



## ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ

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### **SØREN KIERKEGAARD'S LANGUAGE: SEMANTIC FIELDS OF METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN *THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH***

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This article presents a classification of those artistic devices that the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard uses in his work *The Sickness unto Death*. We will talk about such figures of speech as metaphor and simile. This classification arose as a result of the translation and analysis of the treatise since its careful study showed that these stylistic devices are not single and random means of expression designed to decorate or diversify the text, but an integral part of Kierkegaard's philosophical thinking, which is characterized by figurativeness and concreteness. Kierkegaard blames modern philosophers for abstract thinking divorced from reality, and to present his ideas he chooses a figurative language replete with concrete comparisons since he sees it as his task to consider the real problems of human life. This classification is based on the division of artistic devices not according to their type, but according to their semantics. Each group of devices is a “semantic field” from which Kierkegaard drew metaphors and comparisons for a more precise and at the same time more figurative description of his views. The article considers the nine most common semantic fields, while in *The Sickness unto Death*, there are more than twenty of them. Since metaphors and comparisons are an integral part of Kierkegaard's text, a careful study of them is very important both for philosophers who want to penetrate deeper into the concept of the Danish thinker, and for translators who seek to convey the author's original text as accurately as possible. Thus, the main task of the presented classification is to approach the understanding of the concept of “despair” through those figurative characteristics that Kierkegaard endows them with.

**Keywords:** Søren Kierkegaard, despair, the sickness unto death, semantic fields, metaphor, simile.

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard stands out markedly from other European philosophers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His uncompromising and determined outlook on reality made him a lonely and unaccepted thinker, whose contribution to culture was truly appreciated only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But he can be regarded as an outstanding thinker not only thanks to his revolutionary views, which were ahead of their time, that is, not only thanks to the content of his works, which was undoubtedly an unusual and fresh word in philosophy but also thanks to the forms in which he embodied his thoughts, that is, thanks to the vivid and figurative language of his works.

Indeed, Kierkegaard's language is distinguished by picturesqueness and a large number of rhetorical devices, which are more characteristic of literary works than of philosophical treatises. Kierkegaard's works are, in their style, closest to the works of the Jena romantics, who saw it as their task to combine philosophy and poetry<sup>1</sup>. As a philosopher, Kierkegaard opposed the romantic or, as he called it, aesthetic position in life, arguing that it makes a person unhappy. But as a writer, he absorbed the stylistic tendencies of his time, and being undoubtedly talented and gifted with a subtle linguistic sense, he brought these tendencies to a certain perfection. Speaking of the style of his works Søren Kierkegaard can be called an heir of Romanticism, and a very rich one. If the Jena romantics only managed to develop the concepts of irony, fragments, unity of philosophy and poetry, etc., then Kierkegaard brought their ideas to life, creating truly romantic works that combined artistic and philosophical features, and using the method of indirect communication, which was based on the key principle of romantic philosophy, namely irony. As a result, to use the words of the German philosopher Robert Heiss, Kierkegaard created "a masterpiece of romantic poetry" [Heiss, 1963, S. 231].

These words of Robert Heiss refer to the book *Either-Or* (1843), but this characterization can be applied to other works of Kierkegaard as well, namely to *Repetition* (1843) and *Stages on the Way of Life* (1845). These three works best correspond to the romantic idea of the unity of philosophy and poetry. Philosophical reasoning in them is dressed in a

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<sup>1</sup> As Friedrich Schlegel wrote: "Poesie und Philosophie sind ein untheilbares Ganzes, ewig verbunden, obgleich selten beysammen" ("Poetry and philosophy are an indivisible whole, they are eternally connected, though they are rarely found together") [Schlegel, 1799, S. 21].

literary form, they have characters, a storyline, not to mention truly artistic forms of expression, so it is difficult to attribute these books to any particular genre and say with certainty what exactly they are — novels or philosophical treatises. Their specificity lies in the fact that they undoubtedly are both at the same time.

But what seems to be even more interesting is that those works of Kierkegaard, in relation to which there is no doubt that they are philosophical treatises, also adopt the same artistic style of narration that is characteristic of the above-mentioned “romantic” works. Simplifying, we can say that the philosophical and the poetic in Kierkegaard’s style can be mixed in different proportions, and in different works one of the two ingredients predominate. But in those works where the philosophical ingredient noticeably predominates, we still can see the presence of the poetic, namely a wide variety of stylistic devices, such as metaphor, simile, polysemy, repetition (figures of addition of different types), parallelism (antithesis and antimetabole) and others. This article will consider two types of these devices, viz. metaphors and similes, and show how Kierkegaard uses them in order to express his philosophical ideas in his famous treatise *The Sickness unto Death* (1849).

Text analysis of this treatise shows that the metaphors and similes in it are not just an artistic device designed to decorate or diversify the text. Their purpose is to express the thought as accurately as possible. As Kierkegaard himself assured, the style of the work was the last thing he worried about, the content had always been in the first place. He wrote in one of his journals: “Taking care of style really came later... since anyone with genuine thoughts has form from the start” [Hannay, 2013, p. 391]. These words indicate that artistic devices in Kierkegaard’s texts have a fundamental semantic significance. The fact that he had “form from the start” suggests that some of his thoughts originally existed as images, metaphors, or similes. Therefore, these images are inseparable from the thoughts themselves. Kierkegaard, whose main claim to modern philosophy was its isolation from reality, was a thinker who was concerned not with abstract questions of the being, but with the real problems of human life. Therefore, it can be said that his figurative way of expression, full of metaphors and similes taken from the sphere of real life, was a direct consequence of his concrete thought, which has life and reality as its subject.

Besides, it should be noted that Kierkegaard resorts to metaphors and similes not in rare cases, but regularly. If you write out from *The Sickness unto Death* all the fragments containing at least one of these two devices, then, according to very rough estimates, these fragments will make up at least six percent of the entire text. This seems to be quite a large number, even for a literary work. It is safe to say that none of the argumentations in this book are done without at least one metaphor or simile, and in many cases, it is with the help of them the author gives definitions to his concepts.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that metaphors and similes in Kierkegaard's texts are more than just artistic devices. Their goal is to penetrate deeply into the problem and reflect reality as accurately as possible. Therefore, careful consideration and certain analysis of them will help us to understand better this author's philosophical views.

It should be noted that many authors have written about the important role of metaphor in Kierkegaard's philosophical text. Probably the first one was Theodor Adorno who in his work *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* (1933) distinguished between two types of metaphors in Kierkegaard's writing: the "pure" or "abstract" metaphors, and the "literal metaphors" which are also called "objective images" [Adorno, 1989]. Of the more recent works, one can mention *Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling: A Metaphorical reading* of Jonathan Hayes [Hayes, 1996], Jamie Lorentzen's *Kierkegaard's Metaphors* [Lorentzen, 2001], and an article *The Metaphor of the Wound in Søren Kierkegaard and Miguel de Unamuno: the Importance of Suffering in Authentic Existence* by Jan E. Evans [Evans, 2010]. Relying on Paul Ricoeur's metaphor theory Hayes investigate metaphors of journey and silence as they are found in *Fear and Trembling*. Lorentzen regards metaphor as a key principle of the whole Kierkegaard's writing and traces how the role of metaphor changes at the three "stages on life's way", the esthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Evans discusses the similarities and differences between Kierkegaard's and Unamuno's understanding of suffering, the metaphor of which is wound. What all these works have in common is that they are philosophical studies, that consider metaphor not so much as an artistic device, but as a method of philosophizing. They understand metaphors rather as philosophical concepts and aim to clarify their meaning. This approach is undoubtedly justified in relation to Kierkegaard's writings. However, it also seems undoubted that a purely linguistic study of

this subject is capable of shedding light on some subtle issues of Søren Kierkegaard's philosophy. The author of this article did not find any linguistic study on metaphors in the texts of Kierkegaard, and this is precisely what is the subject of this article.

In this article, I will present a classification of the metaphors and similes that Kierkegaard uses in order to describe his concept of "despair" in *The Sickness unto Death*. But first, it must be said that these two devices will be combined later in the text under the same concept of metaphor. The point is that in this context the distinction between metaphor and simile is not so important, moreover, this distinction is sometimes difficult to make, since both devices are often used together in the same fragment and perform the same function in the Kierkegaard's treatise.

This classification below divides metaphors into groups that will be called semantic fields since the items of these groups are united by a common semantic context. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the semantic theory of metaphor, and in particular Eva Kittay's book *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* [Kittay, 1989]. In this book author maintains that metaphor effects a transference of meaning, not between two terms, but between two semantic fields. A semantic field is not just a set of terms grouped on a semantic basis, but also the relations between these terms, relations that govern a term's literal use. In a metaphoric use, these relations are projected into another semantic field. Thus, metaphors work not on the similarity of the terms from two semantic fields but on the similarity of the relations between the terms.

Developing this idea, we can say that for a deeper understanding of the literal thought of the author (in our case, this is Kierkegaard), it will be useful to study his metaphors, because, as already mentioned, the metaphor ("transference") is possible because the relationship between the terms of one semantic field is similar to the relationship between the terms of another. To explain how the relations in the first group are arranged, he refers to the relations of the second. For example, Kierkegaard often compares the relationship between God and man to that between father and son. That is, speaking about the spiritual spheres of human life (let's call it an abstract semantic field), he uses metaphors from practical real life (let's call it concrete semantic fields) and thus makes the abstract and spiritual more concrete and accessible for understanding. In general, he uses metaphors for the same purpose as, according to George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, we use them in our everyday life: as a

tool that makes possible to comprehend abstract things with the help of what people know about their physical and social experiences [Johnson, Lakoff, 1980].

So, below I will consider the main types of semantic fields from which Kierkegaard draws metaphors to clarify his concept in *The Sickness unto Death*. In total, more than twenty such fields can be distinguished in this treatise, but I will consider only the most common ones.

1. The first and most common field of metaphors is “**Sickness and death**”. The very title of the treatise is such a metaphor. “The sickness unto death” is a biblical metaphor that means spiritual sickness and spiritual death, that kind of sickness from which the soul dies. This disease is despair. And the whole treatise is built as an unfolding of this thesis. Therefore, comparisons of various mental states of a person with illnesses (and with death, or vice versa, with health) are a common rhetorical device in this work. Kierkegaard explains the difference between the literal and metaphorical meaning of “death”:

*I christelig Terminologi[er]Døden Udtrykket for den største aandelige Elendighed, og Helbredelsen dog just at døe<sup>2</sup>.*

‘In the Christian terminology **death** is the expression for the greatest spiritual wretchedness, and yet the **cure** is simply to die’<sup>3</sup>.

That is, physical death is the cure for spiritual death. **Death** “in the Christian terminology” is a metaphor for “spiritual wretchedness”. This metaphor can be called the basic metaphor of the treatises.

Further, Kierkegaard also uses specific names for diseases as well as various painful conditions and symptoms, for instance:

*den kolde Brand i Fortvivlelsen*  
‘the **cold fire** in despair’

The English translation, in this case, does not convey the pun, since “Koldbrand” in Danish means “gangrene”.

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<sup>2</sup> All quotations are given with the original spelling and according to the edition of Søren Kierkegaard Forskningscenteret [Kierkegaard, 2006].

<sup>3</sup> Here and below English translation of Edna H. Hong and Howard V. Hong [Kierkegaard, 1983].

...som naar Den, der lider af *Svimmel*, ved et *nerveust Bedrag* taler om en Tyngde paa Hovedet, eller om at det er som faldt der Noget ned paa ham o. S. V.

‘...pretty much as when a man who suffers from **vertigo** talks with **nervous self-deception** about a weight upon his head or about its being like something falling upon him, etc.’

*Det er ikke med det ikke at være fortvivlet som med det ikke at være **halt, blind** o. d.*

‘The thing of not being in despair is not like not being **lame, blind**, etc.’

The last two examples are similes, but they are carried out as a continuation of the general metaphor of sickness (which is why I noted above that in this article I will not distinguish between metaphors and similes).

Further, Kierkegaard uses in a metaphorical sense some actions associated with illness:

*Hvert Øieblik han er fortvivlet, **paadrager** han sig det [Sygdommen].*  
‘Every instant the man in despair is **contracting** it [the sickness].’

Besides, he uses the metaphorical concept of health — as the opposite of sickness. If despair is sickness, then health is faith, for, according to Kierkegaard, faith is the opposite of despair:

*Dette er Troens **Sundhed**, der løser Modsigelser.*  
‘This is the sound **health** of faith which resolves contradictions.’

This semantic field also includes the metaphorical use of the opposition “death-life”, which again means the spiritual state or self-perception of a person:

*Men han kalder sig fortvivlet, han betragter sig selv som **død**, som en Skygge af sig selv. Død er han dog ikke, der er, om man saa vil, endnu **Liv** i Personen. Dersom saaledes Alt pludselig forandredes, alt det Udvortes, og Ønsket opfyldtes, saa **kommer der Liv i ham igjen**, saa reiser Umiddelbarheden sig atter, og han begynder **at leve paa en frisk**.*

‘But he calls himself “in despair”, he regards himself as **dead**, as a **shadow** of himself. But dead he is not; there is, if you will, **life** in the characterization. In case everything suddenly changes, everything in the outward circumstances, and the wish is fulfilled, then **life enters into him again**, immediacy rises again, and he begins **to live as fit as a fiddle**.’

2. The second semantic field of metaphors is “**Body**”, which includes different functions of body such as vision, sleeping, respiration, and even natural bodily functions. As examples can be given the following extracts:

*Instinkt-mæssigt **seer hun iblinde** klarere end den **meest seende** Reflexion, instinkt-mæssigt **seer hun**, hvor det er hun skal beundre, hvad det er, hvori hun skal hengive sig.*

‘Instinctively she **sees blindly** with greater clarity than the most **sharp-sighted** reflection, instinctively she sees where it is she is to admire, what it is she ought to devote herself to.’

The most common function used in the metaphoric sense is breathing:

*At bede er ogsaa at **aande**, og Muligheden er for Selvet hvad Surostoffet er for **Aandedrættet**.*

‘So to pray is to **breathe**, and possibility is for the self what oxygen is for **breathing**.’

*Derimod føler han ikke sjældent Trang til Eensomhed, det er ham en Livsfor-nødenhed, stundom som det **at aande**, til andre Tider som det **at sove**.*

‘On the other hand, he often feels a need of solitude, which for him is a vital necessity — sometimes like **breathing**, at other times like **sleeping**.’

Breathing is a function most closely associated with life. So, Kirkegaard often uses this metaphor together with the metaphor from the first semantic field (such “mixed” metaphors which belong to two or more semantic fields we will see further almost in every group of metaphors):

*Naar En **besvimer**, saa raaber man Vand, Eau de Cologne, Hoffmanns-draaber; men naar En vil fortvivle, saa hedder det: ‘skaf Mulighed, skaf Mulighed’, Mulighed er det eneste Frelsende; en Mulighed, saa **aander** den Fortvivlende igjen, han **lever** atter **op**; thi uden Mulighed kan et Menneske ligesom ikke **faae Veiret**.*

‘When one **swoons** people shout for water, Eau-de-Cologne, Hoffman’s Drops; but when one is about to despair the cry is, “Procure me possibility, procure possibility!” Possibility is the only saving remedy; given a possibility, and with that the desperate man **breathes** once more, he **revives again**; for without possibility a man cannot, as if were, **draw breath**.’



Here we can see that despair is compared to swoon, and saving from despair is compared to regaining of breath and returning to life.

3. The third semantic field is “**Language**”. Kierkegaard often uses as metaphors terms from various branches of linguistics: grammar, phonetics, stylistics, etc., and compares certain spiritual phenomena with the process of writing and book printing. This suggests that language and writing, being the most important part of his life, were also a constant subject of his reflection. I will give only one, but very interesting example:

*Man kan ogsaa ganske in abstracto sige: **paalImperfectum følger Perfectum**. Men dersom i Virkelighedens Verden en Mand deraf vilde slutte, at det fulgte af sig selv og fulgte strax, at et Værk, han ikke fuldendte (**imperfectum**) blev fuldendt: saa var han dog vel gal. Men saaledes ogsaa med Syndens saakaldte Position, naar det **Medium**, hvori den poneres, er den rene Tænkning; det **Medium** er meget for flygtigt til at det kan blive Alvor med Positionen.*

‘One can say also in abstract that **the perfect tense follows the imperfect**. But if in the world of reality a man were to infer that it followed by itself and followed at once, that a work he had not completed (**the imperfect**) became complete (**the perfect**) — he surely would be crazy. But so it is too with the so-called “position” of sin when **the medium** in which it is posited is pure thinking; that **medium** is far too unstable to insure that this assertion that sin is a position can be taken seriously.’

I have taken only two sentences from a long paragraph in which Kierkegaard, by comparison with grammatical tense and the voice of verbs, shows the difference between abstract philosophical thinking and real life. Kierkegaard sneers at the Hegelian way of thinking, in which all processes are regarded as self-actualizing. That is what he means by the metaphorical phrase “the perfect tense follows the imperfect”: it is only in the abstract world that actions are accomplished (perfect tense) on their own. By “medium” Kierkegaard means middle voice, which is the form of verb that means an action that is intermediate between active and passive voices. And again, Kierkegaard uses this term as a metaphor for “pure thinking”, which is “too unstable” to be a real action because it is neither active nor passive.

4. The next semantic field of metaphors we will discuss is “**Children**”. Kierkegaard often compares the immediate person (which includes, for example, an aesthetic and a pagan) to a child:

*Æsthetisk-metaphysisk honoreres det som et Tegn paa en dyb Natur at fortvivle om Syndernes Forladelse, omtrent som hvis man vilde ansee det for Tegn paa en dyb Natur hos et **Barn**, at det er **uartigt**.*

‘Aesthetic-metaphysically it is honored as a sign of a deep nature that one despairs of the forgiveness of sins, pretty much as if one were to regard it as a sign of a deep nature in a **child** that it is **naughty**.’

Quite often this metaphor is used with its opposite — **Adults**.

*Saaledes er Forholdet mellem det naturlige Menneske og den Christne; det er som Forholdet mellem et **Barn** og en **Mand**: hvad **Barnet** gyser for, det anseer **Manden** for Intet at være.*

‘Such is the relation between the natural man and the Christian; it is like the relation between a **child** and a **man**: what the **child** shudders at, the **man** regards as nothing.’

Kierkegaard illustrates the various relationships in the spiritual sphere of human life through the relationship between children and parents:

*Det er med Muligheden som naar man indbyder et **Barn** til en eller anden Glæde; **Barnet** er strax villigt, men nu gjælder det, om Forældrene ville tillade det — og som det er med **Forældrene**, saaledes er det med Nødvendigheden.*

‘A case analogous to possibility is when a **child** is invited to participate in some pleasure or another: the **child** is at once willing, but now it is a question whether the **parents** will permit it — and as with the **parents**, so it is with necessity.’

I would also like to give two interesting examples of “mixed” metaphors. The first one is a mixture of two semantic fields: **language** and **children**. Talking about the immediate man, Kierkegaard compares this man’s self, which lacks subjectivity, with the dative case (in opposition to the subjective case), and with child speech:

*Endog begjerende er dette Selv **et Dativ** som **Barnets** mig.*

‘Even in desiring, the self is in the **dative case**, like the **child** when it says “me” for I.’

Another example is a mixture of three semantic fields: **language**, **body**, and **children**.

*Dersom man vilde sammenligne det at løbe vild i Mulighed med **BarnetsVokaliseringen**, saa er det at mangle Mulighed som det at **være stum**. Det Nødvendige er som lutter **Konsonanter**, men for at **udtale** dem maa der Mulighed til.*

‘If one will compare the tendency to run wild in possibility with the efforts of a **child** to enunciate words, the lack of possibility is like **being dumb**. Necessity is like a sequence of **consonants** only, but to **utter** them there must in addition be possibility.’

Here again, we can see a comparison with child speech: to have only possibilities, and not even one necessity, is like to be a baby, who can utter only vowels (*vokalisere*; English translation ‘enunciate’ is not correct); and to have only necessity is vice versa to use only constant sounds, that is to be dumb. So, there are three semantic fields in this metaphor: speech (physical function), child, and phonetics (linguistics).

5. Another common semantic field in *The Sickness unto Death* is “**Game**”. Game is often used as a metaphor for a frivolous attitude to life, for example, among philosophers:

*Det er ikke christelig Heroisme, at narres med det rene Menneske, eller **lege Forundringsleg** med Verdenshistorien.*

‘It is not Christian heroism to be humbugged by the pure idea of humanity or to **play the game** of marveling at world-history.’

Or, again, among immediate men, who “live with far too little consciousness of themselves”:

*De **lege** saa at sige med i Livet, men de opleve aldrig det at **sætte Alt ind paa Eet**.*

‘They take a hand in the **game** of life as it were, but they never have the experience of **staking all upon one throw**.’

The game immediate men playing in is the opposite of the believer’s game, since the believer:

*...har uendeligt **at tabe**. De umiddelbare, de barnlige eller barnagtige Mennesker have intet Totalt **at tabe**, de **tabe og vinde** bestandigt blot i det Enkelte, eller det Enkelte.*

‘...stands **to lose** infinitely. The immediate men — the childlike or the childish — have no totality **to lose**, they constantly **lose and win** only the particular thing and in the particular instance.’

And in conclusion, I will again give an example of a mixed metaphor. Continuing to reveal the nature of immediacy, Kierkegaard compares it with an error of speech or with a child’s game. Thus, we can see three semantic fields: **children**, **language**, and **game**:

*Det er ved en, om man saa vil, uskyldig Misbrug af Sproget, en Leeg med Ord, ligesom naar Børnene lege Soldat, at der i Umiddelbarhedens Sprog forekomme saadanne Ord som: Selvet, Fortvivelse.*

‘It is, if I may say so, by an innocent **misuse of language**, a **play upon words**, as when **children play** at being soldiers, that in the language of immediacy such words as the self and despair occur.’

6. The sixth semantic field we will consider is “**Crime and punishment**”, which, apart from crimes such as theft and murder, also includes such metaphors as confinement, lawsuit, and some juridical term. For example, Kierkegaard calls suicide:

**Forbrydelse mod Gud**  
‘**crime against God**’

And more potentiated despair, which is sin, he calls by analogy with a qualified crime:

“**qualificeret**” Fortvivelse  
“**qualified**” despair’

Speaking ironically about his time and contemporaries, Kierkegaard compares a person who has spirit with a criminal, since it is customary to punish only criminals with solitude, i.e., imprisonment:

*I vore Tidens Bestandig-Selskabelige gyser man i den Grad for Eensomhed, at man (o, ypperlige Epigram!) ikke veed at bruge den til Andet end til Straf for Forbrydere. Dog det er sandt, det er jo i vore Tider en **Forbrydelse** at have Aand, saa er det jo i sin Orden, at Saadanne, Eensomhedens Elskere, komme i Classe med **Forbrydere**.*

‘In the constant sociability of our age people shudder at solitude to such a degree that they know no other use to put it to but (oh, admirable

epigram!) as a punishment for criminals. But after all it is a fact that in our age it is a **crime** to have spirit, so it is natural that such people, the lovers of solitude, are included in the same class with **criminals**.<sup>7</sup>

Another interesting metaphor is “the judicial report” that is used in the context of guilt before God and God’s judgment:

*Ved Hjælp af Samvittigheden er det saaledes indrettet, at **Rapporten** strax følger med enhver **Skyld**, og at den **Skyldige** er Den, der selv maa skrive den.*

‘By the aid of conscience things are so arranged that the **judicial report** follows at once upon every **fault**, and that the **guilty** one himself must write it.’

7. The next field of metaphors can be called “**Fighting and revolt**”. It combines various comparisons with struggle or protest, as well as terms of military science. Kierkegaard often uses such verbs as “at kæmpe, at stride, at oprøre” (“to struggle, to fight, to revolt”) and such nouns as “Slag” and “Kamp” (“battle” and “struggle”). For example:

*Men dette er den eneste Maade, paa hvilken Umiddelbarheden veed at **stride**.*

‘But this is the only way immediacy knows how to **fight**.’

*Synden selv er Fortvivlelsens **Kamp**.*

‘Sin itself is the **struggle** of despair.’

A very important metaphor in this semantic field is the metaphor of victory and victor, referring to the believer. Already in *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard calls the true believer “en Troens Ridder” (“a knight of faith”), thus endowing him with such qualities as courage, determination, and strength. A believer fights for his faith like a noble knight fights against his opponents. In *The Sickness unto Death* Kierkegaard continues this metaphor and says that the believer fights not as a defender but as an assailant:

*Men nu det Christelige! Ja Den, der **forsvarer** det, han har aldrig troet paa det. Troer han, saa er Troens Begeistring — ikke et **Forsvar**, nei, den er **Angrebet**, og **Seieren**; en Troende er en **Seierherre**.*

‘But now for Christianity! Yea, he who **defends** it has never believed in it. If he believes, then the enthusiasm of faith is... not **defense**, no, it is **attack** and **victory**. The believer is a **victor**.’

As an example of a mixed metaphor, I'd like to give a fragment where Kierkegaard compares one form of despair with “a slip of the pen” that “revolt against the author”, which is obviously a metaphor from two semantic fields: **language** and **revolt**:

*Det er, for at beskrive det billedligt, som hvis der for en Forfatter indløb en **Skrivfeil**, <...> som hvis nu denne **Skrivfeil** vilde gjøre **Oprør** mod Forfatteren.*

‘It is (to describe it figuratively) as if an author were to make a **slip of the pen**, <...> as if this **clerical error** would **revolt** against the author.’

8. The next semantic field of metaphors we will talk about is “**Politics**”. At some point it is concerned with the previous field, namely with “revolt” (so we can regard this metaphor as belonging to both semantic fields), since Kierkegaard several times in the text of *The Sickness unto Death* refers to the so-called March Revolution of 1848 — a series of events that led to the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Denmark. Based on the context, it can be concluded that Kierkegaard was not among those who supported the protest and the change of the state system:

*Qualitets-Forskjellen mellem Gud og Menneske pantheistisk (først fornemt speculative, siden **pøbelagtigtpaa Gader og Stræder**) er hævet.*

‘The qualitative distinction between God and man is pantheistically abolished — first speculatively with an air of superiority, then **vulgarly in the streets and alleys**.’

*En **Konge** giver en friere **Forfatning** — og det veed man nok, hvad det betyder, “det var han nok nødt til”.*

‘**Aking** grants a freer **constitution** — and one knows well enough what that means, “He pretty well had to.”’

The political metaphor of “a king” and “revolution” is also found in another context, where Kierkegaard gives characteristics to a despairer:

*Denne absolute **Hersker** er en **Konge uden Land**, han **regjerer** egentligen over Intet; hans Tilstand, hans **Herredom** underligger den Dialektik, at i ethvert Øieblik **Oprøret** er Legitimitet.*

‘This **ruler** is a **king without a country**, he **rules** really over nothing; his condition, his **dominion**, is subjected to the dialectic that every instant **revolution** is legitimate.’

That kind of despairer who wishes despairingly to be himself does not control his own life, and at any moment reality can turn against him, that is, arrange a revolution.

Another simile Kierkegaard uses several times is the comparison of the relationship between God and man with the relationship between the king and the subordinate, for instance:

*Dersom jeg tænkte mig en fattig **Dagleier** og den mægtigste **Keiser**, der nogensinde har levet <...>*

‘If I were to imagine to myself a **day-laborer** and the mightiest **emperor** that ever lived <...>’

9. The last semantic field that I would like to give as an example is “**Building**”. This metaphor seems to be a very important one since Kierkegaard describes with its help the condition in which most people live:

*Dersom man vilde tænke sig et **Huus**, bestaaende af **Kjælder**, **Stue** og **første Sal**, saaledes beboet, eller saaledes indrettet, at der var eller det var beregnet paa en **Stands-Forskjel** mellem Beboerne i hver **Etage** — og dersom man vilde sammenligne det at være Menneske med et saadant **Huus**: saa er desto værre dette **Sørgelige** og **Latterlige** de fleste Menneskers Tilfælde, at de i deres eget **Huus** foretrække at boe i **Kjælder**en.*

‘In case one were to think of a **house**, consisting of **cellar**, **ground-floor** and **premier étage**, so tenanted, or rather so arranged, that it was planned for a distinction of rank between the dwellers on the several **floors**; and in case one were to make a comparison between such a **house** and what it is to be a man — then unfortunately this is the sorry and ludicrous condition of the majority of men, that in their own **house** they prefer to live in the **cellar**.’

By “cellar” Kierkegaard means “determinants of sensuousness”. People forget that they are spiritual beings and, developing Kierkegaard’s metaphor, do not go up from the cellar to the floors, that is, they do not rise from the definitions of feelings to the definitions of spirit. It is noteworthy that practically the same applies to philosophers. They claim to be dealing with spiritual matters, but from Kierkegaard’s point of view, they nevertheless do not live in their own house either, as long as their “building” (a system) has nothing to do with the life:

En Tænkер **opfører en uhyre Bygning**, et System, et hele Tilværelsen og Verdenhistorien o. s. v. omfattende System — og betragter man hans personlige Liv, saa opdager man til sin Forbauselse dette Forførdelige og Latterlige, at han selv ikke personligen beboer dette **uhyre, hoithvælvende Pallads**, men en **Ladebygning** ved Siden af, eller et **Hundehuus**, eller i det Høieste **Portnerleiligheden**.

‘A thinker **erects an immense building**, a system, a system which embraces the whole of existence and world-history etc. — and if we contemplate his personal life, we discover to our astonishment this terrible and ludicrous fact, that he himself personally does not live in this **immense high-vaulted palace**, but in a **barn** alongside of it, or in a **dog kennel**, or at the most in the **porter’s lodge**.’

This article presented a classification of metaphors and comparisons used by the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard in his treatise *Sickness unto Death*. Figures of speech have been classified according to their semantics so that each classification group represented a semantic field from which Kierkegaard drew metaphors and similes. The article considered the nine most common semantic fields which, of course, do not include the entire stylistic diversity of the treatise. Nevertheless, I hope that the examples presented in the article give a sufficient idea of the nature of Kierkegaard’s thoughts and language.

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**ЯЗЫК СЁРЕНА КИРКЕГОРА: СЕМАНТИЧЕСКИЕ ПОЛЯ МЕТАФОР  
И СРАВНЕНИЙ В ТРАКТАТЕ «БОЛЕЗНЬ К СМЕРТИ»**

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В данной статье представлена классификация тех художественных приемов, которые использует датский философ Сёрен Киркегор в своей работе «Болезнь к смерти». Речь пойдет о таких фигурах речи, как метафора и сравнение. Данная классификация возникла в результате перевода и анализа этого трактата, поскольку его внимательное изучение показало, что эти стилистические приемы являются не единичными и случайными средствами выражения, призванными украсить или разнообразить текст, а неотъемлемой частью философского мышления Киркегора, для которого свойственны образность и конкретность. Киркегор упрекает современных философов в абстрактном мышлении, оторванном от реальности, и для изложения своих идей избирает образный язык, изобилующий конкретными сравнениями, поскольку видит своей задачей рассмотрение реальных проблем человеческой жизни. Данная классификация построена на разделении художественных приемов не по их типу, а по их семантике. Каждая группа приемов представляет собой «семантическое поле», из которого Киркегор черпал метафоры и сравнения для более точного и одновременно более образного описания своих взглядов. В статье рассмотрены девять наиболее часто встречающихся семантических полей, тогда как в «Болезни к смерти» их насчитывается более двадцати. Поскольку метафоры и сравнения являются неотъемлемой частью текста Киркегора, их внимательное изучение представляется весьма важным как для философов, желающих глубже проникнуть в концепцию датского мыслителя, так и для переводчиков, стремящихся как можно точнее передать оригинальный текст автора. Таким образом, основная задача представленной классификации — приблизиться к пониманию концепции отчаяния через те образные характеристики, которыми их наделяет Киркегор.

**Ключевые слова:** Сёрен Киркегор, отчаяние, болезнь к смерти, семантические поля, метафора, сравнение.

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