Billeskov Jansen [1951]; Henriksen 1954; Hauberg Mortensen 1984, 564–573; Downing 1993; Walsh 1994, 23–125; Dehs 1995; Tøjner 1995; Garff 1995; Garff 2008b; Winkel Holm 2008; Ziolkowski 2011.

2 Before *Enten – Eller*, Kierkegaard published the critical essay *Af en endnu Levendes Papirer* (1838), which deals with Hans Christian Andersen's novel *Kun en Spillemand* (1837), and his thesis in philosophy *Om Begrebet Ironi med stadig Hensyn til Socrates* (1841). The frequently cited *Enten – Eller*, part one (Kierkegaard [1843a]), will henceforth be shortened as "EE1".

main authorial voice in *Enten – Eller*, part one, is A, whose aesthetic essay "De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier eller det Musikalsk-Erotiske" (EE1, 53–136) focuses on the immediate erotic seducer of the Don Juan tradition (specifically in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*, 1787), and contrasts it with a potential reflective, psychological seducer of a more modern and inward kind. This provides evidence of an anticipation of the forthcoming novel *Forførerens Dagbog*, a connection explicitly made by Victor Eremita in his preface (EE1, 16–17). Victor Eremita posits A's authorship of the diary novel, although A himself explains in his preface that he has found a manuscript comprising a diary and a series of letters (EE1, 293–303). Additionally, A authors the essay "Skyggerids", which deals with literary couples featuring a male seducer and his female victim (EE1, 163–209); Don Giovanni and Donn'Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* are among them. Victor Eremita draws the conclusion that both essays prepare the ground for the diary novel, the final text in *Enten – Eller*, part one. First A acts as a critic, then as a novelist in his own right, within the Don Juan tradition.[3]

International comparative studies dealing with the Don Juan myth tend to omit Kierkegaard's novel, although they may mention his aesthetic-philosophical essay about the musical-erotic stages in Mozart's opera (Austen 1939; Pratt 1960; Menascé 1986; Watt 1996, 210–211). Is it due to a bias towards Kierkegaard, viewed as a philosopher rather than as a novelist? Or to the arguably peripheral position of Danish literature and language? It is notable that even Danish studies that engage with the Don Juan myth omit *Forførerens Dagbog* without offering an explanation (Larsen 1974; Barfoed 1978).[4]

2 Don Juan and the Flâneur[5] Meet in Copenhagen

With a stroke of genius, *Forførerens Dagbog* actualises and renews the literary tradition centred around Don Juan, both the one *Enten – Eller* explicitly refers to, in particular Mozart's *Don Giovanni*,[6] and, if more indirectly, 18th-century novels that

3 A similar trait, in a more concentrated form, is found in E.T.A. Hoffmann's short story "Don Juan", which is at the same time a fantastic *rêverie* and a critical reading of Da Ponte and Mozart's opera ([1813]). Kierkegaard knew Hoffmann's text (Barfoed 1978, 234).

4 Barfoed's study typically examines Kierkegaard's reception of the Don Juan myth considering "De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier" but omitting his Don Juan novel (1978, 193–247).

5 Henceforth, this recurring French word will be written in roman.

6 The opera *Don Giovanni* is a co-authorship with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, but A ignores the fact in his essay; his *Don Giovanni* appears as the sole creation of Mozart's musical genius. Moreover, A/Kierkegaard used Laurids Kruse's Danish translation of the Italian libretto (1807), as evidenced in "Skyggerids" (EE1, 187, 191–192; Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 115).

display attraction and, at the same time, abhorrence towards characters of disruptive seducers connected with the Don Juan topos, such as Lovelace in *Clarissa* by Samuel Richardson, first published in 1748, and Valmont in *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos, first published in 1782, both of which are epistolary novels, translated in Danish before *Enten – Eller*, in 1783–1788 (*Miss Clarissa Harlowes Historie i en Samling af Breve*) and in 1832 (*De farlige Bekjendtskaber*) respectively.[7]

The fact that Kierkegaard's larger philosophical work, which addresses the dualism, and possibly the interaction, between aesthetic life and ethical life, includes a novel must mean something with respect to the novel as a communicative form, and to its rise in the European genre system throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Indeed, the Danish literary system was the most active in translating the European novel into the national language from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century (Moretti [1998], 151–152). The European success of Richardson's novels had an impact on Denmark, and the translation of his works into Danish contributed to mould the new genre in its early phase, in terms of sentimental and didactic narratives addressed to the growing bourgeois readership. Richardson's work was translated and imitated, with recurring patterns including the opposition between vice and virtue, seducer and pure young girl, sinful big town (Copenhagen) and innocent countryside (Møller 1983, 554–562). Translations from English, German and French, especially of prose narratives, dominated the Danish literary market, and the peak of this trend was between the 1820s and 1840s (Svendsen, Auring and Baggesen 1984, 397–402, 409–415). Through inspiration from abroad, urban novels and stories, set in Copenhagen, were written by Danish authors in the 1830s and 1840s. One model was the Parisian idler and urban observer called flâneur (*flanør* or *dagdriver* in Danish), who did not mind observing young girls as well, and seducing them. As the flâneur phenomenon gained traction in the central and elegant areas of Copenhagen (mainly Østergade), it also became a subject of moralistic debate (Svendsen and Baggesen 1984, 485–492). In terms of theory of literary reception, the elements of this new "horizon of expectation" (Jauss 1970, 144–207) explain why Kierkegaard could imagine and write a novel that drew on them while simultaneously creating something original, as *Forførerens Dagbog* combines the myth of Don Juan and the motif of the Copenhagen flâneur

7 *Det Kgl. Bibliotek*, https://www.kb.dk/find-materiale (accessed July 21, 2024); Billeskov Jansen 1951, 34–37. Esther Menascé includes Richardson's and Laclos' novels in her broad comparative study of the Don Juan myth (Menascé 1986, 60–77) but omits Kierkegaard's. Conversely, Betty Friend Becker considers the pattern connecting Richardson's, Laclos' and Kierkegaard's novels, but distinguishes them from the Don Juan myth (Friend Becker 1979). Ian Watt offers relevant observations on the seducer Lovelace in *Clarissa* in his *The Rise of the Novel* (1957, 208–238), but without seeing him as a Don Juan type. Watt eventually authors an important study on, among others, Don Juan as a myth of modern individualism (1996, 90–119, 207–218).

within the broader scope of *Enten – Eller*. Furthermore, the case illustrates the productive role of translations in the process of literary system renewal and the dynamic exchange between centres and peripheries of the "polysystem" (Even-Zohar 1990, 9–94; in particular 45–51, 73–78). Kierkegaard borrowed from world literature but gave it also something back.

In regard to the general practice of novel writing and novel reading, there are references in *Enten – Eller* and, in particular, in *Forførerens Dagbog*. While spotting a girl at Østergade on 5 April, Johannes ironically observes that young girls build their love expectations upon novel reading (EE1, 307). The problem is, as Johannes argues on 3 June and in an undated entry after 3 July, that novels lie about love (EE1, 333, 352) – and this is stated by a novel character, which highlights both Kierkegaard's metafictional play and his maieutic method: what can we readers really learn about love by reading *Forførerens Dagbog* and its broader text *Enten – Eller*? Furthermore, an indirect sign that Kierkegaard might have read or at least known about Richardson's *Clarissa* and Laclos' *Les Liaisons dangereuses* is Johannes' remark on 16 June about all loathsome forms of constrained love, among which sleeping potions (EE1, 324–325). The English rake Lovelace famously drugs Clarissa to possess her, while his French colleague Valmont violates the virtuous Madame la présidente de Tourvel when she has fainted (Watt 1957, 208–238; Friend Becker 1979, 28–102; Menascé 1986, 60–77). For a seducer like Johannes, on the contrary, the utmost pleasure is a woman who freely gives herself, and such a 'theory' of love proves to be pivotal in the process of seducing Cordelia. In spite of the discrepancies in the seducers' creed and strategy, the fact that Lovelace, Valmont and Johannes engage in a process of intellectualisation in the myth of Don Juan, shows their kinship. In this process, the form of the novel, with its possibilities of subjective and intimate writing (the diary, the letter), plays a role.[8]

When it comes to the way the novel represents the outward, existing reality, often an urban one, a question is how the spaces of Copenhagen and its surroundings appear in *Forførerens Dagbog*. As a matter of fact, even A, in his preface to Johannes' diary, considers the spatial descriptions it contains as incidental (EE1, 300–301); neither have the critical studies dedicated specific attention to this aspect, except for Finn Hauberg Mortensen (1984, 569–571) and George Pattison (1999). That the narrative is imbued with the atmosphere of Copenhagen is recorded as an obvious

8 Watt 1957, 174–207; Friend Becker 1979, 14–25; Menascé 1986, 1–28, 60–77. In Friend Becker's view, the conscious strategies of seduction distinguish Lovelace, Valmont and Johannes from the Don Juan tradition, as expressed in the origin of the myth, Tirso de Molina's Spanish play *El Burlador de Sevilla* [de Molina 1630], which presents an immediate and unreflective seducer. However, as Menascé points out, the intellectualisation of Don Juan began already with Molière's play *Dom Juan ou le Festin de Pierre* ([1665], 717–726, 770–773), and with Thomas Shadwell's play *The Libertine* one decade later and continued with Richardson and Laclos.

circumstance (Henriksen 1954, 27–86), and the urban and natural spaces are perceived as just a backdrop of the 'real' action, the protagonists of which are the seducer Johannes and his chosen victim, the seventeen-year-old Cordelia Wahl.

On the other hand, Joakim Garff's biography of Kierkegaard ([2000], in particular 267–282) and Peter Tudvad's analysis of Copenhagen as a macro-text through which to understand Kierkegaard's life and writing experience (2004), but even a previous essay by Hermann Peter Rohde (1986), have offered new perspectives on the urban stroll, the observation of places, the need for meeting and exchange in the public space of streets and squares, as part and parcel of Kierkegaard's modus operandi and authorial profile. And this has to do with his texts, not simply with his biography; as Rohde observes, "Kierkegaard's relationship to Copenhagen is quite essential for a true understanding of Kierkegaard and his writing" (1986, 3). This kind of awareness is deepened and developed in George Pattison's seminal monograph (1999) about the inescapable, physical presence of the city of Copenhagen in Kierkegaard's critical response to the condition of modernity. Pattison shows the importance and richness of Kierkegaard's ambivalence towards urban modernity: a critique of its 'spectacular' and superficial character, but also a participation in it and a fascination with it, at least until the *Corsair* affair in 1845–1846: "the extraordinary intensity with which Kierkegaard lives, eats, breathes and absorbs the atmosphere of his contemporary culture, high and low" (Pattison 1999, xv, 1–19, 35–36, 131–145; quotation at p. 141). In this context, Pattison underscores the connection between Kierkegaard's urban practice, both as an individual and an author, and the emergence of the Parisian flâneur (1999, 11–18). More recently, this aspect has been reconsidered by the philosopher Bruce Baugh (2022, 1–15, 113–147).

As a historical phenomenon, the by now iconic urban stroller originated in Paris between the Enlightenment and the advent of 19th-century modernity. He was an observer in and of the crowd, a reader and interpreter of signs, looking for news and detecting traces. As such, he was an ideal instrument for representing the increasingly dominant and rapidly changing urban spaces in literature. The flâneur's gaze epitomised a new, keen consciousness of modern identity and of belonging to the city. Over the course of the 19th century, his attitudes and skills were gradually applied to essays and reportage, journalism, literary short prose and, with Charles Baudelaire, to poetry, as historians and sociologists of *flânerie* have observed, following Walter Benjamin's seminal insights in the 1930s.[9]

9 In the extensive body of research about modernity, Parisian modernity, and the flâneur, some sources have been particularly relevant to my studies: Benjamin 1982; Berman 1988; Köhn 1989; Prendergast 1992; Stierle 1993; Tester 1994; Nuvolati 2013.

The flâneur initially manifested himself as a well-off man, a rentier and an idler who moved around in the city without a real profession. He could afford to dedicate himself to watching and approaching others, even in an erotic sense. In *Physiologie du flaneur* [sic], Louis Huart presents idleness, daydreaming, urban observation and stroll as a self-conscious art form, and erotic observations play a role in his attitude Huart 1841, 9, 33, 35, 54, 55, 57–58, 77–79, 102; Parkhurst Ferguson 1994). This quality, a secondary one in Huart after all, becomes the most important one for Johannes, the protagonist of *Forførerens Dagbog*, which is contemporary with the theory of *flânerie* put forward by Parisian Huart in 1841.

In his assessment of his own authorship, *Synspunktet for min Forfatter-Virksomhed* – published posthumously in 1859, but mostly written in 1848 (Holst Petersen and Tullberg 2012, 27–40) – Kierkegaard reveals his awareness of himself as a flâneur (a term he used), and even how ambivalent the word was, both for his environment and for him. The activity of the urban stroller in Copenhagen at the time of the composition of *Enten – Eller* is viewed, on the one hand, as an objective description of the author's identity and work; on the other hand, it conveys the commonly negative connotation attributed to it by the public opinion, who thought – according to Kierkegaard's retrospective reconstruction (Pattison 1999, 11–12; Garff 2008a, 193–197) – that he was an unserious idler: "Dersom Kjøbenhavn nogensinde har været af een Mening om Nogen, tør jeg sige, den har været af een Mening om mig: jeg var en Dagdriver, en Lediggænger, en Flaneur […]" (Kierkegaard [1859], 42). This is also why Kierkegaard paradoxically asserts that the flâneur was a disguise for him, which prevented the public from fully comprehending the extent of the commitment required for his new work *Enten – Eller* (Kierkegaard [1859], 41–44).

At the time of *Enten – Eller*, however, Kierkegaard appeared more intrigued than worried about the implications of the urban stroll and gaze in his authorship. One of his unfulfilled literary projects was to interpret the role of the urban detective and police inspector, who wrote notes in diary pages, namely "Blade af en Opsigtsbetjents Dagbog" and "Blade af en Gadecommissairs Lommebog". In these preliminary sketches he expresses his poetics of *flânerie* in a concise manner (Kierkegaard [1843c]; Pattison 1999, 18; Garff [2000], 270–271; Tudvad 2004, 64–85, 126). These themes are developed in both *Forførerens Dagbog* and the conclusion of *Stadier paa Livets Vei*.

A distinctive feature of Kierkegaard's novel character Johannes is that he combines the recent emergence of the flâneur in Paris and, gradually, in other European cities, with the two-century-old tradition of Don Juan. In following, consciously or not, the Don Juan myth from its start, Tirso de Molina's tragicomical play *El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra* (The Trickster of Seville and His Guest of Stone), published in 1630 and possibly staged between 1612 and 1616

(Menascé 1986, 1–6; Watt 1996, x-xii, 90–119), Johannes is obsessively and indefatigably in search of what he defines as "situations", and he behaves like a faker and a trickster, who skillfully masks his real intentions.[10]

Johannes' first appearance in the diary, on 4 April, is a self-description: he is spying on a girl, concealed by the streetlight at night and enveloped in a cape (EE1, 304–305). It is an urban and modern look, yet it also evokes the Don Juan tradition from the outset of Tirso's play.[11] Another traditional trait is that Johannes is evidently rich, does not need to work and never mentions it, if not directly asked.[12] He seems to be well acquainted with all the houses of high rank in town, where he is respected as a distinguished person. As he is continuously moving from one place to the other in town, his acquaintances think that he must accomplish business tasks, while he is chasing girls (entry on 30 May; EE1, 331). Taking into account the number of women he endeavours to conquer and possess, and the relatively short time span of the novel, almost six months, he proves to be prospectively as productive as shown in the astonishing figures read by the servant Leporello in the famous Catalogue Aria of *Don Giovanni* (Da Ponte and Mozart [1787], 18–19, act one, scene five. See EE1, 96; Dewey 1995, 159–161; Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 127). The intensity of Johannes' central passion for Cordelia can make readers forget that he is willing to seduce other women at the same time. This is evident in the diary: in the introductory entries on 4, 5 and 7 April respectively, before he has met the new girl (whose name Cordelia he will eventually learn) (EE1, 304–313); in the long time of waiting, when he has spotted her, but fails to meet her again in the streets, between 21 April and 15 May (EE1, 316–319); and towards the end of the diary, when he is looking ahead and forward to new situations that may fill his existential void after the forthcoming, perfect seduction of Cordelia. In these concluding situations Johannes observes and daydreams of both girls in town, who belong to his own social class,[13] and girls in the countryside or belonging to the lower classes – fisher girls, peasant girls, housemaids – and even

10 The doubt that Kierkegaard/A/Johannes may not have known about Tirso's play, the actual, modern beginning of the myth of Don Juan, derives from the circumstance that A posits, in "De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier eller det Musikalsk-Erotiske", that the origin of this Christian myth is in the Middle Ages. A follows the idea of a parallel development of the Christian myths of Don Juan and Faust (EE1, 92–97). Tirso, however, belonged to the age of Counter-Reformation in Spain.

11 It is dark when *El burlador de Sevilla* starts, and Don Juan, in disguise, has seduced Isabela. Later, he borrows his friend duke de la Mota's cape for the seduction of Doña Ana (Tirso de Molina 1630, 81–82; 151–159). Don Giovanni's first appearance is similar; it is night, and he is concealed beneath a long cape (Da Ponte and Mozart [1787], 7).

12 Cordelia's aunt wonders why Johannes has not got a job. Johannes replies with an irony that the elderly woman does not understand (EE1, 343).

13 EE1, 367, 370–372, 373–374, 381–382, 384, 398. All these late diary entries are undated.

deludes one of them into believing that he is going to marry her,[14] a set of recurring situations in the Don Juan tradition from Tirso to Mozart.[15]

It must however be observed that the novel about Johannes – as much as the earlier ones about Lovelace and Valmont – lingers on the peculiar quality of one more difficult seduction, in this case the extraordinary and, at least temporarily, exclusive passion Johannes develops for Cordelia. The author A in *Enten – Eller* anticipates a central intention of the diary novel, when he points out in "De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier eller det Musikalsk-Erotiske": "Den umiddelbare *Don Juan* maa forføre 1003, den reflekterede behøver kun at forføre een, og det, der beskæftiger os, er, hvorledes han gjør det" (EE1, 111).

It is of course a Kierkegaardian paradox that Johannes loves Cordelia, and that he knows he will abandon her, if he is to remain a seducer. Johannes falls in love with a woman with an uncommon interiority and a rich personality, something that risks making him lose the total control on emotions he needs in order to act as a seducer. He risks being seduced by a stronger seducer, Cordelia, which would make an end of him, as he would get out of himself and his self-conceit.[16] He must therefore, necessarily according to his sexist stance, 'defeat' her through seduction, and get rid of her. As a matter of fact, love is a feeling that, if Johannes only allowed it in a less cynical and instrumental way, would free him from his compulsive, self-reflective entanglement, and let him instead choose something different from the eternal repetition of the same (seduction). Johannes chooses however another way, or chooses not to choose, which is a keystone in the structure of *Enten – Eller*.

14 EE1, 390–391, 393, 396–398, 401–402. As we will see, this last passage has a special daydreaming character, and takes place in a park just outside Copenhagen; the incidental hint at a promise of marriage occurs here. Even these entries are undated.

15 In *El burlador de Sevilla*, the two lower-class victims are Tisbea and Aminta (Tirso de Molina 1630, 103–113, 121–128, 163–183). In *Dom Juan*, they are Charlotte and Maturine (Molière [1665], 717, 731–741). How *Don Giovanni* tries to seduce Zerlina, Masetto's betrothed, is an action that goes through the whole plot of Don Giovanni; the best-known aria is "Là ci darem la mano" (Da Ponte and Mozart [1787], 26, act one, scene nine). Byron's Don Juan has also affairs with women of all social classes, but Byron typically denies the Christian morals that sustain the Don Juan myth. Juan's love story with Haidée, for example, a pirate's daughter on a Greek island, is a free passion without promises of marriage or eternal love (Byron [1819-1824], 130–207, from Canto II, stanza 112 to Canto IV stanza 73).

16 Garff [2000], 238–249; Lacoste 2002; Garff 2008a; Wennerscheid 2021. Sophie Wennerscheid considers the relationship between Johannes and Cordelia in the context of the contemporary debates on gender roles in Golden-Age Denmark, and of the sexism of that age. While Garff and Guillermine de Lacoste emphasise Cordelia's agency, Friend Becker sees her as a passive and silent figure (1979, 110–111). Similarly, Wanda Warren Berry underscores how women in *Enten – Eller* are stereotypically perceived by men as victims (1995). Downing focuses on the ambivalence between Johannes' poetising and dehumanising use of Cordelia, and the way his seduction also empowers her (1993, 101–127).

3 Architectures of Space and Time in the Novel

In the last three decades, theory has focused on the role of space and place in literature, also considering that priority had traditionally been given to the sole category of time when discussing narrativity. Relevant contributions to spatial studies have emerged also in Scandinavia (Borg 2011; Mønster 2009; Mai and Ringgaard 2010; Ringgaard 2010). Franco Moretti puts forth a "geography of literature", creatively using maps to illustrate and conceptualise the role of space in the European 19th-century novel (1998). Three aspects of Bertrand Westphal's "geocriticism" (2011) are particularly relevant to the present discussion. Firstly, the structural interconnectedness of space and time in narrative fiction – which Mikhail Bakhtin already posited through the term "chronotope" in the late 1930s ([1981], 84–258) – implies that the geographical environment cannot be considered as a passive container of the action developing through time; instead, space and time interact to create plot and meaning. Secondly, the depiction of space and place in literature is not simply a mirror of the tangible, physical world, including artifacts such as urban architecture, but contributes in its turn to actively construct space and place in terms of cultural awareness, representations, expectations and visions, both in collective memory and in individual identity (Borg 2011, 13–71, 97–102). Thirdly, even realistic fiction, for instance in urban novels, implies the creation of "possible worlds" in the readers' mind, with an open, varying proportion of reliable geographical and historical referentiality, and of creative imagination and invention.

It may be useful to outline some basic configurations of space and time in *Forførerens Dagbog*. The diary runs from 4 April to 25 September 1834 and can roughly be divided into three parts (Hauberg Mortensen 1984, 569–571). In the first part, time is determined by the dated entries (nine in April and eleven in May), and the space is the exterior space of Copenhagen at street level, except for the important entry of 15 May, where the scene is Søerne, the lakes outside the city walls. When Johannes meets Cordelia in a house in central Copenhagen, at Mrs Jensen's on 22 May, the entries partly change their character; they become more interior in a double sense, as the flâneur's actions on the street tend to be replaced by his reflections on Cordelia and his plans to seduce her, while domestic interiors also prevail. Furthermore, the dated entries become scarce after 7 June, when Johannes has finally gained access to Cordelia's house, and until the end of the novel: only on 3, 23 and 31 July, 2 and 3 August, 16, 24 and 25 September, while most of the entries remain undated. Johannes' records in June take place in the domestic interior of Cordelia's house, except for a solitary night in the streets, and a long pause of *flânerie* and *rêverie* in the city, when Johannes goes out to follow the summer winds on a Sunday, probably towards the end of June, if we assume that the entries, though

undated, are in chronological order. Johannes' thoughts on seducing Cordelia finally focus on a combination of strategies, that lead to the third and last part of the novel. Johannes elicits the girl's disgust for an ordinary engagement, first by acting as a common suitor and obtaining her consent to the engagement, then by letting her passion grow with the help of his short love letters, and by alternating 'hot' letters and cold treatment in person. This means that *Forførerens Dagbog* becomes more of an epistolary novel than a diary novel at this point, or, at east, that these two possibilities of day-to-day subjective writing are interwoven. The letters, like most of the diary entries in the final part, are undated, but still form a chronological account. The growing inwardness and reflectiveness in *Forførerens Dagbog* do not mean, however, that the exterior places, whether urban or rural, disappear in it, quite the contrary. Johannes takes Cordelia to his uncle's house in town (unspecified location), where engaged couples give vent to their repressed erotic passion; the purpose of this action is to arouse Cordelia's disgust for the hypocrisy of the dominating sexual morals, according to which sex before marriage is not allowed. Furthermore, the seducer needs his own escapades both in town and in its rural surroundings and is happy to observe the crowd and daydream in erotic terms in a park outside Copenhagen. While carefully preparing the fulfilment of his goal – a love night with Cordelia – he is thus, even more carefully, preparing his way out of any possible, deeper emotional and existential commitment with her. When she decides to break off the engagement and moves to a family her aunt knows in the countryside, everything is ready. Johannes has her fetched from that house to his secret place, presumably also in the countryside north of Copenhagen, and finally leaves her the day after, 25 September. The servant who helps Johannes the seducer in these procedures – a peripheral appearance in *Forførerens Dagbog* – is another reminder of the Don Juan tradition.[17]

If the first, dated and urban part of the diary novel has a more realistic effect, Johannes' mind is always utterly visual and spatial, reliant on images and references to literature and myth, which in the end blurs the sharp distinction between exterior or interior; description or reflection; action, memory or cultural legacy. When preparing himself to leave Cordelia, he thinks of himself more as a "myth", beyond limitations of space and time, than as a real historical person (in a short note to Cordelia and in the entry on 24 September: EE1, 428 and 431 respectively). This is true from the point of view of the Don Juan myth; from a realistically psychological, relational, existential, and finally ethical standpoint, however, it is a self-absolution and an escape.

17 Tirso's Catelinon, Molière's Sgaranel (the most outstanding servant character), and Da Ponte and Mozart's Leporello, who borrows traits from Sgaranel.

At the outset in April, the diarist is happy about the season, which enables him to move and act outdoors, in streets and squares, along shores and in green areas of Copenhagen or in its natural surroundings. He is exposed to weather conditions, especially the wind, and enjoys his own mastery of the random situations, and of a social scene that is more varied and dynamic than it can be during the winter season, when his seductive activity is constrained in the interiors of dancing parties or theatres, and where the role-play is predictable, as he observes on 21 April and on 15 May (EE1, 316, 320). Adorno ignores this aspect when he argues that Kierkegaard retired from history and society and cultivated the bourgeois interior in isolation; and also, as a consequence, when he maintains that Kierkegaard was, from the literary point of view, a poor flâneur writer, acting in an incomparably smaller and less relevant town than Paris.[18]

The diary begins in medias res, and the situations that engage Johannes take place in the urban environment. The representation abounds with toponyms of the actual Copenhagen, which in Kierkegaard's time was crowded and still crammed within the fortified walls that had been planned and commissioned by King Christian IV in the 17th century and completed after his reign (Erichsen 1996; Frandsen 1996b; Gamrath 1996; Garff [2000], 462–467).

Fixing on the written page what the newly experienced seductive situation was like becomes the core strategy of this self-reflective and poetic seducer. The category he defines as "the interesting" combines voyeurism and narcissism (Henriksen 1954, 32–43). At first, it entails enjoying the immediately experienced situation on the street, while anticipating the eventual seduction of the female object; but later, it consists of savouring the memory of the seductive situation retrospectively, through the diaristic representation of himself acting in the situation. Memory is spatial, and to remember well, so that the perspective of a future meeting can be fixed in his mind, Johannes must situate the events in space. In this way, he can alternatively observe himself from the inside and from the outside, combining inwardness and outwardness, and representing both the intimate, individual and psychological side of reality, and the detailed, day-to-day external world, in fact an urban reality for the most. Ian Watt argues that this duality is a fundamental formal and structural trait in the kind of realism that characterises the rise of the novel in 18th-century England (1957, 9–34; 174–207). External reality is moulded through intimate subjectivity or, conversely, architectural figures can be used to express inwardness and spatialise it, as David Spurr argues in the introduction to *Architecture and Modern Literature*, citing Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary* as an example (2012, 1–49; here 35).

18 Adorno [1933], 16–19, 54–76, 92–93. See Spurr 2012, 34–36. Pattison gives a critical reading of Adorno's stance (1999, 14–15, 47–48).

As to the urban reality in *Forførerens Dagbog*, we see, through the flâneur's sensitive perception, an environment which, besides houses, streets and squares, includes means of transportation, streetlights, shops, cafés, wares, meeting points, social events (theatre, exhibition, concert, ball, stroll), green spots, occupations, social classes, dress codes and gender roles. Referring to the literary myth of modern Paris, Karlheinz Stierle observes that the challenging experience of the city's "readability" (*Lesbarkeit*) is at the core of the myth, and that the flâneur is a central figure in such an enterprise (1993, 12–50; 205–220). Johannes' gaze and the activity of his feet express a similar adventurous spirit with regard to Copenhagen; he loves reading signs and is utterly aware of it. Here, toponyms and other systems of urban signs serve to reference an existing reality in space and time, but, more importantly, they create an artistic effect of realism, which produces a cultural consciousness of geographic place and space, as well as a literary universe, a "possible world" that becomes palpable to any readers, even those who do not have a direct experience of the Danish capital town.

4 Love by Water

Images of water occur throughout *Enten – Eller*, with a high concentration in *Forførerens Dagbog*. The diarist draws upon his classical and literary erudition, as well as upon his own poetic skills, when he reflects upon the power of love and emotions and upon the depth of Cordelia's personality through aquatic imagery. By following Johannes' line of thought, one can conclude that the seducer's hazardous move is to become fully aware of how water becomes unmanageable and disquieting for man, a source of *Angst* (anxiety/anguish) in such manifestations as rough sea or dark, fathomless depths. Eventually, the awareness is skillfully manipulated to emphasise man's (Johannes') ultimate capability to dominate and aesthetically enjoy (*nyde*) water – the life-giving element and the immense power of passions and emotions – as calm surface and transparency (Henriksen 1954, 43–45). Gaston Bachelard underscores the lasting ambivalence of water as a material element transformed into image by poetry and literature, and his observations are valuable, although Kierkegaard is not included in his framework of reference. Water can be both rough and calm, dark and clear; it can give death and life, and it contains both depth and surface (Bachelard 1942). In his inspiring essay, Bachelard adopts a philosophical and psychoanalytical perspective according to which archetypes, symbols and myths, especially those connected with the four natural elements, are universal and, as such, independent of specific geographical or historical contexts. On the other hand, understanding the symbolic dimensions of water does not prevent us from using them in terms of literary geography, so as to better understand the sense of place that is

key in *Forførerens Dagbog*. Johannes' manifold references to water contribute in fact to create the literary picture of Copenhagen (etymologically a commercial harbour, *Køben-havn*) and its natural surroundings by the water, whether sea or lake.

The first time Johannes spots Cordelia is while he is walking along the seafront called Langelinie on 9 April:

> Er jeg bleven blind? Har Sjælens indre Øie tabt sin Kraft? […] Jeg gik paa lange Linie, skjødesløs tilsyneladende og uden at agte paa min Omgivelse, skjøndt mit speidende Blik Intet lod ubemærket, da faldt mit Øie paa hende. […] Det var mig […] umuligt at see, fordi jeg saae altfor meget. Det Eneste, jeg har beholdt tilbage, er, at hun havde en grøn Kaabe paa […]. (EE1, 313)

The fact that Cordelia's appearance is a shock to Johannes is shown by the irritation he feels when he cannot recall her face, as he is overwhelmed by emotions and loses control. For Johannes, remembering women is the first step towards seeing them as objects. As a flâneur and urban sign detective, he can however, for the time being, recall one clue, the girl's green coat. A few days later, on 14 April, the diary entry conveys Johannes' inner turmoil, as well as his paradoxical, sublime enterprise, through the simile of a sailor on the rough sea:

> Neppe kjender jeg mig selv. Mit Sind bruser som et oprørt Hav for Lidenskabens Storme. Dersom en Anden kunde see min Sjæl i denne Tilstand, vilde det synes ham, at den som en Jolle borede sig med Spidsen ned i Havet, som om den i sin rædsomme Fart maatte styre ned i Afgrundens Dyb. Han seer ikke, at oppe i Masten sidder der en Matros paa Udkig. Brus op I vilde Kræfter, rører Eder Lidenskabens Magter, om Eders Bølgeslag end kaster Skummet mod Skyerne, I formaae dog ikke at optaarne Eder over mit Hoved; jeg sidder rolig som Klintekongen. (EE1, 314)

It is an image of narcissism, solipsism and alienation (Dewey 1995, 182–190). In addition, the shipwreck is a motif in the Don Juan's myth, as seen in Tirso's work and beyond.[19] Originally, the seducer's outrageous deeds compel him to flee from one town to another, and the shipwreck – which Don Juan survives – works as *memento mori*, a metaphysical reminder of man's mortal fate, and an anticipation of the punishment for the seducer's hubris (Menascé 1986, 23–24, 91–97). Watt argues that the Don Juan myth in modern Western culture and literature expresses, for better or worse, man's boundless individualistic and egotistic urge (1997). Bachelard observes that the image of violent water reflects the human desire for power; nature becomes threatening when man defies its order, and masculine joy and pride dream of defeating the elements (1942, 213–249). Kierkegaard's novel is part of this literary

19 Tirso de Molina 1630, 103–109; Molière [1665], 726–727, 731. The shipwreck motif is absent in Da Ponte and Mozart's *Don Giovanni* but is a prominent feature in Byron's epic poem *Don Juan* ([1919–1824], 102–130, Canto II, stanzas 1 to 112). Molière's play and Byron's poem are both discussed in "De umiddelbare erotiske Stadier eller det Musikalsk-Erotiske" (EE1, 108–118), but without any references to the shipwreck motif.

tradition, but it adds an intimate, psychological and existential twist that is his specific contribution as a writer and a philosopher: the storm and the possible shipwreck become interior experiences. Johannes' note continues:

> Jeg kan næsten ikke finde Fodfæste, som en Vandfugl søger jeg forgjeves at nedlade mig i mit Sinds oprørte Hav. Og dog er et saadant Oprør mit Element, jeg bygger derpaa, ligesom Alcedo ispida bygger Rede paa Havet.
>
> De kalkunske Haner bruse op, naar de see Rødt, saaledes gaaer det mig, naar jeg seer Grønt, hver Gang jeg seer en grøn Kaabe; og da mit Øie ofte bedrager mig, saa strande stundom alle mine Forventninger paa en Porteur fra Fredriks-Hospital. (EE1, 315)

The examples above show how *Forførerens Dagbog* blends the Don Juan novel and the urban novel. Fredriks Hospital was a major healthcare institution in Copenhagen at the time, and the uniforms of the hospital staff and bearers were green (Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 206–207).[20] The shift from the poetic images to the observation of a detail of everyday life in town, and of one of its buildings (a move from the inward to the outward), shows that Johannes is a flâneur, a detective and an explorer of urban spaces, looking for clues and signs.

As Pattison observes, Kierkegaard's novels display a dialectic between city and country and an interest for the liminal areas between them (1999, 18, 63–86). In *Forførerens Dagbog*, Copenhagen also includes its natural and rural surroundings, which are characterised by the presence of lakes and woods. Unlike the traditional Don Juan characters, Johannes is not a great traveller but, more like his author Kierkegaard, he prefers staying in town and enjoying the nearby countryside. Johannes' regaining full control – finding a peculiar, aesthetic balance between feeding his emotions and keeping them at a safe distance – is again expressed through the aquatic imagery of a man in a boat, which contrasts with the stormy image from 14 April. This entry is on 20 April, and the symbolic dimensions (the reflective and narcissistic mood connected with a calm surface; remembering/expecting 'her' surrounded by the motherly, life-giving, erotic aquatic element; Bachelard 1942, 29–62, 155–180) do not rule out a strong sense of place:

> [O]gsaa denne Tilstand, den dunkle og ubestemte men dog stærke Rørelse har sin Sødme. Jeg har altid holdt af i en maaneklar Nat at ligge i en Baad ude paa en eller anden af vore deilige Indsøer. Jeg trækker da Seilene ind, Aarerne op, tager Roret af, lægger mig saa lang jeg er og skuer op i Himlens Hvælving. Naar Bølgerne vugge Baaden ved deres Bryst, naar Skyerne drive stærkt for Vinden, saa Maanen et Øieblik forsvinder og atter viser sig, saa finder jeg Ro i denne Uro […]. Hvor megen Nydelse i saaledes at sqvulpe paa et beveget Vand – hvor megen Nydelse i at bevæges i sig selv. (EE1, 315)

20 Kierkegaard would die in that hospital in 1855. See Stig Dalager's novel *Øjeblikkets evighed* (2013).

For his growing frustration, more than a month passes before Johannes sees that girl again. It happens outside the city walls on 15 May. The location is once again described in detail using toponyms. It is another spot near the water, on the path along the small lakes which, at that time, went right outside the fortifications west of Copenhagen. In the urban cultural memory of that time, the walk was known as *Kærlighedsstien* or *Kærlighedsstierne*, the love path(s) (Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 208, 220; Garff [2000], 272; Tudvad 2004, 456–459).[21] The way Cordelia appears by the lake shows that Johannes has regained control of his emotions. The surface is calm, but the water also reflects Cordelia's uncommon depth (her eye with "its infinite depth", "dets uendelige Dyb"; EE1, 322). The symbolic meaning of water fits with the precise details of the setting:

> Det var paa den Sti, der ligger mellem Nørre- og Østerport. Klokken var omtrent halv syv. Solen havde tabt sin Magt, kun Erindringen om den bevaredes i et mildt Skær, der udbredte sig over Landskabet. Naturen aandede friere. Søen var stille, blank som et Speil. Blegdammens hyggelige Bygninger speilede sig i Vandet, som et langt Stykke ud var mørkt som Metal. Stien og Bygningerne paa den anden Side belystes af afmægtige Solstraaler. Himlen var klar og reen, kun en enkelt let Sky gled ubemærket hen over den, bedst at bemærke, naar man fæstede Øiet paa Søen, over hvis blanke Pande den forsvandt. Intet Blad rørte sig. – Det var hende. Mit Øie har ikke bedraget mig, om end den grønne Kaabe har gjort det. (EE1, 320–321)

Johannes' diary repeatedly expresses the ambivalence of the aquatic element. A special study should delve into it, which cannot be accomplished here,[22] but a couple of other examples can be mentioned. On 3 August, just after he has got engaged with Cordelia, Johannes writes that he would be delighted to enjoy her as sea, both transparent and profound ("gjennemsigtig som Havet og dog dybsindig som dette"; EE1, 365). And in the last, undated section of his diary, written in August and September, Johannes compares his love for Cordelia, his future "bride", and the anxiety it creates, with the white flower *nimphæa alba*, which rests on the water surface, but has its roots in the dark depths (EE1, 411).

5 Walls, Interiors and Exteriors

On 19 May, a few days after spotting Cordelia for the second time, Johannes finally finds out her name. It happens on the street, while he is acting with the typical gesture of a flâneur:

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21 The lakes are still there today, now situated in central areas of the city – not as rural as once, but still offering a natural, open space within the cityscape.

22 An interesting analysis is in Winkel Holm 1997, 17–20, 165–170, and Winkel Holm 2008, 503–513.

> Jeg kjendte hende allerede langt borte, hun gik med to andre Piger paa venstre Fløi. […] Jeg stod paa Gadehjørnet og læste Placaten, medens jeg bestandigt holdt Øie med min Ubekjendte. De toge Afsked med hverandre […]. Da hun var gaaet et Par Skridt, kom der een af de unge Piger løbende efter hende og raabte høit nok til at jeg kunde høre det: Cordelia! Cordelia! […] Jeg fulgte efter. De gik ind i et Huus ved Stranden. (EE1, 325)

Exact Copenhagen toponyms are a formal mark of *Forførerens Dagbog*. This house, where Cordelia's girlfriends live, as Johannes will eventually find out, is located at Stranden, along the central canal in front of the royal Christiansborg Palace. Sometimes, though, places are fictional and cannot be identified, as in the case of Cordelia's home (Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 210). When Johannes discovers, on 21 May, during his by now methodic trailing on the streets, that Cordelia lives in a house that appears to be too close to the city fortifications, he gets annoyed again (EE1, 327). That solitary position does not allow a public pathway from which he can spy on her without being noticed. For the same reason, he feels that he cannot resort to the pedestrian pathway on the walls, frequently used by the inhabitants of Copenhagen, and by Kierkegaard among them (Tudvad 2004, 294–296).

Inside the walls, near the walls, on the walls and just outside the walls. Even in Copenhagen as depicted in *Forførerens Dagbog*, one can perceive the impact of that marker of urban architecture, which had shaped Copenhagen for two centuries, but would survive the age of Kierkegaard only for a short time. The author died in 1855, and in the second half of the 1850s the demolition of the fortifications started. This was done to expand the city, build new districts and broad roads, green areas and areas for entertainment, in short: to make the city more functional for mobility and the exchange that would be needed in the coming industrial age (Hyldtoft 1996; Lind 1996). The destruction of those architectural barriers occurred in most European towns before and after Copenhagen. Spurr sees it as a symbol, a breakthrough of modernity, a "dismantling of hierarchies in every sphere of modern life", producing a "modern crisis of meaning" (2012, 26; see also Pattison 1999, 4–7).

From 7 June to 3 July, Johannes' notes are undated (EE1, 338–350). A new phase begins, as he has managed to gain access to Cordelia's home, where the orphaned girl lives with her aunt. The seducer, who is a master manipulator, uses the young man Edvard as his unwitting helper. Unlike Johannes, Edvard cannot control his emotions and is clumsily and unhappily in love with Cordelia. By pretending that he is an intimate friend of Edvard's, Johannes follows him to Cordelia and her aunt's place. He joins in polite conversations with the elderly woman about farming, food prices and the like, while he is secretly amused at how Edvard succeeds in nothing but arousing Cordelia's awareness of being desired. The bourgeois interior dominates in this part of the diary (EE1, 336–343), and Johannes depicts it with a biting irony and comic effects. It is an original adaptation of basic patterns in the Don Juan myth, whereby the trickster, defying moral and social norms, does not mind seducing a

friend's bride.[23] The neat Biedermeier scene of parlour conversations over a cup of tea stands in stark contrast with the inner, rebellious thoughts Johannes reveals in the secret diary, where he mocks friendship, engagement, marriage and social norms:

> Hos Tanten gjør jeg fuldkommen min Lykke, […] men dog føler hun [Cordelia] altfor meget det Oprørske i min Existens.
>
> […] [D]et er en solid og grundig og opbyggelig Conversation, lige forædlende for Hoved og Hjerte. Jeg vender i Almindelighed Ryggen til Theebordet og til Edvards og Cordelias Sværmeri, jeg sværmer med Tanten. (EE1, 338–339)

After a time of indoor seclusion, however, Johannes must get out and walk around. On a Sunday, he is drawn to the summer breeze. In a long, undated, daydreaming passage, the excited seducer follows the zephyrs through streets, squares and places of Copenhagen, and addresses them, offering the reader a panoramic view of central Copenhagen. His feet – or his daydreams, or both – take the Don Juan flâneur through Kongens Nytorv, Store Kongensgade, the fortifications at Nørreport, Østergade, Bredgaden, Langelinie and finally Højbro Plads (EE1, 343–348). The wind in the streets of Copenhagen is a common occurrence (Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 215), and here it is another sign of the sense of place. Furthermore, the streets are full of people, and the passage offers an extraordinary depiction of the town as a crowded public space. It is an irreverent digression in which the seducer and flâneur tries to follow the unpredictable winds, which are as excited and impatient as he is. He asks them to caress and ruffle the young girls, and annoy the strolling engaged couples, who are boringly heading to marriage. The monotony of dull and long engagements is ridiculed with reference to the spatial dimension, again by mentioning the toponym *Langelinie*, where engaged couples in Copenhagen stroll:

> Ja en Forlovelse har virkelig i Almindelighed ogsaa meget tilfælleds med lange Linie […]. Det er et Par, der er bestemt for hinanden. Hvilken Taktfasthed i Gangen, hvilken Sikkerhed i den hele Optræden, bygget paa gjensidig Tillid, hvilken harmonia præstabilita i alle Bevægelser, hvilken suffisant Grundighed. […] Jeg vedder paa, deres Livs-Anskuelse er denne: Livet er en Vei. Og til at gaae med hinanden under Armen gjennem Livets Glæder og Sorger, synes de ogsaa bestemte. De harmonere i den Grad, at Damen endog har opgivet Fordringen paa at gaae paa Fliserne …. Men, I kjære Zephyrer, hvorfor have I saa travlt med det Par? Det synes ikke at være værd at lægge Mærke til. Skulde det være noget Særledes at bemærke? …. dog Klokken er halv to, afsted til Højbroplads. (EE1, 347–348)

23 Don Juan with duchess Isabela and duke Octavio in *El burlador de Sevilla* (Tirso de Molina 1630, 81–85, 134–135). Molière's Dom Juan has married Done Elvire, whose brother Dom Carlos he respects (Molière [1665], 748–756, 773–774). Don Giovanni in disguise has raped Donn'Anna, Don Ottavio's betrothed, and they are both friends of Don Giovanni's (Da Ponte and Mozart [1787], 7–13, 28–35, act one, scene one to three, scene eleven to fourteen).

Since Tirso, a disruptive view on ethical bonds and social norms, particularly engagement and marriage, has gone through the Don Juan myth. Molière, Shadwell, Richardson and Laclos have added a cynical and intellectual self-consciousness in the seducer (Menascè 1986, 1–28, 66–77; Watt 1996, 90–137). Kierkegaard adds a new trait by bringing in his sense of place and space, as seen through the eyes of a Copenhagen flâneur, and by constructing his novel in chronotopical terms.

6 The Town as a Social Space Based on Discourse

In another important essay, Bachelard suggests that the common human activity of daydreaming (*rêverie*) is the seed of poetic production, which can transform the material world into images (1960). Faithful to his approach, Bachelard separates this poetic commitment from any relation to the real world of history and society, which I find a limit, given that Kierkegaard, through Johannes, is a poet, but, as such, also a keen observer of society in the urban space (Brandes [1877], 156). The passage of *flânerie* and *rêverie* inspired by the zephyrs – which may seem to be just descriptive and digressive – is a masterpiece of erotic, socially disruptive observation of the public sphere of the polis: it is political in its own right. In *Forførerens Dagbog*, urban space does not only correspond to a material and architectural artefact. It is also a crowded social scene where different voices, viewpoints and accents interweave – a plurality and multilingualism that the writer can mould to his artistic purpose. As Bakhtin notes, a social variety of voices, registers and languages is essential for discourse in the novel (1981, 259–422).[24] The narrator's irreverence towards the pre-established harmony of engagement and marriage – and towards the general hypocrisy behind the moral façade, whereby sexual intercourse before or outside marriage does occur but is unspoken – is conveyed through an ironic use of the others' words and opinions in the social sphere, either in direct speech or in free indirect speech. Another example is a later *rêverie*, which takes place in August or September (the entry is undated). It describes Johannes' Sunday visit to Fredriksberg Have (EE1, 400–402). It is a large park just outside the town and a popular green area for inhabitants of Copenhagen of all social classes, both then and now.[25] Here, the flâneur mocks the patriotic emphasis borrowed from contemporary social discourse, notably from the author and priest N.F.S. Grundtvig (Cappelørn and Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret 1997, 229). Johannes does so, to praise the 'army' of the Danish housemaids (*Tjenestepiger*), the most beautiful in Denmark:

24 Bakhtin's seminal essay "Discourse in the Novel" was written in 1934–35.

25 Fredriksberg is still an independent municipality (*kommune*), although it is undoubtedly part of Copenhagen, and today a quite central area of it.

> Overhovedet det Mandfolk, der ikke har Sands for Tjenestepiger, han taber mere derved, end disse tabe. Tjenestepigernes mangfoldige Skare er virkelig den skjønneste Væbning, vi have i Danmark. […] Naar man da saaledes turde imødesee en ønskelig Opblomstren af Tjenestepigernes Klasse, vilde dette ikke atter virke gavnligt paa Døttrene i vore Huse? Eller er det for dristigt, naar jeg ad denne Vei øiner en Fremtid for Danmark, der i Sandhed kan kaldes mageløs. Naar det blot maatte forundes mig selv at blive samtidig med dette Gyldenaar, da kunde man med god Samvittighed anvende hele Dagen til at gaae omkring paa Gader og Stræder og fryde sig ved Øiets Lyst. (EE1, 400–401)

The social space of Copenhagen, with its voices and languages, is admittedly fundamental for Kierkegaard's authorship. Through the voice of one of the co-authors of *Stadier paa Livets Vei* (1845), the pseudonymous character Frater Taciturnus, Kierkegaard has expressed, in the final part of the book, his love for Copenhagen, and for the language spoken there. It is a long and memorable passage, which can only be quoted in short parts here, and otherwise summarised (Kierkegaard [1845], 448–451; Garff [2000], 294–299). Some of its remarkable qualities are the perception of Copenhagen as a still manageable urban space – not as huge and hectic as Paris, which, by contrast, is depicted as the disquieting, anonymous big city of the dawning modernity.[26] Furthermore, the passage reflects a perception of urban space as socially and spatially constructed through discourse, composed by language(s), voices and accents of people:

> Saaledes forstaaer jeg mig selv. Nøiet med det Mindre […], er jeg glad ved Tilværelsen, glad ved den lille Verden, der er min Omgivelse. Nogle af mine Landsmænd mene vel, at Kjøbenhavn er en kjedelig By og en lille By. Mig synes den tvertimod, forfrisket af det Hav, ved hvilket den ligger og uden selv i Vinteren at kunne opgive Bøgeskovens Erindring, at være det lykkeligste Opholdssted, som jeg kunde ønske. Stor nok til at være en større By, lille nok til, at der ingen Torvepriis er paa Mennesker […]. (Kierkegaard [1845], 448)

This passage is followed by the critical comparison with the inhuman pace of life in Paris, where everything and everyone has a price. In Copenhagen, on the contrary, you can find deeper joys for free, just by observing and listening to the rich variety of people in town, and learning from them:

> […] [S]aaledes gaaer man blandt Folkemængden, forundret over Sprogets vidunderlige Gave, river nu et, nu et andet Udtryk af i Forbigaaende, glæder sig derved og bliver ikke utaknemlig nok til at glemme, hvem man skylder det; saaledes gaaer man mellem Menneskenes Mængde, seer nu en Yttring af en Sjelstilstand, nu en anden, lærer og lærer og bliver kun mere lærebegjerlig. (Kierkegaard [1845], 449)

26 Pattison puts forward interesting reflections about the fact that Kierkegaard's Copenhagen was not Paris, but Paris foreshadowed the future of Copenhagen and all the other big cities of modernity (1999, 5–16, 21–37).

Finally, and consequently, comes the (truly) patriotic declaration of love for the Danish language, its richness, subtlety, variety and sound:

> Nogle af mine Landsmænd mene, at Modersmaalet ikke skulde være dygtigt til at udtrykke vanskelige Tanker. Dette synes mig en besynderlig og utaknemlig Mening […]. Jeg føler mig lykkelig ved at være bunden til mit Modersmaal, […] bunden fordi det har været mig en Umulighed at lære noget andet Sprog […], men ogsaa glad ved at være bunden til et Modersmaal, der er riigt i indre Oprindelighed, naar det udvider Sjelen, og lyder vellystigt i Øret med sin søde Klang […]. (Kierkegaard [1845], 450)

This passage is a declaration of prose poetics, which supports the kind of aesthetics expressed by the daydreaming digressions in *Forførerens Dagbog*, and by the overall concept of this urban novel.

7 Provisional Conclusions

In order to understand Kierkegaard's *Forførerens Dagbog* as an original literary work, it is important to consider the traditions it encompasses. It contributed to the rise of the bourgeois novel in Denmark during the first half of the 19th century. It combines intimacy and modern subjectivity, employing autobiographical first-person forms such as the diary and the letter, with an exploration of the outside world, the town of Copenhagen with its architecture and space, as well as its natural surroundings. The flâneur's gaze, the viewpoint of the novel, epitomises the fascination with urban signs and their readability.

In terms of chronotopical patterns, it is important that the action of the novel unfolds during the warmer and brighter half of the year, from April to September, to allow the interplay of bourgeois interiors and urban exteriors in the strategies of the detecting, observing and strolling seducer. The town of Copenhagen offers the flâneur an exciting experience of readability of signs, but the 'text' of the town is very dense, as Copenhagen was already crammed and constricted within its city walls in the 1830s and 1840s. When Johannes meets Cordelia, a new interplay between interior and exterior becomes necessary. Her uncommon human qualities and depth require a detachment from the urban and bourgeois 'stage' and roleplay, and thus even beyond the city walls. Pattison suggests that this move is aimed at staging Cordelia's leap from the limited to the infinite (1999, 66); another facet is that the emotional response she awakes in Johannes is connected to the elements, in particular to water – both obscure and transparent, dangerous and life-giving, rough and calm, chaotic and harmonious. The rural but in fact liminal and already urbanised areas near Copenhagen on the island of Sjælland, with their lakes, streams and woods, can offer the proper setting, starting from Søerne (The Lakes) and the

Fredriksberg Gardens – just outside or not far from the city walls and already a part of the town life – to quieter and more remote spots in the countryside and in the woods, where Johannes can stage his seductions, both the occasional ones with girls of the lower classes and his 'perfect', final seduction of the special girl Cordelia. Even in this chronotopical respect we can observe Johannes' existential anguish: the exterior spaces, closer to the elements, do not lead him to authenticity. He uses authenticity as just another stage, according to his "method of transmuting reality into image" (Pattison 1999, 12); it is the perfect, fully controlled setting for the aesthete, a repetition of the same whereby no difference is given between interior bourgeois constraint and exterior natural freedom.

Johannes is a flâneur who acts as a seducer, and *Forførerens Dagbog* actualises the tradition based on Don Juan, confirming some of its central traits: individualism for good and bad (a stubborn pursuit of one's goals, but also an egotism that becomes a prison of the Self), and a behaviour that, regardless of social and ethical-religious norms, unmasks their hypocrisy through a provoking, if not outrageous, use of sex. *Forførerens Dagbog* contributes to the process of intellectualisation of the Don Juan figure, which can be traced from Molière to the libertine or rake in British Restoration comedy, and to European 18th-century novels, such as *Clarissa* and *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. The novels address what they view as aristocratic vice and contrast it with bourgeois virtue. These Don Juan and libertine characters are self-conscious and reflective; they develop a creed of seduction and a set of strategies. In particular, Johannes drives reflectiveness to a form of aesthetic perfection. Such characters thus differ from the immediate and unreflective seducer, as initially conceived by Tirso de Molina in the early 17th century, actualised by Mozart and Da Ponte as opera in the late 18th century.

The success of *Don Giovanni* revitalised the Don Juan tradition across Europe. It also inspired 19th-century writers, but in different directions (Larsen 1974, 128–145; Menascé 1986, 78–104, 157–178; Watt 1996, 210–218). Byron's poem, with its mock-heroic, satirical and picaresque mood, thoroughly denies the fear of sex as sin, which is at the core of the Christian Don Juan myth. In contrast, E.T.A. Hoffmann's short story "Don Juan" ([1813]) initiates a romantic revival according to which the seducer is a tormented, suffering soul, who yearns for the absolute. This romantic Don Juan will eventually find redemption through the love of a self-sacrificing woman in later 19th-century versions (Spanish playwright José Zorrillas' *Don Juan Tenorio* was published in 1844, one year after *Enten – Eller*).[27] Even the readers of Johannes, an

27 Already Molière's Done Elvire chases Dom Juan, because she tries in vain to redeem him and is still in love with him (Molière [1665], 715–717, 723–726, 764–776). The motif is developed in *Don Giovanni* (Da Ponte and Mozart [1787], 58–60, 76, 87–89, act two, scenes three, fourteen and 18). In the essay "Skyggerids", A examines Donn'Elvira's love-hate feelings towards Don Giovanni (EE1, 187–199).

unreliable narrator, can sense that he is tormented behind the mask of his self-proclaimed perfection, and that he, as much as Richardson's Lovelace, is a sensitive spirit who denies his own humanity. But can someone else, Cordelia in his case, save him if he does not choose to break out of his circle? Here, I think, the specific quality of *Forførerens Dagbog* must be understood, both as an independent novel and in connection with the broader architecture of *Enten – Eller* in which the novel is included (Brandes [1877], 126–129; Dewey 1995, 171–174, 177–181, 198–199).

What anticipates and prepares *Forførerens Dagbog* in A's papers and essays in *Enten – Eller*, part one, both as a network of themes and motifs and as a general mood of fragmentation, anxiety and creativity? What kind of answers do B's papers in *Enten – Eller*, part two, offer to the point of no return for the aesthetic man, represented by Johannes' diary? The conclusions of this article must be regarded as provisional. A following article will address this second part of the inquiry, considering the relationship between literature and architecture from another perspective, reconnecting *Forførerens Dagbog* to the structure of *Enten – Eller* as a literary-philosophical work, built around an aesthetic existence, and the possible choice to embrace an ethical one.

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