

Annemarie van Stee

Faith in a Rational Age: A Dialogue with Climacus

Abstract: Johannes Climacus has been invited to address a 21st century, largely secular audience on the topic of religious faith and its (ir)rationality. Climacus refuses to lecture, but in the dialogue that ensues, his views become clear. This article is my transcript of the meeting as it unfolds. Climacus finds himself confronted with contemporary theoretical positions regarding the (ir)rationality of faith as well as with real-life cases such as a touchy-feely type of spirituality and religiously inspired terrorism. In response, he clarifies his idea of faith as subjective truth, revealing the criteria he uses to distinguish faith from pseudo-faith. Throughout, the lively dialogue shows the enduring relevance of Climacus' thought.

On the left side of the stage a lectern, behind which an Organizer (O) of the lecture series. On the right side two chairs behind a table, on which two microphones. One chair is empty. Johannes Climacus (C) sits in the other, looking bewildered. A room full of spectators, approximately 60.

O: Welcome, Johannes Climacus. It is a great pleasure to have you here with us this afternoon, especially since you have not appeared in public for such a long time. We have invited you to speak about religious faith and the rationality or irrationality of it. Having grown up outside of religious traditions, living in a Western-European society with a thoroughly secular public domain, comprehending religious faith does not come natural to us. Having been educated as scientists and philosophers, we have so far found it impossible to understand how people allow themselves to believe something they do not have objective evidence for. We know that worldwide, as well as in certain parts of our own society, religion remains a force to be reckoned with. Yet it seems utterly incomprehensible to us. We hope you may provide some much-needed understanding.

Ladies and gentleman, as we are sure you are aware, Johannes Climacus is widely known for having made one of the most original and provocative contributions to thought on religious faith. Author of *Philosophical Fragments* and the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, he is

Annemarie van Stee, Leiden Institute for Religious Studies, Leiden University, PO Box 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, The Netherlands, a.van.stee@hum.leidenuniv.nl

not the Syrian saint you come across upon first googling his name, but one of the pseudonyms of Søren Kierkegaard, the Danish author of the 19th century. A good indication of the impact of Climacus' thought on subsequent philosophers is the fervor with which they have reacted: Johannes, you came highly recommended by many, but shunned as a fideist by others. The term to unlock the secrets of religious faith is apparently "subjective truth," a term that sounds oxymoronic to us and that we hope to hear more about today. We gladly give the floor to you, Johannes Climacus.

Polite applause. The Organizer steps down from the lectern and takes the other seat. He motions that it is Climacus' turn to stand behind the lectern, but Climacus seems glued to his chair. The Organizer whispers to Climacus, who shakes his head. The audience starts to mumble, until Climacus finally speaks.

C: I know etiquette dictates that I should thank you for your kind introduction, but I cannot pretend to be thankful about being introduced as if I were some assistant professor. You are correct about my name and the titles of my books, but otherwise you are definitely mistaking me for someone else. I feel as if you put a wig on my head that is not mine and are now identifying the wig instead of me.¹ Academic gatherings are not my thing at all, as you would have known, had you read my book. [*addressing the audience*] Ladies and gentlemen, I am most definitely not an authority when it comes to religious faith. All I have aimed for in my work was to think through some of the difficulties involved in becoming a Christian. More broadly, I have been thinking through the difficulties involved in being an individual existing human being. Not for once have I dreamed of actually having arrived at being a Christian, or for that matter of being finished with the task of becoming myself. There are so many things that I do not know. Christian faith is much beyond me. Thinking through the difficulties is what my contribution has been. I am not capable of making this easy, and for that reason amongst others I am wholly unsuitable to speak here today.²

What you want is an assistant professor. He would tell you all to look up the definition of subjective truth in the *Postscript*. And to make sure that you are all on the same page, he would also read it out aloud: "Here is such a definition of truth: *An objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness, is the truth, the highest truth there is for an*

1 SKS 7, 70 / CUP1, 69.

2 SKS 7, 560–566 / CUP1, 617–623.

existing person.”³ Then he would proceed to explain the separate terms one by one, give an example here and there, and you could all feel cozy and comfortable and your thoughts could occasionally drift off to what you will have for dinner this evening and return to the lecture as they saw fit. This is what you need: an assistant professor, not me.

I wonder if instead of my lecturing to you, you could enlighten me a little bit about that society of yours. I found your introduction most intriguing. Tell me: what do you mean when you say that you grew up outside of religion? And what do you mean when you say you cannot comprehend how people can believe something they do not have evidence for?

O: Well, our parents did not raise us with any form of religion. We were not brought up to be Christians or Muslims or Buddhists. We never went to religious gatherings. Naturally, we come across religious stories occasionally, biblical ones mostly, but they sound old-fashioned and foreign to us.

C: Were you baptized?

O: No, we were not.

C: Most interesting! So child baptism is no longer widespread?

O: Not like before, no. Worldwide, however, many people are still religious. Even in our own country, groups of people remain religious. We find this strange, to be honest. As researchers, we know we should take it seriously as a phenomenon to investigate, but at the same time more and more evidence is found against religious hypotheses. We do not know if you have heard, but the biblical creation story and the related idea that the earth has been around for 6000 years only have both been ruled out by the data and replaced by big bang and evolution theories. More and more evidence points against the truth of religious beliefs. Why people keep on thinking they are justified in believing like they do is hard to understand. There does not seem to be anything rational about their faith.

C: Hmm.

O: Previously in this lecture series, we had Richard Swinburne speak to us about the cumulative evidence in favor of the theistic claim that God exists; evidence based mostly on the existence of the universe and of natural laws in it.⁴ For another lecture, we invited Alvin Plantinga, who argued that such evidence cannot be found, but that it can nevertheless be rational to believe, as “God exists” is something Plantinga called a “properly basic belief.”⁵

³ SKS 7, 186 / CUP1, 203.

⁴ Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press 2004 [1979].

⁵ Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, New York: Oxford University Press 2000.

Everything hinged on the quality of our cognitive faculties apparently. It was a very difficult lecture to understand, especially since our own cognitive faculties, which seem to be functioning perfectly fine if we may say so ourselves, have not produced any form of theistic belief. The week after that, Herman Philipse contributed a lecture, and he claimed that neither Swinburne's nor Plantinga's strategy works and that it cannot be rational for someone to believe that God exists.⁶ We do not know what to make of all of this.

- C: Academic dabbling is what that sounds like, at best. Did these professors try to teach you, to convince you of their theories? Did they wear handsome professor suits and stand behind that lectern, delivering their speech with emphases in all the right places, the occasional pause full of suspense, so that people could not help but admire their erudition and think to themselves they might get a similar suit?
- O: What do you mean? Of course they tried to convince us of their theories. [*C smiles to himself.*] Then we had empirical scientists telling us about how natural it is for people to believe in God and other non-physical agents, given the way human brains are wired.⁷ But all those facts about the brain did not seem to solve the issue as to whether religious people are justified in believing or just fooling themselves.
- C: Brains! Academics do find ever more exciting things to distract themselves with from the questions that truly matter.
- O.: How on earth can people believe something for which there is a lack of objective evidence? It just seems ridiculous.
- C: Ridiculous? As in comical? Oh absolutely not! Quite the contrary.
- O.: Well, that is why we invited you. Please explain to us what religious faith is according to you, and whether or not you think it is rational to believe.
- C: Right. I must say your situation is very different from 19th century Denmark. Back then everybody considered themselves Christians as a matter of course. They thought being a Christian was easy. They busied themselves with moving on and trying to understand Christianity objectively, to fit it into their Hegelian systems. You on the other hand seem anything but Christians as a matter of course. You acknowledge that you find it hard to comprehend Christianity. Baptism is no longer taken for granted. What potential! It all sounds like music to my ears. At the same time you did invite the other speakers in this lecture series...

⁶ Herman Philipse, *God in the Age of Science*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012.

⁷ E.g. Justin L. Barrett, *Why Would Anyone Believe in God?*, Lanham: Alta Mira Press 2004.

[*becoming less and less audible, increasingly talking to himself rather than addressing the organizer*] You are not in a world without Christianity in the way the pagans were. You search for the meaning of Christianity or even religious faith in general in the logical or empirical truth of propositions. You question Christianity by questioning the objective truth of propositions you derive from the Bible. Have you forgotten what it means to exist and what inwardness means to an even greater extent than my peers had? Or are you aware of existence, but just do not realize that faith is about exactly that and not about objectivity?

[*almost inaudible*] How can I speak to these people? I have always made things more difficult for my complacent fellow-Danes, but these people are already convinced faith is complicated, then go the wrong way in trying to understand it...

[*clear again*] Tell me, with all these changes, do people still love in your day and age?

O: I beg your pardon?

C: Do people still love in this day and age?

O: Of course we do, we are human!

C: I am glad to hear it. But I am not just talking about the butterflies turning up in your stomach in spring, when a beautiful girl walks by on a morning in March, and then again butterflies, for another whom you meet during your afternoon stroll in April. No, I mean falling in love and committing to it, when you do not even know yet whether your love will be reciprocated, without ever knowing whether it will last. Love before the certainty of marriage. Do people love like that?

O: What do you mean, the certainty of marriage? More than one in three marriages ends in divorce these days. One never has that certainty, whether before or during marriage. But presumably people still love, also in the way you mean. It is hard to say though. Of course before committing, one thinks about whether someone comes from a good family, has similar values. One thinks about the probability that it will last. At the same time, one can never be certain and has to choose whether or not to commit for the long haul.

C: [*chuckles*] One thinks about *someone*, does one? Are *you* married, Mr. Organizer, if you do not mind me asking?

O: Ehm...not to be nitpicky or anything, but it is *Dr. Organizer* actually. And yes, I am married, but what has that got to do with anything?

C: Do you love your wife?

O: [*uncomfortable*] I beg your pardon? This is hardly the time or place to discuss my private life I would say... [*suddenly firm*] Could we maybe go back to speaking about religious faith and the rationality or irrationality of it?

Also, this is supposed to be a lecture. Would you please stand at the lectern for the remaining twenty minutes?

C: No, *that* I could most definitely not. I know my place, and it is not at the lectern. We are simply having a conversation, and I am willing to entertain a thought experiment or two, but I will remain seated here, thank you. And I will come to faith in a moment. I have resolved a long time ago never to arrive too soon at it,⁸ and I want to say a few more things about love first. But I will not put you in an awkward position any longer. It is not much use asking you whether you love your wife anyhow. You would feel obliged to say yes in front of so many people, I presume, since just now was the first time you dared to say *I*.

I must say: you live in strange times. All the uncertainties are acknowledged I understand, even for marriage, and yet people have not drawn the conclusion that objective certainty is not to be found, and it is inward one should turn! Let us start from what you do understand: objective uncertainty. So, let us assume you truly love your wife. You cannot be sure to possess your beloved though, to possess her love, you cannot be sure that you possess it now, and even less so that you will possess it in the future. Do you agree?

O: Yes, definitely.

C: And exactly because of that, any decision to commit cannot be made indifferently. If you could be sure of your beloved, you could just draw the logical conclusion that you will stay together and you would not have to passionately commit to her. In fact, people cannot passionately appropriate objective facts. Mathematical propositions are the best example: exactly because their objective truth is so very obvious, the truth of mathematical propositions is also very indifferent.⁹ It is precisely because of the objective uncertainty of love that you have to make it your own through inward appropriation.

O: What do you mean by inward appropriation?

C: I mean that in the way you relate to yourself, in the way you relate to your life, you hold fast to your love. Your relation to your beloved becomes part of who you are.

O: Alright. I am beginning to understand I suppose. What does any of this have to do with religious faith though?

C: Calm down, we are almost there. We have now arrived at that definition of subjective truth I mentioned earlier. We are moving into your terrain, *Dr.*

⁸ SKS 7, 226 / CUP1, 249.

⁹ SKS 7, 186 f. / CUP1, 204.

Organizer. I will repeat that definition for you to hold on to. Subjective truth is “*an objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness.*”¹⁰ Before you get too comfortable though, be aware that this is not a piece of knowledge I am communicating. It is an existence-communication. It is a task. It is a way towards truth that you should follow.

O: And religious faith?

C: Well, the above definition of subjective truth is basically a paraphrasing of faith.¹¹

O: So faith is also objectively uncertain?

C: Not exactly. Rather, faith is the relation in which people can stand to what is objectively uncertain. Take belief in God for example. God’s existence cannot be proven. To think that people are still wasting good years of their lives on trying to prove the existence of God... But it does not surprise me, I suppose. Those arguments have always had such a learned quality about them, they have a tendency to impress people, and every time and place has people who would like to impress.

Consider the *a posteriori* argumentation for example. When I look at nature, I see just as much that troubles and disturbs as I see things that suggest omnipotence and wisdom. On this basis, I cannot conclude anything with certainty about God. The net result is objective uncertainty.¹²

O: That argument is called the design argument these days. We do not like it either. It is just not a sound intellectual option, given evolution theory. We did not invite any of the Intelligent Design people for our lecture series.

C: But you did invite professors developing *a priori* arguments. These arguments do not fare much better, however. In my days people argued about the necessary existence of God. Talking about oxymorons! Whatever exists has at some point come into existence. Coming into existence is a change. Whatever is necessary does not change, it has not at some point come into existence, it just is.¹³ Now if God is necessary, he cannot be said to exist. For then there would have been a moment when he did not exist and thus he would have been subject to change, but that would entail him not being necessary. As he is necessary, he cannot be said to exist in the ways that we know things (and people) to exist. We cannot say anything with certainty about God’s existence, except that it cannot be like the existence of anything we know.

¹⁰ SKS 7, 186 / CUP1, 203.

¹¹ SKS 7, 187 / CUP1, 204.

¹² SKS 7, 186 / CUP1, 203f.

¹³ SKS 4, 274 / PF, 74.

- O: I have to say these are intricate and difficult arguments. So God's existence is objectively uncertain just like love is objectively uncertain?
- C: Yes. But that first thing you said is also very important: these arguments sound difficult indeed. And exactly because of that you should distrust them. For in another way, they are all too easy, especially for those amongst us with philosophy degrees. I personally may be able to develop such an argument, but that does not mean I am any closer to becoming a Christian. On the contrary, busying myself with these arguments distracts me from the task of existing in faith. It is much harder to live Christianly than to abstractly and absentmindedly develop arguments about it. Much harder and yet: just as accessible for a maid servant as for some *Herr Professor*. Earlier, you mentioned a speaker in this lecture series of yours who developed an argument about the cumulative evidence in favor of the existence of God.
- O: Swinburne, yes.
- C: It is one of the worst disservices you can do to Christianity in my book: to attempt to make it probable.¹⁴ Faith does not follow automatically from facts, nor from probabilities. Faith cannot be strengthened by facts or probabilities. "Without risk, no faith!"¹⁵ It is exactly because of the fundamental objective uncertainty regarding God's existence that I can and must have faith. It means I have to actively hold fast to my faith in God. I need passion for that. And by inwardly appropriating my faith in God in this manner, my existence is transformed, which is what faith is all about. For faith to be possible, I need to remain aware that that to which I faithfully relate is objectively uncertain.
- In my times, my fellow-Danes did not manage this, by the way. They figured they were Christians as a matter of course. They did not passionately appropriate it. They did not transform their existence. They just got married in church, had their children baptized in church and were quite satisfied with themselves if they managed to attend church most Sundays, especially when they saw that the neighbors went less often.
- O: Alright, thank you for this explanation. I see there is a question in the audience [*points to a man who has his hand raised*]. Over there, yes, go ahead.

Audience member 1: What do you mean with existence being transformed by faith?

¹⁴ SKS 4, 292n / PF, 94n.

¹⁵ SKS 7, 187 / CUP1, 204.

- C: Well, for example, it requires an inward God-relationship to be able to see God everywhere in creation. It is not possible to see God in creation directly. Had he been something striking that can be perceived directly, like “a rare, enormously large green bird with a red beak,”¹⁶ then you would not have doubted his existence like you do. But neither would it have been possible for you to stand in a relation of faith to him. If you do relate to God with such passionate inwardness, however, it becomes possible to experience all of nature as God’s creation and to experience God’s presence in everything you encounter.¹⁷ Your existence is transformed in that way. Furthermore, someone who stands in this inward relation of faith to God presumably also shows this in his conduct. Nevertheless, as outsiders we can never be certain on the basis of some action alone that someone truly lives in faith, for an action that seems to have been done out of faith may also have been motivated by something else.¹⁸
- O: That may be a good bridge into the second question that we hoped you could address tonight: do you think religious faith is rational?
- C: What do you mean, rational?
- O: Rational as in rational, as in justified by reasons. Human beings are constantly engaged in the game of giving and asking for reasons. Just now you were talking about how difficult it is to establish, whether someone truly has faith on the basis of their actions. Are there reasons to be given that justify faith? I mean: can people justify their faith towards others by giving reasons for it?
- C: Your question sounds learned to me, and I am only a poor individual existing human being,¹⁹ not learned at all. Let me just try out some thoughts. First, if your question is, whether there are reasons that can justify faith, I would very much doubt that such reasons exist. If there are no objective facts that automatically lead to faith, if faith ultimately depends on the passionate appropriation of something, about which you can never be objectively certain, then of course this cannot be explained to everyone by means of arguments that are valid irrespective of the subject who encounters them. What is more, if someone lives in faith, why would he even *want* to justify his faith towards others? Closer to your life: if you love your wife, what good could it bring to you to try and justify your love by coming up with reasons? It cannot be done, but most of all: if you think you *need* reasons to

16 SKS 7, 222 / CUP1, 245.

17 SKS 7, 221–224 / CUP1, 243–247.

18 SKS 7, 69 / CUP1, 67.

19 SKS 7, 565 / CUP1, 621.

justify your love, you do not love! Likewise with faith: he who believes does not waste his time on defending his beliefs, he is happy to live by them, to live in faith, and to hold fast to the objective uncertainty.

[*hesitating*] That faith ultimately does not have a rational basis does not mean we cannot say anything about somebody else's faith though, if that was what you were trying to ask. Sometimes you can tell that someone does *not* live in truth. They may say that they realize all the uncertainty entailed by living this earthly life that is constantly in the process of becoming, and all uncertainty involved in faith; they may look grave when they say it; it may be a very solemn occasion when they say it; and yet they may show in their actions and in their way of speaking, that they do not understand it at all.²⁰ But the other way around, to be certain that someone actually *does* live in faith, that is impossible to ascertain. Most of all, we should scrutinize ourselves to see whether we truly live in faith or not. It is a dangerous illusion to conclude too quickly that you have arrived, when all existing is a life-long journey.

O: Thank you. I see there is another question.

Audience member 2 [*smiling friendly, receiving the microphone*]: I do not really have a question, but I just want to thank you, Johannes Climacus, for your explanations. I have always been under the impression myself that faith, or life for that matter, cannot be understood. We should stop rationalizing so very much and just listen to our heart. There is just so much that our understanding cannot understand, would you not agree? We should listen to our feelings, because they form the gateway to our inner child and to finding peace with the universe. Personally, I feel... [*keeps on talking, but cannot be heard anymore, the microphone seems to have been shut off*]

O: Right, thank you very much for this appreciative comment. Maybe we can move on to someone else, let us see...

C: No, that is most definitely not alright! [*mumbling*] Ai, to think that I have admirers these days, to think that I stand in an in-law relationship to these people²¹ [*sighs unhappily*]. [*louder*] I am afraid I have not been clear enough, since I see you have been able to hear what you wanted to hear instead of what I intended to say. First of all, please do not grin at me in admiration like that. I am not in a position to truly explain, for that would imply I can live by the thoughts I am considering. It would imply I am a Christian

²⁰ SKS 7, 85 / CUP1, 86; SKS 7, 157 / CUP1, 170.

²¹ SKS 7, 9 / CUP1, 5.

and even in my weakest, most arrogant moments I do not dare to think that I have come that far.

As for reason: we need our understanding very much, sir! I suppose that is yet another approach to the question of the rationality of faith, would you not agree Dr. Organizer? We need our rational faculties constantly, to ensure that it is an objective uncertainty we are relating to. It is true that faith is beyond reason, but we need our reason to ensure *that* our faith is beyond reason. We need our reason to ensure that we do not mistakenly pretend that we are relating to objective facts, because then we would not be risking anything, and, like I said, without risk no faith.²² It is also reason that prevents us from believing nonsense.²³ Our reason needs to constantly remind us that it is objectively uncertain what we are relating to, for us to be able to remain in faith.²⁴ [*mumbles to himself again*] Or even paradoxical, even absurd, but I am not sure that is the right thought experiment for most of you right now, for these times of yours.

Audience member 3 [*jumping up, grabbing the microphone*]: Without risk no faith? And *subjective* truth that you *passionately* appropriate? You have got to be kidding me! You sound like your ideal believers would be those Muslim suicide terrorists that blow themselves up in busses full of people or crash planes into skyscrapers. By focusing on subjectivity you have to allow for everything! Talking about irrationality!

O: Thank you. That was not quite a question, but it does address the issue of the rationality of faith in an important way. I agree, Johannes, that up until now you have discussed two takes on rationality. First you said that no definite reasons can be given to justify or ground faith. Secondly, you explained that our rational faculties are in fact very much involved in faith. To ensure that faith is beyond reason we need our understanding to guarantee that what we believe in is in fact something the truth of which cannot be decided by reason. That is, it should neither be an objective truth nor an objective untruth (nonsense I believe you called it), but an objective uncertainty. Am I correct?

C: Well yes, apart from the fact that you make it sound like a theory.

O: That then seems to provide us with a criterion to distinguish between cases of faith and pseudo-faith. For, thirdly, claims of irrationality are also often

²² SKS 7, 187 / CUP1, 204.

²³ SKS 7, 516 / CUP1, 568.

²⁴ SKS 7, 187 / CUP1, 204.

made when there is a suspicion that *anything* goes, that there is no way to distinguish between true vs. false or good vs. bad forms of faith. By dismissing cases that do not hold fast to objective uncertainty you have introduced a criterion and thereby...

- C: Thirdly? You speak like an academic article. Are you an assistant professor by any chance, dear Dr. Organizer?
- O: [*looks up briefly, frowns, continues on his train of thought*] I guess when you discussed your fellow Danes, who thought they were Christians as a matter of course, who did not see the difficulties, who did not passionately relate *et cetera*, I suppose you introduced a criterion there, too. Faith requires passion in your book, disinterestedness will not do. However, Climacus, this makes the case this audience member brings to the fore all the more interesting. For these violent believers relate to their God, whose existence is objectively uncertain, and do so in possibly the most difficult and definitely a very passionate way: they give their lives for their God and take other people's lives in the process. With your focus on passionate appropriation and on faith making a difference to your existence, you seem to condone or even applaud them!
- C: Well, if you put it like that I can address that case. But what was that man going on about? Muslim suicide terrorists? Skyscrapers? Planes? Does he mean airplanes? Are you telling me humans are capable of flying???
- O: Oh yes. And much more. We can talk about that later. We do not have too much time left though, so maybe you could answer the question first?
- C: [*chuckles*] We are rushing to get through the arguments, are we? These are not academic arguments though, remember. This is an existence-communication: I am imaginatively thinking through the task that existence in general and faith in particular presents to all of us, individually. Such a task lasts as long as life lasts. If you feel like rushing, I wish you good luck!
- Regarding those, ehm, suicide terrorists that you referred to: they may be similar to the medieval crusaders. The crusaders were so certain that they were Christians that they moved on to defend Christianity against the Turks. They employed violence and thought they were defending Christianity. It is the most dangerous illusion of all to be so certain of being a true believer that you direct your attention outwards to defend it against others.²⁵ Like I said, the task of existing is never completed as long as you live. Keep-

25 SKS 7, 552 / CUP1, 608.

ing yourself in faith, holding fast to objective uncertainty with all the passion of inwardness will therefore give you plenty to do as long as you live.²⁶

- O: That sounds like a take-home message to me. Johannes Climacus, thank you very much for being with us today and for sharing your thought on faith and its rationality.
- C: [*laughing*] Once you think that you have come anywhere close to understanding all of this, and not to understanding it as theory, but as existence-communication, then you may bring me back by whichever miraculous means you got me here in the first place. I will be happy to shake you out of that complacency when the time comes by presenting you with Religiousness B and the absurd paradox of the incarnation. The Danes of my day and time needed that from the start because they were on the inside of faith, or so they imagined, and they thought that believing was easy. They never saw the objective uncertainty and never did start to relate passionately and inwardly to their beliefs. Many of you are on the outside, thinking faith is hard to comprehend and you are right about that!
- O: I am glad we got at least something right in your eyes.
- C: I cannot believe you actually got me talking to you. Ladies and gentlemen, may I remind you that none of what I have been saying I pretend to understand? I am only a poor individual existing human being, nothing more.²⁷ [*starting to mumble to himself*] I have been talking for much too long. How come this happens to me all the time? Like that time in the *Postscript*... It seems I always feel the need to add an appendix... [*becomes completely inaudible*].
- O: Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the organizers, I want to thank you for being here this afternoon. Johannes Climacus has told us how in his view Christian faith does not have a rational basis, as the existence of God cannot be proven. What is more, he argued faith cannot have such an ultimate rational basis as it requires passionate inward appropriation, which can only be attained with respect to what is objectively uncertain. Nevertheless, Climacus argues that faith is far from wholly irrational. People of faith employ their rational faculties to ensure that what they believe in is objectively uncertain and not fact or nonsense. Furthermore, Climacus also identified cases of pseudo-faith, for example when a God-relation lacks passionate inwardness, as for the Danes of his own time, or at the very least inwardness, as in the case of terrorists. Last but not least, Climacus kept on repeating

²⁶ SKS 7, 158n / CUP1, 170 f.n.

²⁷ SKS 7, 565 / CUP1, 621.

none of this is theory to be learned. Instead, faith is a task that does not end until life ends. And on that note, this meeting ends. Thank you again for being here, I wish you all a safe journey home.