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Colton's "Repetition and the Fullness of Time: Gift, Task, and Narrative in Kierkegaard's Upbuilding Ethics" (Book Review)

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**Repetition and the Fullness of Time: Gift, Task, and Narrative in
Kierkegaard's Upbuilding Ethics,**

by Randall G. Colton. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2013.
193 pp. \$30.00. ISBN 9780881464627

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Randall G. Colton is a professor of Philosophy at Cardinal Glennon College of Kendrick Seminary in St. Louis. He holds a PhD from Saint Louis University and has published in the *International Kierkegaard Commentary* and *The Thomist*. In the last thirty years narrative's central role in ethics have gained in prominence. Randall G. Colton in *Repetition and the Fullness of Time: Gift, Task, and Narrative in Kierkegaard's Upbuilding Ethics* draws on the thinking of Kierkegaard, especially how his writing addresses gift, task, and narrative. He argues that Kierkegaard's writings have pedagogical or "upbuilding" aims.

In the first chapter the author discusses the concepts of gift and task and the role they serve in Kierkegaard's narrative ethics. Colton suggests that Kierkegaard relied on narrative art forms because of the "usefulness of narratives for showing the contours of human life and for displaying the activity of virtue or vice" (p. 8). He thinks that the concepts of gift and task can illustrate the role that narrative played in Kierkegaard's thought. The author observes, "according to Kierkegaard, our existence – our life as choosing agents – begins with a gift, a beginning point we do not provide for ourselves" (p. 21). Another chapter examines Kierkegaard's *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* to discover how reading Kierkegaard can facilitate the developing of virtue.

Repetition and the Fullness of Times addresses the important topic of narrative ethics. Colton shows how the writings of Kierkegaard can be useful to developing virtue in the reader and he addresses the objections of critics of narrative ethics. This book is recommended to readers interested in Kierkegaard or narrative ethics.