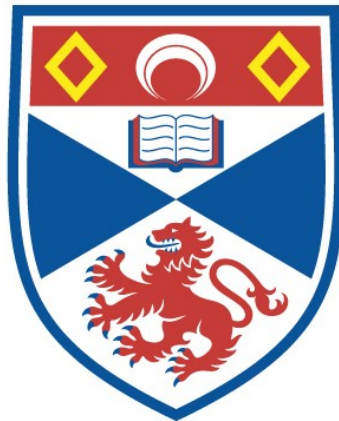


**A DEVELOPED DESCRIPTION OF THE
KIERKEGAARDIAN ART OBJECT**

Scott Koterbay

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



1998

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*A Developed Description
of the
Kierkegaardian Art Object*

University of St Andrews
School of Art History

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They never taught anyone to sing, a hymn by William Slothrop, centuries forgotten and out of print, sung to a simple and pleasant air of the period. Following the bouncing ball:

There is a Hand to turn the time,
Though thy Glass today be run,
Till the Light that hath brought the Towers low
Find the last poor Pret'rite one . . .
Till the Riders sleep by ev'ry road,
All through our crippl'd Zone,
With a face on ev'ry mountainside,
And a Soul in ev'ry stone . . .

Now everybody-

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*

We fear nothing.

Pol Pott, Cambodia

My deep and most abiding gratitude has to be extended to the following: my parents, without whose support this would never have been started so many years ago, nor ever finished, and the rest of my immediate family: Paul and his wife Sharon, Amy, and Dan; Paul Crowther, who has been inspirational; Todd and Jean; Martin Kemp; Christine Lodder; Simon Shaw-Miller; Peter Suchin; Peter Humphreys; Graham Smith; all of the rest of the School of Art History, St. Andrews; Annika and Miriam Ivarson; Cliff McMahon; Caroline Weidemann; Andrew Whiston and Sarah; Stefano and Rachel Gambro; the various members of the Association of Art History in the UK; Tony Maude; Bruce Kirmmse; Robert Perkins and Sylvia Walsh; Scotty Macleod and Janice; Dave Tate; Peter George; Robert Bantens; Laveda Raof; John Cleverdon; Sandra Lee; Leigh Coxwell; Lee Hoffmann; Marquis, my cat (who has always maintained any sense of ethics that I have not been able to stomach), and Bailey (who was always better at epistemology than I was); Baldie, Eldon Dugan, Sara, Reggie, and Kim; Kristie From; Brian O'Neil; Patrick Armstrong; and all of my students at the University of South Alabama (well, not all of them).

Each one, and so many others (apologies to those forgotten- its late, and you know how long I've been working on this), have been instrumental in supporting me, and keeping my spirits up. My eternal thanks.

Most importantly, though, I want to thank Rachel Quave and Dawn Waddell. Rachel for her inspiration, her lively discussions, and her example as a dedicated and brilliant student, which allowed me to continue and to finish, when I had nearly ceased to have hope that this day would ever come. Dawn for so many, many, many things. Perhaps one word could sum it all up- patience.

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The following is a list of the abbreviations used throughout this thesis. Any exceptions which might be noted are in reference to additional translations and are indicated thusly within the text.

- Adler* *Fear and Trembling and The Book on Adler*,
Lowrie,
W. (trans.), (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).
Specifically references "The Book on Adler" .
- CA* *Concept of Anxiety, The*, Thomte, Reidar
(trans.),
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- Crisis* *Crisis in the Life of Actress and Other Essays*
on
Drama, Crites, Stephen (trans.), (New York:
Harper
and Row, 1967).
- CUP* *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to*
Philosophical
Fragments, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.),
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- E/O I* *Either/Or Volumes One*, Hong, H. and Hong, E.
(trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University
Press,
1987).
- E/O II* *Either/Or Volumes Two*, Hong, H. and Hong, E.
(trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University
Press,
1987).
- EPW* *Early Polemical Writings*, Hong, H. and Hong, E.
(trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University
Press,
1990). This is a reference to the essay "From
the
Papers of One Still Living" unless otherwise
noted.
- FSE* *For Self-Examination and Judge For Yourself*
Hong,

- H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
- FT *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
- JP *Journals and Papers*, Vols. 1-7 (Volumes 1-6 and Index), Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967-78), and *Papirer*, Vols. 1-20, Heiberg, Kuhr and Torsting, (København: Gyldendal, 1909-1948).
- The manner of identifying references in Kierkegaard's journals and papers follows a specific internationally accepted method, based on the Danish edition and the editing conventions of the translation. The references appear within the thesis as volume number of the English edition, entry number of the English edition, entry identification of the Danish edition, and date.
- JY *For Self-Examination and Judge For Yourself*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
- PA *Present Age, The*, Dru, A. (trans.), (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962).
- PF *Philosophical Fragments and Johannes Climacus*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). All references are to *Philosophical Fragments* unless otherwise indicated.
- PV *Point of View, The*, Lowrie, W. (trans.), (London: Oxford University Press, 1939).
- R *Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, Hong, H. and

- Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
- SUD *Sickness Unto Death, The*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).
- TA *Two Ages*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).
- WL *Works of Love*, Hong, H. and Hong, E. (trans.), (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962).

Introduction

Kierkegaard's philosophical focus is the development of the individual, a development that leads to a particular form of existence that is concerned with itself and its relation to its ontological grounding within the framework of the Christian religion. Within this focus, one can discern a passing interest in other areas. One of these is art.

Discussing art within the framework of Søren Aabye Kierkegaard's philosophical writing poses a number of problems, but it is a rich source of material for an existential investigation of the nature of the art object. His writing provides a variety of positions which entangle any interpretation into a series of conflicting statements, but a careful reading of Kierkegaard's work produces an aesthetic unified enough to be established as a singular affirmation of the value of the art object to the single developing individual.

To this date, Kierkegaard has not been truly considered as a source of writing on art. One only has to take the example of Taylor in *Journey to Selfhood* as an indication of this, who writes:

[Stephen] Crites provides an excellent account of Kierkegaard's aesthetic theory in relation to Hegel's position... I have benefited greatly from [his] two essays and have drawn on them in formulating my interpretation of Kierkegaard's aesthetics. Another study of considerable importance is Theodore Adorno's *Kierkegaard: Konstruktion des Aesthetischen*... Adorno's analysis effectively relates Kierkegaard's notion of aesthetics to his general understanding of aesthetic existence.¹

While this statement contains references to different issues, Taylor writes nothing else, nor continues comment on Crites' research. Taylor is an excellent scholar, but symptomatic of the Kierkegaard world as a whole. Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object is ignored except in the most superficial sense. My own research shows that Kierkegaard's work is rich with potential,

¹Taylor, *Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship*, p. 98

questions the interpretative silence of Kierkegaardian scholarship, and affirms a new definition of the art object, one informed by Kierkegaard though not determined by him (since he himself seemed unaware of the potential for the art object within his description of existence).

A basic summary of a Kierkegaardian position regarding the art object (which is necessarily constructed interpretively from his writings rather than explicitly stated by Kierkegaard himself) is as follows: the art object is a material form of communication ideal in nature and external to both the producing and the receiving individual. As ideal, the art object communicates the idea of existence between the producer and the receiver, an idea which in Kierkegaard is specifically Christian. Christianity, as an idea and an expression of the actual ontological grounding of existence, demands a specific developing relationship of the existing individual to actuality. Because this relationship is developing rather than explicit, the art object as a communication of the idea of the ideal is embodied in a variety of forms, all of which are embodied in their specific nature as a product of the development of the producing individual in order to develop the receiving individual towards knowledge of the actual. These forms are not necessarily Christian- in fact, because of the peculiar nature of Christianity, they cannot ever be wholly Christian- but directed at the various stages of the development of the individual's relationship to the actual (the Christian). The content is also not necessarily Christian, but reflects the position which both the producer and the receiver occupy in their existences at various stages of development towards the actual (again, the Christian). This emphasis on both the producer and the receiver makes an interpretation of Kierkegaard's conception of the art object vital, placing a reliance on the existence-situation of the individual. The art object, within the process of creation and reception becomes a wholly

personal issue for the artist and the receiving individual.

Two further points, both developed and differing from the Hegelian conception of the art object. First, the Hegelian concept determines the art object as a naturally occurring phenomenon, one dictated by the specifics of its historical condition out of the necessity of its existence. Therefore, the art object becomes not an object for reflection by the receiving individuals, but merely a manifestation of its historicity. The Kierkegaardian art object, while being a product of a specific period of history, remains wholly directed at the specific individual regardless of the differences between the historicity of the object and the individual. The art object in Hegel is a product of its time. The Kierkegaardian art object is both a product of its time as well as timeless.

Second, Hegel's art object, because it is a product of historical necessity, is limited in that the development of the art object in general has a teleology which is fulfilled. The development of the art object serves a specific purpose, regardless of the individual, which ends at a specific point in history. The Kierkegaardian art object also ends, but not in a teleological sense, in that its inadequacy, in the face of the idea of the actual ideal, becomes clear once the individual reaches knowledge of the actual, and, therefore, the material and existing and external nature of the art object is shown to be in conflict with the idea as ideal expressed. This ending, however, of the vitality of the art object, is further proof of the object's vitality; while affirming its impossibility in the face of the actual, the existing art object clarifies, for the individual, the separation of existence and the actual, indicating the very inadequacy of existence as a whole in the face of knowledge of the actual.

I have organised my thesis in the following manner. In Part One, I have described the elements necessary to

define a Kierkegaardian art object. I have divided up Part One into four short chapters, each dealing with a specific topic. These are: 1. the difference between contradiction and dialectics and between existence and actuality; 2. the objective and the subjective; 3. repetition and reduplication; and 4. communication as direct and indirect. These interrelated concepts are the necessary, but do not define the art object *per se*. They do, however, establish the basic ground for the discussion of the art object and their necessity cannot be stressed enough.

I have divided the lengthier Part Two into four chapters. In the first, I analyse the artist, particularly as to how the artist fits into Kierkegaard's distinction between the genius and the Apostle. In the second, I discuss and criticise the secondary scholarship concerning Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object. In the third chapter, I categorise and discuss Kierkegaard's own statements on art. This chapter is further divided into four sections: in the first, Kierkegaard's negative, dismissive statements about the art objects; in the second, Kierkegaard's positive statements; in the third, I show how many of Kierkegaard's negative statements can be understood in a positive manner. Finally, in the fourth section, the second focus becomes clear, wherein the art object is shown to be actively determining its own inadequacy in the face of the communication of the actual, functioning in a negativity which can also be positively understood and which, within a contemporary theoretical context, provides one answer towards the recent debate about the end of art.

At the end of the thesis, I have included two appendices. These are related to information which is important within the grand scope of the thesis, but not necessary. The first covers the individual self. The second discusses, in brief, the application of a Kierkegaardian description of the art object to actual examples. The second appendix also discusses the

application of this theoretical framework within an art historical sense as well as the absence of any discussion of specific artists. A distinction must always be maintained within the thesis between a descriptive and a proscriptive theoretical position. Caution must also be employed when discussing real individuals. This distinction and caution will be discussed in the second appendix.

Rather than beginning with the thesis itself, I would like to briefly introduce some of the difficulties involved. These are difficulties fundamental to understanding why Kierkegaard has not been understood as a writer on the art object, of lesser and greater importance.

The first problem, which seems to exacerbate all commentators on Kierkegaard, is his use of pseudonyms. The first half of the authorship² contains pseudonyms and pseudonyms within pseudonyms, all presenting a question of interpreting Kierkegaard's own position based upon the commentators' understanding of the pseudonyms. How exactly are we to understand what the pseudonyms state, i.e. are we to take the pseudonyms at face-value at all? Generally, it is assumed that any interpretation will discount Kierkegaard's own statement that everything about the authorship up until *CUP* had been part of a plan. Most mix an interpretation of the pseudonyms with an awareness that at times Kierkegaard is speaking with his own voice. Thus, the reader reads the text as if it was written by a pseudonym- not by Kierkegaard- and accepts it as such, while at the same time continually paralleling such a reading with Kierkegaard's own voice in mind, modifying any interpretation. A second position, also widely taken, is to treat Kierkegaard at his word and read the pseudonyms as distinct authors. This produces the intriguing position of allowing a comparison

²A common division of the writings, which are divided by Princeton University Press into 25 volumes and which do not also include a large number of volumes of journals, only about half of which are translated into 6 volumes. The first half includes up to *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* and the second continues until the "Attack Upon Christendom", each half containing pseudonymous texts, though the first has the greater number.

between Kierkegaard and the pseudonyms. A third position takes all of the writing without regard for the pseudonyms at all; they remain the fictive individualities which in truth they always were, while voicing their originators' voice.

My position tends towards the first, with the other two always in mind. The pseudonyms remain a problem because they resemble (as Louis Mackey wrote about in *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet*) art objects in themselves. All three positions regarding the pseudonyms (and there are many more shades between them) have deficiencies. Kierkegaard's authorship, as stated in *PV*, does appear to have a semblance to a structured development of thought; it is not a random output. The pseudonyms embody Kierkegaard's own words, while remaining simultaneously independent of his own individuality. The pseudonyms are also an integral part of Kierkegaard's theory of communication, further lending them to such an understanding. They continue, however, to pose a problem because they can be considered art objects at the same time as being examples of Kierkegaard's indirect and direct communication to the reader. A different kind of dialectic could emerge whereby my own position vis-a-vis the pseudonyms is involved not only in taking up a position in regards to the pseudonyms- i.e. making a decision as to how I will understand them in the context of Kierkegaard in a subjective and personal manner- but in continually assessing them as art objects in an objective manner as well. This complicates my reading, requiring an interaction with the texts as subjectively-direct indirect communications (as they are intended) as well as to view them from without, against Kierkegaard's own intentions. This dialectic becomes clearer when one considers the direct and signed texts containing statements about art which are just as viable to interpretation as the pseudonymous texts. One can understand these purely as sources for interpretative work, rather than as art objects in their own right. These issues are continually in mind throughout this

research but, because they cannot be specifically addressed except at greater length and by removing the focus from the art object itself, they are not discussed herein.

The second problem which exists is Kierkegaard's lack of discussion about art. Very few statements exist in which he directly refers to the artist or the art object. Kierkegaard did not leave any substantial text on aesthetics, beauty, art, etc., almost as if it was of no concern to him. In the early writings (published and unpublished), however, and also in the later half of the authorship, a concern is detectable. Kierkegaard's writing developed such that it became more polemical in nature, targeting the religious establishment and, therefore, the omission is understandable, but this polemicism contains a continuing concern with the manner of presentation of the polemic. This concern exists not as any statements on art, such as those by Hegel or Schelling, but as occasional references³. Thus, any interpretation of art, within the framework of Kierkegaard's writing, necessitates the inclusion of all of his writing; one must shift through statements to discover those which might, even indirectly, pertain to Kierkegaard's understanding of art. This requires that some subjects outside the grounds for a discussion of the nature of the art object appear in this research; the best example being marriage. To find art within Kierkegaard's writing is to dredge through a vast body of text in the hope of small discoveries, sometimes on wild paths.

The third problem is Kierkegaard's confusing ambivalence or hostility towards the role that art has in existence. At the esthetic beginning of the authorship, when Kierkegaard would supposedly be most concerned with art, such works as *Either/Or* (both volumes) establish a

³This can be characterised as a hidden references. I would posit that the same reasons Kant appears hidden in Kierkegaard (as suggested by Green in his excellent analysis of their relationship) can also serve to explain the hidden concern for the aesthetic. See Green, Ronald M., *Kierkegaard and Kant: The Hidden Debt*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1992) for further discussion on this topic.

negative quality to the art object. Even further, Kierkegaard actually writes in *PC*: "...this [the painting of Christ, as an ideal in art] is incomprehensible to me; I repeat, it is incomprehensible to me..."⁴ Does this mean that Kierkegaard doesn't understand art? For Kierkegaard, the esthetic stage of existence⁵ is something that the individual is required to surpass in order to appropriate the actual truth of its existence. Necessarily, the products of such a stage of existence are something valued as part of that stage, even if they are to be overcome. They can be retained to some degree, appreciated for their craftsmanship or beauty, but they do not, for Kierkegaard, have any particular bearing on the relationship of the individual's existence to its actuality.

This is true, but only in a limited sense. Kierkegaard's continual reference to himself is vindication of the possibility of the art object within existence. Even though I shall not assess Kierkegaard as a poet, it cannot be overlooked. He writes of himself as being a poet in nature in a positive sense (though a doomed one, in that he will never be able to allow himself to act in that capacity). The art object can maintain, therefore, through Kierkegaard's own personal example, a specific role in the development of the individual towards authenticity. Even in some of the most Christian-oriented texts- *SUD*, *PC*, and particularly *WL*- the art object is mentioned in such a manner as to suggest that its role is not merely negative but positive.

The fourth problem is Kierkegaard's continuous Christian focus. Kierkegaard's concern throughout his writing is to elaborate the requirements of the Christian faith. He writes: "It is Christianity that I have

⁴*PC*, p. 256

⁵To clarify- The esthetic (in which an individual is preoccupied with the satisfaction of individual needs and the gratification of personal desires), the ethical (in which the individual has developed towards the religious and understood to a limited degree his relationship with other individuals), and religiousness (divided into religiousness A and B, in which the individual first accepts the relationship which he has with a infinite being (his ontological grounding) and then with the Christian faith specifically).

presented and still want to present; to this every hour of my day has been and is directed." ⁶ The Christian faith is primary, and art is, at best, a minor issue. This necessitates two strategies. Obviously, the first is to elevate the importance of art within the thesis at the cost of making Kierkegaard seem less interested in Christian issues. This involves establishing not only the primary concern as the art object, but also requires the sublimation of Christianity and Kierkegaard's discussion of aspects of Christianity such as faith, sin, and love to the embellishment of the art object. In effect, Christian terms must be used from within Kierkegaard's writing to produce a description of the art object within the same context, but in an unChristian sense. Secondly, the Christian faith must be accepted as part of this research unquestioningly. Writing about the art object without allowing the primacy of Christianity to remain intact is an impossibility. I have tried to alleviate this by referring to Christianity in an oblique way⁷, but this still complicates the issue. And, while this may seem a limitation, it lends itself to a further interpretation in the form of positive iconoclasm.

The fifth problem is closely related to the fourth. Kierkegaard's writings are focused on the development within a Christian framework of the individual human being. A discussion of the art object, in relationship to the development of the individual, requires maintaining the continuing nature of the existence of the individual in mind, while relating such an existence to the singular and static nature of the art object. The very concept of art as object suggests a complete separation from the continuing existence of the individual. The art object may be considered an example of a being in existence, but any form of communication which takes place between the art object as being and individual is one-way,

⁶JP, Vol. 6, p.27-28, <<620, IX A 171 n. d. 1848)

⁷I would prefer to refer to Christianity as part of the "authentic development of the individual in existence towards an authentic appropriation of the paradoxical actual ontological truth of existence". This is clarified later.

nullifying, after the fact, any dialectical relationship that may exist. Hence, I use the term 'art object' rather than 'art work', further differentiating it from an esthetic object; the static nature of the art object is maintained against an interpretation of the object as a continual work in progress. The art object remains for this consideration a material and completed object, limited by its very completeness, but able to communicate to the existing individual.

A sixth problem is Kierkegaard's conception of the esthetic stage of existence, as opposed to an aesthetic object and the concept of the art object. The difference between the esthetic stage of existence and the aesthetic object is not merely a philological one. The esthetic stage of existence is a description of the development of the individual at a particular point. It limits that form of the individual from others which have progressed further into the appropriation of the actual through the existential. Though the delineation between the various spheres may be a source of debate, it must be accounted for only in a limited sense. Describing the art object as an *aesthetic* object serves to differentiate it from being merely a product of the esthetic; the art object has value beyond the esthetic stage.

From these points of difficulty, I would like to go on to summarise the developments which I have made in this research towards interpreting the art object within the framework of Kierkegaard. These exist in four points. First, the art object can be autonomous and authentic, dialectical in nature and separated from its creator. Second, the art object is a communication of the development of the artist and for the development of the individual receiving such communication, but its dialectical nature entails a reciprocity which must be maintained, as found in *PF*, which means that the art object is also an expression which allows the artist who has created to further his own development as well as receive the reaction in reduplication from the viewer to further his development. Third, the art object is nearly

a revelation; unlike a revelation, however, it is inadequate to the communication of truth (the artist is, therefore, between a genius and an Apostle). Fourth, the art object is inadequate, but this is also its dialectical value within existence and the communication of actuality. Art's value is its valuelessness.

While reading Kierkegaard's own writing as well as the secondary literature a discrepancy emerges. This discrepancy exists whenever art was discussed or referred to. No clear picture exists of the nature and role of art. If communication is important, then so is art. If art is to be positive, then what should be the nature of this positiveness?

Part One: The Necessary Grounds for Art

Chapter One- Contradiction and Dialectics; Existence and Actuality

To understand Kierkegaard's understanding of the dialectic, one must understand first Hegel's. Hegel's conception of the dialectic, an integral aspect of his philosophy, dictating the direction and method of approach that he takes towards his material, is a resolution and development of contradicting concepts which, through their opposition, develop inevitably towards the ideal. Contradiction and dialectics are independent concepts, but necessarily related, since contradiction is the force which drives the dialectical.

Contradiction has two classical definitions which Hegel found problematic. First, contradiction is the occurrence of two proposition opposing each other by being each other's opposite, or by being the negation of the other. Hegel saw these definitions as impossible. Contradiction as conflict must be accommodated within logic, but must also be understood as far more widespread and integral than his predecessors believed. Previous philosophers ascribed to contradiction a static place, resolving the interaction between opposing concepts yet leading nowhere beyond that resolution. For Hegel, any finite thought or conception involves a contradiction, at its most basic level, as a negative element of its definition, with the capacity for proposition, a process analogous to thinking, having the capacity and the impulse to overcome the limitations. Hegel writes:

Logic shows that the subjective which is to be subjective only, the finite which would be finite only, the infinite which would be infinite only, and so on, have no truth, but contradict themselves, and pass over into their opposites. Hence this transition, and the unity in which the extremes are merged and become factors, each with a merely reflected existence, reveals itself as their truth.⁸

⁸Hegel, *Logic*, p. 277

This process is appropriate when the thought moves to a new, higher concept involving a contradiction and removal through interaction with the first. By successively revealing and overcoming contradictions, which drive the process of negative thought onward, thought arrives at the Absolute Idea, which is free of contradiction and appropriate for concepts that elude comprehension (such as God), sublating their individual contradictions through mediation (the taking-into-account of the entire process fuelled by contradiction), occurring in three stages, and leading into the dialectical process.

The dialectic in Hegel is not the classical conception as embodied in the Socratic dialogues and other sources- as a dialogue between two thinkers, or between a thinker and his subject matter, such that a singular resolution is created from such interaction- but is conceived as the autonomous self-development of the subject matter of, for example, consciousness or a concept. The dialectical has three sides: 1. the abstract, or that of understanding; 2. the dialectical, or negative reason; and 3. the speculative, or positive reason within dialectics. Speculative or positive reasoning- the third stage of the dialectical process, and the most important- is the expression of the adequate determination caused by the development of the abstract through the dialectical process. In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes:

Ideality can be called the *quality* of infinity; but it is essentially the process of *becoming*, and hence a transition- like that of becoming in determinate being- which is now to be indicated.⁹

In the first, one or more concepts are taken as sharply fixed from each other in understanding. In the second, contradiction emerge whereby the continued existence of such concepts becomes an impossibility through negative reasoning. In the third, a results is established through a new, higher category through speculation or positive

⁹Hegel, *Science of Logic S*, p. 150

reasoning. The new category is the unity of opposites, one in which contradictions evolve together and intensify internally into a single individuality. Dialectics becomes, in Hegel's system, not merely a method but also an intrinsic structure and development of the subject-matter of thought within the existence of that subject-matter. It becomes the autonomous process in thought and in the existence of thought whereby self-creation and self-negation produce a sense of consciousness of the process.

Kierkegaard's understanding of contradiction and dialectics is partially derived from his reading of Hegel, but differs significantly enough that it becomes a primary thread for the interpretation of his aesthetics, requiring a further level of interpretation. Kierkegaard's view of life as dialectical is one which takes as its starting point the idea that two contrasting principles may interact within thought, existence and the actual. For Hegel, this requires sublation of both principles into a third, which is the idea. For Kierkegaard, this process emphasises the developed unity of the two into a third relationship while simultaneously maintaining their previous identities. Such a notion of contradiction, in which there is both dialectical resolution negatively as well as simultaneous affirmation, is crucial to Kierkegaard's thought. Evans points out:

The contradictions he focuses on are not logical but existential. He is discussing the incongruity, tension, or contrast between one state of affairs and another... In every case the contradiction is between clashing or incongruous realities.¹⁰

These, however, are realities which are maintained. The very notion of sublation or of positive or speculative thought is, for Kierkegaard, an impossibility when it comes to describing the individual within existence. This necessitates a difference between existence (which can be defined as the immediate awareness and knowledge of the

¹⁰Evans, *Kierkegaard's "Fragments" and "Postscript"*, p. 188

individual's being and its relationship to its surroundings) and the actual (which can be defined as the grounding of existence, that which is immanent within and, because of its opposition to existence, transcendent beyond mere existence).

This can be strengthened further by noting the apparent difference between the Kierkegaardian notions of the idea (which is the idea in pure thought, within existence but without any relation to the existence of the individual and its relationship to the actual) and the ideal (which is the application of the appropriated idea of the actual ideal within the continual existence of the individual's existence). The actual is the ideal or the Christian which is always in opposition to the existence of the individual. Indeed, the existing individual as the actual are so separated that Kierkegaard writes in a further journal entry:

The man and the ideal are separated from each other in this way. To be so situated as to be able to live for an idea, to be able to employ all one's time for this, is indeed closer to relating oneself to the ideal- although, of course, when the ideal is Christ there is the infinite qualitative difference between him and one who comes closest to him...¹¹

Existence, and existence with knowledge of actuality, should favour the contradictions inherent in their natures. Unity may be the highest principle for abstract thought removed from existence, but existence and actuality must recognise the inherent impossibilities present.

Kierkegaard's understanding of the very nature of humanity is that its goals are accomplished only through their opposites. Taking what Malantschuk identifies as an 'anthropological' form of the contemplation of man¹², in which man as individual is investigated on various levels of mental and spiritual activity, Kierkegaard believes that the individual must simultaneously reflect such a various nature and, further, that the perfection or the

¹¹JP, vol. 1, p. 99, <<236; X¹ A 135, n.d., 1849

¹²Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Thought*, p. 14

development of such in existence is a process whereby these are recognised. He writes: "the imperfection consists of not so much in the opposite as in one's not being able to see one thing and its opposite simultaneously." ¹³ Therefore, perfection in one's relationship to the truth of existence (i.e. knowledge and appropriated understanding of the ontological grounding within actuality of existence) is such a recognition of the imperfect. Kierkegaard further writes:

"Actuality" [Virkeligheden] cannot be conceptualized... To conceptualize is to dissolve actuality into possibility- but then it is impossible to conceptualize it, because to conceptualize it is to transform it into possibility and therefore not to hold to it as actuality. As far as actuality is concerned, conceptualization is retrogression, a step backward, not a step forward. It is not as if "actuality" were void of concepts, not at all; no, the concept which is found by conceptually dissolving it into possibility is also in actuality, but there is still something more- that it is actuality.¹⁴

Actuality thus becomes not only a means of understanding the grounding of existence but, through a recognition of its opposition to existence, it becomes a pursued existential stance. Actuality, or the ideal, is that which is both beyond existence and a goal of the individual in existence.

An understanding of the dialectical nature of the individual as composed of opposites is, therefore, one which takes into account the opposition inherent in the nature of the individual. Unity must be stressed, since the individual remains singular in existence in relation to the actual. But, if unity is emphasised over contradiction and the dialectical relation of the individual within existence, then existence becomes a contradiction itself. As long as an individual remains in time (i.e. its relationship to the actual is governed by the fact that it is within a temporal existence) then a

¹³JP, Vol. 1, p. 328, <<700

¹⁴JP, vol. 1, p. 461, <<1059; X² A 439, n.d., 1850

single, unified identity is abstract from an existing identity.

Kierkegaard privileges the elucidation of the existential situation through a form of thought which understands the inherent oppositions. In particular, Kierkegaard's interpretation of Christianity is a process which is a continual recognition of the impossibilities of oppositions. Truth, communicated in whatever form or discovered through thought, must always contain its opposite. Kierkegaard writes: "Every truth is nevertheless truth only to a certain degree; when it goes beyond, the counterpoint appears, and it becomes untruth."¹⁵ The phrase 'either/or' becomes a talisman whereby truth is maintained always in relation to untruth, in a continual process of oppositionalism.

This does not mean, however, that the dialectical nature of individual existence does not have a resolution, whereby existence merges with actuality. An understanding of the paradox of opposition is, in part, the hope for the individual. Malantschuk writes:

By one's understanding... in individual existence, the transcendent can be achieved, contrary to Kant's claim. For Kierkegaard, there is not in this respect "ein Ding an sich"; a higher form of this may be found in Kierkegaard's category of the paradox, which is "an ontological qualification which expresses the relation between an existing cognitive spirit and the eternal truth."¹⁶

An understanding of the paradox affords the individual the ability to determine opposites as such within existence and their relationship to actuality- opposites such as temporal/eternal, quantity/quality, necessity/freedom- and overcome the separation of existence and actuality. The paradox is, however, always present and never resolved within existence. When the actual is fully appropriated into existence, then the dialectic is fulfilled but, since the actual cannot become completely unified within existence for the

¹⁵JP, vol. 1, p. 350, <<753;

¹⁶Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Thought*, p. 123

individual until the individual's leap of faith into the absurdity of Christianity or the individual's death, this remains an impossibility throughout existence. Christianity is a process whereby the hint of the actual ideal is presented to the individual in existence, but always with the stipulation that it is in opposition to that existence. This results in the determination in Kierkegaard's mind of the differences between the idea and the ideal, between existence and actuality.

This may, in part, seem similar to Hegel's notion of the dialectic; a resolution takes place at the end of the development of oppositions. What is different for Kierkegaard is the organic nature of this process, whereby identity of the oppositions are always present. Three crucial points make this clear.¹⁷ First, Hegel's method is concerned with bringing about a finalised unity of all elements since it reproduces the necessary cause of the Idea in the unfolding of its whole concept. Therefore, actuality is created by the method, and the connection of the idea and actuality is made empty. Kierkegaard's method is an instrument, tested in actuality and never producing actuality, but, whereby the medium of thought becomes possibility. Second, in Hegel, the idea or concept produces actuality and its forms. Concept, method, and actuality are congruent. In Kierkegaard, only the existing actuality of the individual brings itself into existence and, therefore, a strict difference is maintained between method, concept, and actuality, a difference only bridged by a leap of faith. Third, Hegel's' dialectic, his system, tries to explain all actuality through his speculation within existence, exhausting all existence from such thought. All links are identical and, thereby, identity is the key factor. Kierkegaard's dialectic is employed to define the individual existence as apprehended in the form of actuality. The contradictions which he discusses never cease to exist, since they are never caught in a system

¹⁷See the elucidation of these in Malantschuk, pp. 170-173, for further discussion.

which requires their dissolution, but appear both in existence and actuality simultaneously. Kierkegaard writes in a journal entry:

If the distinctive mark of the true is the opposition it suffers, if I am to prove the rightness of my view by the opposition it finds- how then shall I order things; then all the distinctive marks will have become completely dialectical. Quite so, for precisely thereby and therefore faith is what it is, if it is preceded by an absolute dialectic which has made everything dialectical. That the distinctive mark is opposition is really the expression for the inwardness of the conviction; indeed, it is hoping against hope, believing against the understanding etc.¹⁸

In Hegel's process, each stage of the dialectic destroys the previous and the individual is discounted in favour of the actual. In Kierkegaard's, the oppositions do not even resolve themselves except in a full relation of the individual with the actual on an individual basis which is, in itself, a contradiction. The individual must remain the focus for the individual.

What does this have to do with communication and Kierkegaard's aesthetics? It follows that if all existence of the individual is dialectical opposition to actuality, i.e. composed of opposites which do not resolve themselves except in the resolution of existence with actuality, then all aspects of existence in relation to the individual, as well as all aspects in existence in relation to the ideal, must be dialectical in nature as well. This has two implications.

First, since the existence of the individual is the only form of existence which can enter in a resolved relation with the actual, because of the nature of the individual, then all other aspects of existence are impossibilities in relation to the actual. Only the existence of the individual, in recognition and appropriation of its actual nature can become removed from the Kierkegaardian dialectic. All of existence is, therefore, in eternal contradiction to the actual. This

¹⁸JP, vol. 4, p. 490, <<4855; IX A 304, n.d., 1848

does not mean that relations between individuals in existence cannot become determinants of a relation with the actual for such individuals¹⁹, but it does mean that any possibility of a resolution being determined in existence, as well as being removed from the individualities involved, is an impossibility. It is because of this that art objects- which are removed from the existence of the individualities taking part in the communicative process embodied as such- remain an impossible communication and development of such a resolution. Indeed, all of existence becomes an impossibility for the individual's resolution with actuality. It would therefore be logical to maintain that they have no value in terms of such a resolution.²⁰

Kierkegaard and secondary commentators, however, have missed a further vital implication, one which categorically determines the art object as having positive potential. If the dialectic is to be maintained in existence for the individual, then it must also be maintained regarding that which is in existence as well as the products of the individual. If existence is to be understood as an impossibility, in regards to the resolution of the individual with the actual, then Kierkegaard's dialectical method also maintains that the very impossibility is a possibility. The dialectical nature of existence, composed of contradictions, requires that all objects within existence (whether material or thought) have both possibility as well as impossibility in relation to the actual. The very possibility of a communication within existence of the actual, necessarily in contradiction, is evident in some of Kierkegaard's thought, though he does not seem aware of the implications. For example:

Christianity tends above all toward actuality, toward being made actuality, the only medium to which it truly is related. It is not to be possessed in any way other than by being made

¹⁹Kierkegaard notes in a number of sections of *WL* in particular that this is not the case

²⁰A point Kierkegaard maintains throughout the authorship.

actual; it is not communicated except to or in upbuilding and awakening. It must always be assumed that there are some who do not have it or who are still lagging far behind- therefore there must be labor on their behalf.²¹

Christianly understood, there are certain requirements for the authentic communication of the ideal and, because there would appear to be such requirements, the potential for communication is always there.²² Both aspects of an object or elements of a specific existence are necessarily present, since it is only through the presence of one that the other determines itself (i.e. an object cannot exist finitely without having a relationship, even negative, to the infinite). This is not an Hegelian speculation, nor it is a resolution of an Hegelian understanding; it is merely a recognition of oppositions. Furthermore, if this is developed, it must be that the very nature of the object as dialectical, contained within an object within existence appearing to the individual as possible or positive in nature with regard to the actual, necessitates that both aspects be present within the object; an object, within existence, must appear to a full understanding of the existing individual simultaneously as both positive (i.e. establishing a possibility to actually exist within existence and to communicate such) as well as negative (i.e. establishing the impossibility of actually existing within existence and to communicate such). The impossibility must be primary in relation to the individual's appropriated knowledge of the ideal or actual of its existence, since only the individual can enter into an actual relation with the actual ideal, but the possibility can still appear within existence as long as it ultimately indicates its impossibility;²³ the object, while appealing to be a positive indication of the idea of the ideal,

²¹JP, vol. 1, p. 203, <<508; X1 A 558, n.d., 1849

²²And, with such statements, Kierkegaard almost makes it an ethical duty to communicate the potential for knowledge of the ideal of the actual ideal. This is a point addresses in the second appendix.

²³Something which grounds the very nature of the stages, since they become both possibilities for the individual's existence in relation to the actual as well as impossibilities for the determination of that relation.

must be continually tempered with an awareness of the impossibility of the determination of the actual truth of the ontological dependency of existence. Kierkegaard hints at this, writing:

The human dialectic cannot advance further than to the admission that I cannot think this [revelation], but also to the admission that this does not imply anything more than that it cannot think this... that all this about genius and education and reflection makes no difference but that divine authority is the decisive fact...²⁴

The implications for art, though, are missing. The depiction of the actual ideal always points to and ends with the Christian. Kierkegaard writes:

The secular mentality... turns the relation around, that the higher actually becomes the lower, for when the lower relates to the higher in order to profit from the relation, then the lower is actually higher than the higher from which one wishes to profit, consequently higher than the higher. It is also the same when a person relates to a higher in such a way that he wants to profit *also*.

The essentially Christian is the higher which continually reflects itself *inversely*. Any higher which reflects itself directly is not Christian. The reason that the essentially Christian must reflect itself *inversely* is that finitude and infinitude, time and eternity, from a Christian point of view, are qualitatively heterogeneous; the infinite is anything but a superlative or the most superlative superlative of the finite.²⁵

Why can art not function within this? Kierkegaard does not address this question. It should be noted, though, that Kierkegaard writes of the Christian as the *inversely* higher, as if the actual ideal no longer remains the idea but becomes merely the ideal once the Christian has been appropriated into the existence of the individual- i.e. no longer does a difference between existence and actuality exist for the individual. And cannot art embody communication in the same manner?

²⁴JP, vol. 3, p. 365, <<3026; VIII² B 15, n.d., 1847

²⁵JP, vol. 4, pp. 420-421, <<4696; X⁵ A 11, n.d., 1852

Chapter Two- Object and Subject

Based on the distinctions defined in the previous chapter, one then has to turn to Kierkegaard's understanding of objectivity and subjectivity. The differences between objectivity and subjectivity are fundamental, describing the art object's objective nature dialectically embodied in representation as the particular form of that representation and the possibility of subjective importance.

Objectivity and subjectivity are based on Kierkegaard's understanding of truth and his continual emphasis on the individual's responsibility towards learning the actual truth of its existence. An initial understanding of truth is that it is a conformity of thought and being interacting in a process of becoming such that, as long as one exists, one is in a process of becoming; one seeks to enact that about which one has thought, thereby striving to effect a unity of one's thought and being. This has two consequences: 1. that the empirical being is emphasised in the process of conforming being with thought (through perception), or 2. that the idea is emphasised in conforming thought with the idea of the being. Kierkegaard rejects both of these as being too static in their approach to that which is firmly rooted in existence. Kierkegaard's argument is that "the unity of thought and being is a task that is posed to the existing individual and is not an accomplished fact."²⁶ Truth is a continuing function of the individual's existence rather than a static fact which confronts the individual and remains wholly separate.

For this reason, Kierkegaard argues that any objective approach to truth is fundamentally flawed. He argues that objective truth exists only as the product of a knowing of the particulars of a thing, which are static in nature, rather than knowing its actual existence, which is continually evolving in its own definition of

²⁶Taylor, *Kierkegaard's Pseudonymous Authorship*, p.44

itself. Truth, as something which the individual contemplates objectively, is not something that is determinative, and, therefore, is not the real existence of the object. The consequences of this are such that when the subject attempts to understand the object in an objective manner, a detached relation is constructed between the subject and the object. The subject does not become involved with the object in a passionate relationship, becoming solely an observer of the existence of the object, standing in existence beyond its existence and, therefore, never truly knowing that which it contemplates.

The way of objective reflection turns the subjective individual into something accidental and thereby turns existence into an indifferent, vanishing something. The way to the objective truth goes away from the subject, and while the subject and subjectivity become indifferent, the truth also becomes indifferent, and that is precisely its objective validity; because the interest, just like the decision, is rooted in subjectivity.²⁷

The individual, by attempting to remain objective in contemplation of the object, never fully begins to encounter the object. Rather, the object begins to increasingly disappear the more the individual becomes objective about it, as does the subject's own subjectivity.

This understanding of truth leads to Kierkegaard's developed criticism of objectivity. For Kierkegaard, objective reflection requires a suppression of both the existing subjectivity of the individual subject and the existing object, seemingly denying existence in favour of a state of detachment, such that "to the extent that the subject does not become totally indifferent to himself, this is merely an indication that his objective striving is not objective enough... whereas subjectivity has gone out."²⁸ The essential nature of objectivity, of objective reflection on the object, is the gradual process whereby

²⁷CUP, p. 193

²⁸Ibid., p. 193-194

the very subjectivity of the subject becomes inconsequential and disappears.

From this understanding of objective truth, Kierkegaard applies it to the religious as actual. Objectivity, for religious truth, has specific consequences in an historical and a speculative sense. An historical, objective approach to religion can be characterised by two approaches. First, the individual may be in a position of faith and belief in the religious which is conditioned by the historical truth of his knowledge (thus deemed to be in historical reference to religious truth). The individual understands that the truth of Christianity is an historical event which determines his own belief in the truth. Second, the individual may be in a position of disbelief which investigates objectively the truth of religious knowledge. Either way, the individual is beyond a personal interaction with religious truth; he is not involved personally when a personal involvement is required. "The solid, sensible subject thinks this way: 'Just let there be clarity and certainty about the truth of Christianity and I will be surely be man enough to accept it; that will follow as a matter of course.'" ²⁹ The objective historical reference to religious truth might ground itself upon three things- Holy Scripture, the Church, and the evidence of the continuance of Christianity through the centuries- which are inherently vital to being a Christian; even these, however, prove inadequate for the individual to fully become authentic as a self.

The speculative objective seeks to conceive of Christianity in terms of pure thought, and, thus, relates it to the eternal with no presuppositions as to the nature of Christianity, except to accept that Christianity is a given, requiring the fact of the existence of Christianity to begin. This speculatively objective stance is a misrelation whether the objectively

²⁹Ibid., p. 46

speculative thinker is a believer (in that "speculative thought, in its objectivity, is indeed totally indifferent to his and my and your eternal happiness" ³⁰) or not (in that "the speculative individual does not raise the issue... because as a speculative thinker he becomes precisely too objective to concern himself with his eternal happiness" ³¹). Kierkegaard is strongly opposed to the speculative point of view for the same reason as the historical; neither adequately describe the existential relationship that the individual is required by Christianity to fully come to the truth of Christianity. In the case of the speculating individual "the question of his personal eternal happiness can not come up at all, precisely because his task consists in going away from himself more and more and becoming objective and in that way disappearing from himself." ³²

For Kierkegaard, neither the historical nor the speculative objective relate themselves to the actual truth of the religious for

objectively understood, there are more than enough results everywhere, but no decisive results anywhere. This is quite in order because decision is rooted in subjectivity, essentially in passion, and maximally in the infinitely interested, personal passion for one's eternal happiness.³³

The individual who is bent on historical objectivity does not take part fully in the synthesised elements of being an individual; he emphasises the temporal over the eternal. The speculative objective individual does the opposite, emphasising the eternal over the temporal. The objective interest of the individual removes it from its own happiness and fulfilment as a synthesis of eternal and temporal within the religious truth, and thus the objective individual does not really know truth. By reflecting on objective truth the subject is not

³⁰Ibid., p. 55

³¹Ibid., p. 55

³²Ibid., p. 56

³³Ibid., p. 34

"infinitely, personally, impassionedly interested in his relation to this truth." ³⁴

Thus, Kierkegaard denies the validity of objective truth as it is related to existence. This is furthered within Kierkegaard's own reaction against Hegel. Kierkegaard, in stressing the importance of subjectivity, sees the abstract manner of understanding existence to be vitally flawed. He asks: 'Is thinking the same as creating, giving existence?' This does not hold true, he acknowledges, to imperfect existence, but is it true of perfect existences, however, such as ideas, in which thinking and being are one. This could be so, but he questions whether or not one can consider an existing human being, an individual, as a perfect thought or an idea. "Existing (in the sense of being this individual human being) is surely an imperfection compared with the eternal life of the idea, but a perfection in relation to not being at all." ³⁵ Existing as a human being may be assigned a place in the system but "if the individual were related directly to the development of the human spirit as a matter of course, the result would be that in every generation only defective specimens of human beings would be born." ³⁶ His point is that Hegel's system does not take into account each specific individuality, despite Hegel's protestations to the contrary. Scientific observation orders subjectivity into a particular place within the system, but does not describe its passionate and necessary relation to the existence of the individual subjectivity as it exists. Kierkegaard's point is that the individual itself is all that can relate itself to its eternal responsibility in relation to God, and that any system which does not emphasize the individual's only true knowledge of itself, namely, its subjectivity, warps the individual's actuality. This is the ethical task of the individual: to determine his own subjectivity as the grounds for his knowledge of his actuality, and to apply

³⁴Ibid., p. 21

³⁵Ibid., p. 329

³⁶Ibid., pp. 345-346

this knowledge as it relates from himself and his possibilities to other individualities.

The most important instance where Kierkegaard writes on objectivity is found in *PF* and in the first half of *CUP*. In *PF*, Kierkegaard tries to reconcile the implications of Socratic understanding of the truth through recollection with the Christian understanding of acquiring truth through faith, basically asking "Can the truth be learned?"³⁷ The Socratic position is, for Kierkegaard, such that truth is brought about through the reminding of the ignorant person of its existence through an indirect communication. Truth is not external to the individual, but can be found if the person is fully reminded of its existence within himself. Every human being is the midpoint on which the whole world focuses, such that self-knowledge is God-knowledge. By implication, objective truth is an aspect of knowledge which the individual contains within himself and which, dispensing perhaps even with the teacher, the individual relearns as he develops.

Kierkegaard rejects this position, stating that the learner is not only outside of truth but also in a polemical position, remaining wholly outside of the truth in a state of untruth. Both the teacher and the pupil, in Socrates' view, come to know themselves through each other and through their own deliberation. They do not understand themselves fully, whereas God does. By coming to knowledge through God, the individual comes to terms with his relationship with God, and, thereby, moves from a state of untruth to truth. This moment has decisive significance for the individual, who does not move towards God and the truth, but discovers that God and the truth moves towards him.

The individual moves against the unknown, and is thereby moving against and towards God. In trying to demonstrate the existence of God, however, the individual discovers that God does not exist only as a concept or

³⁷*PF*, p.9

notion, but is that which determines the very fact of existence itself. At the same time, a paradox is constructed, whereby an understanding of the unknown is posited, but this very act of positing also disallows the act of knowing the unknown.

If, namely, the god does not exist, then of course it is impossible to demonstrate it. But if he does exist, then it is foolishness to want to demonstrate it, since I, in the very moment the demonstration commences, would presuppose it is not as doubtful...but as decided, because otherwise I would not begin, easily perceiving that the whole thing would be impossible if he did not exist. If, however, I interpret the expression 'to demonstrate the existence of the god' to mean that I want to demonstrate that the unknown, which exists, is the god... then I demonstrate nothing, least of all an existence, but I develop the definition of a concept.³⁸

A gap occurs that the definition of a concept cannot fulfil. One cannot fulfil one's desire to explain the unknown and, thereby, one cannot prove that which might exist. Yet, that which one does not have any knowledge of truly does exist. "The paradoxical passion of understanding is, then, the continually colliding with this known, which certainly does exist but is also unknown and to that extent does not exist. The understanding does not go beyond that."³⁹ The unknown is always at the point of being disclosed, but is never fully disclosed. The existence of the unknown becomes a paradox for the individual seeking to know it, since the unknown only exists as the unknown and not the known.

The moment of this paradox is defined through the concept of offense. Kierkegaard describes offense in the following manner:

If the paradox and the understanding meet in the mutual understanding of their difference, then the encounter is a happy one... If the encounter is not in mutual understanding, then the relation is unhappy, and the

³⁸Ibid., p.39-40

³⁹Ibid., p.44

understanding's unhappy love... we could more specifically term *offense*.⁴⁰

Offense is a misunderstanding of the moment of knowledge of truth for the individual. Understanding seeks to reconcile the offense which exists in paradox, but discovers that the paradox is both defined by and defines the very nature of offense itself, and so comes to odds with understanding. Reconciliation occurs for the individual in a Christian sense when the individual comes to terms with the offense in understanding the event whereby God takes on human form. For the contemporary to this event, knowledge of it is easy to acquire, and the degree of offense is not as large as one who must come to terms with it through history. The 'second-hand' learner can only come to terms with the offense of the human form of God through faith. Faith is not knowledge *per se*

for all knowledge is either knowledge of the eternal, which excludes the temporal and historical as inconsequential, or it is purely historical knowledge, and no knowledge can have as its object this absurdity that the eternal is historical...⁴¹

but it is the means. It is thus only faith which can give some knowledge, and security in that knowledge as respite from offense, of the Christian even of God as the eternal becoming human and thereby temporal.

Implied negatively in this example of the religious and of the Christian as the highest truth in objective terms is the implication that subjectivity is truth itself. One's interest in one's self constitutes one's own existence, and, thus, to become subjective is the greatest responsibility of the individual human being. "Truth becomes subjectivity in that the disturbing 'truth' of the God-man is apprehended and appropriated not as a rational dogma but in a passionate inwardness."⁴² Truth can only be appropriated and constructed by the individual through a perception of it existing in existence. Truth becomes a matter of

⁴⁰Ibid., p.49

⁴¹Ibid., p.62

⁴²Arbaugh and Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, pp. 211-212

subjective response, rather than objective perception. It is impossible for man to grasp spiritual concerns objectively. Indeed, it is impossible even for the objective to be communicated as the actual idea of the ideal as thought. To treat God as an objective uncertainty is the only manner of obtaining any knowledge of him, and to treat externality with objective uncertainty is the only way to construct its importance for the individual. Only in the passionate relationship formed through an understanding of the importance of God to one's subjectivity can one come to terms with the truth of God.⁴³

This reflection on knowledge has certain implications. Objectivity, within the context of *PF*, cannot be understood as a viable means of reconciling the anxiety which the individual feels in coming to terms with a specific Christian event and, therefore, it can be concluded that objectivity does not correctly place the individual in an authentic position to judge any object in an objective manner; the individual is unable to discover both its essential and existential natures. Objectivity becomes, in *PF*, an impossibility in relating the individuality to the God-man event of Christ, as the embodiment of the most important Kierkegaardian paradox. The individual does not, however, inquire after subjective truth. In the case of the subjective view, the individual seeks to know not only how the object of his inquiry exists as such (i.e. as an independent subject in its own right), but also seeks to understand the complex

⁴³Some truth is not subjective and some modes of subjectivity are not concerned with the truth. There is also some confusion in that the truth of Christianity is concerned with objective fact, but only through the subjective appropriation through passionate concern and inwardness on the part of the individual- "subjectivity which is faith is objectively grounded." † Subjective faith is not concerned immediately with revelation, but with the historical fact of Christ in the world. Kierkegaard finds objectivity to be a necessary aspect that precedes subjectivity as a growth from God- it is only the fact that the objective fact of Christ and God never requires assent on the part of the individual, but a leap of faith. Kierkegaard's use, therefore, of the term 'subjectivity' is wrought with difficulty because it requires objectivity to exist. There is no such thing as faith but only faith-in-God. Likewise, there is the possibility that there is no such thing as subjectivity but only subjectivity-appropriating-objectivity. This leads to the development of art as a possible means of resolving the conflict, discussed at the conclusion.

†Arbaugh and Arbaugh, *Kierkegaard's Authorship*, p. 225

interrelation that the object of his inquiry not only has with his own existence, but also as a synthesis of eternal truths in its own right. The objective individual is a subject who is not "infinitely, personally, impassionedly interested in his relation to [the] truth" ⁴⁴, while the subjective individual is.

Subjective truth is that by which the individual comes to know himself. Kierkegaard writes that "Since the questioner specifically emphasises that he is an existing person, the way to be commended is naturally the one that especially emphasises what it means to exist." ⁴⁵ Subjective truth for Kierkegaard is "an objective uncertainty, held fast through appropriation with the most passionate inwardness... the highest truth there is for an existing person." ⁴⁶ Subjectivity concerns itself with decision in regards to that objective uncertainty. There is a conjunction between thought and being and, therefore, the existing individual is always in a state of uncertain becoming, leading Kierkegaard to believe that it is only the subject's existence that he should be concerned with or, more precisely, the individual's sense of inwardness.

Kierkegaard relates religious truth to subjectivity, as an example, in the following passage.

At its highest, inwardness in an existing subject is passion; truth as a paradox corresponds to passion, and that truth becomes a paradox is grounded precisely in its relation to an existing individual. In this way the one corresponds to the other. In forgetting that one is an existing subject, one loses passion, and in return, truth does not become a paradox; but the knowing subject shifts from being human to being a fantastical something, and truth becomes a fantastical object of it knowing. ⁴⁷

Thus, Kierkegaard equates religious truth with subjectivity, noting that it is the paradox which the knowing subject understands. Truth, as a paradox, remains

⁴⁴CUP, p. 21

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 193

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 203

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 199

a paradox for the subjective individual; it becomes a continual confrontation with its knowledge of its existence. Knowledge, which remains grounded in a non-paradoxical knowing of existence, is an impossibility for the subjective thinker because it then becomes a distortion of existence and its relation to the actual. Knowledge in relation to the paradox is described as such: "the paradoxical passion of understanding is, then, the continually colliding with this unknown [referring to the God] which certainly does exist but is also unknown and to that extent does not exist."⁴⁸ The paradox exists between the unknown and known existence of the god, the learner's understanding, knowledge, and its own existence. By relating to subjective truth, the individual goes through the described process and becomes a more actualised and individuated self, understanding the ontological dependency of the individual grounded in the paradoxical nature of the revealed truth.⁴⁹

By acting, by venturing, by choosing to exist, it is only by these that the individual is able to come to terms with his existence, subjectivity and eternal responsibility. To think of existence as abstract is to think of it without its necessary progression of becoming and its relation to its own future (by which Kierkegaard means the responsibility of the individual to the eternal). To think of existence in abstraction is to essentially annul it, since abstract thinking is inherently unconcerned with the ethical life as it should

⁴⁸PF, p. 44

⁴⁹Two important consequences arise from Kierkegaard's identification of subjective truth with the religious- first, attention is diverted towards the subject, subjectivity and the subject's own potentialities, which is exactly opposite of objective reflection. Second, by focusing the knowing subject's conception of truth in such a manner, Kierkegaard emphasises the subject's relation to the goal or focus, his relation to his choice, rather than the goal or choice itself (the goal being to become a more actualised self in relation to God). This has lead critics of Kierkegaard to insist that he is thus denying the objective existence of God- this is not true, since Kierkegaard never denies this, attempting to reconcile the Socratic notion of truth with both the historical and revelational nature of the Christian truth- but it is only an emphasising of Kierkegaard's idea that religious faith has to do with personal choice for a paradoxical form of existence rather than an objective understanding of existence. Kierkegaard's understanding of subjective truth requires, in essence, an acceptance and application of the absurd.

be lived (though it can be concerned with it as it is, in static relation to the individuality).

It would be another matter if pure thinking would explain its relation to the ethical and to the ethically existing individuality. But this is what it never does; indeed, it does not even make a show of wanting to do it, since in that case it would also have to become involved with another kind of dialectic, the Greek or existence-dialectic.⁵⁰

For Kierkegaard, it is only the motion of existence which the individual can be concerned with, not a static temporality. The existing person's concern must lie with the possibility of his existence as he knows it through his sense of the subjective, whereas objectivity is merely an eternal abstraction.

The actual and subjective individual is one whose concern lies in having an absolute *telos* of existence for himself, such that his interestedness in existing is his actuality. Only by engaging with the fact that the individual is part of his own actuality, i.e. only being recognising its own individuality through a sense of the subjective, can the individual fully come to terms with it. Actuality, for the individual, is not merely abstraction, nor is it merely possibilities; it is a becoming of possibilities within existence of which the individual, through his responsibility towards his eternal future. "The actual subjectivity is not the knowing subjectivity, because with knowledge he is in the medium of possibility, but is the ethical existing subjectivity."⁵¹ An abstract thinker exists, but his existence is, to him, only a satire; proving existence from pure thinking is a contradiction, since the thinker has only knowledge and thought about the other individualities and nothing by which returns from the other to knowledge of himself. The individual who is subjective sees not only his own existence as a necessarily vital aspect of his thinking, but relates

⁵⁰CUP, p. 309

⁵¹Ibid., p. 316

this emphasis in an ethical manner to other individualities.⁵²

The subjective thinker's task is to understand himself in existence. He does not abstract from existence but is in it while thinking about it (the inherent dialectical and contradictory nature of actual existence). The subjective thinker may progress only in that "abstract thinking turns from concrete human being to humankind in general; the subjective thinker understands the abstract concept to be the concrete human being, to be this individual existing human being."⁵³ Every individual possesses that which belongs essentially to being an individual being and, therefore, the subjective thinker must transform himself into an instrument clearly and definitely expressing the essentially existential humanness of individuality. Thus, the subjective-orientation of the individual determines for the individual the form of his communication, a style that takes into account both the fact that his own existence is a concrete human existence and the objective uncertainty of existence. To the same degree that his existence as a subjective thinker must be concrete, so also must his form be concrete dialectically, while reflecting the synthetic nature. His form must not be abstractly specific, i.e. it must not deal with that which is removed from actuality by the abstract thinker and therefore made lifeless, but must be related to his existence *qua* existence. Existence and actuality *qua* existence-actuality cannot be directly communicated as objective fact. Actuality may only be understood by a third party through the communication of possibility. "A production in the form of possibility places existing in it a close to the recipient as it is possible between one human being and another."⁵⁴

The conclusion of this is that direct communication of static facts, of objectivity, is possible between

⁵²A point which is more fully developed in *WL*, pp. 99-196.

⁵³*CUP*, p. 352

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 358

individualities precisely because it is static and contains within itself no possibilities toward a development of actuality for the individuals involved. Direct communication between individuals of the motion of existence, of the subjectivity of the individuals involved, is impossible because of the very nature of subjectivity as an isolation of the individuals from each other. Subjectivity must be the goal, and this determines art within a Kierkegaardian description of existence.

The prospect for Kierkegaard's understanding of the objective and the subjective as a grounding for art is indicated, to an extent, by Broudy in his article "Kierkegaard on Indirect Communication" ⁵⁵. Kierkegaard, for Broudy, argues that subjectivity is the truth of man's existence, and that such a truth cannot be communicated directly. The being of human existence must be communicated indirectly, if it can be communicated at all. Anything that sticks to the ideals of objectivity is unable to communicate the authentic truth about human existence, and can only, thereby, communicate untruths about such a subject. Should a philosopher wish to communicate the authentic truth of human existence, then he must abandon the ideals of objectivity and "resort to modes of communication whose cognitive status in philosophy is suspect." ⁵⁶

Broudy cites five points which he sees Kierkegaard indicating as the problems of communicating subjective truth directly: 1. the effort to communicate subjective truth is nonsensical; 2. direct communication of existential reference points which are constantly in motion determines them as static, which is a falsification of their value; 3. the values of direct communication and objective thought are considered to be unambiguous, but existential and subjective truths are, by their very nature, ambiguous; 4. subjective truths cannot be directly communicated because this directness transforms the truth for the recipient so that it become

⁵⁵Broudy, "Kierkegaard on Indirect Communication", pp. 225-233

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 225

untruth; and 5. existential truths are related to the appropriational mode or the propositional epistemic relation rather than the assertion.

It is the final point which is vital. Broudy asserts that the subjective is a matter primarily indicated in the form of the communication rather than in its content. Kierkegaard asserts that it is not necessarily the truth content itself which is of value, but the manner in which the truth is communicated; the truth of existence, once it is communicated, still remains the truth, but that the method whereby the truth is passed from one individual to another is more important. This emphasis on the form of the communication reflects Kierkegaard's own interests and concerns. Throughout his writing there is a conflict between directness and indirectness, reflected most clearly in the differences between the signed and the unsigned texts. It is when Kierkegaard sets up indirect communication as the only vital and able means of communication allocated to the individual to communicate truth to each other that art takes its place within his system. Communication can reflect an historical, objective truth, but subjectivity is the primary concern of the individual and, therefore, must be one of the determinants for the form of the communication if it is to reflect the individual's concern with both its own and another individual's existence and relation to the actual. The communication's form should reflect not a distancing of the recipient from the truth, through an imposition of a style of form that excludes the recipient,⁵⁷ but should be an enclosing element within the individual's existence producing appropriation, through passionate concern, in the development of a relationship to the actual. Communication's form should be a reminding in the style of the form of the subjective truth of the individual, a form indicating the separation of the individual from the truth and the granting of grace as the only viable means of a full appropriation of

⁵⁷As well as the creator.

actuality. Since grace cannot be determined by the individual but, with Kierkegaard's framework of Christianity or merely from the existing and continuing separation of the individual from the actual, the form must also be an indication of its inadequacy.

Kierkegaard, Broudy asserts, determines that subjective truths are such that they cannot remain anything but what they are and, yet, they lose their meaning when the individual attempts to express in concrete terms what they mean for him. Broudy indicates three means of indirect communication: irony, behaviour syndrome (i.e. the pseudonyms and Kierkegaard's own method of signed writings), and art. It is the inherent nature of art to reflect the nature of the individual, as described by Kierkegaard. Moving beyond both Kierkegaard and Broudy, art's dialectical nature embodies both objective fact as representation and subjective fact as the product of an individual artist. The very fact of its nature as embodied communication is an objective representation of fact, while the fact that the art object is a product of an individual embodies that individual's subjective nature, requiring a subjective response by the viewer. What is important to continue to remember, against Broudy and Kierkegaard, is that the objectivity is always present, but must also be rejected; the dialectical relation of the embodied objective and subjective must be simultaneously present.

Chapter Three- Repetition, Redoubling, and Reduplication

Repetition, and the various concepts which bear a resemblance to it such as redoubling and reduplication, are an important part of Kierkegaard's development of the individual. They serve a specific role; it is only through their application to the existence of the individual, within the process of communication, that the subjective individual enters into an awareness of its actual existence. Repetition, in particular, is important as an imaginary psychological construction, utilising Kierkegaard's understanding of imagination and communication to indicate the possibilities of further development, while delineating the limitations imposed by a lack of faith. Repetition is the process of carrying out actions with thought of the eternal, the "*conditio sine qua non* of every issue in dogmatics" ⁵⁸ according to Constantin Constantius. This chapter defines the concept, and its further development in other forms: redoubling and reduplication.

The easiest, initial means of defining repetition is to distinguish it from recollection. Repetition and recollection are of the same type, movements in the development or existence of the single individual, but are movements in opposite directions. "What is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas genuine repetition is recollected forward." ⁵⁹ By recollection, Kierkegaard means the ancient understanding of comprehension as it progresses and develops the truth in relation to the individual; the single individual recollects during its lifetime to learn, acquiring knowledge and applying it in recollected form. It is, however, of little significance. For example, the young poet/man of R is in love, but his love is, initially, merely a recollection rather than a repetition of that love. "He was deeply and fervently in love, that was

⁵⁸R, p. 149

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 131

clear, and yet a few days later he was able to recollect his love. He was essentially through with the entire relationship." ⁶⁰ The love of the individual, within recollection, is both a misunderstanding and an inauthentic communication between two individuals; the fact of the relationship and its communication (both between the loved individual and the loving individual to itself) ends as soon as it begins. Recollection is a loss rather than a gain. "Recollection has the great advantage that it begins with the loss; the reason that it is safe and secure is that it has nothing to lose." ⁶¹ Furthermore, in terms of the existing relationship to the actual, recollection is the cessation of interaction with the idea rather than a reaffirmation.

Repetition, in contrast, is not merely the repetition of the past but an earnest, dialectical furtherance of the individual's development in the moment indicating the continuance of the future; it is the "actuality and the earnestness of existence." ⁶² Repetition is the continuance of the individual's involvement with an earnest and authentic approach to existence and its relationship to actuality, a double-movement within existence to reach the actual truth of existence. Repetition is an earnestness about being earnest (i.e. being passionately interested in one's existence). It is a fortification of the individual's awareness of its relationship to the ideal. Kierkegaard makes an explicit reference to this in CA:

But this same thing to which earnestness is to return with the same earnestness can only be earnestness itself; otherwise it becomes pedantry. Earnestness in this sense means the personality itself, and only an earnest personality is an actual personality, and only an earnest personality can do anything with earnestness, for to do anything with earnestness requires, first and foremost,

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 136

⁶¹Ibid., p. 136

⁶²Ibid., p. 133

knowledge of what the object of earnestness is.⁶³

Repetition is a step beyond recollection; it is applied earnestness where earnestness already exists. Earnestness can only be an active part of the individuality if the individual has already earnestness as part of its individuality; a repetition of the capability of earnestness is necessary for the individual to be able to act upon that capability.⁶⁴

Repetition is ultimately a movement towards transcendence. It occurs as an overcome impossibility for the individual. A letter from the young poet points out that Job serves as an example of repetition:

When does it occur? Well, that is hard to say in any human language. When did it occur for Job? When every *thinkable* human certainty and probability were impossible. Bit by bit he loses everything, and hope thereby gradually vanishes, inasmuch as actuality, far from being placated, rather lodges stronger and stronger allegations against him. From this point of view of immediacy, everything is lost...⁶⁵

Repetition is the moment when Job regains everything, not by submitting to the punishment, but by continuing to profess his faith that everything, no matter the difficulty, as part of the process of God's relationship to the individual and the truth of actuality. "Repetition is basically the expression for immanence; thus one finishes despairing and has oneself; one finishes doubting and has the truth."⁶⁶ It is also beyond immanence. The individual accepts the truth of actuality, any previous existence is nullified, and then existence returns again. Repetition is "transcendent, a religious movement by virtue of the absurd- when the borderline of the wondrous is reached, eternity is the true repetition."⁶⁷ Repetition is the inner movement of the

⁶³CA, p. 149, referenced by the Hongs in *FT+R*, p. 363, Note 7.

⁶⁴This categorisation of the capabilities of the individuals does not apply solely to the earnestness of the single individual, but to other capabilities of the individual such as faith or love

⁶⁵R, p. 212

⁶⁶CUP, p. 263

⁶⁷JP, IV B 117, n.d., 1843-44, quoted in *FT+R*, p. 305

individual whereby the ideal of the actual truth of existence is attained and personalised in the individuality of the individual's new existence. McCarthy points out that:

Kierkegaard is positing a concept whose actualization is existential rather than conceptual. In contrast to the Hegelian system, it is not when one gets to the concept (*Begriff*) that one has attained the full meaning. Real repetition is beyond the concept.⁶⁸

The movement points beyond itself and, in indicating further possibilities to the individual, points back again to the individual. Repetition is basically an expression for immanence, with the emphasis now being on its activity as an expression in a movement towards transcendence, though not its achievement.⁶⁹

From this, repetition can be further described as the end product of the communication of the idea and the resulting attempt at an appropriation of that idea as ideal (i.e. as appropriatable and applicable idea).⁷⁰ One of the questions raised is how to translate the purely poetic (esthetic, or, perhaps, the abstract or speculative) of existence or the idea of the actuality of existence into the applicable and appropriatable idea of the actual. It is repetition that solves this all. The explanation for the combining motion of two factors is provided when one considers it as the defining element in the dialectical transition.

⁶⁸McCarthy, Vincent, 'Repetition's Repetitions', *International Kierkegaard Commentary Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, p. 279

⁶⁹The difference between immanence and transcendence is discussed in greater detail in the chapters on the artist and the art object.

⁷⁰What is appropriation in Kierkegaard's philosophy? Poetically, he defines it in the preface to *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions* as such:

Let each do a share- the reader therefore more. The meaning lies in the appropriation. Hence the book's joyous giving of itself. Here there are no worldly "mine" and "thine" that separate and prohibit appropriating what is the neighbour's. Admiration is in part really envy and thus a misunderstanding; and criticism, for all its justification, is in part really opposition and thus a misunderstanding; and recognition in a mirror is only a fleeting acquaintance and thus a misunderstanding- but to see correctly and not want to forget what the mirror is incapable of effecting, that is the appropriation, and the appropriation is the reader's even greater, is his triumphant giving of himself.[†]

[†]*Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, p. 5

The dialectic of repetition is easy, for that which is repeated has been- otherwise it could not be repeated- but the very fact that it has been makes the repetition into something new. When the Greeks said that all knowing is recollecting, they said that all existence, which is, has been; when one says that life is a repetition, one says: actuality, which has been, now comes into existence.⁷¹

Repetition is the means whereby that the already present is revealed as being present to the individual. It extends this further to reveal it as of interest for the individual, already there and already part of the individual's existence. Repetition allows such a process to begin, while not achieving it. Repetition is a process of self-revelation, an acknowledgement of actuality as part of the existence, such that the idea of actuality, within existence, nullifies the previous existence for the individual, allowing the individual to create a new existence based on the new perception of actuality. In essence, repetition becomes a means of creating a new form of existence.⁷²

⁷¹R, p. 149

⁷²Repetition as a concept can be understood furthermore to provide both an escape from the ethical (in its immanent sense) as well as the means of transcending it to enter the religious as ideal. In this sense, it also provides one of the means of producing the authenticity of a communication or the product of a communicator since such a process must be part of the communication of the actual ideal. Again, the difference between recollection and repetition is valuable. Recollection is a social construction, allowing individuals to exist within a web of rituals that determine through the recollection of such rituals the means of communication between individuals. By recollecting what is required in social terms, the individuals can communicate with each other within structures which are acceptable to both sides of the communication, but this can lead into mere chatter.† Constantin writes: "Recollection is the ethnical [ethnische] view of life, repetition the modern." †† Stephen Crites (whose thought provides much of the catalyst for this direction) equates this to the German term *sittliche*- a signification of the social pattern and structure by which individuals interact with each other is established patterns.††† The pattern in which the individual exists provides that individual with a degree of identity, albeit one based on the constructed and recollected social interaction of other individuals. Crites points out: This shared 'ethnic' way of life has the feel of timelessness, the events and decisions of each day, the reiteration of immemorial patterns. Recollection in this sense is not necessarily a bad thing either, but Constantius suggests that repetition implies quite a different relation between personal identity and social identity.††††

The shared social structure is certainly not something that is inherently bad for the individual- Kierkegaard implies in his thoughts on communication that such a learned form of communication is necessary for the individual to interact and communicate with other individualities. But it would also be correct to state that Kierkegaard would require of the authentically developing and communicating individual the necessity to transcend those structures. An inert development of social interaction only leads to an

The authentically developing individual must become determined, in its form of communication, not by the bonds imposed by recollection, but by the self-determining movement and moment of repetition. He must act as the Job of the young man's letters, whose missives to Constantin suggests that he is searching not just for an escape from the social mess that he is placed himself into, but a new means of establishing his identity. The young man writes of his inability to find an identity among other individuals: "I do not converse with people... What could be gained if I did say something- there is no one who understands me. My pain and suffering are nameless, even as I myself am nameless..."⁷³; but he finds a path towards a self-re-establishment of his identity in the example of Job. Job is an example, for the young man, of an individual discovering a relationship with God in which the identity of the individual is affirmed. Because of this, the individual is able to return to communication with other individualities as an example of that affirmation. Job becomes, for the individual, a being who has entered a category which is beyond esthetics or the ethical and which is transcendent, a movement through one mode of existence and into another

inert level of communication between individuals- something which the example of the "Attack" *Upon Christendom* suggests as well.

†See Peter Fenves' *Chatter* concerning this concept.

††R, p. 149

†††For example, Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, trans. Knox, Oxford, 1967, pp. 122-123:

182. The concrete person, who is himself the object of his particular aims, is, as a totality of wants and a mixture of caprice and physical necessity, one principle of civil society. But the particular person is essentially so related to other particular persons that each establishes himself and finds satisfaction by means of others, and at the same time purely and simply by means of the form of universality, the second principle here.

183. In the course of the actual attainment of self ends- an attainment conditioned in this way by universality- there is formed a system of complete interdependence, wherein the livelihood, happiness, and legal status of one man is interwoven with the livelihood, happiness, and rights of all. On this system, individual happiness, &c., depend, and only in this connected system are they actualized and secured. This system may be prima facie regarded as the external state, the state based on need, the state as the Understanding envisages it.

††††Crites, Stephen. " 'The Blissful Security of the Moment' Recollection, Repetition, and Eternal Recurrence" , *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Fear and Trembling and Repetition*, ed. Perkins, Robert. Mercer University Press, Mercer, GA, 1993, p. 231

⁷³R, p. 203

through the authentic appropriation of actuality.⁷⁴ Through repetition, the communication is transformed, becoming wholly personal, specific to the individual, and universally applicable in a transcendental manner. Repetition becomes the means of breaking down the ethic forms of communication to produce a form which is transcendent in nature in the direction of the ideal. In effecting the process of repetition, the very process authenticates the nature of the individual's development as an individual, singling out the individual from the 'crowd' in order to ground his communication in ideality. The authentic communicator- the authentic artist- is an exception, one no longer bound by the constraints of societal requirements. Instead, through repetition, the individual has encountered his own possibility of development and allowed the singularly necessary possibility, leading to appropriation, to occur; in spite of the inherent impossibility of its occurrence. The young man, as the example of the process, asks Constantin- "How did I get involved in this big enterprise called actuality?"⁷⁵ He discovers the means of removing himself from the proscribed understanding of actuality, placing himself into the prescribed knowledge of it, and reflecting, in itself, the necessity of communication. Repetition is the moment when the individual becomes an individual, aware of the responsibility of his existence in relation to actuality, and aware of his existence as a movement within eternity. He becomes also aware of the responsibility that he has to his past, present and, most importantly, his future.

⁷⁴This is, of course, an ordeal-

This category, ordeal, is not esthetic, ethical, or dogmatic- it is altogether transcendent. Only as knowledge about an ordeal, that it is an ordeal, would be included in a dogmatics. But as soon as the knowledge enters, the resilience of the ordeal is impaired, and the category is actually another category. This category is absolutely transcendent and places a person in a purely personal relationship of opposition to God, in a relationship such that he cannot allow himself to be satisfied with an explanation at second hand.†

The process of the movement of repetition- the ordeal which occurs during the transcendence- becomes a collision for the individual with the individual's preconceived bonds of communication.

†R p. 210

⁷⁵R, p. 200

The movement into the moment of eternity, which contains the past, present, and future, is one not of recollection but of repetition. It is the intersection of the past, present, and future with the responsibility that the individual assumes and appropriates for its future self; the individual becomes involved in the confrontation with the impossibility of a future as a self grounded ontologically within Christianity.

As Crites explains, this eternity is not an eternal present- one in which the individual is continually aware of and existing in a state of existence that is not dissipated in the past nor fragmented in the possibilities of the future, "concentrating the fullness of being in itself" ⁷⁶- because the eternal present is a state of static being, rendering conditional judgements and requirements of the individual empty. It is a blessed state of being, in which the individual remains the individual without threat or promise of change. What is required of the individual entering into repetition is the continual movement of the individual, acting in a process of self-transformation within the moment of existence, which becomes a series of moments. The elements of time are synthesised, by the individual self, within the self; they become not a static moment within the present, but a moment that is an expression of the continued existence within the actuality of the individual. By repetition, in which the individual is able to come to recognise itself as spirit, reflecting upon itself as itself in relation to the truth of actuality, the individual enters into a state of existence in the moment in which the moment itself is recognised not as merely the present but as linked to the eternal. Kierkegaard in CA describes this understanding of the moment in two stages. First the moment is recognised as existing within the present as a vanishing point, particularly in the case of the Greeks conception of time:

⁷⁶Crites, p. 236

Whatever its etymological explanation, it is related to the category of the invisible, because time and eternity were conceived equally abstractly, because the concept of temporality was lacking, and this again was due to the lack of the concept of spirit... Thus understood, the moment is not properly an atom of time but an atom of eternity. It is the first reflection of eternity in time, its first attempt, as it were, at stopping time. For this reason, Greek culture did not comprehend the atom of eternity... did not define it with a forward direction but with a backward direction.⁷⁷

This stage recognises only the moment as one in which the present is attendant, yet, one which seems to the individual to be not within existence. No sense of temporality (within which the individual's existence resides) remains. Yet, the recognition of the synthesis of the individual's self further allows, within the repetition, the individual to recognise the temporal nature of the moment, linking it not only to the present but also recognising its eternal nature. By entering into a state of repetition, the individual can posit and appropriate its authentic nature as spirit and, therefore, can also posit the moment within which it exists to be eternal.

The synthesis of the temporal and the eternal is not another synthesis but is the expression for the first synthesis, according to which man is a synthesis of psyche and body that is sustained by spirit. As soon as the spirit is posited, the moment is present.⁷⁸

The future is thus created as a necessary aspect of the individual's own existence within actuality. The individual is not allowed to abstract the moment from actuality into existence and, therefore, remove its potential and responsibilities for the existing individuality (as it would in the eternal present); it must retain its temporal and eternal elements. The moment determines the future as it should be, as a guide, in both the sense of boundary and path for the individual,

⁷⁷CA, p. 88

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 88

allowing the individual to be able to relate to itself as spirit within the context of its future as individuality, while simultaneously determining itself based upon its relation to its past and present. Crites writes:

the future, considered simply as one of the modes of temporality itself, cannot contain this whole. But... it is the future considered as eternity that contains the entire temporal sphere. Furthermore, this eternal future stands in an intrinsic relation to the temporal present: the two are united in the moment, which is just the present set in motion by the eternal future.⁷⁹

The eternal future, as a repetition of the individuality's temporal existence, is the continued possibilities of the individual, bounded by an understanding of its nature within temporality. Thus, repetition becomes a moment in which the continuing existence of the individual comes into a relationship with the actual.

Extrapolating from this, the differences between eternal present and eternal future describe the form of the authentic communication of the the idea of the actual ideal,⁸⁰ as opposed to the inauthentic. This has specific consequences for the art object. In *R*, for example, the young man is swept into a state of recollection by his love for the young woman, but this love is one not of communication between the two individualities. Rather, the love between the two individuals is one that takes place completely within the mind of the young man who, through recollection of the idea which he himself has created of the young woman, continues to torment himself.

Falling in love does not create an actual relation between him and the young woman. It awakens something purely internal in himself, his capacity to create an imaginative ideality in language. He adores her, but his adoration takes the form of an unsurpassable longing, ostensibly for her but really for his ideal image of her.⁸¹

⁷⁹Crites, p. 243

⁸⁰From this point onward, the description of authentic communication must generally be understood to mean an indication of the authentic art object.

⁸¹Crites, p. 231

This imaginative construction, which he himself has created, comes between the actual woman and the real woman. The form of the communication between himself and the object of his love, within recollection, is a separation from the object, one that cannot and will not be brought together. The object is lost to the young as long as he remains held by the recollection of the object, unable to enter into state of repetition whereby he would be able to appropriate the truth of his existence and therefore balance himself out in relation to other individuals.

Recollection, and its manifestation as eternal present, reflects an aesthetic achievement for Crites, containing a moment of epiphany. It is an aesthetic achievement, presenting itself as the embodiment of possibility through immediacy and reflection, while remaining wholly tied to the present state of the individual. Through immediacy, there is a concentration within the moment of the present moment. Through reflection, there is a reflective transcendence of the temporality which is maintained within the immediacy of the temporality of the moment, thereby producing a synthetic object. This matches, however, merely the esthetic form of the communication. Crites is wrong to be so simple about the aesthetic (he means, of course, the esthetic, but by implication the aesthetic object). Recollection, and the eternal present as the communication of the communication, may be authentic for the state of development for the communicating individual, but lack the possibility of a full development of the communication of the idea of the actual truth of existence. Crites might identify this state of the eternal present as being an aesthetic achievement, but it is recognisable in Constantin's own example, wherein the form of the object can only be one of separation:

At one time I was very close to complete satisfaction... Everything was prescient in me, and everything was enigmatically transfigured

in my microcosmic bliss, which transfigured everything in itself, even the most disagreeable... it was one o'clock on the dot when I was at the peak and had presentiments of the highest of all; when suddenly something began to irritate one of my eyes... in the same instant I was plunged down almost into the abyss of despair... Since then I have abandoned every hope of ever feeling satisfied absolutely and in every way...⁸²

Constantin can find in the self-generated, momentary illusion that he himself generates a hope of satisfaction or repast from the restlessness which the lack of an engagement enforces upon his self. His expression resembles nothing if not a typically overly exuberant collision that someone who would not be engaging with an art object might have. What might be interpreted as being present is a separation of the individual receiving the communication from the art object's actual communication. This inauthenticity is present, both in the reception as well as in the production of the art object.

Authenticity, in contrast, can occur when the individual, in both the reception and the production of the communication, maintains repetition as part of the individual's authentic development. What is required is that the individual remains not within the eternal present, but seeks to implement the eternal future within the present in its appropriation of the idea and, therefore, the actual ideal into its existence. The key to the form of communication of the idea of the actual ideal lies in repetition as an indication of the eternal future.

Repetition is a vital element in the communication of eternity to another individuality. Eternity is not a dissipation of existence but an affirmation of the present in its fullest sense; repetition is the facilitation of the eternal in the present, pointing towards the continued transcendent position that the future has in relation to the present. Crites cites some examples taken from Kierkegaard's writings as examples of

⁸²R, pp. 173-174

art objects as communications of the eternal present-Mozart's *Don Juan* and the theatre that is attended by Constantin- and in doing so labels them as "examples of the pursuit of bliss afforded by the eternal present."⁸³ In doing so, he cites these examples of art objects as authentic communications as the culmination of aesthetics, as if the eternal present can be interpreted as the only example of the path that art must take. He fails to realise, however, that the eternal future holds a specific and more viable place within aesthetics, despite the opposing argument that an aesthetic art object is, by its very nature, an eternally present object. The possibility of the art object as eternal future is rightly held up as a vanishing possibility (particularly in the form of the young man's vanishment from Constantin's sight) but, in its very example as an imagined construction, there is the possibility for the eternal future to be embodied in the form of the art object which the young man himself represents.

Repetition provides the self-transformative movement. It can do this by remaining a repository of the present while simultaneously being a synthesis as indication of the authentic possibilities and responsibilities of the future of the individual. This reading of the authentic communication, within the context of repetition, takes place parallel to Crites reading of the present's relation to the future per CA and R, but with a different result.

The inadequateness which Crites sees in repetition, however, is not completely misplaced. While he fails to engage with the possibility of the potentially authentic communication as the embodiment and the inducement of repetition within another individual, Kierkegaard's own further description of the development of repetition begins to annul any initial positive approach. Any discussion of recollection and repetition leads to the related concepts of redoubling and reduplication, which

⁸³Crites, p. 237

are internalised intensifications of repetition. According to the Hongs, redoubling (*Fordobleslse*) is an ontological category for a kind of being belonging to the realm of faith. Philosophical thought normally explains empirical or limited being, through which such thought can explore and explain abstract concepts as abbreviations of being. Only when the thinker explores concrete being within the context of higher faith, within the religious, does reduplication take place. It is important to recognise the differences between redoubling (or, in Poole's translation, "doubled reflection"⁸⁴) and reduplication at this point. Poole determines doubled reflection as a form of communication which implies a separation of the communicator from the communication even though the communication may be authentic in nature and indirect. This separation denies, to some degree, the process of appropriation by the communicated because the communication is unable to be repeated within that individual's existence and applied to its actuality. Reduplication is more important and more authentic. The communication of the communicator is infused with the communicator's own existence, and remains indirect. Because the communication and the communicator act within existence as an indication of a singular truth, the communication can be appropriated by the receiving individual; the very fact of reduplication in one individual acts to reduplicate itself indirectly in the receiving individual and thereby determine itself.

However, as Poole at least alludes to, in referring the concept of reduplication to the position of the pseudonym Anti-Climacus of *SUD* and *PC*, this reduplication becomes a complete appropriation of the actual ideal. In effect, for Kierkegaard and for Poole, reduplication becomes an appropriation and application within the existence of the individual only in relation to the fullest embodiment of the existence-actual being: Christ. The individual's being consists of body-mind, as

⁸⁴Poole, *Kierkegaard: The Indirect Communication*, p. 257

empirical/objective reality, and possibility, as the possibility of appropriation of the actual within existence. Kierkegaard writes:

A person's task, then, is to form a synthesis of these two parts in redoubling. When the synthesis is actualized, each element in man's existence contains a doubleness in that it simultaneously has a temporal and an eternal expression. One reaches redoubling as an ontological category in the sphere of faith.⁸⁵

Redoubling is an indication of the eternal self; it is the presentation of the individual's own self as a relationship to actuality. Reduplication is the further step forward, such that existence becomes the actual, and it is a necessary step forward.⁸⁶ Reduplication is to be what one says or to exist in what one understands, presupposing reflection as the knowledge to appropriated the actual. This whole process remains, however, an impossibility except in the face of death. Actuality cannot be fully realised within existence except in the collision of existence and actuality. Reduplication, therefore, becomes an impossibility within existence.

Kierkegaard always implies in his description of recollection, repetition, redoubling and reduplication a possibility of communication. In fact, they require communication; all four are the embodiment of the appropriation of a position of knowledge within existence in relation to the actual, necessitating the importation of an externalised position as part of the process of appropriation. What neither Kierkegaard nor the secondary literature describe, however, is the dialectical nature (in a Kierkegaardian sense) of this communication. The very possibility of this communication necessitates its impossibility. This is seen in Constantin's own description of repetition. He notes that there is almost an impossibility to true repetition in that it requires the 'death' of the individuality in favour of a further

⁸⁵JP, Vol. 3, p. 908

⁸⁶Necessary since the process of development through recollection, repetition, and redoubling is always a process towards the appropriation of the actual into existence, which can only be accomplished by reduplication.

possibility, i.e. the individual must overcome its own identity in order to reassert its furthered identity. "It may be true that a person's life is over and done within the first moment, but there must also be a vital force to slay this death and transform it into life." ⁸⁷ He further observes⁸⁸ that there is no possibility of repetition at all. For him, the esthetic object, and even the aesthetic object, can only be enjoyed once. This leads to a further point. Even though redoubling and reduplication both would appear to be transcendent by producing the illusion of knowledge of the actual, in effect they remain impossibilities as well. There is an impossibility inherent in them; the position gained remains at odds with existence within actuality. Redoubling is understood as a doubled form of communication, taking place within the realm of the imagination, necessarily characterised as an impossibility, a gap between the reader and the author, the artist and the art object's recipient, whereby the two are completely separated.

By taking place in the form of an imaginary construction, the communication creates for itself an opposition, and the imaginary construction establishes a chasmic gap between reader and author and fixes the separation of inwardness between them, so that a direct understanding is made impossible. The imaginary construction is the conscious, teasing revocation of the communication, which is always of importance to an existing person who writes for existing persons, lest the relation be changed to that of a rote reciter who writes for rote reciters.⁸⁹

The imaginary construction as communication retains an opposition to the existence and the process within existence of gaining knowledge of the actual which is an inherent possibility of the individual. Kierkegaard further writes regarding redoubling:

No doubt there have been keener and more gifted authors than I, but I would certainly like to

⁸⁷R, p. 137

⁸⁸R, pp. 168-169

⁸⁹CUP, pp. 263-264

see the author who has reduplicated [redupliceret] his thinking more penetratingly than I have in the dialectic raised to the second power. It is one thing to be keenly penetrating in books, another to redouble [fordoble] the thought dialectically in existence. The first form of the dialectic is like a game played for nothing other than the game; reduplication is like a game in which the enjoyment is intensified by being played for high stakes. The dialectic in books is merely the dialectic of thinking, but reduplication of such thinking is action in life. But every thinker who does not reduplicate the dialectic of his thinking continuously constructs an illusion. His thinking never gains the decisive expression of action. He tries to correct misunderstands etc. in a new book, but it is of no use, for he continues in an illusion of communication. Only the ethical thinker, by acting, can protect himself against illusions in communications.⁹⁰

And, regarding reduplication, the following two examples serve to determine the impossibility of reduplication as a form of communication, no matter how authentic.

Come Unto Me All of You. If the object is to say these words esthetically, then the art would be to say them in such a way that literally everybody, if possible, comes. Christ said them in such a way that the effect was that everybody ran away from him. Here again is the reduplication which is in everything essentially Christian.⁹¹

and

The essentially Christian is the rigorousness of the reduplication [Reduplicationens] with which the teacher, even more cruel toward himself in serving the idea, watches lest the winning of men develop into an illusion for them, lest it become something they say, etc., also lest the cause very gradually go backward, lest it be held to the center less than originally, which usually is the case the more there are who join up.⁹²

As forms of communication, as means whereby the positive potential of an authentic communication can take place between two individuals, all of these concepts maintain a specific and valuable place within Kierkegaard's

⁹⁰JP, Vol. 3, p. 698, << 3665 (VIII¹ A 91, n.d. 1847)

⁹¹JP, Vol. 3, p. 705, <<3683 (X³ A 377, n.d. 1850)

⁹²JP, vol. 1, p. 212, <<518, X³ A 100, n.d., 1850:

description of the existence of the individual and its relationship to its actuality; they serve as part of the process of appropriation of the idea as ideal. However, the very nature of the fullness of a development of reflectiveness, of an application and appropriation of knowledge of the actual ideal into existence, contains within it an impossibility. As will be seen in the final chapter, however, this is to the advantage of the art object.

Chapter Four- Direct and Indirect Communication

Kierkegaard's theory of communication was never fully articulated, found only in brief references scattered throughout the published texts and in journal and paper entries. Though he planned to set it out in a series of lectures, this was never realised. Still, communication for Kierkegaard was of vital importance. His writing was directed at the individual and the individual's relationship to the truth of its existence, namely, its ontological grounding and its place within Christianity. This concern manifests itself first with the truth of existence as such and, through understanding a specific conception of the truth, how one can communicate truth to the individual.

As has been seen, the objective nature of a systematic exposition of theory did not appeal to Kierkegaard in that it conflicted with the existence of the individual. Yet, a systematic description was necessary to communicate cohesively. The essence of communication in Kierkegaard, the central aspect to understand, is that it, like all concepts in his thought, is dialectical. Communication takes place between two individuals, necessarily dialectical themselves, and is, therefore, dialectical in structure. The dialectical nature of communication develops as the unity of synthesis, the combination of contradictory terms within an organic whole, which accurately elaborates existence as existing. Communication is the flow of information, leading to knowledge of existence, between individuals which is not unstructured but which can fulfil all individuals' places within the community and in relationship to God.

The truth of existence which emerges for Kierkegaard is the subjective grounding of the individual's understanding first, leading to the next part of the process: the direction of the development of the individual towards a passionately determined decision with God and Christianity. The truth of existence is both

a function and a universally valid aspect of the individual, rather than something that can be understood solely through observation. Truth is not a turning away from existence into objectivity, but a process of appropriation of both externality and revelation through an emphasis on the subjective nature of the individual. The process of appropriation is absolutely vital, since objective observation and speculation never fully determines the exact nature of the truth for the individual, keeping it in static compromise rather than allowing it reciprocally to determine the individual's own existence. For Kierkegaard, truth is subjectivity, appropriated and transformed within and through Christianity into the individual existence.

This process of appropriation by the individual calls into question the manner in which the truth can be communicated. Objectivity distorts the nature of truth for the individual, transforming it into something which it is not, removing the fact of existence from its being for the perceiver. Subjectivity brings the truth into the individual's existence, making it a necessary aspect of what it means to be an individual. This, however, also has problems, since the individual, in appropriating the truth of existence only through subjectivity, tends to sink into a reified understanding of subjectivity;⁹³ since a requirement of communication would seem to be subjectivity, how can communication take place at all? Both objectivity and subjectivity seem to deny the very possibility of communication itself; both remove the individual from any relationship with other individuals.

Communication is, therefore, plagued with problems. What is required is that a theory of communication takes into account both the direct and indirect communication of existence from one individual to another, such that both the idea in objectivity and the ideal in subjectivity become necessary for the individual; at the same time, any theory of communication must also take

⁹³A position very similar to Fichte's philosophy.

into account the process of exchange. Communication's method is not only an exchange of information, but must be a manner of leading the individual from inauthentic selfhood to authentic selfhood, employing an educational method that constantly respects the integrity of choice as a necessary element for the individual's development into an individual self. Kierkegaard's theory of communication is such that communication must both directly speak to, while simultaneously and indirectly approaching, both the spirit and the soul of the individual; it must facilitate the development of the individual toward a better understanding, within the process of appropriation, of its relationship with God and Christianity, and the allowing of choice by that individual receiving the communication.

This chapter describes the Kierkegardian conception of communication, showing how these are related as possibility to another gap in Kierkegaard's thought- his conception of art. This is done in four parts: 1. Communication of knowledge through both direct and indirect means; 2. communication of capability through the indirect; 3. communication of the Christian, necessarily indirect; and 4. the application of both direct and indirect communication as embodying one possibility for the grounding of art, a grounding which provides the form of such a communication (not the content) for the art object. As a final part, though, the entire theory of communication is briefly shown to be inadequate to its purpose. Communication, whether direct or indirect, remains an impossibility in light of the subjective nature of the appropriation by the individual of knowledge of the actual grounding of its existence. Communication of any sort remains within Kierkegaard's structure an impossibility.

1. Communication Of Knowledge Through Both Direct And Indirect Means

The difference between direct and indirect communication is the manner in which they create knowledge for the individual. Knowledge takes two forms: 1. knowledge about something; 2. self-knowledge. Direct communication is the conveyance of information from one individual to another in a direct fashion- knowledge about something. It is based on objectivity, the observation of facts which are external to the individual. Direct communication of ideas and facts are necessary for individuals; without them, they could not function in the world. "We human beings need each other, and in that there is already a directness." ⁹⁴ Still, there is something lacking in the direct exchange of ideas between individuals for Kierkegaard.

Direct communication is dangerous when trying to communicate eternal truths between individuals on two levels. First, communication of knowledge may be direct, through imagination (which is the creative capacity of combining the elements of all thought), but a genuine engagement with this direct knowledge for the individual's existence is not possible. Direct communication does not engage the individual's existence sufficiently to produce for him self-knowledge. Second, impatience may get the better of the communicating individual. The target may become hostile to the message. Kierkegaard cautions that:

First and foremost, no impatience. If he becomes impatient, he will rush headlong against it and accomplish nothing. A direct attack only strengthens a person in his illusion, and at the same time embitters him. There is nothing that requires such gentle handling as an illusion, if one wishes to dispel it. ⁹⁵

The direct communication forces the individual to reassess its objective existence, not from within its own subjectivity, but through a presented objectivity external to itself. A direct attack achieves nothing, since it does not persuade the individual to the truth

⁹⁴JP, Vol. 2, p.384

⁹⁵PV, p.25

away from the deception which constitutes his existence, but forces it on him.

And this is what a direct attack achieves, and it implies moreover the presumption of requiring a man to make another person, or in his presence, an admission which he can make most profitably to himself privately.⁹⁶

The direct attack upon the individual's preconceived ideas, static and incorrect in the case of eternal truths, may seem necessary for the communicator, whose existence is in truth, but only reinforces the individual's firmly held ideas and deception resulting from these ideas. Rather than slowly convincing him to move beyond that which he knows in a static state, to incorporate that which he can make his own decision about, direct communication serves to convince him that he is right, keeping the individual in a static, inauthentic state of existing. The direct communication of ideas, the direct communication about eternal truths, is impossible if it is to be appropriated into the individual's existence. Rather, the better method is the gradual convincing of the individual whereby he comes to those truths himself.

One may assume that the targeted individual is in an illusion, but to point this out to him in a direct manner only invites failure; the receiving individual is more prepared to reject the message rather than accept. The target individual is in an illusion, his existence is occupied by it. The first task must be to remove this illusion, but this can only be done by an illusion itself, by negativity.

Assuming then that a person is the victim of an illusion, and that in order to communicate the truth to him the first task, rightly understood, is to remove the illusion- if I do not begin by deceiving him, I must begin with direct communication. But direct communication presupposes that the receiver's ability to receive is undisturbed. But here such is not the case; an illusion stands in the way. That is to say, one must first of all use the

⁹⁶Ibid., p.25-26

caustic fluid.⁹⁷ But this caustic means is negativity, and negativity understood in relation to the communication of the truth is precisely the same as deception.⁹⁸

This deception consists of accepting the target's own preconceptions, rather than simply seeking to do away with them. "What then does it mean, 'to deceive'? It means that one does not begin *directly* with the matter one wants to communicate, but begins by accepting the other man's illusion as good money."⁹⁹ Direct communication transmits information that is necessary for existence as a human being,¹⁰⁰ but not the form of information which can, through appropriation into the existence of the individual, develop him out of his deception and into authenticity. " 'Direct communication' means to communicate the truth directly. 'Communication in terms of reflection' means to beguile a person into the truth."¹⁰¹ This takes into account that the individual is always in a state of existence, of motion rather than static form, and his communication must display this. Direct communication is inappropriate to communicate eternal truths because the very act of communicating in such a manner only serves to cease the motion of existence that is embodied by these eternal truths. Any attempt to directly communicate the reflection of the individual only results in a contradiction which distorts these truths. Indirect communication differs from direct communication in that it is a deception at first but, through the receiving individual's own reflection, this deception becomes truth. The indirect method, as the form of such communication, achieves far more than the direct. The form of direct communication is adequate only in specific cases, but inadequate for those truths that need to be appropriated by the subjective individuality. The art and

⁹⁷A reference to a previous simile, where the example of discovering a hidden text underneath the writing is used.

⁹⁸*PV*, p.40

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, p.40

¹⁰⁰And, problematically, transmits the fact of the illusion of the individual to the communicator, who must appropriate it into his own existence.

¹⁰¹*PV*, p.148

difficulty of communication of knowledge is not in showing that the system is incorrect in its assessment of existence. Direct communication makes the receiving individual misappropriate the communicated knowledge for his existence. Rather, through indirect communication, there should be a bringing out the correct manner of appropriation for the individual's existence such that he is lead by his own thoughts to God and the religious, into knowledge of the actual idea as ideal.¹⁰²

2. Communication Of Capability Through The Indirect

The next stage in communication lies in the genuine realisation of the process of the development of the individual as something which is to be indirectly communicated. Genuine communication resides in the upbringing or training, rather than in the direct passing-on of knowledge. Upbuilding brings out that which the communicator knows to exist already in the individual, rather than believing that he is imparting something on the individual. Upbuilding deals with the universally human, with the capability of being authentically human; in the ethical-religious with the ontologically necessary grounding of the human and its relationship to Christianity. Kierkegaard himself struggles directly with the difference between the direct and the indirect communication of capability, of upbuilding. He writes:

I have been experiencing much spiritual trial [Anfægtelse] thinking about how far one dares to withhold direct communication. O, there are perhaps a few men who have any idea of the fear and trembling involved in having lightness enough to be able to be something else [in order] to act in the service of the truth- and then, then to sit in fear and trembling lest one do anyone harm, all the while understanding that this is the truest way to help another.¹⁰³

¹⁰²Journal and Papers, Vol. 1, p.259-260, <<633

¹⁰³JP, vol. 6, p. 41, <<6230, IX A 217, n.d., 1848I ; direct communication, and an indication that other artists, authors exist besides Kierkegaard himself who are aware of the difficulty of communicating the truth of existence.

This upbringing, as the communication of capability, is found in Kierkegaard in three places, *PV*, his journal entries, and in *The Book of Adler*.

In *PV*, Kierkegaard seeks to reconcile his authorship with the widely-held view that he began as an esthetic author, and changed to a religious. He saw that simply declaring his message to the people would either have him ridiculed or held in great esteem, but ultimately ignored and ineffective. From this, Kierkegaard recognised that: "If one is truly to succeed in bringing a person to a definite point, one must first and foremost pay attention to finding him there, where HE is, and begin there."¹⁰⁴ Communication, if it is to have any effect in bringing the individual to the truth of his existence, must first present itself as if it is a natural part of the individual to whom it is directed, deceiving him in his own existence, rather than trying to carry him out of it against his will.

The indirect manner is a deception, carried out in love for that individual to whom it is addressed. It allows that individual to make his own step forward as the communicator steps away from his offering. This is Kierkegaard's response to the nihilism of his age, which he termed "the levelling of individuality". This levelling is discussed in detail in *PA* (the third part of *TA*) as the process whereby the individuality of each human being loses its value, and all are accounted for as one mass, as part of the crowd. Indirect communication, by requiring the individual to make his own choice about his existence, counters this. By addressing the process of levelling, indirect communication reaffirms the value of each individual's capabilities.

In the lectures on communication, found in the journals, Kierkegaard aims to draw a fundamental difference between the communication of knowledge as direct communication, and the communication of capability. Communication of capability is one aspect of

¹⁰⁴Quoted in Pattison, *Kierkegaard, The Aesthetic and the Religious*, p.71

indirect communication; it is the drawing out of the individual, allowing him to discover his own potential and possibilities and the direction in which he can lead his life. It does not have an object *per se*, but "demonstrates that there is reflection and consequently also a distinction in the direction of 'the object,' namely, negative in the direction of 'the object,' or away from the 'the object.'" ¹⁰⁵ This is most important in the communication of ethical and religious truths. While these are communication of knowledge to some degree, through the learning of Christianity and the constant "you shall", they still remain a communication of capability; the individual has the capability of becoming a Christian to the fullest degree through his own choice rather than through the prescription of an object of understanding. This communication of capability is universal, required of every individual unconditionally, but which every individual already has knowledge of, to some degree. This unconditional knowledge is already known, underlying the concepts of revelation, authority, and choice, as embodied particularly in the example of Abraham in *FT*. Christian dogmatic knowledge can be learned and easily understood by a child, but the individual always knows, within his existence, the Christian truth of existence, which must be communicated to him through indirect means.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵*JP*, Vol. 1, p.281, <<647

¹⁰⁶This lead to the distinction of the maieutic method, which is different from the indirect. The indirect method of communication communicates knowledge to the individual which he does not necessarily have; the maieutic method takes place when the student is reminded of what he already has as capability of his individuality by an individual already in a position of truth. "Where the communication of knowledge is concerned the maieutic is irrelevant." † However, where the communication of capability is concerned, the maieutic is essential, since it brings forth the individual's own capability and confidence in himself through his own decision. The maieutic is the process whereby the communicator does not produce anything himself- such as he does when he communicates knowledge- but allows the target to produce the results of the communication and the development himself. The maieutic differs from the indirect in that the communicator as well as the target are already capable of knowledge of the actual ideal truth.

Kierkegaard deals with this difference most clearly in *PF*, where it emerges that the actual truth of existence is something which must be granted through grace- paralleling the development of form while not actually informing its construction- and where it also emerges that authority is not something granted to the communicator. Indirect communication requires a degree of authority in the person of the communicator, even though this communication develops most ideally as the maieutic in nature. For Kierkegaard, any communication of religious and

3. Communication Of The Christian, Necessarily Indirect

PC offers Kierkegaard's Christian interpretation of the possibilities of communication. It is concerned, firstly, with the development of the individual in a process of healing the sin-consciousness self and, secondly, with the ethics developed through the awareness of the redemptive gift of Christianity. As is suggested by the title, it is concerned with the individual practising Christianity, and the place that his activities as a human have within his development to an acceptance of the ontological grounding of the individual.

PC may be understood in two ways. It constitutes a healing and corrective support of the contemporary established church; it may also be understood as an attack on the establishment. Both views are grounded in the necessity of a dialectical understanding of communication, developed as a doubly-reflective form, making clear the dialectical nature of communication itself. In this respect, *PC* may also be read as an embodiment of Kierkegaard's theory of communication. It is in this dual nature of the communication, embodied by *PC*, that Kierkegaard's theory of communication finds its final form, and where the impossibility of direct communication for the development of an authentic individual becomes determined in relation to the actual in existence.

The central point of the book is the offense of Christianity (examined earlier in the context of *PF*), the

Christian truths must be based on authority that comes from within the individuality- an authority which is based itself on faith and the capability of faith- rather than on a directness which only distorts the truth. Faith is a communication through which no proof, no form of knowledge, can be offered for the receiving individual. Faith is the individual's capability of accepting the paradoxical offense of Christianity. In Christianity, this faith deals solely with the paradoxical nature of the basis of the religion. The communicator vanishes in the face of a requirement for proof of his message, and the recipient is faced with his own decision of acceptance.

The maieutic, however, is essentially not communication and irrelevant to the discussion of the art object.

†Pattison, *Kierkegaard: The Aesthetic and the Religious*, p.77

paradox of the Christ-event, and the individual's relationship to it. In *PC*, Kierkegaard asks about the possibility of any individual being able to declare that he would recognise the God-Individuality of Christ. He asks whether or not one who is not contemporary could say that, should he have been contemporary to Christ, he would have recognised Him as Christ, and Kierkegaard answers absolutely in the negative. For Kierkegaard, this question is blasphemous, since the very point of Christ's existence was his unrecognisability, his status as incognito, and his position as individual within His contemporary society. The very nature of Christ's appearance among humanity as an individual, and not as directly revealed as Christ and God, requires that the incognito aspect of His appearance remain indirect. Essentially, with the paradox which Christ embodies, Kierkegaard would indicate that:

If there is to be a direct communication that remains a direct communication, one must step out of the incognito; otherwise that which in the first is direct communication (the direct statement) still does not become direct communication through the second (the incognito of the communicator).¹⁰⁷

The very nature of the Christ-Event embodies the essential, necessary fact of indirect communication. Therefore, the communication of this fact to others, for whom it is impossible, because they not directly contemporary, must, through necessity, remain indirect.

Indirect communication is necessary for Christianity as communication of the idea of the actual ideal truth of existence and, thus, as the basis of the message of Christ and the ontological grounding of the existence of the individual human. Indirect communication takes two forms in *PC*. First, it is an act of communication which redoubles in reflection that which is reflected upon and communicated to the individual. This involves removing the objective present of the communicator into a purely objective nothing, and then combining that which is

¹⁰⁷*PC*, p.132

present in the dialectical of that which is communicated. The manner in which this occurs is as follows:

One presents faith in the eminent sense and represents it in such a way that the most orthodox sees it as a defence of the faith and the atheist sees it as an attack, while the communicator is zero, a nonperson, an objective something- yet he perhaps is an ingenious secret agent who with the aid of this communication finds out which is which, who is the believe, who the atheist; because this is disclosed when they form a judgement about what is presented, which is neither attack nor defence.¹⁰⁸

This first form of indirect communication presents the very dialectical nature of the communicated to the individual while at the same time revealing the dialectical nature of the individual himself (who may be in a position of both attack and defence). The message may be seen from both directions, in the very manner of *PC* itself.

In the second form, indirect communication can also appear through the relationship between the communication and the communicator. The example of Christ as individual, message, God-Man, and actual ideal makes this clear. Christ cannot be said to have used direct communication, which involves not only direct communication within the communication, but also the direct display of the individual's nature *qua* individual; this is something which is inherently impossible due to Christ's own nature as the God-Man. Direct recognisability is the characteristic of the pagan idol. Even though Christ explicitly states that He is the Son of God, this is still clothed in the fact that He remained a common human individual among men. "He is the sign of contradiction, and by the direct statement He attaches Himself to you only so that you must face the offense of the contradiction."¹⁰⁹ Direct communication of His true nature is impossible for the God-Man. "The true God cannot become directly recognisable, but direct

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p.133

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p.136

recognisability is what the purely human, what the human being to whom he came, would plead and implore him for as an indescribable alleviation." ¹¹⁰ Thus, the very fact of Christianity, the human form of God, cannot be communicated directly but only indirectly, since that is that way that the very event occurred and must be revealed. Therefore, the very humanness of the individual must be removed. What is necessary is faith, and this may only be communicated from one individual to another maieutically.¹¹¹

The possibility of the paradox, the offense of Christianity, the very fact of Christ as the embodiment of the actual ideal of existence, and faith in all these confirms "the chasmic abyss between the single individual and the God-man over which faith and faith alone reaches." ¹¹² The possibility of offense exists for all men, but this offense is a reflective-inducing repulsion, and is, thereby, necessarily indirect. Only through faith is the choice made and accepted, after despair has been reached through sin-consciousness. Only through the indirect form of communication does the individual come authentically to the actual ideal truth of his existence within Christianity. And only through the removal of the communicator does this process occur authentically.

4. The Application Of Both Direct And Indirect Communication As Embodying One Possibility For The Grounding Of Art.

Brayton Polka's interpretation of Kierkegaard's theory of communication is interesting as a modified approach. It lays the burden fully on the responsibility of the individual, while keeping the actual theory of communication withheld from the individual's possibility

¹¹⁰Ibid., p.137

¹¹¹Once again, faith is that which the individual comes to achieve through their own development in relation to the actual, while grace is granted from the actual and cannot be determined by the individuality. Faith cannot, therefore, be communicated.

¹¹²PC, p.139

of coming to terms with it, constructing it so that communication cannot become an aspect of an authentic individual, but a function of authenticity.

Polka's stresses the similarity between existence and Christianity as a dialectical relationship. He equates this dialectical structure to that as between the esthetic and the religious stage of existence. What he observes is that a degree of undecidability constantly emerges, deconstructing the binary opposition such that

the decisiveness of the Kierkegaardian either/or is that it encompasses the undecidability of indirect communication. Its non-dialectical other is the illusory decidability of Christendom whose direct communication reflects indecisiveness.¹¹³

Polka sees Kierkegaard's understanding of communication as rooted first of all in the choice/non-choice offered to the individual by Christianity, in dialectical relationship with the esthetic, and in rejection of the non-choice offered to the individual through the established church of Christendom, expressed in direct and dogmatic form.

The dialectical nature of communication is necessary because of the constant collision of the individual with the paradoxical offense which is Christianity, as seen in *PC*. The reader is, essentially, bound up in his existence with this offense until he either fully accepts or rejects the acceptance of the religious (whereby all of the texts are accepted as being religious). Ultimately, all communication becomes understood, by the individual, as being religious in nature, even if it does not appear that way on the surface. Communication is religious because it embodies that which it is to be human, namely spirit, as well as that which it is to be ontologically grounded within God, brought into and existing through the grace of God.

Though the nature of human existence as spiritual may make direct communication impossible in the absolute

¹¹³Polka, Brayton. "Aesthetics and Religion: Kierkegaard and the Offense of Indirect Communication". in *Kierkegaard on Art and Communication*. ed. Pattison, George., p.28

sense, both it and indirect communication are necessarily aspects of the existence of the individual. Undecidability may remain, even though the individual within the Christian paradox may understand this paradoxical offense as direct and decidable, but Kierkegaard's exposition of the dialectical nature of communication makes this an impossibility. Polka's understanding of communication emphasises the necessity for the individual to come to terms with in order to be authentic; the individual must accept the undecidable nature of the Christian offense and accept it through faith.

One soon becomes aware that there is nothing aesthetic in itself, for what is aesthetic must express the spirit of being human- in its most diverse manifestations, including its degradations as idolatrous Christendom- and what is spirit always embodies the indirect communication which is metaphor and paradox. The same is true of the religious. To attempt to capture either God or human being- including the God-Individual- directly in image or concept, or even directly outside the image or concept, is the rankest idolatry (heresy). There is no image outside its concept, except as idol, and there is not concept outside its image, except as idol.¹¹⁴

Therefore, all that remains is the undecidable nature of acceptance of the Christian offense, based on faith. The religious is the offense, the paradox, the embodiment of the communication as it should be in Christian form, and is, therefore, by its very nature, undecidable.

I am not in complete agreement with Polka's understanding of Kierkegaard's form of communication, but it points in the right direction. Communication, in Kierkegaard's authorship, begins with the tension that exists between the direct communication of knowledge from one individual to another and the indirect communication of the truth of existence, on which every individuality is based in actuality. For Polka, all the texts, and hence Kierkegaard's theory on communication, become religious. This is an impossibility, since the actual

¹¹⁴Polka, p.50

cannot be appropriated fully into existence until the end of existence; the communication of the actual idea of the ideal within existence is an impossibility. In the development of the authorship, this tension is resolved wholly in favour of the indirect as the only means of communication which is vital for the individual. Yet, this understanding is lacking not only in Polka's development but also Kierkegaard's. Because the gravity of Kierkegaard's thought is centred around the exposition of Christianity as the actual truth of individual human existence, the functionality of communication in general terms is underdeveloped and impossible. More specifically, what is required is an interpretation of the value which communication has for the individual, within Kierkegaard's thought.

Kierkegaard's theories suggest the possibilities of communication, but are lacking in this specific instance. Beginning with the communication of knowledge, it is clear that communication fully expresses this aspect in both direct and indirect form. Indeed, as must be implied by the direction of this thesis, art, specifically as communication, can take place solely on this level, making known facts of existence as knowledge in pure form, having nothing to do with the existence of individuals *per se*. Historical facts, facts of appearance, and facts of narration are firmly rooted in the possibility of direct communication which can be concreted in "artistic" form. It is clear that this is the simplest and most obvious point of possibility for art as communication, and the least problematic. Yet, *contra* Polka and Kierkegaard, I question whether or not this interpretation of art communicates (as objectivity) the fact of the individual's existence and, therefore, whether art can have any value under this conception of it. Clear objective fact may state distinct objective truth, and is necessary for certain forms of understanding and interaction with actuality, but the conveyance of the truth of individuality in existence does not occur. The appropriation and application of

actual ideal truths may also form a direction whereby the individual is able to more fully come to knowledge of the actual, but the actual is always in confrontation with existence until it becomes the existence of the individual (which occurs only in death). Thereby, communication itself *always* remains an impossibility, inadequate even in indirect form.

With indirect communication, the possibility of art becomes partially capable and, thereby, positive. Capability is more than the development through indirect means of an individual's faculties. Communication of such may declare what is necessarily and concretely required of the individual to exist in actuality, but points beyond actuality to the universal and eternal nature of existence as it exists for the receiving individual. Because the communication of capability is indirect, art too must be indirect and, through this indirectness, it has value for the individual. Art may not only be constructed of reflection and the maieutic but also a form of revelation and the materialising of faith itself. The possibility of art as the communication of capability addresses firmly the possibility of understanding and rejecting the esthetic manner of existence.

With this understanding of the communication of capability lies a second conceptualisation of art. Even the possibility of communication of the Christian as being necessarily indirect¹¹⁵ is also a further indication of another set of value for the possibility of art. Though Kierkegaard, at times, refuses to understand the purpose of any direct religious depiction (which would place any such communication as art form in the category of direct communication of knowledge, rather than the conveyance of self and Christian knowledge), art, as embodied communication, quite clearly can manifest, through indirect means, the requirements of an indirect communication of Christian truths. By presenting the paradoxical nature of the individual's relationship to

¹¹⁵As fulfilled by PC.

Christianity through indirect means,¹¹⁶ by even representing this relationship to existence alone, art as communication fulfils the possibilities of communication which Kierkegaard describes. It is, nevertheless, an impossibility. By addressing the paradox of existence, in relation to the actual (which occurs as the message and truth of Christianity), communication maintains a possibility of value in Kierkegaard's thought, but one which has its own problems.

Despite the Kierkegaardian description of communication and, in particular, of indirect communication and its apparent usefulness as a means of communicating the idea as ideal, the actual within existence, it still remains an impossibility. In terms of reflection, for example (which implies recollection, repetition, redoubling, and reduplication), it is important to note that reflection cannot be a result that directs itself out from the individual, but remain wholly within the individual's own dialectical and synthetic self. This is seen most clearly in the difference between the upbuilding discourses and the indirect and pseudonymous texts. In the first, reflection is not there to be communicated, but concerns itself with ideas which are already fixed, and seeks to directly change them. In the indirect texts, "reflection does not presuppose the qualifying concepts as given and understood; therefore, they [the indirect texts] must not so much move, mollify, reassure, persuade, as awaken and provoke men and sharpen thought."¹¹⁷ Regarding communication itself specifically, Kierkegaard makes this statement, expressing striving and how it is modified by grace:

With regard to the claim of ideality, it may be right to present the ideal higher than one himself is existentially if he then, note well, makes an admission concerning himself. In this area it may be right, for indeed one ought to express striving. But with regard to grace it would be nonsense if one proclaimed grace for

¹¹⁶By either the redoubling of reflection or through the very existence of the communicator, the artist and then by removing itself.

¹¹⁷JP, Vol. 1, p.263, <<641

others and denied that it is for himself. Grace pertains to receiving, not to my worthiness but rather to my unworthiness. Without any embarrassment at all I can speak of grace because I thereby also speak indirectly of my own unworthiness.¹¹⁸

How can the actual ideal be presented? Only in striving, but only in a striving which is also an impossibility as communicable idea. Does Kierkegaard recognise this? Regarding specifically the actual, he does. However, what Kierkegaard does not recognise is that the very impossibility of communicating the actual means the communication itself becomes impossible in its entirety. What is clear from another journal entry is that indirect communication remains inadequate to the depiction of the actual ideal: "...in connection with Christianity the indirect method is only transitional, for Christianity, after all, has grace to proclaim."¹¹⁹ It must be noted, though, that grace is something which can only be given to the individual by the actual ideal of God, and not communicated as either knowledge or capability by another existing individual. Art is not grace. In this, communication embodies an unworthiness within the context of the actual.

¹¹⁸JP, vol. 2, p. 164, <<1470, X² A 188, n.d., 1849

¹¹⁹JP, vol. 6, p. 427, <<6783, ⁴ A 395, n.d., 1851

Part Two: Artist, Art Object, and the Death of Art Introduction

This section will serve as an introduction to the second part of my thesis, which provides the descriptive analysis of a Kierkegaardian aesthetic from within an exclusive focus on the potential of the art object. The first part of my thesis developed the Kierkegaardian grounds within which the art object must function. On the basis of the previous chapters therein, the art object can be considered to emerge as a type of communication which is ideal in nature (in that it is the communication between two individuals of knowledge of the truth of, for Kierkegaard, the Christian ideal or, more generally applicable, knowledge of the existing individual's relation to the ontological grounding of its existence as idea of the ideal), dialectical (in that it involves a communication between two individuals, and contains in its nature opposing concepts), and in a specific relation to the individual (in that the communication must always be related to the existence of the individual, that which is creating and receiving the communication, involving the processes of reflectiveness). Furthermore, the art object is an indirect communication of knowledge and is necessarily so, within a Kierkegaardian framework, as the means which offers the greatest capability for the facilitation of the communication of the idea as ideal (as applicable and appropriateable idea), within the opposition of the individual's existential knowledge and its subjective individuality. This grounding, based on Kierkegaard's understanding of the individual, its relation to the actual ideal, and the communication of such an ideal through the idea of the ideal, leads to the potential for the art object as a catalyst for the receiving and the creating individual, instigating progression towards more complete knowledge of its relation to the actual ideal. A problem exists, however, in that the entire first part does not differentiate

between the art object as such- as a material object created by an individual and received by a single individual- from communication as a whole. Kierkegaard seems entirely unaware of the potential for any such object to exist, one remaining wholly outside of the existence of an individuality and, yet, which is still applicable. Communication, for Kierkegaard, is always a communication between two individuals, and does not exist on the basis of an external third. The art object, therefore, does not exist directly within Kierkegaard's description of existence. This second part of my thesis will address this issue, and construct, from such a description, a positive potentiality for the art object.

In the first chapter, I discuss the nature of the artist. Because the artist does not usually appear in the Kierkegaardian literature (either primary or secondary) with only a few exceptions, this has required utilising that within the literature which *might* be understood as describing an authentic artist. In no way does Kierkegaard ever set out a definition of what the artist should be; his idea of an authentic communicator seems to reside solely in the individual capable, through the spoken or written word, to indirectly communicate the ideal of the ideal and actual ontological grounding of the individual, in order for that individual to appropriate it into their existence. This would seemingly deny the possibility of an authentic *artist* in the Kierkegaardian philosophy in that an artist is usually considered one who is creating singular, material art objects that have a personal and an historical identity to them (historical in the sense of being located within a particular point in temporality). This denial is a mistake on the part of Kierkegaard.¹²⁰

Because of this lack, I show that the artist, within Kierkegaard's writing, can play a role while producing temporal, material, static (i.e. non-existing, in that

¹²⁰If I am to follow the implications of Green in his wonderful book on the relation of Kant and Kierkegaard, it is a deliberate attempt to disguise Kierkegaard's personal inclinations.

they do not change in an historical sense but remain the same in time) objects that are authentic in nature. What I mean by authentic is that they communicate not only the possibility of the ideal of the ontological grounding of the individual as idea but also, and more importantly, the actuality of such an ideal for the individual. From this first chapter emerges the most important point, determining the difference between a genius and an Apostle and the existence and identity of the artist as between the two, and the implications of this in terms of its creative activities.

The second deals with secondary sources, showing how they have been unable, with only a few exceptions, to focus on the potential for a Kierkegaardian art object from within the literature; they maintain, for the scholarly reasons, Kierkegaard's own prejudice. This is entirely within acceptable reason but, because of my own predilections and interests in art, I would like to take my own Kierkegaard scholarship in a different step.

The third chapter describes the art object specifically as communication of the idea of the actual ideal, and as authentic in nature. This chapter describes and critiques a number of elements which have been left out up until this point, in particular the relation that Kierkegaard has to the art object and how that position shifts within the literature. What should be remembered is that the description of the art object is, to a great extent, dependent upon the first part of this thesis (as summarised in the paragraph above). The concluding chapter of this part will answer, in part, the question of the omission of the authentic art object from Kierkegaard's writing, answering the question of the final development of art. This final development is the death of art. What I would like to describe is an art object whose ultimate (in the sense that it communicates and allows and informs the appropriation of the actual in the developing individual in the fullest sense) value is its lack of value. Kierkegaard himself, for a variety of reasons, seemed to ignore the art object. Why? Because he was

unable to think its dialectical implications through to the end.¹²¹ In this sense, I am applying a corrective to Kierkegaard himself, one on which to end. Like so much of the development of a Kierkegaardian art object, this is based on a dialectical development of radical contingencies. Its result? Art's value is its valuelessness.

¹²¹Particularly since his understanding of the dialectical requires a lack of ending- and yet his understanding of the communication requires an ending.

Chapter Five- The Actuality of the Artist as an Individual

My interpretation of Kierkegaard has so far covered the grounding aspects of his philosophy related to the artist and the art object. I've proceeded along in the following manner: interpreting Kierkegaard's understanding of the metaphysical nature of the individual and its ability to communicate and the means by which these produce the *possibility*¹²² of art as authentic communication. I hope to have shown in this the development of the expression of the individual which has the possibility of authenticity, but what is also important is to show that the artist, as a producer of objects external to the individual, is an actual and positive (though unrecognised) possibility in Kierkegaard's philosophy, and this can be done by examining the actuality of the artist.

The first important point to understanding the actuality of art, for Kierkegaard, is to outline and analyse his statements about the artist himself. Statements on the nature of such an individual are scattered throughout the published and unpublished works, but I shall base my understanding of Kierkegaard's relationship to the artist on the following sources: "From the Papers of One Still Living" (published in *EPW*), *TA* (containing "The Present Age"), "On the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle" (published in *Adler*), *PF*, and *Adler* itself. This analysis shall be supplemented with entries on the artist from Kierkegaard's *JP*. A number of other texts contain important allusions to the nature of the artist- *E/O II*, *FT*, *PV*, and *Crisis*¹²³- but the references contained therein are minor.

¹²²Possibility in that these aspects are the grounds for communication and are therefore the necessary conditions on which communication can take place.

¹²³This is in part because much of the secondary literature adequately describes the artist or poet as they appear in these texts. Sylvia Walsh in particular does an interesting and important analysis of the ethical artist/poet as he appears in *Either/Or*. However, I am going to concentrate

The artist is usually demoted to the esthetic stage, because his products are usually considered an element of such.¹²⁴ The artist is generally relegated to the esthetic stage by secondary literature and Kierkegaard. This is to such an extent that Kierkegaard seems, at times, to be completely dismissive of the possibility of the artist as a distinct identity. He writes:

An artist, a poet, a scientist, etc. may very well live admired through a whole lifetime, and it is accidental if such a one is persecuted or derided. Every such person relates himself differentially to the universally human, and, since his production is in the medium of the imagination it does not essentially touch existence... an ethicist relates himself to the universally human (consequently to every man, and equally, not differentially), and he relates himself to human existence as a requirement.¹²⁵

This problem occurs particularly when discussing the artist within a context determined by the esthetic. The esthetic stage of existence is a necessary one, in that it begins the process of the authentication of the individual towards a relation with the infinite. The esthetic stage is also that which damns most men to a lack of individuality. If the individual remains within the esthetic stage, then no development towards an authentic self takes place. Such individuals see themselves as defined by the crowd; indeed, they see themselves as defined by those things which they understand as commenting upon society. In the *Diapsalmata*

on the stated volumes because they provide the most direct information on the artist as a practising individual.

¹²⁴Why? Because of Kierkegaard's own inclinations (in favour of the artist as an individual- his activities when writing *Either/Or* would suggest this, though I would always like to avoid a biographical reasoning) and his desire to disguise or hide such from his 'public' in order to create a more 'perfect' image of himself.

¹²⁵*JP*, vol. 4, pp. 290-291, <<4444; VIII¹ A 160, n.d., 1847; An interesting comment, which on sense denies the possibility of an authentic artist or art form. On another sense it also defines the possibility of creating an authentic art form, which must correspond to the ethical communication of the ethicist, and therefore the authentic artist must be at least equal to the ethicist. Of course, remaining an artist is, to a degree, an entirely accidental element in the development of an individual and therefore not related to its production in a universal and only in a particular sense, but that individual's form of communication as art remains, if authentic, an authentic communication of the ideal.

of *E/O I*, A writes: "people complain that the world is so prosaic that things do not go in life as in the novel, where opportunity is always so favorable." ¹²⁶ Modern life, contemporary life for Kierkegaard, was empty of meaning. However, the authentic artist, one who recognises his own development towards an understanding of his ontological grounding, and whose communication has passed through the various developments of form and content in the movement from immanence to transcendence, can surpass these difficulties and communicate to other individuals both his own and their development. The authentic artist is a communicator of the idea of the actual truth of existence as ideal,¹²⁷ both because he is describing such a development for other individuals, as well as describing his own development. Because of this, the authentic artist is one who appears to be defined as either a genius or an Apostle, since both are communicators of such an idea. This is not, however, entirely true, and is an issue which Kierkegaard did not work out fully. The authentic artist is one who communicates within a reciprocal relationship (reciprocal both in the sense of others and himself), developing others while at the same being developed through his message. In this sense, the authentic artist is a communicator of the ideal, but in what sense? Therein lies the question of the actual nature of the authentic artist in Kierkegaard's thought, one which he himself did not explicate.

The artist is a developing individual, something which is described and referred to in the secondary literature only briefly. Indeed, in Kierkegaard's writing, the artist is not much more than a minor figure, if one at all. However: "it is through sin that once gains a first glimpse of salvation." ¹²⁸ The authentic artist and his production cannot be dismissed because of the inauthentic one. The art objects produced by the

¹²⁶*E/O I*, p.22

¹²⁷The beliefs of Christianity for Kierkegaard, the grounding nature of the individual.

¹²⁸*E/O I*, p.20

artist contain, within their material form of communication, an expression of the idea of the actual ideal of existence, and, therefore, the authentic artist, producing such forms of communication, is a valid subject to discuss within the philosophy.

The artist can be understood to be developed within Kierkegaard's thought in five stages. In the first, the definition of the artist by others who might have influenced Kierkegaard is explored. In the second, the artist, as expressed in his earlier writing, is shown contained within the emphasis on a life-view and a life-development. Kierkegaard's concern is to establish the authentic artist as one who has a passionate existential commitment to his own authenticity and seeks to communicate and develop in others that commitment. In the third, a definition emerges which can be found in both his pseudonymous as well as his signed work throughout his oeuvre, interpreting the artist as he interacts with other individuals. In the fourth, and most importantly, Kierkegaard differentiates between a genius and an Apostle. This differentiation is of vital importance, declaring the exact role of the artist in both his own and others' individual development. It distinguishes the difference between the genius as a communicator within immanence and the Apostle as a communicator within transcendence as revelation. In the fifth, I carry this distinction to its developed conclusions. It emerges, from the difference between the two, that the authentic artist is an individual who, by the very nature of its communication, exists in a position between the two. He is higher than a genius, but lower in relation to the ontological grounding of his individual existence than the Apostle. Furthermore, the artist, as existing between the genius and the Apostle, exists between immanence and transcendence. The artist's communication of the truth of the idea and its application as ideal is a dialectical combination of immanent truth, created through the imagination of the artist as an immanent individual, and the transcendent nature of its communication as ideal.

Therefore, the artist's product exists between both. The implications from this are vital, in that the art object thereby becomes a combination of immanence and transcendence, creating an identity for itself which can only be understood as untruth. The further implication of this is that the art object communicates neither immanence nor transcendence, failing both. These implications are explored in the remaining chapters.

1. *The Artist as Understood by Kierkegaard's Influences*

What is first necessary for this elucidation is an elaboration of the identity of the artist as conceived by writers before Kierkegaard (Kant, Hegel, Schlegel, and the Romantics) and an examination of the actual means of communication by which the artist interacts with other individuals. It is not possible to state that Kierkegaard took from his readings on the nature of the artist anything in specific. He remained far too much of an individual to be thoroughly influenced by them. However, they can serve as a basis from which to elaborate on the exact nature of the Kierkegaardian artist.

An interpretation of artist within the framework of Kierkegaard's philosophy must take into account a definition of imagination as the basis for the artist's identity. Imagination is necessarily a vital aspect of any understanding of aesthetics concerns, informing the production of the art object as well facilitating an interpretation of such an object and the nature of the identity of the artist. More specifically, it is, for writers on the art whom Kierkegaard would have read, the crucial mean whereby the individual can be identified as an artist. What is interesting is that Kierkegaard did not, however, treat imagination at any length, while other writers did. It is a vital human faculty, but is of minor importance for Kierkegaard. Yet, it must be both defined and interpreted, since it is a vital faculty for the artist as artist for such individuals as Kant, Hegel, and others.

The origin of the early 19th century's conception of imagination is Kant. Kant can be understood as a seedbed for the Romantic and Idealist understanding and application of imagination, having established imagination at the centre of epistemological and aesthetic concerns. Contrary to the misgivings of the Enlightenment, of the rational and empirical approach, which could not properly place imagination in a philosophical context, Kant did not dismiss the irrationality of imagination, but vindicated it by establishing a new function for imagination both epistemologically and aesthetically.

Imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is limited to the processes of understanding of the subject in relationship to externality, to the capacity for comprehension of the manifold of experience.

If this intuition is to match a concept, we must have an active power or ability to structure the particular features of that intuition in accordance with the structure of the concept; this power is what Kant calls our 'imagination.' The imagination "apprehends" (takes up) what is given in intuition and then puts together or "combines" this diversity (or "manifold") so that it matches the concept. In this way the imagination "exhibits" ... the concept, i.e., provides it with a matching or "corresponding" intuition.¹²⁹

It is not, however, limited only to the reception, but can also function in a productive and reproductive capacity. It is reproductive in that it allows the possibility of the connection of disparate associations of experience, and it is productive in "possessing a higher transcendental function necessary for empirical experience and the association of ideas."¹³⁰ Imagination allows the orderly perception of the world while producing, through association, the continual perception of the manifold in space and time, appearances being experienced thus in a unified and rational manner. It is

¹²⁹Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, , translated Pluhar, Werner S., translator's preface, p. xxxv

¹³⁰Gouwens, p. 18

the capacity for matching empirical judgements with empirical intuition.

Imagination in the *Critique of Judgement* acquires a greater role. In addition to being a capacity for structuring experience, it also becomes a part of aesthetic and teleological judgements. In the experience of the beautiful imagination and understanding combine in free play. In a confrontation with the sublime the imagination is unable to present the experience to the understanding for reasoning, but the imagination is not denied its ability to continue the experience in a negative infinity.

It does not achieve the repose belonging to the beautiful, but strives without success for a positive representation, since the imagination and reason, in the experience of the sublime, are in conflict. There is no "what" in the imagination's experience, but only the sense of the *apeiron*, the boundless, "the ground of which... is concealed from itself." Thus, Kant refuses to conclude that the imagination delivers an epiphany. The imagination does not give access to the positive Infinite, but only a sense of the powers and dignity of the self.¹³¹

The imagination is thus, in Kant's system of experience, a means of upholding, or upbuilding, the individual's own sense of capability as a subjective individual, something inherently ethical in nature and, therefore, appealing to Kierkegaard. This upbuilding is, with the Romantics, taken to extremes. Kant writes in the *Critique of Judgement*:

§49 ...presentations of the imagination we may call *ideas*. One reason for this is that they do at least strive toward something that lies beyond the boundary of experience, and hence try to approach an exhibition of rational concepts (intellectual ideas), and thus [these concepts] are given a semblance of objective reality. Another reason, indeed the main reason, for calling those presentations ideas is that they are inner intuitions to which no concept can be completely adequate.¹³²

¹³¹Ibid., p. 21

¹³²*Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 182-183

and

§49 Now if a concept is provided with [unterlegen] a presentation of the imagination such that, even though this presentation belongs to the exhibition of the concept, yet it prompts, even by itself, so much thought as can never be comprehended within a determinate concept and thereby the presentation aesthetically expands the concept itself in an unlimited way, then the imagination is creative in [all of] this and sets the power of intellectual ideas (i.e. reason) in motion: it makes reason think more, when prompted by a [certain] presentation, than what can be apprehended and made distinct in the presentation (though the thought does pertain to the concept of the object [presented]).¹³³

These two statements provide some link to the expansion of the imagination which takes place with later developments, particularly the work of Fichte, Schelling, and the Romantics as a whole. Later thinkers identified in Kant a split between nature and freedom, and sought in different ways to provide an answer to the bridging towards the ideal or the expanding of the individual's experience. Kant's interpretation is more common-sensical, but this did little to curb the excited activities of later thinkers.

For Fichte, imagination was the source of the categories of experience, determining in and through the imaginative capability of the ego the whole of the objective experience of nature. Imagination is a foundational process and capability of the ego in the production of the non-ego. The system of Fichte played a vital role in Kierkegaard's thought, providing along with Hegel a philosophical system that he could react against. Fichte's system is found primarily in his *Science of Knowledge* (1794). The focus of Fichte's philosophical system is to provide an alternative to the followers of Kant, whom he labels "dogmatists", as opposed to his own thought which he terms idealism. For Fichte, dogmatism is a form of thought which stresses the external in reality, the so-called objective or real. Fichte's criticism of dogmatism is that it cannot account for the existence of

¹³³*Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 183

consciousness or conscious selves, i.e. that it is mechanistic in its approach to reality and thereby excludes the possibility of freedom. Fichte would have philosophy based on a purely subjective level, inclining towards the personal as the source of philosophical knowledge rather than the impersonal. Idealism should be the emphasis of philosophical thought, insisting on the self as sufficient. For Fichte, dogmatism ascribed to the conscious self an unconscious origin, and felt that idealism, centring its thought on the individual self, would destroy this view. His approach came to a head in his description of the opposing concepts of self and not-self, seeing both as exclusive, yet also viewing the not-self as having its source in the self. It is this aspect of the self¹³⁴ which was to have a decisive effect on Kierkegaard's thought in terms of his understanding of the imagination, in both a positive and negative manner.

Schelling, like Fichte and others, who are linked to Romanticism, affirmed the possibility of achieving the positive Infinite, i.e., knowledge of the ideal. For Schelling, imagination acts primarily in this capacity in the production of art as manifestation of absolute world unity, in a manner that is similar to Fichte's description of the positions of the self. He writes:

the imagination does not simply emulate the play of reason in going beyond nature, but actually attains the secret of nature that is beyond unaided philosophical reason. The imagination has such power because... imagination stands at the beginning and the end of Schelling's system of transcendental idealism. Experience begins before consciousness with the individual's primitive productive perception, progresses to the act of coming to consciousness with reflection and reproductive perception, and moves then to the aesthetic perception as productivity with consciousness. The importance of the imagination is that it is the subject of the whole development of the "I" from the beginning to the end, and can be spoken of as the true fundamental capacity of the self.¹³⁵

¹³⁴Discussed in greater detail in the first appendix on the self.

¹³⁵Gouwens, p. 24

With the production of art, the identity of the real and the ideal occur in concrete combination. Kant's imaginative creations are only emulations of reason's attempts to comprehend the ideal, while for Schelling, the imaginative production of art is a material attainment reached in aesthetic intuition.

The splendid German word "imagination" (*Einbildungskraft*) actually means the power of *mutual informing into unity* (*Ineinsbildung*) upon which all creation is based. It is the power whereby something ideal is simultaneously something real, the soul simultaneously the body, the power of individuation that is the real creative power.¹³⁶

It is both Fichte's and Schelling's development which establishes the position of the German Romantics.

With the German Romantics, the conception and application of imagination expands, not only as a metaphysical tool, but also as a cultural, historical, and religious concept. The artist becomes a creative genius, his personal creative powers a source for art's fantastic forms. From both Fichte's and Schelling's developments beyond Kant, the Romantics posited an imagination whose creative powers were identified as the distinguishing element of the poetic genius above the common individual. In particular, the imagination would be able to be used to unite the unconscious activities of such a poetic genius with the conscious activities in which the subject is related to an object of such activities. This is not just a creative, productive ability. Poets such as Novalis¹³⁷ used imagination as both an active and passive capability, receptive and creative, but this combination asserted a new freedom by opening all experience to the artist's abilities to manipulate and produce new form, a new openness of human possibility, active imagination and passive imagination creating in freedom a new sense of the individual's possible union with the Infinite.

¹³⁶Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 32

¹³⁷For example, Novalis' *Hymns to the Night*. Another example of this is the paintings of Friedrich and, in particular, Runge.

The Romantics' use of imagination resulted in two distinct types of religious vision, depending upon the conception of the relationship of infinity and the striving of the individual. The first form (which can be identified with Novalis and later Schlegel) is a religion of transcendence, a striving for the Infinite through the use and transcendence of the finite world. It can be typified by such statements of Schlegel as:

The mind.. can understand only the universe. Let imagination take over and you will have a God. Quite right: for imagination is man's faculty for perceiving divinity.¹³⁸

The second form (Schleiermacher and early Schlegel) holds that the Infinite, within the experience of the world, finds, and is given in the finite world, the revelation of its existence. Imagination is the means of perceiving the world as infused, impregnated by the Infinite's truth. Imitation is maintained as important, but imitation in the face of the world's plenitude.

The two views are united in their application of irony, a distancing of self from the normal realm of human experience. Irony appears in both objective and subjective form, it may even be applied to such a degree that the artist must be ironic about his own production. In its ironic form, it signifies a detachment from the world itself. In a subjective form, it signifies a detachment from the artist's own production. It finds one of its high points in the work of Solger, who gives a theoretical account of both forms (objective and subjective). Solger's approves of subjective irony's understanding and recognition of the ephemeral quality of artistic accomplishments while also seeing objective irony's relativising of the world as a means of simultaneously preserving the world. Imagination is vital in either application of irony. For Solger,

all art is ironic because it is all symbolic, reflecting a gap between the loftiness of the act of its creation and the transitoriness of the unity it achieves out of opposites. In the

¹³⁸Schlegel, Friedrich, *Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Firchow, P., p. 242

act of creativity, the imagination symbolizes the divine creativity in which act and achievement are united. At the same time the poet's imagination, with subjective irony, sees the nothingness of one's own efforts. Objective irony, however, represents imagination's triumph, for in "world-irony" the art object is created. The imagination is the key to this entire dynamic, artistic production.¹³⁹

It is the imagination which allows the binding process of opposites to be contained in the production of the singular, material, communicative object. For the Romantic individual, the production of the imagination achieves not only aesthetic objects but the means of grasping, in ironic detachment, the meaning of life, the Infinite within and grounding the Finite, the basis for freedom and the development of the world.

Kierkegaard's early analysis and response to Romanticism is that it is grounded by unsatisfied yearning. He appreciates the Romantic imagination and irony,¹⁴⁰ but was aware also of the inner infinity produced by the irony of reflection. Through this, he establishes a position viewing Romanticism as inadequate for the individual, striving after the infinite without regard for the dialectical nature of actuality, which necessarily contains the finite.¹⁴¹

Kierkegaard criticised the Romantics' understanding of imagination on two counts. First, they expanded the function of the imagination to such a degree that they lose themselves; human freedom, in producing a vision of the infinite, always remains bound to the finite, thereby contradicting itself, unless both the infinite and the finite are maintained in a dialectical relationship. Second, the finite always remains to produce an unsatisfactory relationship between the finite and the infinite, a doubled sense of negativity. The imaginative capabilities of the Romantics expanded the ideal to such a degree that the actual was lost, losing both the world

¹³⁹Gouwens, p. 34

¹⁴⁰An appreciation developed in his thesis on irony.

¹⁴¹Schlegel: "Only in relation to the infinite is there meaning and purpose; whatever lacks such a relation is absolutely meaningless and pointless." †
†Schlegel, Friedrich, *Lucinde and the Fragments*, trans. Firchow, P., p. 241

and the self. Actuality is not the product of a dream but is retained and developed for the individual as part of the activity of the individual. The Romantics established in their use of imagination possibilities of actuality but not actuality itself. The actual then acts against the Romantics productions, since their imagination is no longer rooted in actuality.

To live Romantically, for Kierkegaard, is to live in imagination as possibility, denying the actuality of the self as concrete existence.¹⁴² Any attempt to incorporate actuality into the possibilities of imagination fails because imagination remains the basis for such incorporation, i.e. the incorporation of the finite into the infinite fails if only the infinite is acknowledged. Gouwens summarises Kierkegaard's position:

Schlegel, Tieck, and Solger in different ways represent the same unsuccessful incorporation of actuality into possibility. Schlegel most clearly denies actuality and flees into an imaginary life that falsely claims to attain infinity in an ideal life; but the finite takes its revenge, and the imaginative idealization dissolves into sensuality. Tieck's denial of actuality produces formlessness in his poetic production. His imagination, opposed to the static forms of the philistine world, makes his artistic work arbitrary and empty. Lacking a definite relation to the ideal, his imagination vitiates both the infinite, ever-vanishing ideal and the finite world. Solger's attempt to give a philosophical and religious account of the place of irony that retains the finite fails, since his understanding of the artistic movement dissolves the finite into an imagined nothingness.¹⁴³

In effect, the Romantics lacked a proper development of form and content of the dialectical relationship of possibility and necessity, resulting in communication and knowledge of the the actual, which would dialectically unite, for the individual, as communication the infinite and the finite, the idea and the ideal. From *The Concept of Irony*, containing the criticism of the writing of

¹⁴²This affirmation is an inclination of the affirmation of the necessity of the physicality of the art object.

¹⁴³Gouwens, p. 38

Schlegel's *Lucinde*, Kierkegaard notes a particular example of the fantastic realms that the Romantics imagination occupies:

He hopes to achieve the purely poetic in this manner, and as he abandons all understanding and lets fantasy alone prevail... This (letting fantasy alone prevail) is repeated throughout *Lucinde*. Who would be so inhuman as not to be able to enjoy the free play of fantasy, but that does not imply that all of life should be abandoned to imaginative intuition. When fantasy alone gains the upper hand in this way, it exhausts and anaesthetizes the soul, robs it of all moral tension, makes life a dream. But this is essentially what *Lucinde* attempts to promote... This [the purpose of *Lucinde*] clearly means that when the understanding has reached its apex, its order should give way to fantasy, which now alone is to prevail and not be an interlude in the task of life.¹⁴⁴

The imagination of the Romantics was interpreted by Kierkegaard as a force which allowed the individual to 'go beyond' itself into the fantastic. Though Kierkegaard's interpretation of *Lucinde* does not always match the actual premise of the book,¹⁴⁵ nevertheless his general conception of the Romantic form of imagination is indicative of the development of his own understanding of it.

Kierkegaard understanding of Hegelian and Idealist conceptions of imagination is just as polemical. Hegel, like Kierkegaard, was extremely critical of the Romantics for their indulgences in a bad sense of the infinite. The Romantic form of art is a development out of the classical, a transition to a higher form of the expression of the ideal. For Hegel, this is a denial of the expression of the ideal.

The romantic form of art cancels again the completed unification of the Idea and its reality, and reverts, even if in a higher way, to that difference and opposition of the two sides which in symbolic art remain unconquered... Abandoning this [classical] position [the

¹⁴⁴CT, p. 292

¹⁴⁵And is over-rated- disjointed as it is, it serves very little as an example of the individual 'going beyond' and perhaps can only be criticised for its lack of imagination at times.

correspondence of the spiritual and the sensuous], the romantic form of art cancels the undivided unity of classical art because it has won a content which goes beyond and above the classical form of art and its mode of expression.¹⁴⁶

The embodiment of the romantic form of art necessitates a further separation of the ideal and the sensuous. Inward self-consciousness has advanced to understand the true element of the development of the Absolute, but this has become one which can only be realised in spiritual knowing. Therefore, the romantic form of art, as the Hegelian third stage of the development of art, is one of free concrete spirituality manifested spiritually, as part of the inner world. However, all art is an external manifestation or expression.

Now since spirituality has withdrawn into itself out of the external world and immediate unity therewith, the sensuous externality of shape is for this reason accepted and represented, as in symbolic art, as something inessential and transient... The aspect of external existence is consigned to contingency and abandoned to the adventures devised by an imagination whose caprice can mirror what is present to it, *exactly as it is*, just as readily as it can jumble the shapes of the external world and distort them grotesquely.¹⁴⁷

While his treatment of the Romantics (not the romantic form of art, but the individuals who could be called the 'Romantics') is not considered necessarily remarkable, it is crucial to understanding Kierkegaard's developed stance on imagination. Hegel writes:

Of course we are accustomed to rate a free production of the imagination higher than the manipulation of material already available, but the imagination cannot go so far as to provide the required harmony so firmly and definitely as it already lies before us in actual reality...

It initially establishes Hegel in opposition to the Romantics, a position which Kierkegaard himself eroded.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 79

¹⁴⁷Ibid., p. 81

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 256

For Hegel, imagination is important in representation as the capacity to create images but subordinate to reason. Representation is recollected or inwardly directed intuition, "and as such is the middle between that stage of intelligence where it finds itself immediately subject to modification and that where intelligence is in its freedom, or, as thought."¹⁴⁹ Representation is between intuition and thought, forming an image from intuition, but not as part of thought. It begins with intuition and the ready-found material of intuition: "The intelligence which is active in this possession is the *reproductive imagination*, where the images issue from the inward world belonging to the ego, which is now the power over them."¹⁵⁰ Its products, however, in the mind, do not grow into notions until they reach the stage of thought and, therefore, do not act within the actual.

Representation is divided into recollection, imagination, and memory and is reproductive rather than being productive. For Hegel:

imagination, in its turn, contains three forms into which it unfolds itself. It is, in general, the determinant of the images [which are to be present through memory for reason]. At first, however, it does no more than determine the images as entering into existence. As such, it is merely the reproductive imagination. This has the character of merely formal activity. But, secondly, imagination not merely recalls the images existent in it but connects them with one another and in this way raises them to *general ideas* or representations. Accordingly, at this stage, imagination appears as the activity of *associating ideas*. The third stage in this sphere is that in which intelligence posits *general ideas* or representations as identical with the *particular* aspect of the image and so gives the former a pictorial existence. This sensuous comprises creative imagination [*Phantasie*], which produces symbols and signs, the latter forming the transition to memory.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 201

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 206

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 208

Imagination in the psychology of the individual at this point is composed of definite and concrete subjectivity. This concretion of ideas in the subjectivity, however, is not yet at-hand for the manipulation by reason. Imagination is merely the means of allowing the process of memory to develop.

Furthermore, imagination for Hegel is the source for the production of art, the capacity to begin the production in the artist of the artist's expression of the ideal, but it is not the capacity to extend such sources fully. Hegel does not truly progress the idea of imagination in the "Lectures on Fine Art" .

This central element of imagination [Vorstellung] therefore draws something from both spheres. From thinking it takes the aspect of spiritual universality which grips together into a simpler determinate unity things directly perceived as separate; from visual art it keeps things juxtaposed in space and indifferent to one another. For imagination is essentially distinguished from thinking by reason of the fact that, like sense-perception from which it takes its start, it allows particular ideas to subsist alongside one another without being related...¹⁵²

Imagination is subordinate to reason. It is only an expression of a passage through the spirit, arising from spiritual productive activity as a product of the subjective productivity of the artist through activity of the artist's reason. Indeed, in *The Philosophy of Mind*, imagination is almost a static element in the production of the embodiment of ideas, almost as a "store of ideas" ¹⁵³ rather than as a creative power. The art object is an undivided entity produced through the constitutional activity of the imagination.

This activity is the rational element which exists as spirit only in so far as it actively drives itself forth into consciousness, yet what it bears within itself it places before itself only in sensuous form. Thus this activity has a spiritual content which yet it configures sensuously because only in this

¹⁵²Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 2, p. 1035

¹⁵³Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 209

sensuous guise can it gain knowledge of the content.¹⁵⁴

Though this might be the source for productive sensuous form- i.e., the configuration of a new form, imagination remains, however, primarily reproductive- productive use of the imagination is limited. Hegel writes:

Productive imagination is the centre in which the universal and being, one's own and what is picked up, internal and external, are completely welded into one... The creations of the imagination are on all hands recognized as such combinations of the mind's own and inward with the matter of intuition...¹⁵⁵

Sensuous material, the opposite of thought, is grasped, manipulated, to become the repository of the content as Idea, manifesting the truth of the Idea in sensuous form, such that:

imagination rests rather on the recollection of situations lived through, of experiences enjoyed, instead of being creative itself. Recollection preserves and renews the individuality and the external fashion of the occurrence of such experiences, with all their accompanying circumstances, but does not allow the universal to emerge on its own account.¹⁵⁶

Imagination is the capability of the individual to produce "self-sprung" ideas through the recollection of experience. Though art may develop beyond the merely sensuous to the medium of language (which embodies most fully the art form of the Romantics in Hegel's system), it is still surpassed in history as an outmoded form of consciousness.

Imagination, when regarded as the agency of this unification, is reason, but only a nominal reason, because the matter or theme it embodies is to imagination *qua* imagination a matter of indifference; whilst reason *qua* reason also insists upon the *truth* of its content.¹⁵⁷

It is almost as if the products, resulting from the imagination in a creative capacity, are without truth, even though they derive their content from the truth of

¹⁵⁴Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 40

¹⁵⁵Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 211

¹⁵⁶Hegel, *Aesthetics*, vol. 1, p. 40

¹⁵⁷Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind*, p. 211

the individual subject's sensuous experiences. In that sense, imagination remains an extremely limited capacity (though infinite in its relation to the finite), and, because of this limitation, the union with the Absolute, the realisation of the Idea, most occur in a development through religion into rational thought.

This limitation is wholly present in Hegel's conception of the artist. The Hegelian artist remains linked inextricably to the development of the Idea within its specific historical manifestations. In effect, the Hegelian artist is unable to utilise its power of imagination to a full extent, but is beholden to the identity of its circumstances. However, within the *Aesthetics*, the role of the artist emerges in an interesting manner. Hegel writes:

But since this whole stage of art by its presentation of the external makes straight for an exterior effect we may cite as its further general character the production of effects... Producing effects is in general the dominating tendency of turning to the public, so that the work of art no longer displays itself as peaceful, satisfied in itself, and serene; on the contrary, it turns inside out and as it were makes an appeal to the spectator and tries to put itself into relation with him by means of the mode of portrayal. Both, peace in itself and turning to the onlooker, must indeed be present in the work of art, but the two sides must be in the purest equilibrium. If the work of art in the severe style is entirely shut in upon itself without wishing to speak to a spectator, it leaves us cold; but if it goes too far out of itself too him, it pleases but is without solidity and at least does not please (as it should) by solidity of content and the simple treatment and presentation of that content. In that event this emergence from itself falls into the contingency of appearance and makes the work of art itself into such a contingency in which what we recognise is no longer the topic itself and the form which the nature of the topic determines necessarily, but the poet and the artist with his subjective aims, his workmanship and his skill in execution. In this way the public becomes entirely free from the essential content of the topic... In the severe style, on the other hand, it is as if nothing at all were granted to the spectator; it is the content's substance

which in its presentation severely and sharply reduces any subjective judgement.¹⁵⁸

Hegel would seem to be suggesting that the artist is one who can both act within the development of the Absolute as a manifestation of historical progressive identity as well as function specifically within historical conditionality of the singular individual as individuality. The artist and its production acts both as a display of the development of the Idea as well as an embodiment of its nature as artist.

Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel is multifarious. This last point about the artist, which seems in contradiction to much of Hegel's own aesthetics, is something I am certain he would be in agreement with-but, concerning imagination, it is initially simple. Despite agreeing with Hegel's criticism of the Romantics, he sees Hegel limiting the imagination too much, while at the same time allowing it a freedom in areas which it does not warrant it. This develops on three levels. First, Hegel¹⁵⁹ devalues imagination and feeling. The progression to the rational realisation of the Idea is inadequate because it leaps over the existential situation of the individual; it removes the individual's characteristic primitivity. Second, Hegel and the Idealists, despite their criticism of the Romantics' use of imagination, remain just as fantastic as the Romantics themselves. This criticism is particularly related to Danish Idealism and the work of Heiberg specifically, and rooted in Kierkegaard's analysis that both the Romantics and the Idealists live in possibility rather than actuality (produced by imagination or through imagination by reason); the Romantics in poetic possibility, and the Idealists in speculative or intellectual possibility. From both standpoints, possibility is higher than actuality, and Kierkegaard would posit the ethical in substitution and opposition for possibility, rooted in a

¹⁵⁸Hegel, *Aesthetics*, Vol. 2, pp. 619-620

¹⁵⁹And the Idealists in general, since Kierkegaard has in mind Danish Hegelianism as well.

passionate attachment to the individual's existence. Imagination may produce poetic possibilities, but a danger exists in allowing possibility the semblance of actuality. The individual remains an individual in actuality, but its existence is transferred through the incorrect use of imagination into the realm of possibility, and the infinite and the finite are not realised in authentic combination. Third, Gouwens believes that Kierkegaard would also criticise the Romantics and the Idealists because their conception of imagination is limited rather than embodying infinite possibility. This is the first step towards a positive role for imagination. Kierkegaard's goal, the purpose of the authorship, is to advance passionate attachment to actuality within existence as a way of developing the individual towards an appropriation of the actual truth of existence as ontologically grounded. Because of this, he must

redefine the imagination as more than either Idealism's "surpassed medium" or the Romantic's aestheticism. The imagination must also be seen as a passion and an activity characterising a "higher enthusiasm" -- the enthusiasm of the "subjective thinker."¹⁶⁰

The third position Gouwens defines as the imaginative-passion, a process of transforming the imaginative-passion of the esthetic to the imaginative-passion of the subjective thinker, one concerned with its own development and the development of others in time. This is done through inwardness, a directing of passion and imagination to the infinite, within the self, rather than to an external infinite. The medium changes from the possibility of imaginative constructions or speculations to expressions of the inwardly-directed existence of the subjective individual.

Positive imagination at this point means that imagination must be related to a negative infinity, but also a positive infinity. A positive infinity, which can be reconciled with actuality, exists in religion and

¹⁶⁰Gouwens, p. 117

mastered irony. Imagination still contains possibilities, but at the early stage of the authorship Kierkegaard remains unsure.

Despite the hints of a more positive role for the imagination, Kierkegaard views it, by and large, in a negative fashion in *The Concept of Irony*. The imagination, perhaps even more than irony, is the subject of a sustained polemic. His primary interest is to restrain the claims of the imagination to be either the key to the infinite or in any way adequate for a truly human life... The possible positive senses of the imagination are not [yet] developed...¹⁶¹

But, as the authorship and the writings in the journals progress, a certainty in the role of the imagination emerges.

Kierkegaard's own notion of the fullest development imagination is one which is specifically different from the preceding ideas. Imagination is, first of all, central to logic, abstract thought, and objective knowledge; second, imagination in the esthetic is a corruption of the first, the abstract; third, imagination functions in the qualitative dialectic, part of the development in existence for the individual towards the appropriation of the actual truth of existence. Imagination is basic to thinking, but in an anti-speculative manner, as an activity of the individual. Kierkegaard focuses on the development from actuality to possibility in this respect. In abstract thought, the imagination is an abstraction from existence to possibility, a endless process, unless halted by the will of the individual.

Only when reflection comes to a halt can a beginning be made, and reflection can be halted only by something else, and this something else is something quite different from the logical, being a resolution of will.¹⁶²

This process involves an abstraction from the self, a denial of the self's place in the process. Unfortunately, imagination contains the danger of moving from

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 81

¹⁶²CUP, trans. Swenson, D., PUP, 1941, p. 103; quoted in Gouwens, p. 179

abstraction to pure thought, obscuring the differentiation between essence and being, positing a fantastic identity crisis in which thought and being are equivocated. Imagination is not, however, a purely negative force in the development and thought of the individual, since it may first be, and is, necessarily a part of the establishing of the forms of expression required for thought and communication. Imagination is the means of splitting reality and ideality, an identifying immediacy in the dialectical consciousness of the individual, such that reflection can occur. Imagination, as identifying immediacy, is, thus, one of the primary tools to understand the individual. This tie to immediacy Gouwens identifies in three stages: 1. the origin of the categories, 2. theoretical consciousness, and 3. objective knowledge.

The origin of the categories is rooted in Gouwens' reading of *SUD*. Kierkegaard labels imagination as the origin of categories, derived in part from his reading of Fichte. Kierkegaard agrees with Fichte in saying that imagination is their origin, including any *a priori* categories. Gouwens:

In reflection, the ideal and the real are posited over against one another, and the imagination helps generate the synthetic *a priori* categories applicable to contingent knowledge, plus the necessary logical laws of thought. The *a priori* is both a gift and a task; it is an activity, and yet something not simply generated by the self.¹⁶³

In any analysis constructed by a thinking individual, the ideal and the real are separated. Thus, in thought, the categories of experience are separated from the real experience of the individual. It is the imagination that brings them together in the continuing existence of the individual.

The activity of the imagination, then, not only posits the ideal realm as opposed to the real in the beginning of language, but, as part of

¹⁶³Gouwens, p. 151

that activity, gives rise to the categories
"receptively."¹⁶⁴

Objects exist, but are undifferentiated and, thus, not objects until categorised by the imagination of the subject. This shows

the essential feature of Kierkegaard's understanding of knowledge in an age dominated by Idealism: knowledge is the result of human activity, and in the operations of the imagination in positing the ideal and the real, certain *a priori* concepts are given.¹⁶⁵

In effect, imagination is the one of the key means of understanding the Kierkegaard's system of epistemology. Yet, this is also a misinterpretation of his description of experience, since the imagination is interpreted as producing *a priori* categories, and Gouwens gives too much emphasis to the powers of the imagination at this point. This is an incorrect understanding, since the imagination can only determine the *a priori* categories from within the esthetic stage as possibilities generated within the subjectivity of the individual. Rather, the categories are given to the individual and can only be understood in actual truth in existence, rather than in the existential truth in existence. Nevertheless, this does provide an understanding of the categories at an esthetic level.¹⁶⁶

Theoretical consciousness is a transitional stage, one in which the individual is aware of the separation of the self, such that consciousness is both an awareness of

¹⁶⁴Ibid., p. 152

¹⁶⁵Ibid., p. 152

¹⁶⁶If I were to posit the role of imagination in an epistemological sense from within this Kierkegaardian framework, I would concentrate on the senses of immediacy rather than imagination- allowing imagination only a conductive role- because all experience (even transcendent experience) is immediately given to the individual. Immediacy in the first stage of existence of the individual is one of spontaneous interaction with experience of the actual world, without imagination. In the second stage of immediacy, imagination functions in the manner described by Gouwens, separating reality and ideality in existence (since the concerns of the individual are not ones of existence and actuality at this stage) but also producing the possibilities of the third stage of immediacy. In the third stage, knowledge of truth through imagination becomes one of a combination of the real and the ideal, an awareness of the separation of existence and the actual, which allows a full understanding of the categories of existence as existing in actuality. The development of the individual then results in an appropriation of the actual, a separation of the real and the ideal as grounded by actuality, and the construction by imagination of the individual's place in actuality. This process more closely matches Gouwens' own interpretation of the changing role of imagination in the development of the individual, though here his emphasis is strangely incorrect.

consciousness, the process of constructing a consciousness of the real and the ideal (again, before an awareness of the differences between the existential and the actual), and the consciousness of such a process. This leads into objective knowledge and the role of the imagination there. Imagination has a role in theoretical and empirical knowledge as well. In objective knowledge, a disjunctive exists between thought and being; truth becomes an object of thought, but how does one move to truth in objectivity? Objective knowledge of truth is only an approximation, but the imagination facilitates this.

Thinking [in a quantitative dialectical manner] for Kierkegaard is an individual act that requires imagination; it involves projection, sympathy, insight, and suggestion. Precisely because it requires imagination to be a thinker, thinking is for Kierkegaard an eminently human activity.¹⁶⁷

The quantitative dialectic is more important. Imagination is no longer employed merely as the means of identifying ideality in existence, but is now concerned with the possibility of the development within subjectivity.

The self is reflection, and the imagination is reflection, as the rendition of the self as the self's possibility. The imagination is the possibility of any and all reflection, and the intensity of this medium is the possibility of the intensity of the self.¹⁶⁸

Positing the idea, imagination extends the immediate, providing the possibility of all reflection, within a movement towards the ideal. Imagination is the medium for the process of infinitizing the finite, becoming identical as reflection with the process and the possibilities of the individual. Imagination is a key element in the individual's becoming conscious of itself, opening possibilities for the self that the individual existing self was not conscious of, and effecting a variety of responses.

¹⁶⁷Gouwens, p. 155

¹⁶⁸SUD, p. 31

Imagination takes a further development in the ethical stage of the individual. In the ethical development, the aesthetic and the esthetic are not lost. In the esthetic stage, actuality is almost the enemy of an authentic use of the imagination, even in the daily activities of existence. Echoing the sentiments found in *R*, before the party for the esthetic individuals in "In Vino Veritas", Constantin's apprehension in *Stages on Life's Way* is expressed thus:

Even though one knows that one is driving to a banquet and consequently indulges momentarily in imagining the sumptuousness of it, yet the impact of the natural environment is so powerful that it must prevail. The only fear Constantin had was that this would not happen, for just as there is no force so proficient as the imagination in embellishing everything, so, too, there is no other force able to play havoc with everything when things go wrong for one in the moment of encounter with actuality.¹⁶⁹

Actuality is the enemy to the esthete and the imaginative productions of the individual; imaginative possibilities presented to the individual exclude the concreteness of actuality. In the relationship between the actual self and an ideal self, imagination emerges as part of the significance of choice, the transition and separation of possibility and actuality, the process of the concretion of actuality in existence, and as the inner ingredient in the infinite of the ethical.

Just as finitude is the limiting aspect in relation to infinitude, so also necessity is the constraint in relation to possibility. Inasmuch as the self as a synthesis of finitude and infinitude is established, is *καταδυναμιν* [potential], in order to become itself it reflects itself in the medium of imagination, and thereby the infinite possibilities become manifest. The self is *καταδυναμιν* [potentially] just as possible as it is necessary, for it is indeed itself, but it has the task of becoming itself. Insofar as it is itself, it is the necessary, and insofar as it has the task of becoming itself, it is a possibility.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹*Stages on Life's Way*, p. 26

¹⁷⁰*SUD*, p. 35

For both the actual and the ideal self, the movement of the ethical is twofold. In *R* the letters from the Young Man, expose the emptiness of the esthetic imagination, the lack of choice which does not produce a movement within existence, as found in this quotation from his 'silent confidant':

"What foolish contradiction is often found in human cowardliness and courage. One fears to see something terrible but has the courage to do it... If you know what you want, why and how much, then you ought to inspect, you ought to respect, every argument and not speak away from something in the hope that your imagination is duller than actuality..." It is true, every word is true, but it is a truth so very cold and logical, as if the world were dead. It does not convince me, it moves me not.¹⁷¹

And so the young man, who is on the verge of becoming the ethical-religious individual, rejects the use of imagination that Constantin is offering. Imagination, in the esthetic stage, is an objective capability of the individual, limited in its capacity to bring pleasure to the individual. In the ethical individual, imagination generates movement. This movement begins with the concrete, the given, the actual within the existential, abstracting from the concrete to create possibility (duplicating the esthetical process of creating possibility), taking the possibility of the self present in imagination and making it the goal of the self.

The ethical individual begins with the idea of the actual, but in the transition to the ethical the individual chooses one possibility through necessity. The ethical individual takes the elements of existence, given in possibility, and infinitises the task of itself in imagination. This occurs as a process of infinitizing one element of the self rather than one from an infinite number of possibilities, limiting itself, engendering pathos and resolution. The imagination facilitates this.

It is only momentarily that the particular individual is able to realize existentially a unity of the infinite and the finite which

¹⁷¹*R*, p. 191

transcends existence... In passion the existing individual is rendered infinite in the eternity of the imaginative representation, and yet he is at the same time most definitely himself.¹⁷²

The imagination thus facilitates the transition from the imagined ideal self to the possibility of the actual, concrete, ideal self. This occurs in the infinitising process such that the eternal emerges as an ethical task.

In short, for Kierkegaard, to be a self is to exercise the ability to choose freely the self one is to be; in choice a person gains sovereignty over the self... In ethical choice one rules over the territory of the self, one's dreams, and imaginings becoming transformed into a concretely constituted actual self.¹⁷³

The ethical individual then makes a transition between the imagined ideal self and the actual self. This occurs as a process of choosing the concrete particular. Having recognised the eternal in the ideal, the eternal is shown in its fullness. Here one of the applications of imagination in the capacity of producing art is determined by the concept of κίνησις.¹⁷⁴ This is the transition from possibility to actuality, the means by which Kierkegaard separates thought and existence, and yet relates them together in a dynamic manner. Κίνησις mediates between possibility and actuality, between the quantitative and qualitative. This movement between the two is the key to the incorporation in ethical passion. "Becoming a concrete, finite, individual, in ethical striving does not exclude, but dialectically incorporates, the ascending movement of imagination."¹⁷⁵ Existence becomes confused with imagination, with the choice of the ethical individual to be a choice; the choice becomes imaginatively fused with the ethical, allowing the individual to maintain the choice and not to

¹⁷²CUP, Swenson, D. (trans.), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 176; quoted in Gouwens, p. 197

¹⁷³Gouwens, p. 199

¹⁷⁴In JP, vol. 1, p. 109, IV C 47, n.d., 1842-43, <<258, κίνησις is defined by Kierkegaard as movement or becoming- "The transition from possibility to actuality is a change... kinhsis is difficult to define, because it belongs neither to possibility nor to actuality, is more than possibility and less than actuality."

¹⁷⁵Gouwens, p. 201

slip into the possibility of despair. "In contrast to the aesthete who finds only an external infinity, the actual self gives to the ethical person in the shape of the ideal self, an internal infinity of possibilities." ¹⁷⁶ This is a process of actualising the ideal in a universal ideal as the ideal "other", pointing beyond an abstract self to an ideal self.

But although he himself is his aim, this aim is nevertheless another, for the self which is the aim is not an abstract self which fits everywhere and hence nowhere, but a concrete self which stands in reciprocal relations with these surroundings, these conditions of life, this natural order.¹⁷⁷

Thus, in the ethical, the imagination functions not only as an indication of the possibilities (which, of course, it did in the esthetic stage), but also to concrete the ideal union of the finite and the infinite in the ethical individual. At the same time, imagination provides the abstraction from the given, and this internally generates an external ethical ideal. The self remains a dynamic, ordered relation of factors and plays a vital role in the ethical nature of the individual which is sustained by the will.

Every human being possesses to a higher or lower degree a capability called the power of imagination, a power that is the first condition for what becomes of a person, for will is the second and in the ultimate sense the decisive condition.¹⁷⁸

The imagination is the first capability necessary for the individual in order to become a self. The imagination, in the formative process of the self, allows the self to construct a notion of what it means to be a self, a process which then becomes part of the self's own identity as a self. The self continues to develop as an individual self, utilising imagination to unite finitude and infinitude, necessity and possibility, reality and ideality, in a concrete way, while exhibiting freedom.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., p. 203

¹⁷⁷E/O II, trans. Lowrie, W., PUP, 1959, p. 267, quoted by Gouwens, p. 203

¹⁷⁸PC, p. 186

However, the self has not yet appropriated the actual in existence, and the imagination continues as a capability of furthering this development.

Because of this alone, Kierkegaard can reject the concept of imagination elucidated by his predecessors, and, thereby, reject their understanding of the artist itself. A quote from *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses* ("Every Good and Perfect Gift is from God Above", 1843) provides a succinct means of grounding Kierkegaard's reaction. He writes:

what he would choose if he had the choice; whether what he had heard was true, that the most glorious thing to do was to have nothing to do with the world, to be able to say: I came into the world naked, I possessed nothing, I was a stranger in it, and I leave it again naked; whether it would be very hard and irksome to possess the treasures of the world; whether being able to communicate to others would be so difficult a work and involve so much responsibility. Yet any such deliberation, which flirts with the circumstances and premises of life as a game for the power of the imagination, serves only to halt freedom's power to act and to grieve the spirit in romantic hankering and pain.¹⁷⁹

The artist becomes, in his understanding, one who lives within a dangerous state of existence, whereby imagination, as the central means of facilitating artistic production, becomes a denial of the very existence of the individual existing as artist. Unchecked imagination becomes a 'flirtation' with premises which do not hold weight within the development of existence towards actuality. The identity of the artist does not become communicative within an instructive and externalising sense but in an internalising manner; i.e. the artist's power of imagination is used to create the artist's identity which, simultaneously, becomes a grounding of such identity outside of the artist's existence. This is not to say, however, that imagination does not serve a positive role within the Kierkegaardian literature. For example, he writes in *SUD*:

¹⁷⁹*Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, p. 144

Just as finitude is the limiting aspect in relation to infinitude, so also necessity is the constraint in relation to possibility. Inasmuch as the self is a synthesis of finitude and infinitude is established, is *καταδυναμιν* [potential], in order to become itself it reflects itself in the medium of imagination, and thereby the infinite possibility becomes manifest. The self is *καταδυναμιν* [potentially] just as possible as it is necessary, for it is indeed itself, but it has the task of becoming itself. Insofar as it is itself, it is the necessary, and insofar as it has the task of becoming itself, it is possibility.¹⁸⁰

Kierkegaard is apparently envisioning as the role of imagination the medium whereby the development of the individual is able to be reflected upon, wherein the individual can stand back and appraise its own development towards authenticity. Imagination is definitely the means of developing the subjective individual, even though this means is inherently dangerous for the individual, and may lead to despair. It is vital in making the leap from within religiousness (specifically Religiousness A) towards appropriated and applied knowledge of the true nature of the relationship of the individual with its actual ontological grounding; but, within a Romantic setting (as the above appear in Kierkegaard's understanding of them), imagination is a dangerous escapism. Any infinity of the artist must take this into account.

2. *The Development of a Life-View*

This escapism is something which Kierkegaard believes can be countered by a number of different elements within the identity of the artist, particularly a developed life-view. Kierkegaard makes it clear that the requirement of a life-view is universally applicable when he applies the concept to himself, as well as citing examples throughout history. He writes:

An understanding of the totality of my work as an author, its maieutic purpose, etc. requires

¹⁸⁰SUD, p. 35

also an understanding of my personal existence [Existeren] as an author, what I qua author have done with my personal existence to support it, illuminate it, conceal it, give it direction, etc., something which is more complicated than and just as interesting as the whole literary activity. Ideally the whole thing goes back to "the single individual" [den Enkelte], who is not I in an empirical sense but is the author.

That Socrates belonged together with what he taught, that his teaching ended in him, that he himself was his teaching, in the setting of actuality was himself artistically a product of that...¹⁸¹

Kierkegaard seemed at times to be searching for an authentic individual acting the capacity of an artist. This desire was voiced throughout his life, from his student days-

In an age when it is the order of the day for one author to plunder another, it is nevertheless pleasant at times to stumble upon men whose individuality so molds and stamps every word with their portrait that it must compel everyone who meets it in a strange place to say to those concerned: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's."¹⁸²⁻

to the final publications constituting his *Attack Upon "Christendom"*. The first example of Kierkegaard writing about an individual in an artistic capacity is in his first published work, "From the Papers of One Still Living" (1838)¹⁸³. It is a review of Hans Christian Andersen's *Only a Fiddler*, negative in tone, difficult to follow, and an obvious product of Kierkegaard's early thought. Yet, it shows signs of his mature thinking, emphasising the individual, the individual's responsibilities, and the formation and understanding of the importance of a developed life-view, as well as alluding to his understanding of indirect communication.

Kierkegaard's review begins with a polemic against the Hegelianism of the time. He notes that it has become

¹⁸¹JP, vol. 6, p. 126, <<6360; X¹ A 146, n.d., 1849

¹⁸²JP, vol. 1, p. 53, <<127; the requirements of individuality in the authentic artist, I A 234, September 10, 1836

¹⁸³"From the Papers of One Still Living: Andersen as a Novelist with Continual Reference to His Latest Work: *Only a Fiddler*", published in EPW, pp. 53-102

a general tendency infecting most spheres of contemporary thought. This tendency is identified as one in which thinking, contemplating, and interacting within the social structure is reduced to a desire for a system precluding the positive and the actual in favour of the concept of nothingness. The review is a continuation of this observance, to show how the poetic and artistic production of the time lacks any substance, making it valuable enough to be considered seriously by the individual. The review "is done out of consideration for the life-view contained therein, which just as surely has had its corresponding element in existence for its presuppositions as it has also an aroused element for its effect..."¹⁸⁴

Kierkegaard first notes two authors who are deserving of praise. In the stories of Thomasine Gyllembourg-Ehresvård Kierkegaard finds a relation of the author to both the work¹⁸⁵ and the audience, a relation which is seemingly based on the truth of Gyllembourg's individual existence.¹⁸⁶ The author's work seems, to Kierkegaard, to reflect her life, communicating an authentic individual life-view. The work of Steen Steensen Blicher is also noted, wherein Kierkegaard perceives that a unity exists within the elements of the work conveying the nature and truth to which the work appeals.

Andersen's work, in contrast, is viewed as disunited, as chaotic in nature:

he is characterized rather as a possibility of a personality, wrapped up in such a web of arbitrary moods and moving through an elegiac duo-decimo scale of almost echoless, dying tones just as easily roused as subdued, who, in

¹⁸⁴EPW, p.65

¹⁸⁵This is the first time that I have consciously used "work". In this case, I feel it is applicable because Kierkegaard is relating to the entire body of writing of the authors discussed. For the most part, I prefer to describe an example of art as "object", in that this implies a staticness inherent to the example.

¹⁸⁶Though it should be noted that Kierkegaard did not know that Gyllembourg was a pseudonym for Heiberg's mother, and therefore the truth of the author's existence was an untruth.

order to become a personality, needs a stern life-development.¹⁸⁷

Andersen has not developed his art form properly, to encompass both his development as well as the development of the reader; he has "not entered into relation with it [such development] for the sake of his own individual life or out of any more general esthetic interest as a reader but for reasons of prospective short-novel writing."¹⁸⁸ He does not write to incite reflection either upon his existence (which would be the most basic form) or for the audience's own subjectivity (which is the more valuable intention), and, therefore, his work has no substance or value in terms of an individual's existence.

Andersen, as an artist, lacks a life-view in his work. For Kierkegaard, a life-view is more than propositions of neutrality or experience:

it is, namely, the transubstantiation of experience; it is an unshakeable certainty in oneself won from all experience, whether this has oriented itself only in all worldly relationships (a purely human standpoint, Stoicism, for example) by which means it keeps itself from contact with a deeper experience- or whether in its heavenward direction (the religious) it has found therein the center as much for its heavenly as its earthly existence...¹⁸⁹

A life-view is a reflection on existence, whereby the individual artist concerns himself with his own activities and thoughts, within existence, and applies any conclusions reached about these to himself. It is not yet true development, but a strengthening of a consideration for one's self.

The presence of a life-view affects the production of an artist. A life-view is the deepness of the product of an artist, freeing the art object from being purposeless or arbitrary. The life-view is the means of

¹⁸⁷EPW, p.70

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p.73

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p.76

determining the communication as embodying the artist's concern with his actual truth in his own individuality.

In an age when it is the order of the day for one author to plunder another, it is nevertheless pleasant at times to stumble upon men whose individuality so molds and stamps every word with their portrait that it must compel everyone who meets it in a strange place to say to those concerned: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." ¹⁹⁰

The artist must achieve an authenticity to himself, which then produces a unity and authenticity to the work. This must not be based solely on the artist's life, imbedded with unnecessary details, but must be produced, as a product, emerging and developing from the artist. In the work of Andersen, Kierkegaard detects strains which contradict this, as well as encountering aspects of his work that have potential but which are not realised. Kierkegaard concludes, from his analysis of Andersen's work, that Andersen has not realised his own potential as an existing individual being; Andersen's potential, which might be created through achieving authenticity, is not there. Therefore, Kierkegaard also concludes that Andersen's artistic output does not have the necessary life-view, and is not valuable for the individual.

This negative judgement is also based on Kierkegaard's belief that artistic production can be divided into two elements. The first shapes the life-view of the individual who creates such a work. It is determined through the lived experience of that individual's existence. Kierkegaard writes:

When I read a book, what gratifies me is not so much what the book itself is as the infinite possibilities there must have been in every passage, the complicated history, rooted in the author's personality, studies, etc., which every phrase must have had and still must have for the author.¹⁹¹

The second is the reflection that is created from the creating individual's life-view, imbuing the work with

¹⁹⁰JP, Vol. 1, p. 53, <<127; I A 234

¹⁹¹JP, vol. 5, p. 115, <<5297; II A 693, January 13, 1838

the life-view and, thereby, creating a process of reflection in the receiver/audience. For Kierkegaard, Andersen's work possesses a misrelation between his person and the necessary elements of a art object; the source of his work's art contains a lack of unity between its creation and the possibility of reflection contained therein. The author of *Only A Fiddler* experiences an environment transforming him from a genius to a wretched man, paralleling events in Andersen's life, and can be interpreted as a story of self-pity. There is no development, from the experiences of his own life to a reflection furthering any understanding of his existence. Kierkegaard scorns this, since it produces nothing for the individual who might encounter Andersen's work; nothing valuable is created for the reflection of the audience. In the novel, Andersen projects his own individual problems, and does not address the reader. What is not created is a life-view, a fixed idea of the dialectical nature of existence.

The publication of *TA* describes, in even more detail, the nature of the artist, as Kierkegaard understood him. *TA* was a review of Gyllembourg-Ehresvärd's book of the same name and, as in the review of "Only a Fiddler", Kierkegaard cites her writing as one in which a life-view is developed for the individual being authentically. Two sections of the review are important and distinct from each other. The first is the introduction, in which Kierkegaard describes the authentic author as artist in greater detail as having a life-view, stressing this aspect of the artist.

Kierkegaard understands that an author/artist can be judged along a number of criterion, a range which includes styles, accuracy, and general formalistic qualities, but faithfulness to the artist's own identity is the most important. *TA*, as a book describing the relationship and differences between "the age of revolution" and "the present age", Kierkegaard notes as open to criticism on the basis of its representation of such ages. However, Kierkegaard focuses on the artist's

identity, and ability to remain authentic to such identity, as the most important aspect of any production. Kierkegaard would have the artist remain true to himself as an individual being, coming to terms with its ontological grounding, and not be overcome by perceived requirements of a public or the demands of an "age". He writes:

If the apparent metaphysical profundity about the demands of the times is not to disintegrate in confusion, here again the re-examination must ethically be assumed to be able to judge by determining whether he was an author who remained true to himself despite the demands of the times, or one who betrayed himself and his consciously undertaken commitments... a justifiable demand¹⁹²

Despite the character of the time, and its position within a relationship to the ideal, the artist must be an individual who assumes a position outside of such a society. Each specific, historical period necessarily has a relation to the actual within its existence, and the artist must remain in a position contrary to its contemporary society. The artist makes commitments to himself based on reflection on his own life experiences, and his production can be judged, or, more strongly, *should* be judged, by the degree to which the artist remains true to those commitments,

The author should remain true to himself, achieve a unity of self in his production. The author should not be determined by external concerns, but determined in his production of art objects by a faithfulness to himself, to his subjectivity and existential commitments, to his own self-constructed demands on his being. Speaking specifically about the author of *TA*, but applicable to all artistic productions, Kierkegaard writes:

The considerable richness of the author consists precisely in that. The life-view that creatively sustains those stories remains the same, while an ingenious inventiveness and an acquired resource of rich experience and vegetative luxuriance of prolific mood serve to

¹⁹²*TA*, p. 8

produce change within the creative repetition. The disquietude is essentially the same, the quietude is essentially the same, the movement in all the stories is essentially from the same to the same... that is, the life-view is the same.¹⁹³

The artist embodies his life-view in his productions, sustaining it throughout. This is an absolutely vital point. The artist takes everything learned so far in existence, applies it, and allows the production to embody the reflection created by its life-view and, through imagination, creates objects which communicate this life-view while the life-view remains a constant and continual factor.

This sense of faithfulness to the artistic life-view is vital, and must run necessarily throughout the artist's productions, characterising each one, even if only in a subtle and almost undetectable manner. Kierkegaard labels the entirety of production as sustaining, as opposed to creating. The difference is vital. Sustaining means that the life-view is carried through all of the production, coloring each, and determining their reception. Creating is simply the means of bringing into existence objects with no inherent existential value. If the artist is too dependent on creating objects, on focusing on their individual natures and the variety of forms which his production can take, then the production is not sustained, but dissolves into individual and unrelated works, since only God can create and sustain simultaneously. Instead, the artist must concentrate on sustaining a life-view, no matter what form the productions might take.

Indeed, if this were not the case with this author [again, speaking specifically, but generally applicable], his own words would contain a self-contradiction. The life-view in this one story must also be in the whole production; otherwise it reveals the discrepancy that, despite all his presumed creativeness, an author has no life-view.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³Ibid., p.13-14

¹⁹⁴Ibid., p.14

The contradiction of the individual's dialectical nature cannot be resolved. Therefore, the production of the artist must be a communication of the tension created by the dialectical nature of his existence. The very nature of the artist's own production remains in opposition to its existence. Kierkegaard writes:

What is it to be a poet? It is to have one's own personal life, one's actuality, in categories completely different from those of one's poetical production, to be related to the ideal only in imagination, so that one's personal life is more or less a satire on the poetry and on oneself... Such a life is the life of the witness to the truth. This rubric disappeared long ago, and preachers, philosophy professors, and poets have taken over the place of servants of the truth, whereby they no doubt are served very well- but they do not serve the truth.¹⁹⁵

Kierkegaard is, here, maintaining his negative position against artists, but the dialectical development out of this position secures an authentic identity for the artist. The demoralisation, in which the position of the artist as a communicator of the possibility of knowledge of the actual idea as ideal and its application within existence, can be countered if the artist, as individual, continually relates itself to the idea of the ideal. This is only done by sustaining the life-view, which is paramount to the production of authentic art and always counter to the expectations presented to the individual artist, as expected by its contemporary society and its approach to the ideal.

The difference between sustaining a production and creation creates a difference between conventional understandings of art and one which Kierkegaard would agree to as being viable for the developing individual. An idealistic, Hegelian interpretation of what the art object signifies, for the individual, sees art as being a means of reconciling the individual and the object with the ideality of imagination, by means of an application of imagination. Kierkegaard has been accused of

¹⁹⁵JP, vol. 6, p. 85, <<6300; X¹ A 11, n.d., 1849

subscribing to this view,¹⁹⁶ but it is clear, from a reading of *TA*, that Kierkegaard would accuse this view as one negating the importance of actuality and denying a reconciliation of the individual with the reality of its existence. A reconciliation of the idea in the actual person is a split from actuality; on a basic and, importantly, as a differentiation between inauthentic and authentic art, esthetic¹⁹⁷ level art cannot become fully an expression of actuality for either the artist or the recipient.¹⁹⁸ However, an art form, whose subject is strictly bound to the actuality of the artist, an artist who is bound to his life-view and to a developing understanding of his actual ontological grounding, can be labelled by Kierkegaard as one both authentic and valuable for the developing individual, through a faithfulness to the artist's life-view. The authentic art form is the product of the artist's maturity¹⁹⁹, a product of the development of his individual existence and his own personal life-view. It is because of this that sustaining the life-view is to be emphasised over and above the act of creating.

His writing is not an element in his own development, but since this development is mature it brings forth as its fruit a work of interiority. It is not genius, talent, virtuosity that makes the work what it is, for the writing virtually would stop if these were to disappear. No, the work itself, the possibility of being able to produce such a work, is, if anything, the reward that God gave the author...²⁰⁰

The authentic art object is a product of the artist's existence. The productivity of the artist develops from the artist's maturity as an existential being and authenticity towards his own individuality. The vital

¹⁹⁶In Crites' introduction to *Crisis in the Life of an Actress* and Connell's *To Be One Thing*

¹⁹⁷Meaning an art form which is created for the desires of the esthetic individual.

¹⁹⁸For further discussion, see *Samlede Vaerker: PC SV XII 173-175, CUP SV VII 384-389, and JP II 737-50.*

¹⁹⁹Which is a recognition and development of the authenticity of the individual, towards an acceptance and appropriation of the ontological grounding of the individual.

²⁰⁰*TA*, p. 15

aspect of the authentic art object is the development of that individual who produces it as a communication of their own individuality.

As should be already clear, the authentic artist is unlike the conventional and idealistic one. The conventional artist, Kierkegaard notes, is able to transport and inspire through imagination (an allusion to Romanticism), but his production never engages concretely with the actuality of the individual. Art objects produced by an inauthentic artist are never truly concerned with the artist's individual existence nor with the existence of those who receive it as communication. The conventional/inauthentic artist produces only for pleasure. It is never persuasion but relief from a need for sustenance, for sustaining their own inauthenticity.

The authentic artist, in contrast, persuades the recipient through an intermediate tone between actuality and imagination; the communication is indirect, but the results firmly grounded in a transformation of the recipient towards a better understanding of his existence. The recipient of the artist's production is moved through the recipient's own reflection upon itself, to a new relationship with actuality; through indirect communication, and the recipient's own reflection on its being, it comes to a better understanding of its ontological grounding. The product of the aesthetic may move the individual, as may (and will, Kierkegaard hopes) the religious, but this process of movement must be supported by persuasion. As a product of a life-view, as the product of a perceived reciprocity between individuals, as an example and means of sustaining the production, as the product of an developed and authentic individual, the art object persuades the individual to move towards authenticity, supporting him as the changes are made, and maintaining the individual in the direction of actuality. The esthetic, as a product of the inauthentic individual, does not move through support of the recipient, but cajoles him through temptation. The product of the authentic individual does not move the

recipient beyond actuality through necessity, but acts as a support in such a move. This is the limits of the product of the authentic artist: it may support, but cannot move through necessity. Therefore, the product of the authentic artist is limited in that it cannot bring the individual to authenticity- it cannot bring the individual to accept the paradoxical nature of his ontological grounding- but it can be valuable as a support, always as the product of a life-view grounded in the same existential relation to actuality as the individual receiving the communicating. Kierkegaard recognises this throughout his writing, in particular, as always, through the use of the pseudonyms and indirect communication.

3. *Interaction with Individuals*

The second aspect of Kierkegaard's understanding of the artist can also be understood through reading of "The Present Age", being the third part of *TA*.

The age in which Kierkegaard lived he classified as one that reflects on the nature of actuality, but which does not act on that knowledge. Reflection in the artist should produce art objects which produce reflection in those who are being communicated with. However, the artist must be prepared to overcome the nature of the age and interject a cessation within the reflection which currently possesses individuals. Misplaced reflection is a temptation.

One thing... is certain, an increased power of reflection like an increased knowledge only adds to man's affliction, and above all it is certain that for the individual as for the generation no task is more difficult than to escape from the temptations of reflection, simply because they are so dialectical and the result of one clever discovery may give the whole question a new turn...²⁰¹

It is against this that the artist must strive, to avoid presenting mere possibilities rather than the possibility

²⁰¹PA, p. 42

of a relationship to concrete actuality. The individual being communicated to is always in danger of seeing the artist's advancements, and accepting them purely at face-value, without seeing them as applicable to this own existence. The artist must seek to induce in the individual a change which is brought about through the individual's own passionate choices. He should not allow the message of the truth of actuality to become a feat of dialectics empty of existential content. Kierkegaard warns specifically against such a feat, for:

It leaves everything standing but cunningly empties it of significance. Instead of culminating in a rebellion it reduces the inward reality of all relationships to a reflective tension which leaves everything standing but makes the whole of life ambiguous: so that everything continues to exist factually whilst by a dialectical deceit, *privatissime*, it supplies a secret interpretation- that it does not exist.²⁰²

Such a communication leads the individual to regard his own existence within dialectical terms not applicable to his own actuality, leading the individual to regard his own actuality as something not necessarily having significance for his existence. The relationship in the individual, between his existence and his actuality, Kierkegaard describes as a tension "which exhausts life itself and the fire of that enthusiasm and inwardness which makes the fetters of dependance and the crown of dominion light..."²⁰³ A passionate, developing relationship between the individual, his existence, and the actuality of his existence must always be the goal of the authentic artist. The communication of the authentic artist must overcome the tendency to allow individuals to discover and appropriate a singular message, to manipulate such a message for the fulfilment of their own personal requirements, and never develop further.

This sense of passion has its own dangers. It requires a sense of reflection, an examination of the

²⁰²Ibid., p. 42-43

²⁰³Ibid., p. 45

individual artist's position in relation to itself, as well as to its contemporary society. Kierkegaard notes, though, that: "Reflection is a snare in which one is caught, but once the 'leap' of enthusiasm has been taken, the relation is a different one and it becomes a noose which drags one into eternity."²⁰⁴ Reflection alone is that by which the esthetic individual makes no commitment, no decision, within passion but only speculates and contemplates. As noted by Dreyfus in his introduction to *PA*, the esthetic individual is only contemplating pleasure and enjoyment, rather than taking part in it. This is furthered by Kierkegaard's understanding of the concept of levelling.

In Kierkegaard, the concept of 'levelling' is synonymous to Nietzsche's nihilism. Contemporary society has become one within which individuals do not develop but decide a singular position for themselves and remain there. He cites classical society as one example of a time when individuals did not do this, but continually points out that his own is one which has become petrified by levelling.²⁰⁵ Kierkegaard believed in his position and the viewpoint and, therefore, in a specific identity of the artist.

Little by little, being an author has become the most contemptible profession of all... How stupid: the one who writes should understand that what he is writing better than the one who reads; otherwise he should not write.-

Or one has to become a clever shyster who knows how to lead the public by the nose.- That I will not do, I will not, I will not, no, no, the devil take it all. I write as I want to, and here rests- the rest can do as they wish, refrain from buying, reading, reviewing, etc.²⁰⁶

Levelling seems to Kierkegaard to be an inevitable process, since the artist is communicating to individuals

²⁰⁴Ibid., p.58

²⁰⁵One wonders if Kierkegaard's, like Nietzsche's, and many other's, understanding of classical society was correct? Did people *en masse* act as a collected group of individualities as Kierkegaard would suggest, thereby retaining their individual value while acting as a group? Or did, as I suspect, they act in the same manner as the public of which Kierkegaard is writing about.

²⁰⁶*JP*, vol. 5, p. 227, <<5647; IV A 88, n.d. 1843

who are receiving such communication, and which, therefore, necessarily wish to understand such communication.²⁰⁷ This, however, is mere understanding, which is inadequate.

Kierkegaard's point about levelling as a concept is that, in antiquity, the individual men were valued as such, even when they were exiled. The public, and the communications which were produced by the public, brought about an equality to every individual, denying their individuality. This is such even when the individual is denied the communication of that society which partially creates its identity as an individual because that individual, exiled from the community, continues to maintain its identity as a member of the community. The individual could be what others could not be in the present age. The individual being is, in Kierkegaard's understanding of contemporary society, constructed by the public and is able to achieve what anyone can achieve, but only at a loss of its passionate commitment to its own identity. This becomes not only a justification for *ressentiment*, of envy, but also a means of justifying a lack of commitment through a lack of sufficient character to make oneself significant.²⁰⁸ The authentically communicating artist must counteract this levelling.

The public is the main thought-forming and acting body, being incredibly concrete and also insubstantial at the same time. The public sets things forth, but then can deny responsibility quite easily. This is the process of levelling in action, "equating itself to the divisor by means of which every one is reduced to a common denominator."²⁰⁹ But religiousness holds the key to escaping this. "Eternal life is also a sort of levelling, and yet that is not so, because the common denominator is that every one should really and

²⁰⁷Adorno's understanding that Kierkegaard in *Construction of the Aesthetic* is a product of early 19th century ideas on the author and its responsibility to its public serves here, but this is also generally applicable.

²⁰⁸Therein lies Kierkegaard's condemnation of the established church; it is easy for a man to become a Christian, since he is already born a Christian—there is no struggle here.

²⁰⁹PA, p.67

essentially be a man in a religious sense." ²¹⁰ Thus, a man should return to a conception of his individual self that is equitable to that of the Greeks, and, yet, also apply himself fully to Christianity. This is a vital aspect of the artist's almost ethical obligation to create and move the individuals who are stuck in the masses.²¹¹ The artist must overcome the stagnation and induce in individuals, through authentic communication, their own development almost in complete opposition to the society which might give the individuality an identity. This remains a process fraught with difficulties, but ones which Kierkegaard would appear to regard as necessary for the authentic artist. He writes:

There is a strange psychological contradiction in the following:

It is well known that suffering and pain are a condition for many kinds of distinctiveness, such as with poets, artists, religious individualities, and the like. Without these sufferings they would not have become great. Take away their sufferings, give them an easy life, grant them what they desire- and it is all over with greatness. If they had their desire satisfied and the suffering taken away, they would lose even more: ergo, they ought to be happy in their suffering, so happy that they would not wish it removed. But then again they are beyond suffering. I wonder if an individual so situated could really understand this. An individual could be held at the point of extremity where he constantly grasps for the highest in order to find out to what extent this could be done.²¹²

The authentic artist must always seem to be in a state of opposition to the public and to the public's ability of levelling in order to overcome the public's ability to level the individual's own specific existence.

In *PA*, furthermore, a difference between the immediate and the reflective esthetic and an understanding of the authentic artist are further laid

²¹⁰Ibid., p.67

²¹¹And sets up further questions about the nature of great art being produced by artist. Is one quality of great art that it be produced only when the needs of the individuals within society are to be addressed? Is great art only created when there is a need for it?

²¹²*JP*, vol. 4, p. 371, <<4590; VI A 80, n.d., 1845

out. The authentic artist is in tune with his contemporaries, able to induce, to create, a higher degree of reflection in their own individualities through indirect communication. The authentically communicating artist is able to create a higher degree of reflection that both implies and induces a greater significance than immediate passion (i.e. a greater desire to fulfil immediate requirements and pleasures). The authentic artist should construct an enthusiasm which intervenes to gather the powers of reflection together into a decision, and because reflection confers, on the average, a greater capacity for action; then, when religion enters in, it takes command of that increased capacity for action. The artist creates authentic communication (and, therefore, authentic art) which is that through which the individual experiences experience and possibilities in an idealised sense (i.e. including opposing appropriateable possibilities) and applies the decisions which are created for the individual based upon the reflection of those experiences.

This is furthered by the artist's means of communication, whereby the artist does not cater to the requirements imposed on him by the public, but silently works in opposition to the public for the individual. Communication, as art not having the ideal actuality of the ontological grounding of the individual ever present and yet always hidden, becoming the responsibility of the receiving individual to discover it, is not authentic communication. This is particularly problematic for the artist, because the artist remains a part of the society—indeed, subsistence, the continuation of the artist producing an authentic communication, is based on an interaction with society. However, artistic production as authentic communication must always be a product of an individual acting as an artist opposed to society and communicates in silence.

Only one who knows how to remain essentially silent can really talk— and act essentially. Silence is the essence of inwardness, of the

inner life. Mere gossip anticipates real talk, and to express what is still in thought weakens action by forestalling it. But some one who can really talk, because he knows how to remain silent, will not talk about a variety of things but about one things only, and he will know when to talk and when to remain silent.. Every man who has a real experience experiences at the same time all its possibilities in an ideal sense, including the opposite possibility. Aesthetically these possibilities are his lawful property. His talk and his production both rest upon his silence. The ideal perfection of his talk and of his production will correspond to his silence, and the absolute expression of that silence will be that the ideal will include the qualitatively opposite possibility... but as soon as the artist prostitutes his own reality he is no longer essentially productive. His beginning is his end, and his very first word will be a sin against the modesty of the ideal. This type of artistic production is therefore even, aesthetically speaking, a kind of private gossip.²¹³

Thus, any artist who caters to the public, to the public's taste and levelling processes, loses his value in this process of levelling. But an artist who remains silent in his production will capture the ideal within his art, and make his production have value as such. Kierkegaard finds this evident in the difference between the actor's art and the art of actuality.

The actor should seem to be moved, although he is calm (if he is actually disturbed, this is a mistake). In the realm of actuality one should seem to be calm, although he is moved (if one is not actually moved, this is a mistake, and it is easy enough to be calm).²¹⁴

The artist should, in the realm of actuality, when trying to assist other individuals in existence to develop towards appropriation of the actual truth of their existence, should be silent, withdrawn.

The authentic artist is one who does not declare that his communication is the expression of the ideal truth, but remains almost indifferent to it. The artist can attain the ideal- a communication of the truth of the

²¹³PA, p.69-70

²¹⁴JP, Vol. 1, p. 58, <<149, V A 97

actual existence of the individual- and communicate this as idea, but specific conditions apply.

The condition of his attaining this ideal is the silence with which he shuts off his own real personality. Otherwise, in spite of all precautions... his one-sided predilection will be privately recognizable. For an author, like any one else, must have his own private personality, but it must be his own *αδύτου*²¹⁵... The more thoroughly a man grasps the ideal and the idea- in silence- the more capable will he be of reproducing man's daily life so that it seems as though he only talked of particular things at a certain distance. The less ideal, the more superficial his talk...²¹⁶

Inauthentic art leads to formlessness which is "the result of doing away with the vital distinction between form and content. Formlessness may, therefore, unlike madness or stupidity, have a content that is true, but the truth it contains can never be essentially true."²¹⁷ Inauthentic art may contain truth in objective form, either through form or content, but it does not contain the essential and subjective in its truth. Kierkegaard may be criticising objectivity in art and inauthentic art as such, but he is also pointing a way towards an authentic art that does take into account completely the individual's subjectivity and essential truth. Authentic communication is art in which "the very soul of the writer [or any artist] should go into his style."²¹⁸ And, in fully engaging in his own productions, the communication of the artist is the means of assisting other individuals to develop. The responsibility of this for Kierkegaard is clear in this journal entry:

What pains me most, however, is not the vulgarity of the rabble but the secret participation in it by the better people. I, too, would like to make myself comprehensible to one single person, to my reader. But I dare not, for then I defraud the idea. It is precisely when I am succeeding most, when brutality is at its most shameless peak, that I

²¹⁵Translated in PA as "Holy of Holies" , p.70

²¹⁶PA, p. 71

²¹⁷Ibid., p. 72

²¹⁸Ibid., p. 76

dare not speak. Finally, it is my responsibility to be consistently unyielding so that I will not be responsible for several people going completely astray. So be it, I must be silent.²¹⁹

But, authentic art is also that in which the artist, while instilling his production with his own experiences in development towards an understanding of his ontological grounding, also removes all traces of his development so as not to confuse the authenticity of the communication. "The law of delicacy by which an author is permitted to use what he has himself experienced is that he never says the truth but keeps the truth for himself and only lets it emerge in different ways."²²⁰ What is clear from this is that the artist must be removed from his audience as well as from his own communication, while both maintaining concern for the audience's existence as individual beings and removing himself from his work, such that his own existence is not completely reflected in the work that he produces.²²¹ Kierkegaard is quite clear to point out the fact that the artist should remain a communicator of the actual ideal and serve as such. He writes:

What the age needs is not a genius- it surely has had geniuses enough- but a martyr, one who in order to teach men to obey would himself become obedient unto death, one whom men put to death; but, see, just because of that they would lose, for simply by killing him, by being victorious in this way, they would become

²¹⁹JP, vol. 5, p. 315, <<5887; VII¹ A 98, March 9, 1846

²²⁰JP, Vol. 1, p. 57, <<146; IV A 161

²²¹This is taken even one step further, whereby the artist is removed from his own communication and almost becomes a member of the audience. Weston points out that Kierkegaard achieves this through the use of the pseudonyms.

The pseudonymous writings avoid even an indirect relating actuality of an I to an I since the one who addresses the reader is not an actual individual but a *fiction*, and so the author himself is in the same position as any other reader, left alone entirely in what he does or does not do with what is said.[†]

The authentic artist constructs a reciprocal relationship between the communicator, the communicated, and the communication. The artist is not only communicating to an individual the means of that individual's development, but also establishing a relationship between himself and the individual for his own development.

[†]Weston, M., *Kierkegaard and Modern Continental Philosophy*, p.146

afraid for themselves. This is the awakening which the age needs.²²²

The artist is an awakener, presenting himself as a martyr without regard for his own acknowledgement, the one who would awaken and reform the age. His existence is so completely removed that, even by killing the artist, by removing the means of the communication, nevertheless the knowledge is imparted.

To put it another way, Kierkegaard stresses the importance of the relationship between artist and audience by emphasising the relationship between dialectical redoubling and serious communication. Dialectical redoubling is important for the artist, as a translation of the truth of actuality from a purely intellectual understanding of it, grounded in the individual's existence, into its application to the very actuality of the individual. The indirect communication of such is necessary for the development of other individuals, requiring the artist to maintain his own actuality in a state of ambiguity. The artist should not declare his own actuality to the individual, with whom he is trying to communicate the truth of existence to, but should keep himself distant from such communication. This is not a indication for the use of a mystifying form of communication, which only distorts the message, but rather an indication of how the communicating individual should present himself. The process of mystification not only distorts the message, but also the communicator. As Kierkegaard writes, significantly, in *PV*:

In case a sophisticated person should find it necessary in a given contingency to resort to mystification, it would be perfectly natural for him to do it in such a way that the comical situation results that he can't get himself out of it. But this, too, is due to a lack of seriousness, which prompts him to fall in love with mystification for its own sake, instead of using it for a purpose. Hence when a mystification, a dialectical reduplication, is used in the service of a serious purpose, it will be so used as merely to obviate a

²²²*JP*, vol. 3, p. 151, <<2636; VIII¹ A 418, n.d., 1847

misunderstanding or an over-hasty understanding, whereas all the while the true explanation is at hand and ready to be found by him who honestly seeks it.²²³

The artist must always seek to maintain his own seriousness about the subject of the actual truth of existence, removing his own individuality from such a communication as well as remaining unwilling to indulge in the cleverness of the communicative act. As always, Kierkegaard requires of the individual who would know or communicate the truth of his existence a complete seriousness towards that truth. The artist must always be able to identify with the communicated individual, and, therefore, must always maintain a relationship with that individual.

To summarise the above, the authentic artist, the communicator of the truth of the existence of individuals, should have specific qualities in order to be able to communicate that truth. He should have no impatience with other individuals. He should be able to recognise that the individuals, with whom he is communicating, are confirmed in their own illusions, and unwilling, at first, to overthrow these, unless through their own activities.

First and foremost, no impatience. If he becomes impatient, he will rush headlong against it [the esthetic condition of the individual being communicated with] and accomplish nothing. A direct attack only strengthens a person in his illusion, and at the same time embitters him. There is nothing that requires such gentle handling as an illusion, if one wishes to dispel it.²²⁴

The authentic artist should approach the individual and seek to allow them to come to the truth through their own reflection. He cannot dictate this truth, for that only breeds resistance to it. He should also not be impatient, because his own efforts do not produce direct results. Instead, as always, he must employ the indirect method:

²²³*PV*, p. 16

²²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 25

loving and serving the truth, [the authentic artist] arranges everything dialectically for the prospective captive, and then shyly withdraws... so as not to witness the admission which he makes to himself alone before God—that he has lived hitherto in an illusion.²²⁵

The authentic artist, the religious artist, must start with the esthetic, continue to be in fear and trembling before the truth of his own existence, and have everything in readiness to bring forward the religious promptly in order that he may just as quickly withdraw from the process of communication "so that with the momentum gained by devotion to the [a]esthetic they rush headlong into contact with the religious."²²⁶ The authentic artist must be able to make other individuals take notice of his own serious witnessing to the truth, but must never allow his own position to become the means whereby other individuals seek the truth of their existence, for therein lies the danger of those individuals relying on the communicator rather than the actual truth.

4. *The Difference Between A Genius and an Apostle*

Kierkegaard's understanding of the artist is further defined in the essay "On the Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle", published by Kierkegaard in 1849 as part of "Two Minor Ethico-Religious Essays", but originally intended to be included in *The Book On Adler*. In the first, Kierkegaard affirms the importance of the authentic individual²²⁷ even when he seems to be denying the importance of any such labelling as the use of the term 'genius'. Kierkegaard describes the individual's confrontation with ideality and the possible subsequent communication of such a confrontation. This communication contains within itself the means of betraying that communication of the idea of the ideal for the

²²⁵Ibid., p. 25

²²⁶Ibid., p. 26

²²⁷As always, the one who is able to communicate to other individuals based on a development towards knowledge of the actual ideal and allow them to develop themselves as a result of such knowledge.

individual's own subjective concerns, and, therefore, destroying such a communication for other individuals. But it also contains the very possibility of producing art as authentic and ideal communication within material form.

A genius belongs to the sphere of immanence. What a genius bring forth may be new, but this still becomes assimilated by humanity. A genius is such through his own merits, through being himself, having an immanent teleology. An Apostle, on the other hand, has something new to bring forth, the newness of which is paradoxical and thus always remains new as an Apostle remains an Apostle for eternity (a genius may be discredited as such in later history). An Apostle is an Apostle by divine authority rather than through himself, and is placed within an absolute paradoxical teleology before which all sensuous thoughts vanish.

Genius is born, is genius as genius. Genius may change, but remains a genius. A genius may bring forth something paradoxical, but this loses its paradoxical nature through assimilation and ultimately the genius is assimilated (the paradox is not absolute, and thus can be assimilated). A genius is appreciated aesthetically, but his value is not divine. Authority is the key, since authority is inconceivable within the sphere of immanence and is thus transitory.

Genius has an immediate teleology, developing itself and developing self-projection, but does not have external authority. Genius is self-sufficient, despite the fact that the public may try to immediately assimilate him as serving them (or at least assimilate him as one of them).

The humorous self-sufficiency of genius is the unity of a modest resignation in the world and a proud elevation above the world: of being an unnecessary superfluity and a precious ornament. If the genius is an artist, then he accomplishes his work of art, but neither he

nor his work of art has a telos outside him... No genius has an *in order that*.²²⁸

Hence, a genius is an individual immanent within the world.

The Apostle, in contrast, has absolutely and paradoxically an *in order that*. An Apostle is not born, but called and anointed by God. An Apostle does not develop. To become an Apostle is to be preceded by no potential possibilities to be an Apostle. An Apostle "stands paradoxically outside his personal identity with himself as the definite person he is."²²⁹ This paradoxical nature of his calling brings forth the new, which always remains new.

An Apostle remains himself and also is not himself, thus always making his message new and, therefore, transcendent. An Apostle is such through divine authority, an authority which is decisive in its quality because, unlike genius which only has authority in its own production, an Apostle has authority paradoxically outside of himself through revelation. The authority is paradoxical because it remains outside of that in which it comes from. The Apostle's identity, the quality of 'Apostle' as authority is transcendental rather than immanent. He is not only absolutely teleological and faithful as such, but is also sent out by God with His authority.

The difference between the two is discussed in great detail in *The Book on Adler*²³⁰, which elaborates on the

²²⁸PA, p. 108

²²⁹Ibid., p.92

²³⁰Not published by Kierkegaard in his lifetime. Commentators have debated the reasons, but it would seem most likely that Kierkegaard was concerned that passages in it would be interpreted (correctly) as an attack on the Bishop Mynster- head of the Danish church throughout most of Kierkegaard's authorship. On friendly terms with each other, but Kierkegaard's journals reveal his criticism of Mynster's leadership as dangerous- something which Kierkegaard did not undertake until able to do so indirectly after the Bishop's death. It is, however, strange that he did not do so, for it is one of the more important books of Kierkegaard's many, in particular as to the place of the author/artist in relation to Christianity. Specifically, it asserts the identity of the artist as beyond a merely authentic communicator (i.e. above the level of a genius) while at the same time being below that of an Apostle. Reading *The Book On Adler* in this fashion clearly identifies the place of the artist in Kierkegaard's philosophy, and it is surprising that this book has not been more studied before (perhaps an indication of the lack of importance that not only secondary literature has afforded it, but also Kierkegaard himself). It is beneficial to cover *The Book On Adler* in detail because, even though it covers some of the previously discussed

difference between the genius and the Apostle more specifically in terms of a premise and an essential author, described below. Kierkegaard begins the book by noting that individuals, for the most part, do not attempt to live their lives in an extraordinary manner. Individuals who identify themselves as artists Kierkegaard describes as a premise-author, or premise-artist. He writes:

It is not improbable that the lives of many men go on in such a way that they have indeed promises for living but reach no conclusions—quite like this stirring age which has set in movement many premises but also has reached no conclusions.²³¹

The character of the age Kierkegaard has identified as one in which individuals might seek greatness, but never truly achieve it. More specifically, Kierkegaard would characterise the age (and most ages) as one in which greatness is recognised but never sought because it is unattainable except in the most rarest instances.

Within such an age, an individual might aspire to become an artist. What is clear from Kierkegaard's criticism of Andersen, however, is that such an individual would have no chance of being an authentic artist, because the very nature of society restricts this. Without a conclusion, without passion and

ideas, it clarifies the position of the authentic artist within the entire philosophy.

The Book on Adler is concerned with a priest named Adler who declared that he had received a vision from Christ, telling him in revelation that he was not only to change the Christianity of Denmark, but also that he was to abandon Hegelianism, which Adler had been a devoted follower of. Adler published a number of books on this subject and sought both confrontation and confirmation from the established church. Surprisingly, the Danish Church did not take kindly to Adler's efforts to reform it, and removed him from its organisation.

Kierkegaard's involvement with Adler results from two things. First, Adler apparently made a gesture to Kierkegaard personally, seeing him as a kindred soul and offering him a secondary position in his reform movement. Second, Adler published a number of books which discussed and described his revelation, seeking to both prove it and make it a convincing means of changing the people's attitude to the established order. Not only was this project something which Kierkegaard himself felt strongly about (resulting spectacularly in his various attacks at the end of his life on the church), but Adler's writing was compared favourably to Kierkegaard's, especially with Kierkegaard's use of pseudonyms. As Lowrie points out, Adler became a concern of Kierkegaard's not only because he attempted to carry out something which Kierkegaard himself felt was necessary, a project which Kierkegaard felt he was carrying out wrongly, but also because Adler appeared in the same light as Kierkegaard had when he had been attacked by "The Corsair". Even if he did not publish the book, *The Book on Adler* was important to Kierkegaard personally.

²³¹Adler, p. 113

authenticity and a proper life-view (all of which run counter to societal requirements), the individual would find it impossible to become a true artist, able to create within his reader knowledge of the truth of existence. Such an individual might be talented enough to write the first or even the second part of a description of an authentic existence, by which Kierkegaard understands as the physical and the psychical nature of man, but it would be impossible to write the third part, which would facilitate the generation of knowledge of the actual ideal.

The nature of the individual being is such that he must pass through a variety of stages of self-consciousness and self-knowledge. "To find the conclusion, it is necessary first of all to observe that it is lacking, and then in turn to feel quite vividly the lack of it."²³² The individual who has not yet reached a conclusion, who has not progressed through the various stages of self-consciousness and self-knowledge, cannot effectively come to terms with his own existence. The individual must go through the agonies of anxiety and despair before being able to come to terms with his existence. Not doing so denies the possibility that an individual would be able to communicate the nature of his or any other individual's existence at all, either directly or indirectly.

An esthetic production of such an individual (one in which the individual recourse to his infinite powers of imagination) is lacking. This is in contrast to an essential literary or artistic production by an individual which contains a life-view such that:

If a life-view is developed, if it stands out whole and clear in its necessary coherence, one has no need to put the hero to death, one may as well let him live: the premise is nevertheless resolved and satisfied in the conclusion, the development is complete. But if there is lacking a life-view (which of course must be in the first part and everywhere, though the lack of it only becomes evident in

²³²Ibid., p. 114

the second part or the third, that is to say, the conclusion), it is of no avail to let the hero die, no, it avails nothing that the writer, to make quite sure that he is dead, even has him buried in the course of the story-with this the development is by no means complete.²³³

The art object, as a product of a communicating individual, is not a resolution of the life of an individual, but should be part of a development of the individual's life. Death is not a conclusion, but a life may be concluded long before death if it is not lived in an authentic manner. Likewise, the artistic production focusing on the life of an individual is not necessarily concluded with the ending of the production (the completion of the art object), nor the finality within that production. The art object is an object whose communication can be appropriated for the authentic artist as part of his own communication as well as part of the development of the individuals being communicated. The lack of conclusion may be evidence that the artist (and the art object as well) lacks an authentic existence.

The author lacking conclusions has something else, which is an indication of the lack of authentic existence. An artist, lacking in conclusion, and, therefore, any authentic direction or passionate choice, has only a premise on which to base his work. This brings out a vital distinction. The premise is a superficial goal, a direction without grounding, whereby an effect is created. The premise-author (or artist) is outwardly directed, while its counterpart, the essential-artist, is inwardly directed.

Premise-authors are the opposite of the essential authors, for the latter has his own perspective, he constantly comes behind himself in his individual productions; he strives forward indeed, but within the totality, not after it... For he has a definite world-view and life-view which he follows, and with this he is in advance of his individual literary

²³³Ibid., p. 114

productions, as the whole is always before the parts.²³⁴

The premise-artist is bound by the constraints of externality, and his production is led and constructed along the laws laid out by this externality, be they physical limitations in the most basic sense, or social limitations in a more complicated manifold. The premise-artist's productions are created not on the grounds of his own existence, but on a perceived existence. The premise-artist is a producer of an esthetic product, one which may be a communication of the idea, but not the application and, hence, the appropriation, of the idea as ideal. The essential-artist, on the other hand, produces according to his existence. He is either a teacher or a learner, expressing his own existence as an individual. The essential-artist is a producer of the aesthetic, which is a communication not only of the idea but the ideal as a necessary process of appropriation and application to the receiving individual's existence.

The essentialist nature of the individual's communication is one of the key factors of the individual being an authentic artist. The form of communication which such an essential-artist uses is one which is part of his existence but also maintains the dialectical nature of the art object. "The art of communication consist in coming as close as possible to reality, i.e. to contemporaries who are in the position of readers, and yet at the same time to have a viewpoint, to preserve the comforting and endless distance of ideality."²³⁵ The ideal for the premise-artist is a construction based on the interaction of externality with his imaginative powers. The essential-artist, in contrast, bases his work on his existence as an individual with full awareness of the communication which he is creating, directed towards other developing individualities, thereby producing an object easily understood to be not existing as reality

²³⁴Ibid., p. 117

²³⁵Ibid., p. 118

(i.e. it is only a depiction), but as something understood in terms of a movement towards actuality.

These points are the main features of Kierkegaard's criticism of Adler. Kierkegaard does not criticise Adler from an aesthetic viewpoint, in opposition to the esthetic viewpoint, nor is he critical of Adler as an ordinary author. Rather, Kierkegaard discusses Adler from the position of one without authority, investigating the phenomenon of Adler in its entirety (i.e. to see if he is an essential author with a life-view, according with his claims to revelation). Adler has not, for Kierkegaard, denigrated any claims to the possibility of revelation. Rather, Kierkegaard notes about him that "when a man only wishes to explain away what was intended to be an apostolic existence into being a genius, without revoking the first claim- then he confounds the situation terribly." ²³⁶ Adler's revelations may be enough to label him an Apostle, but he confuses the issue and, therefore, denies his claim as such through the nature of his communication.

Kierkegaard continues to confront Adler along a number of levels. First, he examines the historical aspect of Adler's revelation. Adler's collision with the universal is that of the special individual by way of revelation. A man so called should regard himself, for Kierkegaard, outside of the age, while remaining part of it an embodied individual.

The man chosen in our age will not be merely an instrument in the immediate to serve but will consciously undertake his calling in a sense different from that which has always characterised a divine calling: he will think of himself and understand himself in the fact that this extraordinary thing has happened to him.²³⁷

This is an historical individual, but with a claim of revelation. For Kierkegaard, the historical individual is fully tied into the existential individual, relating himself in an authentic manner to his contemporaries,

²³⁶Ibid., p. 124

²³⁷Ibid., p. 130

while at the same time continuing to come to terms with the existential truth granted him. This granting of revelation bears great responsibility, such that the individual, who has received one, should place himself in the best possible position, whereby he maintains his existential role as both a witness and a teacher of that revelation. This responsibility cannot be carried out only inwardly, through subjective reflection, but must be performed within the context of the individual's fellow man.

In case everything was in order about a man being called of God by revelation, he would then understand that to this call and to the fact of having a revelation there corresponds ethically a prodigious responsibility in all directions, not only inwardly... but outwardly, in relation to the established order, because the extraordinary has in reflection the dialectic of being the highest salvation, but also of being able to be the greatest corruption.²³⁸

His responsibility is to make his extraordinary experience and, therefore, through that experience, his extraordinary communication such that he continues to learn while at the same time teaching. In effect, the individual who experiences a revelation must make himself suffer direct damage from this revelation, while knowing that it is simultaneously his salvation. "In the ultimate consequence of reflection he would then transform the fact of revelation into his life's deepest secret, which in the silence of the grave remained the law of his existence, but which he never communicated directly."²³⁹ The revelation must be completely counter to the individual's existence, and the individual must understand, reflect, and, ultimately, apply this to its existence and communication.

What is clear for Kierkegaard, however, is that, while the individual experiences seems to require the necessity to keep the revelation inward, this is not enough. What makes the change a requirement- that the

²³⁸Ibid., p. 130

²³⁹Ibid., p. 131

individual communicate his revelation- is the dialectical nature of a revelation. Not only must the individual who has received a revelation *not directly communicate it*, but, because the revelation is dialectical, *he must indirectly communicate it*; "he who is called by a revelation and to communicate a revelation, or the fact that he had a revelation (for the principal thing is precisely that he has had a revelation, not always so much its contents...), he should proclaim this, appeal to it, exert authority." ²⁴⁰ The revelation is a universally applicable communication, revealed to a single individual. The dialectical nature of the revelation (through all of its manifold apparitions) emerges when it becomes clear to the individual that he has no authority, since the revelation comes from divine authority, but he must continue, because of the very fact of the revelation, proclaim its contents and be witness to the fact that he has received one.

In an age of reflection, which Kierkegaard identifies as characteristic of his own, the receiver of a revelation has no authority in himself; the actual ideal is granted from actuality, outside of the receiver's existence. The authority is divine in its source and nature. Divine authority is the only authority, and the questions which an individual must ask are not 'Do you understand?' or 'Do you agree?' but are commands for obedience. The individual who receives the revelation is not granted any status. It is hard beyond belief to exist in such a state, with a revelation, but, by the very fact of its being revelation, the individual must persist without the authority, thereby developing in existence as an extraordinary individual. "The true extraordinarius will not be comforted nor seek relief no find relief in the public, but only in God; and therein consists the dialectical, which is anguish and crisis but at the same time blessedness." ²⁴¹ The true extraordinary

²⁴⁰Ibid., p. 131

²⁴¹Ibid., p. 139

individual confronts his revelation and situation, acknowledging his burden while rejoicing underneath it.

How does the individual become extraordinary? He might be a normal individual but, upon increasingly inward reflection, he conceives of a new point of departure for the established order, a position from which he is in direct conflict with the paradigms of such an order and which cannot produce for himself a position from which he might gain authority. What distinguishes the ordinary from the special individual? The starting-point is the revelation. An ordinary individual might reach a higher standing in the world, but he does not affect those very terms which placed him in such a position; he accomplishes nothing beyond the ordinary, nothing original, though he might be considered by the public as being "great". The extraordinary man, in contrast, starts with the same- the human standard of individual ethics- but he also starts with a revelation. The extraordinary man is required to make sacrifices and to put himself in a position contrary to the established order, and does so.

The true extraordinary individual, capable of being an essential-artist, accepts its revelation, and attempts to communicate such. However, by its very nature as revelation, such an individual is always placed within an existential opposition to the revelation, resulting in suffering. Kierkegaard writes:

Truly there is only one thing to do with respect to serving truth: to suffer for it. This is the only possible awakening. Such an appalling, all-engulfing web of reflection as now envelops the generation cannot be exploded by reflection; greater powers are needed. And martyrs are the only ones who are needed.²⁴²

Suffering is one of the marks of the true extraordinary individual, since the revelation, which is communicated to the individual from the actual ideal, becomes not only applicable to its existence but removes the existence of that individual beyond its normal existence, while still

²⁴²JP, vol. 3, pp. 159-160, <<2650; x¹ A 16, n.d., 1849

requiring an interaction within its previous existence. The extraordinary individual, by the very fact of the communication of the idea as ideal to itself,²⁴³ is placed within existence, while being wholly outside of that same existence. Kierkegaard writes:

The extraordinary person is not vain about what has been granted him- for then he would definitely not be the extraordinary; moreover, he is far too exhausted by what has been granted him to be more vain. But on the other hand it is nevertheless true that he is the extraordinary.

And then, yes, perhaps the extraordinary prefers to encourage men to believe that he is a fool, a nobody- but then the responsibility to God- does he dare, is it not deceiving God, since under the circumstances God has made him into the extraordinary.

O, so strenuous is the true God-relationship that it is always characterized by a tendency toward madness. To be the extraordinary, to know with God that one is that, to dare know that the future will reveal it more and more (yet here the future perhaps says: not until after one's death)- and then in his present life to have the most insignificant person among his contemporaries be more than the extraordinary, for the most insignificant person is in the previously given relativity, the extraordinary is the new- which is still nowhere at home.²⁴⁴

This tendency to madness is, first of all, a specific aspect of the revelation as idea, always in opposition to the extraordinary individual's previous existence prior to it attaining the status of Apostle. Not only does the true extraordinary individual exist within a confrontation with existence itself, but it also bears the burden of its revelation as revelation, and is, therefore, secondly, within a confrontation with itself. By its very nature, as revealed truth of the actual grounding of existence, the revelation is a continual opposition corrupting the existence of the extraordinary individual. As Kierkegaard writes: " But on the whole it

²⁴³And one might argue that the Apostle is receiving the idea as pure idea, rather than as ideal. The extraordinary individual is not an Apostle. Revelation is present, but the idea expresses the ideal. The Apostle's revelation is such that the ideal *is* the idea.

²⁴⁴JP, vol. 4, p. 404, <<4672; X⁴ A 189, n.d., 1851:

is certain that to be an apostle must be torture and horror, total torture and horror." ²⁴⁵

The extraordinary man is one who is unconcerned with his own temporal responsibilities. This is not to say that he is an unethical individual (though this is a criticism which can be cited against Kierkegaard if such an individual is to be justified). His primary source of anxiety is the inward responsibility which he bears, hoping that suitable resistance will be met. The ordinary (or, as Kierkegaard begins to distinguish, the ordinary-extraordinary author, the premise author) sees his efforts as having a *telos*, constructed and carried out within the confines of rationality. The ordinary-extraordinary man individual already knows the results, whereas the true extraordinary is in anxiety about their truth, and he is concerned only about his relationship to God and the revelation, and not about the "preordained" results. The true extraordinary man (the extraordinary author/artist) possesses certainty only in the fact that he has the eternal on his side and that he has had a revelation.

The ordinary-extraordinary man understands the nature of his message in a different manner from the true extraordinary. His message is reached as a result of his thought and, once he is through with this inward thought, he then takes up a position against the established order. The ordinary-extraordinary man constructs his message on his own rational terms, and then applies then against the establishment. "The problem and the labor [for the ordinary-extraordinary] is only to insure that [the desired results] may be brought to victory." ²⁴⁶ The extraordinary individual is the opposite, concerned only about his relationship to God and the manner of revelation of the idea of the actual truth which he wishes to communicate, since his message will succeed if it is coming from God, though the individual might himself fail. The ordinary-extraordinary individual (whom

²⁴⁵JP, vol. 2, p. 454, <2098; XI¹ A 400, n.d., 1854

²⁴⁶Adler, p. 146

Kierkegaard describes as the "man of movement", one who moves under his own impetus and directs himself towards his own goals) needs the established order, if only so that the established might change their minds and appreciate and accept his plan. The extraordinary man has no such need, only a need for a proper relationship with God. "Whether the true *extraordinarius* prevails today or tomorrow or in a thousands years is a matter of no concern, for he *has conquered*, his relationship to God is his victory; yea, through what he has to proclaim were never to prevail in the world, to this he might reply, 'All the worse for the world.'" ²⁴⁷ Indeed, elements by which the extraordinary individual might be identified- such as suffering- are inconsequential to a great extent.

A true extraordinary person performs activities which are profound, which go beyond the normal scope of temporal imagination to connect with the eternal. It is something profound and "properly speaking profundity is the deep existential realisation of an idea which corresponds directly with God." ²⁴⁸ Profundity is a mode of existence- the individual who is extraordinary has both knowledge of, a relationship with, and the ability and necessity to communicate knowledge of actuality, such that he must not only fear and yet be reconciled with his extraordinary nature, he must also love the established order and not wish it any harm while at the same time contain within himself the seeds of its dissolution and make himself one who is reviled and repulsed such that no one would wish to be him. The individual becomes extraordinary only when he understands the thought that he is paradoxical; the extraordinary individual becomes such when he understands his message of salvation as one which will be interpreted as damnation by those for whom the message is intended. It is on these terms that the true, authentic artist is created. Kierkegaard writes:

It is one thing to be a so-called extraordinary
with *direct* recognizability (that is, the

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 149

²⁴⁸Ibid., p. 152

spurious extraordinary), getting along fine with all the relativities that participate in that which is merely the maximum of their range and on that basis interpret the extraordinary's behavior as the extraordinary.

It is something quite different to be the true extraordinary, who relates *inversely*, explodes the relativities, which therefore defend themselves with all their might against him—the true extraordinary is *inversely* recognizable by being that which is ridiculed, cast off, etc., and the life of the extraordinary one is sheer wretchedness and suffering.²⁴⁹

The true extraordinary is not only outside of the normal understanding of existence within the knowledge of those to whom it is communicating, but must maintain that difference even as it is communicating the actual ideal as possible while simultaneously maintaining the impossibility of acceptance or recognition.

This extends across the artist's entire life and defines not only the nature of the individual as the extraordinary individual but also such an individual's output. The extraordinary individual as artist is one whose communication is established by the nature of its existence and, furthermore, the nature of the relationship between its existence and the knowledge of actuality which has been revealed to it. What must an author do when writing, particularly if he is writing a multiple number of books? Similarly, what must any artist do when producing art objects? Kierkegaard answers this question with regards to Adler's last four books.

The four books must have objectively a deeper aim— for example, as I think of it, to compass, if possible maieutically, a certain field from various sides at once. It must be important for the author of the four books, a half-poetical artistic task for him, that each book, which *in itself* is essentially different from the others, may be *characteristically* kept apart from the others; the author must know how to express poetically the illusion which is essentially confirmed by the special point of departure of each book...²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹JP, vol. 4, pp. 435-436, <<4719; XI¹ A 541, n.d., 1854

²⁵⁰Adler, p. 192

For Kierkegaard, the artist must produce objects which differ in style and structure, but in which the inherent nature of each object must remain the same, and must be expressed maieutically.

Kierkegaard is highly critical of Adler's claim to genius. For Kierkegaard, the vital and amazing fact of Adler's writing is that he *might* have had a revelation. However, even if he had had one, by claiming to be able to go beyond the immediate fact of the revelation, by seeking public approval, and by claiming to be able to come to terms with his revelation through reflection and mediation, Adler is dismissed as being either unworthy of having had a revelation (if he had one at all), or of not having had one. The claim to genius, which Adler makes based on his revelation is a false one. The individual who is called by a revelation to have an effect on the world contains within himself a teleological attitude, since he is God's (and the ideal truth's) instrument (and, by being such, the goal's success is never in doubt). Such an individual, and Adler is not one, in Kierkegaard's understanding, however, must remove itself from a position of authority. To live humouristically denies this teleological aspects of the existential individual, and describes Adler's attitude towards his own revelation. Kierkegaard points out that

this is pretty much the attitude Adler assumes in his last works- but Adler began by being called by a revelation, and Adler now thinks that he is in identity with himself, that is to say, he fails to notice that there is a qualitative decisive difference between his first position and his last.²⁵¹

To have a revelation, and to accept it and understand it as such, is marvellous for the individual involved. To assume that one must then become a clear and reflective author on the matter, to assume that one can then enter into a dialogue with one's own revelation, is blasphemous. The results of assuming any position of authority are to relegated one's status to that of

²⁵¹Ibid., p. 215

ordinary genius, and relegates the communicative production to inauthenticity.

The development of the individual being is paralleled by the development of originality, determined through silence.

Silence is the way by which originality is acquired, an originality which is more than a surrogate for the originality of the genius.. By holding fast a definite expression of one's life, a definite single thought, in absolutely silent inwardness, by not wishing to open the least communication with any other man (by which relative and comparative standards, the standees of mediocrity, are made accessible) every man will, if in the meantime he does not lose his reason (for this danger is inescapable), *acquire originality.*²⁵²

Silence as originality is a claim to an exemption from normal existence, without making a claim for distinction within existence. Silence ensures a separation from normal existence (though it never ensures a position within actuality). Silence is not writing multiple books of reflections on a revelation. Silence is the expression of the individual who does not seek approval from the public but simply presents his communication in indirect form so that they might accept it or not, based upon their own existence.²⁵³ The change of the individual, the qualitative existential decision, is by its very nature both inward and silent. The outward and the inner may appear to be both necessary, but it is the silence of the inner subjectivity of the individual, which is vital.

²⁵²Ibid., p. 215

²⁵³An interesting and rare note- Rothko quotes from Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* on this subject, and is agreement on the necessity of silence for the artist. Rothko read this book in 1955-56, and was much taken with the figure of Kierkegaard's Abraham. Rothko is quoted in Breslin, p. 392, as stating in April, 1956: "Last year when I read Kierkegaard, I found that he was writing almost exclusively about that artist who is beyond all others. And as I read him more and more I got involved with his ideas that I identified completely with the artist he was writing about. I was that artist." Rothko is typical of many other artists who have chanced upon Kierkegaard in the 20th century- reading piecemeal, understanding even less (especially since so many did not have access to a translation from the Danish). What is remarkable about this is that Rothko (and other 'Abstract Expressionists' like Pollock and Motherwell) seemed to have latched onto applicable passages. Despite the fact that I have done nothing to investigate the possible influence that Kierkegaard has had on 20th century art (and 19th century for that matter), I would like to point out that there remains a great potential for such an investigation.

Adler might be qualified, his subjective transformation may be qualitative with regards to his existential being, but it is not so in a Christian (in a paradoxical relationship to knowledge of the actuality of existence), and, therefore, in an authentic, manner; Adler appears not to have experienced a transformation which is qualified in a Christian sense.

It is different with the definition of a Christian awakening to a religious interest *which lies in the sphere of transcendence*. The emotional seizure of the individual by something higher is far from defining a Christian adequately, for by emotion may be expressed a pagan view, pagan conceptions of God. In order to express oneself Christianly there is required, besides the more universal language of the heart, also skill and schooling in the definition of Christian concepts, while at the same time it is of course assumed that the emotion is of a specific, qualitative sort, the Christian emotion.²⁵⁴

Herein are even more qualities for the extraordinary individual to be regarded as an authentic artist. The means of expression require an emotional commitment to the knowledge of the ontological grounding of the individual being, as well as that very knowledge itself. Danger exists in the fact that an individual, believing that he has had a religious emotion, assumes that it is necessarily a Christian emotion, simply because he is a Christian, when the qualitative imperative may not, in fact, be present. The authentic individual will recognise this. Therein lies a specific distinction. The authentic artist is one who implements, within its communication, the qualitative imperative as a confrontation within existence against the actual, but does so not merely as an action within existence, but as a state of existence to move both against and beyond. In effect, the extraordinary individual is one with potential for being an authentic artist, as a communicator of the idea of the actual ideal within existence, so that even its own

²⁵⁴Adler, p. 252

qualitative transformation towards the actual is irrelevant.

5. *The Implications Of The Above*

Three problems arise from the preceding ideas. First is a major criticism which many have held against Kierkegaard. Throughout his writing, Kierkegaard could be understood as describing an authentic existential individual who remains silent and does not produce communication of any sort, either direct or indirect. Kierkegaard would reply that the individual can communicate his revelation, his relationship to God and his understanding of his ontological grounding, authentically. The only stipulation is that such an individual not enter into a form of reflection which leads to his seeking assurances from outside of his own self. His subjectivity, and his understanding of subjectivity, must be the key to his authenticity and the development of his individual self. This is clear and precisely defined through Kierkegaard's criticism of Adler:

one may say that he has been productive at the wrong place, his productivity sails before a false wind. *For instead of giving himself time, gaining repose, coming to his senses, going to school; instead of acquiring respect for what after all it means to have had a revelation, and coming to an understanding with himself and to a qualitative decision, in short, instead of keeping and acting and labouring, he becomes so productive in a literary way about all this, that he has not yet attained repose, that he is fatigued, that he is shaken, pale, that he is on the point of making the leap, that with a longer time for working quietly to revise the ideas he hopes, etc.*²⁵⁵

Certain steps were not taken by Adler which were necessary. He should have come to an understanding of himself in terms of the revelation. Instead, he begins producing works directly which seek to explain in a literary and direct fashion that which does not require,

²⁵⁵Ibid., p. 259

through its nature as a revelation, an explanation. Adler becomes bound by reflection in the wrong manner.

The second problem is that Kierkegaard requires for the communicating individual a necessarily Christian grounding, based on both the emotional and existential nature of the individual, as well as on a specific Christian knowledge. From the preceding, it would seem possible to suggest that Kierkegaard believes that it is only the Apostle who is able to produce a communication which allows for the appropriation. Otherwise he would be unable to state, in a reference to the genius and the apostle and as an indication of both the limits of art and Kierkegaard's recognition of his own limitations, the following:

X¹ A 56, n.d., 1849: ...My situation will place me personally under the same "judgement," as everyone else, the judgement upon Christendom contained in these books. It is precisely this which will prevent my being confused with an apostle or someone like that. The books are poetically written, as if by an apostle, but I have stepped aside- no, I am not the apostle, anything but, I am the poet and the penitent.²⁵⁶

Yet, the very example of Kierkegaard himself (unless we are to label him an Apostle!), and other indications noted in the preceding, disallow this. This is more difficult to answer and come to terms with. The initial response is to state that Kierkegaard's philosophy, no matter how it is appropriated, must remain Christian in its grounding. Therefore, any production or communication which is to be authentic for the individuals both communicating and receiving must, by its very nature and efforts to be authentic for the existence of individuals, be Christian.

But where, then, does the artist fit into the whole scheme? A solution to this is only found in an interpretative reading and determination of the previous descriptions of the extraordinary individual as either genius or Apostle. The artist appears to be neither and

²⁵⁶JP, vol. 6, p. 100, <<6317

Kierkegaard makes no indication of the artist as such. Yet, the authentic artist (one who is an authentic communicator of the idea as actual ideal, i.e. as appropriatable into the receiving individual's existence through a process of reception which involves reflection and repetition) must fit into a position within this framework, something Kierkegaard never suggests. Kierkegaard *does not* describe the artist as a distinct identity *anywhere*. This is the third problem, but is resolved by defining the distinction between immanence and transcendence, and then placing the importance of an authentic artist between the communication of the genius and the communication of the Apostle, having qualities of the essentialist, the ordinary-extraordinary, and the extraordinary individual.

Immanence and transcendence can be used to describe the development of a specific concept or relation within the subjectivity of the individual. In particular, it is used to distinguish between Religiousness A and Religiousness B and, while it can and will be used to describe other developments, it is that example which provides the clearest understanding in a Kierkegaardian context. The difference then becomes a mean of application in determining the identity of the artist.

Religiousness A is a form of religiousness concerned with the individual's relation to the actual but not yet fully appropriating the implications of this relation into its existence. Religiousness A is not specifically Christian, and can even be a form of paganism, but has not yet confronted itself with the paradoxical nature of Religiousness B. It is pathos-filled, i.e. it contains within its stage of existence, a concern and limited appropriation of the pathos of the actual, the truth of the actual for the individual. It remains, however, separated by that acceptance of the paradox, only one step before the completion of the dialectical confrontation with the ideality of the actual in existence. Religiousness A is not for acting in a decisive manner and, as such, can be described as

immanent religiousness in that it has appropriated into existence only that which exists in existence. Religiousness A, as an immanent form of religion, is static in nature, an unmoving relation to the actual. This does not mean that the state of immanence is undialectical, but that it is not paradoxically dialectical; it is not in a pathos-determined confrontation and appropriation with, and of, the paradox of the God in time.

The distinction between the pathos-filled and the dialectical must, however, be qualified more specifically, because Religiousness A is by no means undialectical, but it is not paradoxically dialectical. Religiousness A is the dialectic of inward deepening; it is the relation to an eternal happiness that is not conditioned by a something but is the dialectical inward deepening of the relation, consequently conditioned only by the inward deepening, which is dialectical.²⁵⁷

Religiousness A, as immanent religiousness, remains a condition of the individual, determined by the individual's singular relation to itself, rather than in a confrontation with that which is outside of itself.

It is not a grasping of the eternal within temporality within the eternal but within the temporal nature of the individuality, and it is this relation with the temporal that makes the movement a necessary one. Just as the forgiveness of sins is an event which occurs not within the temporal but in direct relation to the eternal, a movement from immanence to transcendence, so too must the development of the content of the art object take place. This movement is necessary in the case of the forgiveness of sins because such an act is determined as a temporal relation to the eternal, necessitating the movement from one to the other. In the case of the development of content of the art object, the movement must also be one of immanence to transcendence for both the communicating individual and the receiving individual if it is to invoke an appropriation for the receiving

²⁵⁷CUP, p. 556

individual a truthful relation with the actual. Even though the objects remain wholly within time as material objects, there must be an indication of a transcendence of their own temporal nature, beyond the immanent.

Immanence, as Religiousness A must be first present before transcendence can take place, before acceptance of the absurdity of the paradox. Religiousness A may be understood as higher than B by speculative thought, in that it remains immanent, grounded as it is by human nature; B can only be B by having been A, and therefore A is a necessary determinative of B. Within Kierkegaard's understanding of the human individual, however, Religiousness A contains within itself the means of transcending itself. Religiousness A is a doubleness within life, one in which the specific stage of existence becomes re-doubled and then overcome through a transcendence.

The view which sees life's doubleness (dualism) is higher and deeper than that which seeks unity or "pursues studies toward unity" ... the view which sees the eternal as *τελος*, and the teleological view in general, is higher than all immanence or all talk about *causa sufficiens*. The passion which saw paganism as sin and assumed eternal torment in hell is greater than the *summa summarum* of the thoughtlessness (which is disheveled) which sees everything within immanence.²⁵⁸

The view of existence which sees only that which is within immanence, that which is at hand to the existence of the individual, is one which is inherently incorrect. If the singularity of the existential stage that the individual is within and perceives is adhered to, then the individual will be unable to fully develop. But, if this singularity is transcended, by perceiving such as containing within itself the possibility of redoubling, then such a singularity is transcended.

This transcendence occurs when the relation of the individual to the actual becomes a matter not of thinking

²⁵⁸JP, IV A 192, n.d., 1844, <<704, vol. 1, p. 329

of the actual (a partial acceptance), but of acting within existence in the direction of the actual.

Religiousness B.. or paradoxical religiousness... makes conditions in such a way that the conditions are not dialectical concentrations of inward deepening but a definite something that qualifies the eternal happiness more specifically (whereas in A the more specific qualifications of inward deepening is the only more specific qualification), not by qualifying more specifically the individual's appropriation of it but by qualifying more specifically the eternal happiness, yet not as a task of thinking but as paradoxically repelling and giving rise to new pathos.²⁵⁹

Religiousness B becomes a confrontation with an *other*, determining the individual's relation to the actual external and to the individuality, despite the individual's own ability to conceive of that actuality. Religiousness B is an appropriation which is not qualified by the individual but by a qualification outside of the individual in a paradoxical relation to it.

The specific for Christianity is the dialectical in the second place, except, please note, that this is not a task for thinking (as if Christianity were a doctrine, not an existence-communication...) but is a relation to the pathos-filled as an impetus for new pathos.²⁶⁰

In effect, the appropriation by the individual is not grounded in the individual's own act of appropriation but grounded external to it, almost imposed on it. Because of the dialectical nature of Christianity, however, guilt and sin consciousness being primary considerations of Religiousness B. This process of appropriation of the actual, which is external to the individual, becomes internalised, becoming a transcendence of the internal appropriation in an external direction.

The movement from immanence to transcendence within the context of Religiousness A and B occurs as follows. The individual's existential-dialectical development is

²⁵⁹CUP, p. 556

²⁶⁰Ibid., p. 559

immersed in the immanence of its personal situation, its existential immersion in pathos being determined by a guilt-consciousness. Therefore, the individual's relation to the *telos* of his existence becomes reduced to a minimum, since the guilt-consciousness is a repelling relation to the eternal. At this point, the dialectical movement of transcendence occurs, when the absolute minimum of immanence is present and then overcome in favour of the eternal. The dialectical relation of the individual to itself, in reference to its immanent character, in relation to the actual, is a process whereby it is recognised in a progressively diminishing manner as inadequate and, in this process of recognition, is transcended.

Transcendence may become an isolating factor for the individual, in that its relation with the eternal is exclusive of other individualities- "Religiousness B is isolating, separating, polemical." ²⁶¹- and transcendence may reflect only the individual's own specific confrontation with the actual, but the communicative act must reflect both this development towards the actual as well as the isolation which it creates. Kierkegaard writes: "The genius's point of departure is within his own personal identity; the point of departure of revelation is paradoxically beyond the personality." ²⁶²

This isolation ultimately determines the communicative act as inadequate within existence while indicating the actual. Therefore, the development of the individual's communication must be a reflection of this development towards transcendence. It must be maintained, however, in opposition to this development of inadequacy, that the transcended immanence of the previous existence remain in a dialectical relation with the new situation of the individual.

The divine can very well move in an earthly context, and it does not require the

²⁶¹Ibid., p. 582

²⁶²JP, vol. 3, pp. 405-406, <<3088; (VII² B 256:9, n.d., 1846-47)

annihilation of the earthly as a condition for
its own appearance...²⁶³

The material may remain. Through the distinction between immanence and transcendence, the communication of the idea becomes confused. In the case of the genius, who is immanent, the communication of the idea itself is immanent. Therein lies its inapplicability to the receiving individual, since the idea is presented but remains part of the existence of the communicating individual. In the case of the Apostle, because the idea is a communication transcendent to the communicator's being, the idea also remains separate from normal existence. The idea is a continual factor within the existence, making communication of the idea as ideal a necessity, but still remaining transcendent by its very nature as actual idea. What is necessary to maintain is that the dialectical movement (like all dialectical movements for Kierkegaard) from immanence to transcendence does not simply annihilate the preceding state but affirms it in the movement to a higher state, while simultaneously isolating the actual from existence in any form of communication. Transcendence is a movement through the immanent, in that it surpasses it while simultaneously maintaining it. There is a transformation occurring in which the original identity is transcended but is also always present.

Does this mean that neither the genius nor the Apostle are capable of communicating the idea as ideal? In the case of the genius, yes, but in the Apostle's case, because of the very nature of revelation, there is a certainty about the possibility of the communication and its appropriation. This is not the issue, though. Kierkegaard, goes to some length (though never an adequate one) to define the nature of the genius and the Apostle. His definition of each is inadequate because it defines them solely on the basis of a negative distinction- the differences between the two- and does not define the nature of their communication. The

²⁶³JP, II A 351, Feb. 3, 1839, <<833, Vol. 1, p. 382

definition is possible, nevertheless, and quite simple; the genius is a communicator of an idea immanent to its being, and the Apostle is a communicator of the idea as revelation of the actual ideal, which is transcendent to its being. This does not, however, define the artist. Only when this distinction between the genius and the artist is examined in further detail does the artist emerge as a separate entity.

The ordinary-extraordinary individual, the genius, is an immanent creature. His productions may be new for both himself and other individualities to whom he is communicating, but these communication remain wholly within the realms of existence (i.e. they never truly communicate the actual ideal of existence). The communication of the genius is something which is appreciated on an esthetic level and, while it might be considered and judged on aesthetic terms, is not authentic. The communication of the genius is not authoritative and his production does not have an accomplishment which can be cited except within the realm of the existence of individuals- i.e. it does not communicate actual truths. There is neither life-view nor passion, but simply a desire to create fulfilment of the basic requirements of the public. Kierkegaard condemns such production in his journals:

It occurs to me that *artists* go forward by going backward, something which I have nothing against intrinsically when it is a reproduced retreat- as is the case with the better artists. But it does not seem right that they stop with the historical themes already given and, so to speak, think that only these are suitable for poetic treatment... Why are modern heroes and the like not just as poetic? Is it because there is so much emphasis on clothing the content in order that the formal aspect can be all the more finished?²⁶⁴

This communication may be more than simply esthetic, but not much more (at most, it might be ethical, but never religious). The art object, as product of such an individual, is not a resolution which is the result of

²⁶⁴JP, Vol. 1, p. 51, <<119, I A 86

reflection by both the communicator and the communicated, but simply a playful production which has no real conclusion to offer. In short, the product of the genius is *merely* the communication of the idea in an immanent sense, which is inapplicable to the development of the receiving individual's progressive knowledge and appropriation of the actual ideal. The genius is not a communicating individual who feels the necessity to communicate for other individualities as part of his own development, but as part of his relations in existence, which is purely within a state of immanence. There is little *actual* incentive to communicate, except for the pleasure of communication as existential incentive. Even if he is communicating aspects of the actual truth of existence, the very form of his communication (because of his status as genius) denies an authentic reflection and appropriation.

The Apostle is a development of the authentic communicator which is beyond the genius who, by the very identity of the individual after the revelation, has become transcendent. His message is given to him, without his consent, as revelation from the actual, and it requires that he communicate this. However, it also denies the direct communication of the message, and forces the Apostle to confront the world. He is given a conclusion, and forced to communicate that conclusion. The individual who has received an actual communication of the ideal nature of existence as idea must communicate, since it has become part of his own existence. Because this knowledge of the actual remains a revelation, however, and, therefore, an idea, it is incommunicable within existence. He is not concerned with his temporal or societal responsibilities, but only with the manner in which his communication will best be appropriated by those receiving it. He is moved by an outer transformation, over which he has no will to change. The Apostle, is bound existentially by the message which he must communicate but which is wholly outside of existence itself.

Kierkegaard's own understanding of the Apostle and the artist seems confused. Is the artist either a genius or an Apostle? Therein lies a vital distinction. Kierkegaard writes:

This is the idea of Christianity: that the most unfortunate person, the one who suffers most, is the very one who is to bring consolation to others. This is the very expression of the infinitude of his suffering, that it is not a matter of anyone's consoling him, but only that he is to console others- so inconsolable, in a certain sense, is his suffering!... This is poetry and dialectic.²⁶⁵

What is of extreme importance is the fact that Kierkegaard is relating the importance of the Apostle, who has received a message of transcendence through its revelation, to the suffering which is inflicted upon the Apostle within existence. For Kierkegaard, this becomes poetic in nature, and therefore artistic. However, Kierkegaard has failed to realise the opposition which is present in the immanent nature of the suffering and the transcendent nature of the revelation which would seemingly create the Apostolic identity of the individual. Does Kierkegaard mean that the suffering nature of the Apostle's existence within existence is artistic in nature? This is a confusion which seems to run throughout the literature.

Even in the later years²⁶⁶ the need to continue to define what it means to be an authentic communicator of the truth continues. Despite the polemical nature of the attack, and the direct form of communication employed, Kierkegaard continued to utilise indirect communication to some degree. This is evident in the very nature of the attack, since it is, at times, nearly a ridiculous style that is employed for a serious purpose, without resorting to mere caricature or satire, but it also contains strictures for the authentic artist. The requirements of the authentic communicator, the artist, as recognised by Kierkegaard for himself and others is indicated thusly:

²⁶⁵JP, vol. 1, p. 187, <<472; VIII¹ A 493, n.d., 1847

²⁶⁶Particularly in the *Attack Upon Christendom*.

This has to be said; I oblige no one to act accordingly, I have no authority to do so. But having heard it, thou art made responsible and now must act upon thine own responsibility, in such a way that thou canst justify thine action before God.²⁶⁷

The requirements of the authentic communicator, the artist, is not only that he should be scored by his fellow individuals, or, more specifically, put himself into a position where he is scorned, but also that he should have an unwillingness to his ability, a hesitation to speak beyond his authority, which he recognises as being something that is lacking.

Ability being assumed, it is best that the person in question should have no liking for the task. For doubtless it is true, as the proverb says, that liking makes the work go swiftly, but real seriousness only appears when a man with ability is compelled by a higher power against his liking to undertake the work—so it stands with ability opposed to liking.²⁶⁸

Even further than this, not only should the artist be able to recognise the lack of authority, but the very act of communication or production itself should be in doubt. In recognition of the limitations of Kierkegaard's own authorship, artistry, activity as an author and the reason, or at least an indication of the debate, for remaining a "silent" author, he writes:

What troubles me is whether or not I have the right to do this [remain silent about his own work], whether in relation to God this silence is permissible, whether it is permissible to let a productivity which is so infinitely indebted to Him for its ingenuity remain an enigma and for many somewhat odd. And why? In part because the author considers this to be self-denial and in part because he feels unable to assume every misunderstanding in actual life resulting from giving an explanation.²⁶⁹

For Kierkegaard, it would seem that the very communication itself should remain the embodiment of an

²⁶⁷Attack Upon "Christendom", 'This Has To Be Said, So Be It Now Said', Dec. 1854, p. 59

²⁶⁸Attack Upon "Christendom", 'The Instant No. 1', May 24, 1855, p. 79

²⁶⁹JP, vol. 6, pp. 116-117, <<6345; X¹ A 115, n.d., 1849

unreconcilable difference, between the material form of the communication within existence against its nature as a communication of the ideal. For Kierkegaard, the fact that the communication seemingly acts as a transference of knowledge of the actual idea as ideal from the actual to existence seemingly requires an acknowledgement of the debt which such a communication has to its source. The implications from his concerns are that the authentic artist, as extraordinary individual, must acknowledge that source within his own existence as a relation to the actual, but not acknowledge it within existence as a whole. This is a problem explored in the chapter on the art object itself.

From this, and beyond Kierkegaard, the authentic artist is both immanent and transcendent. The authentic artist must be understood as different to both of these types of individuals and, on the scale of development that Kierkegaard constructs, the authentic artist is between the genius and the Apostle; the authentic artist (or, more specifically, the product of the authentic artist) is both immanent and transcendent, even though this results in a contradiction of terms. The authentic artist is one who is a genius but who is also nearly an Apostle. He is one who is able to manipulate the message that he is communicating while at the same time developing towards the state of existence, of understanding, which the Apostle has received. As he develops towards being an extraordinary individual, he is developing towards an appropriation of the actual ideal truth of his ontological grounding. As an extraordinary individual, it can be said that the authentic artist is a continually-developing Apostle, whereas the Apostle is a given part of that specific individual's existence. He is not called by revelation, but, through reflection, develops the means of an existential appropriation of the revelation, which is a given element for the Apostle, and which is something that the genius is incapable of communicating. The authentic artist is not an extraordinary communicator in the sense that his

communication is developed outside of himself, but he has reached the development and construction of his authentic communication by himself. This message has the same basis as actual truth as that of the Apostle, and is only different in how it is determined.

The authentic artist, within the potential for a Kierkegaardian understanding of such an identity, matches what he describes as the essential-artist, but is more than that. The premise-author/artist is outwardly directed towards an appreciation by others within the totality of existence, bound by externality, by social constraints, etc. The essential-artist, in contrast, is continually aware of his own development, the teleological aspect of his development, and his relationship and responsibilities to other individualities, but is also bound by its own subjectivity. The concern is still there to differentiate between the genius and the Apostle, to establish those grounds whereby the communication is authentic, and its there that the identity of the Kierkegaardian artist lies. As noted even at the end of his life, Kierkegaard writes on this issue in the *Attack Upon Christendom*:

The difference between a genius and a Christian is that a genius is nature's extraordinary, no man being able to make himself a genius, whereas a Christian is freedom's extraordinary, or, more properly, freedom's ordinary, for though it is found extraordinarily seldom, it is what everyone ought to be. Therefore God wills that Christianity should be preached to all men absolutely, therefore that Apostles are very simple men, and the Pattern is in the lowly form of the servant, all this in order to indicate that this extraordinary is the ordinary, is accessible to all- but for all that a Christian is a thing even more rare than a genius.

Only be not deceived by that fact that it is accessible to all, possible to all, as if from this it followed that it must be an easy sort of thing and that there were many Christians. No, it must be possible for all, otherwise it would not be freedom's extraordinary, but, for

all that, a Christian is a thing even more rare than a genius.²⁷⁰

Kierkegaard's *Attack Upon "Christendom"* has to it a tone which seems to suggest that the degeneration of Christendom is an almost inevitable affair, that the nature of being a human individual in existence lead to the individual. While the requirements of the individual do not necessitate this, the nature of existence lead to this lack. Therefore, the artist is hindered by the very nature of his production to construct an art form which annuls itself. The production of art, to some extent, can turn into a farce of Christianity, or to the communication of the actual truth.

And then everything went gaily, with fine words and grandiloquent phrases and heavenly glances and torrents of tears, all the artists engaged for this purpose, who could not find words to thank God enough for the great privilege that we are all Christians, etc.- and the secret was that we have falsified the concept of what it is to be a Christian, but hope by knavish and hypocritical flattery and sweet word, giving thanks again and again that we are... the opposite of what God understand by being a Christian- by this hoping, deluding ourselves, to put a wax nose on God's face; by so heartily thanking Him that we are that, we hope to get out of being that.²⁷¹

The artist and his inherent danger is the means of removing the individual from the requirements of actuality into the pleasures of existence, allowing the individual not to strenuously adhere to the truth of actuality in its own existence but to transform the truth of actuality in the existence of actuality, thus annulling it. If, however, the artist functions within an authentic manner, the very process of annulling- which is inherent to the dialectical nature of the identity of the artist and, as will be shown, to the art object- becomes a catalyst for the development of the receiving individual towards understanding of its actual ontological grounding.

²⁷⁰*Attack Upon "Christendom"*, 'The Instant, No. 5', July 27, 1855, p. 159

²⁷¹*Attack Upon "Christendom"*, 'The Instant, No. 5', July 27, 1855, p. 169

What clarifies the definition of the authentic artist even further is the form that his communication, takes as well as the development of that form during the development of the individual. The authentic artist is one who is able to communicate the truth of existence, a truth which can only be communicated between individuals indirectly. The truth of existence, though, must not begin to be communicated directly with truth, but may be communicated through untruth. " If one were to say that then the *extraordinarius* [the extraordinary individual] begins with an untruth, indeed makes God a party to the untruth, it may be replied that all communication of truth must always begin with an untruth." ²⁷² The genius is incapable of communicating untruth, since his very communication is based on his relation to factors which are external to his individuality. His communication is determined by elements outside of himself. The Apostle is unable to communicate untruth, since the truth which he is given is a revelation. Even though the form which the Apostle may employ in his communication may have the appearance of untruth, its primary concern is never involved with this. This extends within the identity of the Apostle to such an extent that:

If I were to imagine such a one [an Apostle] in our time, he would refrain completely from preaching, in order, if possible, to draw attention to what it means to exist [at *existere*], to preach by existentially [existentielt] expressing self-denial, the imitation of Christ, etc. How could he cope verbally with those artists in eloquence who preach now- and completely cover up what it means to exist [at *existere*].²⁷³

The authentic artist, in contrast to both, is able to communicate untruth at first (as part of the necessary development out of the esthetic stage of existence) and allow the transformation of the message of his communication so that it evolves from being untruth to truth. This does not mean that the artist's product as a

²⁷²Adler, p. 276

²⁷³JP, vol. 1, p. 463, <<1062; X³ A 725, n.d., 1851

communication of the actual idea as ideal is truth in itself, but that the dialectical nature of the authentic artist, as a communicator of both immanence and transcendence, allows the dialectical relation of both within the single object. The paradoxical relation remains and the object, as the greatest extent of its capacity (at its most authentic, its nearest approximation to a direct communication of the actual), as paradox, reflects the relation that the receiving individual has within existence to the actual. The authentic artist is beyond the genius but not yet Apostle, being a developing individual whose message expresses both his own development, as well as assists that development, while at the same time is the means by which other individuals can develop towards authenticity, unlike the pure essential-artist.

The conclusion from all of this is a Kierkegaardian description of the author/poet/artist. This is more proscriptive rather than descriptive, since I am sure that Kierkegaard would find very few individuals who would match up to the standards which he espoused.²⁷⁴ However, this high degree of authenticity to the truth of the actual existence of the individual is what is required within the framework of his thought. The authentic artist must have a developed life-view, an ethical stance with regard to other individuals (in the sense that he wishes to develop them towards the authenticity which he has either reached or is progressing towards), and an awareness of his relationship to the idea of the ideal message which he is communicating and to the form of communication which he is employing. Finally, the authentic artist must be a developing individuality, transforming himself through reflection towards an existential stage, at which his communication is approximating that of the revelation of an Apostle. Though the art objects produced by such an individual never equate to such a revelation, they can

²⁷⁴Something addressed in the second appendix.

indicate it by the very fact that they are both a product of an individual who exists within the paradox of immanence vs. transcendence as well as embodying such a paradox in separation from the individuals involved in the communication process.

Chapter Six- Approaches to a Kierkegaardian Aesthetics

One of the reasons that Kierkegaard is so underestimated as a potentiality for the art object is that Kierkegaard himself seems to have been not only able to dismiss it but also to qualify his position. This occurs particularly in *CUP* when Climacus, in the section of *CUP* entitled "A Glance at a Contemporary Effort in Danish Literature"²⁷⁵ makes it quite clear that the assumption that knowledge of the artist's personal existence and intentionality can make clear the purpose and effect of the production of that individual is wrong. In this sense, Kierkegaard himself can be removed from an interpretation of his own understanding of the aesthetic. As a "Christian poet", which he so aptly describes himself as, his own life intrudes upon his work too closely. This might make him susceptible to his own criticism against Andersen. What it certainly establishes is that Kierkegaard cannot be used as a model on the basis of his work if one is to construct an aesthetic from his philosophy.

Each of the preceding chapters has been an analysis of a specific concept which is a necessary element of a Kierkegaardian description of communication of the idea as ideal within the context of the individual as producer and receiver. Issues such as repetition, objectivity and subjectivity and, perhaps most vital to keep in mind, the Kierkegaardian dialectic. The question is whether any of these, however, serve as adequate means of defining the art object. Quite clearly, they do not. None of them serve to explain the art object as a material and externalised object, as an embodiment of a communication of the idea as actual ideal. Kierkegaard himself does not work through this and other problems. What should be done, before turning to Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object, is to turn to the secondary literature.

There are a variety of approaches which various authors take when discussing Kierkegaard in terms of the

²⁷⁵*CUP*, pp. 251-300

aesthetic. To some degree they are dictated by the differences in the emphasis on either the esthetic or the aesthetic, but all remain inadequate when it comes to describing the art object within the Kierkegaardian literature. The reasons that they are inadequate are equally various, and usually intertwined with each other. However, they can be described in the following categories: 1. adherence to an esthetic interpretation of the aesthetic, which denies the inherent value of the art object (producing itself two subcategories, the first, in which the only reference to the esthetic is within the context of *E/O I*; the second, in which the aesthetic is completely denied any value); 2. adherence to Kierkegaard as a poet, which can only focus on Kierkegaard's own poetic or artistic output as a specific paradigm but which cannot be used to describe the production of other individuals (producing a subcategory in which the aesthetic is only considered in terms of literary output); and 3. an emphasis on the relationship that Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object in purely idealist terms that are coloured by Hegelianism. Very few of the commentators on Kierkegaard addressing the aesthetic fall into one specific category or another, and almost none have bothered to examine the *material* art object within a Kierkegaardian sense. They usually acknowledge the others, if they do not in part subscribe to them, and, therefore, end up leaving out the art object altogether. Why is this the case? More specifically, why can the vast majority of the secondary literature be dismissed in this regard? Two simple reasons. First, almost all commentators acknowledge and give precedence to the esthetic, and rightly so. Some of this investigation into the esthetic is extraordinarily interesting (Louis Mackey and George Malantschuk are primary examples), but the esthetic is not the aesthetic. Second, because of the nature of Kierkegaard's writings, his commentators are generally philosophers or theologians, and are not art historians nor aestheticians. In many cases, however, there are those

who have not *directly* addressed the issue of the aesthetic, but have contained within their own writing an awareness of such. I shall now turn to these examples.

For Walsh's *Living Poetically: Kierkegaard's Existential Esthetics*, the poetic and the artistic is Kierkegaard's writing is grounded as a mode of reflecting and communicating the religious ideal. Her book's primary objective is to show that Kierkegaard maintained a positive attitude to the esthetic and what it means to be an authentic poet or artist. Kierkegaard is shown to be concerned with a

mode of living poetically [which] is one that affirms both possibility and actuality, a sense of our historical situatedness and finite limitation of a human personality through a process of self-development, rather than self-creation, in relation to the infinite or divine.²⁷⁶

There is an emphasis on the personal, on the existential, rather than on the objectively defined artistic, such that the aesthetic idea is concerned with the individual's own development rather than the communication of the ideal through objective means. Thus, in Walsh's reading, Kierkegaard emphasises individual striving, striving for the wholeness of the individual described as a authenticated comfortableness of the individual in relating itself to the actual truth of the grounding of its existence.

Walsh asks and answers: What does it take to be a creative and authentic artist? She traces this through Kierkegaard's review of Andersen's *Only a Fiddler* published as "From the Papers of One Still Living" and *The Concept of Irony*- both books having been dismissed by Kierkegaard himself in *PV* - and continues through the majority of the corpus. Walsh shows how Kierkegaard identifies what he believes is the main trend in artistic production of the time: the adoption of a negative attitude towards actuality. Constructed in relation to Hegel, Heiberg, Martensen, and Gyllembourg, Kierkegaard

²⁷⁶Walsh, p. 2

asks after the extent that the artist's own activities and experiences can affect the production. Kierkegaard believes that the life of the artist and the production should be connected, but not in the manner of Andersen, who has both a lack of a developed life-view and a proper life-development, of a proper self-cultivation and an understanding of existence in relation to actuality as the means for a continuing self-development. What emerges in Walsh's reading is that there is an interplay of the two factors- the artist's own development and the positive, affirming element of the message that he is producing and communicating- which produces the second power "involving a dialectic of transmuted personal experiences and ironic detachment in the creation of the work of art, not merely the wholesale projection of one's personal experiences into a work and identification with its characters and viewpoints." ²⁷⁷

This is further developed in her reading of *The Concept of Irony*. Walsh believes it contains two dialectically related threads: a criticism of romanticism coupled with a prescriptive design for an authentic artistic life, and an incorporation of the esthetic with the ethical-religious. Walsh makes the interesting point that Kierkegaard's remarks on imitation as the depiction of ideality must be either less than or greater than that which it seeks to aspire to. It can never be that which it imitates, since it is always imitating it. The problem lies, in Walsh's interpretation of Kierkegaard, not so much in the presentation of the actual, but in how that representation reflects the artist's position in his own development to the actual. The actual is not a *telos*, the romantic (represented by Tieck, Solger, Schlegel and Fichte), a lack of self-development, an awareness of the inwardly infinite, but is developed, for Walsh, such that artistic production, as the communication of the individual's development, is a process of transubstantiation, wrought by the poetic and the

²⁷⁷Ibid., p. 40

religious upon the actuality of the individual. This last point becomes, for Walsh (and I disagree), not only a means of determining poetic and artistic authenticity for communication, but also an authentic development of identity. She writes:

ultimately, he [Kierkegaard] envisages... an identity in which 'actuality is possibility' (CI, p. 325), wherein we have acquired in our personal lives the poetic ideality to which we stand personally, as well as artistically related through a combination of imagination, controlled irony, and existential striving.²⁷⁸

The personal and the artistic acquire, thusly, a sense of analogy.

Regarding the esthetic itself, Walsh concentrates on *E/O I*, asserting the emergence of the esthetic as an ethical activity. Interestingly, Walsh rightly notes that " ...we must be guarded in associating the aesthetic views of volume 1 with those of Kierkegaard, since they generally reflect a romantic aesthetics corresponding to the romantic mode of living poetically he wishes indirectly to criticize in his work." ²⁷⁹ She is correct to try to establish the esthetic within the context of volume two, but her implications lead to a distinct lack of conclusion. Walsh clearly believes that volume one has limited value but, while being clear in characterising the first half as fragmentary and incomplete and as missing a necessary and elemental fulfilment, the art object does arrive at a specific identity that can function across the range of existence.

Chapter 4 is one of Walsh's best chapter and contributions with the central concept: in order to make the aesthetic ethical, one must actualise the aesthetic into one's own existence. The ethical emerges as a vital and valuable mode of living poetically while remaining essentially aesthetic/romantic, having enough earnestness to move through the ethical and ultimately into the religious. *E/O II* corresponds to a repetition of *The*

²⁷⁸Ibid., p. 62

²⁷⁹Ibid., p. 67

Concept of Irony, taking up the theme of the Christian mode of life expressed poetically. This is seen most clearly in her interpretation of the Judge. The Judge-Kierkegaard's pseudonym at this point- of *E/O II* reconsiders what the aesthetic is, focusing on the concept of beauty and the concretion of the ideal. He clears up the confusion between the aesthetic, realised in artistic form and realised in life, emphasising in the process repetition and time and showing how those concepts not susceptible to aesthetic material treatment can be acknowledged in a mode of living poetically and a theory of self-identity appropriate to the self. The Judge is, according to Walsh, working against the literary stream, examining marriage after the fact and not the events leading up to it. Marriage becomes an aesthetic act, uniting sensuousness and spirit and the erotic and the religious. Marriage, as an act, becomes determined not by finite means, but by the infinite development of the individuals involved through love. Artistic significance is established not as a purely external affair but as that which is acquired, appropriated, into the existence of the individual. Artistic expression is inadequate because it represents the extensive in the intensive, the moment instead of the temporally successive.

I concur with Walsh in her specific points. She correctly identifies the primary question of the Judge: "whether the aesthetic ideal of internal history can be represented aesthetically since traditional forms of art are inadequate to express it."²⁸⁰ The aesthetic idea becomes represented solely through repetition of the aesthetic in love and in time. The individual himself becomes an expression of the aesthetic idea in his own individuality, poeticising and poeticised as both the produced and the product of God. For the Judge, this process involves the individual synergistically constructing his self along with the simultaneous co-

²⁸⁰Ibid., p. 110

operation/construction of the Christian. Whereas the romantic aesthetic is concerned with the alleviation of boredom that never ends through multiple possibilities of the individual, the ethical is the construction of a singular, teleological unity of selfhood, allowing the imagination to play its vital role in realising the possibilities, presenting them, towards the actual. Walsh correctly stresses that the Judge's, and Kierkegaard's, remarks accomplish three things: 1. transfer categories of description normally applied to art to the existing individual; 2. emphasise the historical and not the immediate ideal; 3. orienting the aesthetic in a religious sense. Walsh sees *E/O II* as a further development of "From the Papers of One Still Living". But the object is still left behind, and fading fast!

For example, in chapter six, Walsh bring forward the critical remarks of the middle period of the authorship-*Stages on Life's Way*, *CUP*, *PV*, and *WL*.²⁸¹ From a series of proposition and statements, poetry and art are recognised as a tempting distraction from actuality, transfiguring actuality in favour of the desires of the individual, removing the individual and establishing a primacy of the immediate and the externalised; art is considered dangerous as a mode of life. Art can be tempered, however; its activities are also recognised as ones which can be tamed and utilised in a positive fashion. This takes away from the dangerous nature of the aesthetic object which the Judge identifies himself, but which Walsh does not seem to be able to do so. Walsh, perhaps, identifies a solution to this in recognition of the potential for the specific art object within the context of the individual's developing knowledge of the actual in the epic, declaring it to be in correspondence with the ethical, but this then produces the statement that: "I think the subjective thinker, whose internal action brings that individual under ethical qualifications, can

²⁸¹Particularly *WL*, which is never given the treatment which I feel it deserves, especially since it contains a number of remarks about community (which of course can be related to communication and art) as well as both positive and negative comments on the artist and the art work.

also be constructed in aesthetic terms as an artist, even if he or she never produces a work of art." ²⁸² Does this mean that the art object does not even have to exist? The implications are that the subjective thinker is an artist, just by its thought!²⁸³

Walsh attempts to alleviate this by describing the authentic form of communication which an individual must, as an individual, enact.²⁸⁴ This degenerates, however, from containing the possibility of discussing the art object to describing Kierkegaard's challenge to the individual which she describes as "...to don the artistic frock, take up our palettes and sketch our own self-portraits in existence, reproducing in ourselves the human ideal towards which we strive." ²⁸⁵ This is unsatisfactory, because her reading of Kierkegaard, however, as a development in the concept of living poetically, advance his thought beyond the German Romantics to establish an ethical-religious, Christian, alternative which is self-developing and one which is not elitist but a possibility and requirement for all individuals. The importance of the aesthetic, in opposition to the esthetic, becomes meaningless. For Walsh, we can all be and *should* be authentic artists, something I disagree with.

Walsh believes that is incumbent to require that we consider an application to the present age. Walsh applies this in particular to current French feminist theories of identity, theories which she believes "ironically result in a volatilization of the self in the other that corresponds to the romantic experimentation with self-identity so roundly criticised by Kierkegaard in his writings." ²⁸⁶ For Walsh, Kierkegaard provides an alternative, one in which the structure of the self and the process of self-identification provide a communality

²⁸²Walsh, p. 204

²⁸³Walsh seems to be wanting to equate the subjective thinker with the artist, thereby making all individuals potential artists- something I have no ability to approve of.

²⁸⁴Walsh, pp. 207-209

²⁸⁵Ibid., p. 209

²⁸⁶Walsh, p. 220

which constructs a matrix transcending differences, while retaining uniqueness. Focusing on the concept of otherness, Walsh reads current French feminist thought as a process of decentering the self, a process of self-identity in which the identity is reborn and remade, an "assertion of female difference [which] ironically results in a question of self-identity rather than an affirmation of it in the process of becoming."²⁸⁷ Focusing on *SUD* and *WL*, Walsh sees in Kierkegaard's thought²⁸⁸ an explication of the concept of the self and love which are beyond gender limitations, which are visions of independent subjects equally grounded in actuality.²⁸⁹ Differences are disregarded in the face of the Christian truth of existence, but are also called into question in concern for the singular individuality's relationship to the truth of actuality. Kierkegaard's dialectic of the individual's self-identity "is one that seeks to affirm and synthesize rather than to exclude one term in relation to the other."²⁹⁰ However, Walsh has failed to recognise the inherent exclusion of existence, the exclusive nature of the material art object, and tried to recreate the esthetic as a mode of existence to extend it as a mode of incorporation of individualities. Walsh is also unwilling to establish any sense of privilege for the identity of the artist. Walsh discusses esthetics, but leaves out art. The poetic ideality, the artistic communication of the idea, no matter how authentic it is, must remain separate from the individual. Herein lies my major criticism of Walsh, in that she simply does not treat the art object as a created object but as a process of creation and communication. The art object is separate from its

²⁸⁷Ibid., p. 257

²⁸⁸Despite the normally patriarchal tendencies exhibited throughout most of his writing.

²⁸⁹An emphasis on gender differences- either negatively or positively- results in a manifestation of despair in which the individual loses the self in identification with the other, in infinitude's or possibility's despair. In particular, this achieves a certain clarity in *WL* with Kierkegaard's analysis of the other in his contemplation of the responsibilities of the individual to the neighbour.

²⁹⁰Walsh, p. 266

creator; even though a continuing reciprocal relationship can be established between the viewer and the artist through the object, the object remains separate from the individualities involved.

Adorno's *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, a much ignored text, should be included for no other reason than the fact that Adorno wrote one of the major texts on aesthetics of the 20th century, and was deeply indebted to Kierkegaard in many respects. Beyond the simple historical reasons, Adorno's text is a major contribution in many respects, though it too has its failings. Adorno's text implies throughout that he understands Kierkegaard to be an idealist in nature, despite Kierkegaard's own protestations to the contrary. I would agree with this to a great extent, though with a modification to Adorno's assessment. Kierkegaard is an idealist in the sense that he is communicating and describing the paradoxical ontological grounding of the developing individual within its relation to the actual. The object of his description is necessarily ideal in nature, though the product of such communication remains merely the idea of such an ideal in that it does not communicate knowledge of the actual but only of the existential. Kierkegaard is, as always, describing something which is indescribable.

Adorno's assessment of Kierkegaard focuses in on his conception of the esthetic stage of existence, with references being made to the other definitions of the aesthetic and the esthetic. Because of this, one can safely place Adorno's commentary in a rather exclusive group- that which does recognise such differences and does not try to include them in a singular category of existence. Adorno's text is also in another exclusive group, in that he, as no other commentator on Kierkegaard does, attempts to establish the legitimacy of the esthetic (the stage of existence) in the face of Kierkegaard's depiction of its nature, to reinvigorate the positive possibilities inherent in the esthetic.

The success of this endeavour is difficult to judge, particularly because of Adorno's own philosophical inclinations which would lead to categorising this text as biased against Kierkegaard without the possibility of reconciliation. Though Adorno continued to regard Kierkegaard as an important informant of his own development throughout his life, one cannot help but read into this text a corrective established, in part, because of a political grounding, rather than an effort to fully engage with Kierkegaard's writing.

Adorno begins by questioning the poetic nature of Kierkegaard's writing. For him, philosophy requires the real and the manifestation of the thinker's subjectivity or the coherence of its thought in a unified direction of discourse. Poetics deny this, since they remain wholly subjective in nature and are connected only indirectly with the real to which they allude. Philosophy is the act of illuminating ideas to existing individuals, disseminating the particular and applying it to the universal. Poetry in philosophy means that the elements not specifically applicable or understandable can be ignored, which is bad philosophy. Adorno's first concern is, therefore, to distinguish the poetic from the philosophical in order to determine philosophy as a rigorous engagement with the real.

Adorno recognises the poetic nature of many of the texts. The inclusion of poetry into the style or nature of the writing is apparent, but they do not constitute art in the normal sense, and therefore cannot be labelled as art objects. The poetic production of Kierkegaard is inadequate to the task at hand. Adorno establishes the failure of Kierkegaard as a poet from the start:

Three times ["Journal of Seducer", "Repetition", and "Guilty/Not Guilty"], with allegorical rigidity, he presents the enigmatic empty image of his disintegrating love. Its collapse degrades the entire phenomenal world to mere semblance. In its presence people are

transformed into masks, while speech comes to sound like opera dialogue...²⁹¹

For Adorno, Kierkegaard's attempts at including a form of communication, which he himself identifies as poetic, is to transform not only the nature of the philosophy that he is writing, from one which is concerned with existence to one which is not, but also the individuals depicted in the "poetic" communication and, therefore, the actual individuals receiving such a communication. This transformation is to move them from a realm in which they are concerned with their actual existences (something which Kierkegaard professes to do) to being mere images of such a concern. This transformation is such that the individuals to whom it is being directed cannot, in Adorno's opinion, begin to appropriate such a communication. He writes: "he [Kierkegaard] was not involved with giving form to the content of experience, but with the reflection of the aesthetic process and of the artistic individual in himself."²⁹² For Adorno, Kierkegaard's writing prepared the way for a contemplation of art for art's sake- an aesthetic idealism he traces through Schelling and Schopenhauer to Wagner and Nietzsche- giving power to the individual in isolation from other individualities. This criticism has some validity but, as Adorno proceeds to discover Kierkegaard's faults, he is also clearly missing some of the positive value in such faults. This has a further application. Both Adorno and Kierkegaard miss the positive potential for such an empty poetic communication which purports to be philosophy.

Correctly, Adorno is one of those who recognises Kierkegaard's idealist constructions. Though Adorno strongly accuses Kierkegaard of being Hegelian, he identifies him as an idealist particularly in with regard to the production of communication. For Adorno, Kierkegaard's entire theory of communication, and hence

²⁹¹Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* (all references to Adorno refer to this text unless otherwise stated), p. 8

²⁹²Adorno, p. 8

the production of the art object, are bound by an idealist origin which is a communication of that which cannot be known by the receiving individual. The ideal is hidden by its very nature as ideal, and thus the truth of the communication is one created by the producing and receiving individuals in the production and receiving appropriation of that communication. What is interesting is that Adorno's interpretation seems to exclude the theological from the ideal. Adorno writes:

Kierkegaard's fruitless attempts to compose self-animating poets confuse creator with artist and corresponds better to his idealist origins than to his theological goal.²⁹³

This denies the entire thrust of Kierkegaard's efforts, which were continually to stress the religious and the relationship that the individual has to the religious as knowledge of its ontological grounding. Adorno's characterisation of Kierkegaard's understanding of communication is itself coloured by Adorno's own distinct project. Adorno continues to attempt to impose a positive assessment of the existential as actual, while moving the actual into the mere idea. Adorno's understanding of Kierkegaard states that the ontological is always absent from the subjectivity and therefore the object is always an obstructed object. This is a position which must be reversed; the existential must then become, for Adorno, the actual as the grounding of the individual, while the ideal becomes an empty indication of the actual as merely idea without the existential.

Adorno traces Kierkegaard's own thought to the influence of Fichte, whose idealism he identifies as constructing a form of actuality that becomes pale, a rendering of knowledge as infinite but also negative. For Adorno, Kierkegaard follows Fichte such that

the idealist who conceived of "relegating reality to the ethical," that is, to subjectivity, is at the same time the archenemy

²⁹³Ibid., p. 11

of any assertion of the identity of the external and the internal.²⁹⁴

For Kierkegaard, this 'relegation of reality to the ethical' is an assertion of the internal, which must take precedence over the external; Adorno's statement merely equates the external with the internal, thereby annulling the particular forms of primacy which each should be given. For Kierkegaard, this involves a mediation or transformation of the actual into the existential, and he would deny this transformation of the actual by Adorno. However, it is valuable that the ideal nature of the communication is identified by Adorno.

Adorno further recognises that Kierkegaard remains attached to the dualistic determination of communication as form and contents as ideal which involves a necessarily atemporal quality, writing: "Where Kierkegaard clings to the dualism of form and content, this dualism retains its idealistic character."²⁹⁵ This idealism is constructed within an atemporal context, one in which Adorno feels the art object becomes a static construction, not involved with the existence of the individual's producing and receiving that communication. For Adorno, the greatness of the art object should be first determined by the activity of the subject stamping the object with an idea. This too is done from a particular point of view (Marxist, perhaps?), in that it is an attempt to socialise the construction of the object as opposed to the Kierkegaard's isolated individualism. Adorno recognises that the object, for Kierkegaard, is "radically devolved upon the "I", as purely immanent to the subject and, at the same time, as removed and unreachable transcendence."²⁹⁶ In that sense, Adorno is correct to interpret Kierkegaard's art object as atemporal to a degree, but the temporal nature of the appropriation is always evident and necessary. Adorno's intentions remain purely personal, and are not a valid

²⁹⁴Ibid., p. 29

²⁹⁵Ibid., p. 20

²⁹⁶Ibid., p. 27

criticism in that respect. For Adorno, in reading Kierkegaard, inwardness becomes a potent symbol of an increased subjectivity against the external, in alienation from its externality. This occurs such that the Kierkegaardian subject is confronted and overcome by the impossibility of the object. To achieve inwardness and thence truth requires that the individual struggle with itself, rather than with its position amongst the external realm. This leads to Adorno's identification of Kierkegaard's philosophy as characterised by a bourgeois *intérieur* of the 19th century. The individual becomes, in such a situation, merely a *flaneur*, promenading in his own internal space- "the world only appears to him reflected by pure inwardness."²⁹⁷ Space is not an opening of the *intérieur*, of the subjectivity, but is an enclosure, a boundary which repels the individual from any applicable knowledge of the external. The symbols of the *intérieur*, Adorno finds in the "Diary of the Seducer" in such as passages as the following:

Surroundings and setting do have a great influence upon a person and are part of that which makes a firm and deep impression on the memory [*Hukommelse*] or, more correctly, on the whole soul, and for this reason cannot be forgotten either. No matter how old I may become, it will nevertheless always be impossible for me to think of Cordelia in surroundings other than this little room... At moments I let the lamp be the motif in my landscape. I sit with her then, stretched out on the ground under the flower of the lamp. At other times, I let the willow matting cap up the image of a ship, of an officer's stateroom- we are sailing out in the middle of the great ocean. We are sitting far from the window, we look directly into the sweeping horizon of the sky... Cordelia's surroundings must have no foreground but rather the infinite boldness of the horizon. She must not be earthbound but must float, not walk but fly, not back and forth but eternally forward.²⁹⁸

Space is not merely means of exclusion, but also the means of inclusion of the individual into an historical

²⁹⁷Ibid., p. 41

²⁹⁸E/O I, pp. 389-390

or temporal situation with that which is external to its subjectivity. The *intérieur* of the small room becomes an environment within which a distance is created from the world outside of the room while at the same time the two individuals are situated so that they are both opposed to the world (and therefore should be opposed to each other) as well as include in each other's worlds. Cordelia does not become removed with the infinite, but is brought "eternally forward". And the items of the room, in Adorno's reading of Kierkegaard, are not merely decorations but are links between a shared sense of personal history which is inclusive rather than exclusive.

Adorno is, furthermore, critical of Kierkegaard's conception of aesthetic. Though he does not necessarily mean the aesthetic and refers to the esthetic throughout the text, there is one section of his book titled 'Subjective "How" and Enmity toward Art' within which the boundaries are blurred.. He begins with the following statement:

In the sleeper the spontaneity of the "I" comes to rest, without, however, being annihilated. If the aesthetic images that surround him are- as ontological semblance-located beyond subjective autonomy, Kierkegaard's theory of the subjective "how" and its correlate, the verdict on the "aesthetic sphere", lose their ultimate legitimation.²⁹⁹

For Adorno, the images of the aesthetic must be incorporated into the development of the individual, valued as such and not superseded by the individual's closer approximation to knowledge of the ontological. If this is not done, then the description of the subjective individual in the Kierkegaardian literature is, for him, invalid, excluding the aesthetic from that individual's existence. The individual is born into the aesthetic and must continue to relate to the aesthetic or the esthetic throughout its development of its existence.

²⁹⁹Ibid., p. 134

I cannot completely agree with this. Adorno is suggesting that the esthetic remain a concern for the individual throughout its existence as if this were not the case within the Kierkegaardian description of the individual's development. But Kierkegaard himself would not state this and, furthermore, it denies the potential for ideality of the art object. However, Adorno's remarks leads into a more poignant criticism of Kierkegaard, where I find more sympathy. For Adorno, Kierkegaard's conception of communication and, necessarily, of the art object is an exclusionary one. Objective or direct communication is an impossibility, even if direct communication of the objective is necessary; in Adorno's opinion Kierkegaard's conception of subjectivity denies the possibility of communication in any sense. Adorno's understanding of Kierkegaardian communication is one bound completely within the subjectivity of the individual, determined by the communicator's subjectivity, reflection on itself, and reflection and awareness on the receiving individuality and its reception of the communication. This is, in Adorno's opinion, incorrect, since communication or, more specifically, the art object is an autonomous creation, bound by the reception process, but autonomous in its own right. Adorno quotes Kierkegaard's famous saying- "The greater the artistry, the greater the inwardness." - and remarks: "this may be the regulating principle of Kierkegaardian 'communication,' but it is not a law of art.

For Adorno, even if the Kierkegaardian theory of the art object is one appearing to be completely aware of its service to human understanding and relations, it removes the art object in its autonomous form from any real relation to the individualities to which it is directed. The subjective communication, however, is authentic communication of the actual ideal precisely because of this process is a separation or an alienation from the ideal of the actual. The subjective communication becomes an alienated one, and

Only alienated, mute contents can be adapted, dressed up, and "communicated" as "content" to suit a subjective will; only to the extent that they are not binding are they made so by individual existence.³⁰⁰

The content of the communication of the art object becomes a complete abstraction, removed from the existence of the individualities involved and therefore directionless in nature and lacking in any concreteness.

The art object's autonomy is, in Adorno's reading, a product of its eloquence, determined by its forms and its presentation of the truth through semblance. This does not, however, acknowledge the existential requirement of the idea becoming ideal nor its potential. Kierkegaard's theory of the art object, in his opinion, remains alienating in that it does not allow the art object to contain within its communication such an eloquence. For Adorno,

His "subjective how" reflects distortedly the power of truth over the manner of its appearance, a manner that can never be separated arbitrarily from it as if it were a mere sign, for truth itself exists exclusively in the dialectic in which it "appears". The "how" - developed by Kierkegaard in opposition to the shallow dualism of form and content - gains its philosophical justification as the expression of objective laws in the manifestation of truth. Yet his doctrine qualifies this justification by consigning it to subjectivity which superadds truth to the matter at hand as something new; by dividing truth from the material in which it appears; by ascribing truth to existence and contingency to the material.³⁰¹

In Adorno's reading of Kierkegaard, the communication of the truth which the art object should be an embodiment of is denied in favour of the subjectivities of the individualities involved. What should be a communication that is indirect in nature and yet which is also an embodied manifestation in objective form is warped by the addition of subjectivity. What Adorno finds in reading

³⁰⁰Ibid., p. 134

³⁰¹Ibid., pp. 134-135

Kierkegaard on art is that he longs for an imageless presence, one in which the subjectivity remains isolated. Subjectivity leads to iconoclasm, one which 'recognises' the impossibility of the image of truth but which, as positive, appropriatable presence neither Kierkegaard nor Adorno acknowledges; Kierkegaard's isolated subjectivity is one for whom semblance has no meaning. For Adorno, the power of semblance cannot be ignored.³⁰² Neither realise that both positions must be maintained within a Kierkegaardian notion of the dialectical.

Adorno's limited remarks regarding the art object within the context of Kierkegaard's writing fail in many respects, but do so in a manner which remains truthful to Kierkegaard's own failures. His text on Kierkegaard remains, though outside of the normal sphere of Kierkegaardian scholarship. Only three authors within that context have directly addressed this issue at any length- George Connell, Stephen Crites and George Pattison.³⁰³ All are very interesting in their approach, and very different, but they have one feature in common not only with each other but with all of the secondary literature and, perhaps, even with Kierkegaard himself- they are dismissive of the positive potential of the authentic art object as communication of the idea of the actual ideal within the framework of the Kierkegaardian literature. The simplest reason is that none of these individuals are concerned with the art object *per se*, in a 'normal' aesthetic sense. The more important reason is that none of them have been able to take into account the Kierkegaardian notion of the dialectic and apply it to a material object. The potential is there, but the next step has not been taken.

Crites is the most interesting. In the introduction to his translation of *Crisis in the Life of an Actress*³⁰⁴,

³⁰²Issues Adorno takes up in his own *Aesthetic Theory*.

³⁰³I would also add Poole's *Kierkegaard: The Indirect Communication* to this list but, because of the nature of his book, I cannot say that it specifically addresses such issues in a manner which would fit into the scheme of my research.

³⁰⁴Which is titled "Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress" in the Danish, and much closer to Kierkegaard's own intentions and to his ideas on repetition and the art object.

Crites seems to have established the groundwork for thought on the art object in a Kierkegaardian sense. He correctly identifies Hegel's *Aesthetics* as being one of Kierkegaard's great interests³⁰⁵ and correctly notes that this text was the basis for Kierkegaard's thought on art. However, this seems to have given Crites the freedom to equate Kierkegaard's thought on art directly with Hegel's. This is understandable, particularly within the context of the *Crisis*³⁰⁶, but has led to the misconception that Kierkegaard's writings could only produce an Hegelian understanding of the art object, rather than a more existential one. As always, this is in keeping with Kierkegaard's own facade regarding the issue but, in response, one must always keep in mind the fact that Kierkegaard seems not to have recognised the potential present in his work (or has deliberately concealed it).

Crites is an acute observer, however. He begins his interpretation of Kierkegaard's aesthetic by noting that a particularly problem exists in the writing. Kierkegaard's emphasis is always on the poetic or, in the case of his criticism of any one particular art object, curiously almost always focused on the theatre. This means that Kierkegaard's aesthetics are obscured, hidden within his writing, as if Kierkegaard himself did not wish them discovered. Crites writes:

Kierkegaard's general aesthetics is left largely implicit in his writings. He never attempted to produce a complete systematic theory of art, but for reasons which had nothing to do with his well-known polemic against 'the System'. His primary task as a writer lay elsewhere, and besides he seems to have considered that the basic groundwork of aesthetic had already been laid. Kierkegaard was, broadly speaking, a Hegelian in aesthetic theory.³⁰⁷

To some extent, this is true. Kierkegaard's aesthetics is left hidden away amidst all his writing, and has to be

³⁰⁵See also Thulstrup's *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel* regarding this.

³⁰⁶Since the subject of *The Crisis and A Crisis in the Life of an Actress* is Fru Heiberg, the wife of Johan Ludvig Heiberg, one of the key Hegelians in Denmark at the time and a target for Kierkegaard's wit.

³⁰⁷*Crisis*, introduction by Crites, p. 19

teased out. But what are these reasons that Crites speaks of? He leaves this question mostly unanswered. Certainly, Kierkegaard relied heavily on the theatre as an example of the art object and, therefore, any application of his aesthetics which might be applied to another form is implicit, but why is this so? Crites does not venture an answer for this.

The most contentious point of Crites' observations is the Hegelian nature of Kierkegaard's thought. Crites writes:

...for the basic theoretical background which informed his aesthetic thinking he [Kierkegaard] drew heavily on Heiberg and other Hegelian writers, and even more on Hegel's own *Aesthetik*, to which Heiberg's work had introduced him.³⁰⁸

This means that, for Crites, Kierkegaard would allow an Hegelian interpretation of the art object to exist simultaneously within his own thoughts on existence. Crites offers a simple, and persuasive, explanation. For Kierkegaard, it was possible to read Hegel as being correct regarding the aesthetic because Hegel's system of thought was essentially esthetic itself. While Hegel might be incorrect on ethics and the religious, because of the nature of his philosophy and, as Crites interprets Kierkegaard's own interpretation, because of the nature of objective knowledge within Hegel's system of thought, he is essentially correct regarding art. Objective knowledge is merely the distancing of the world or, more particularly, the actual ideal, from the individual's own existence. An individual regarding objective knowledge as applicable to its existence remains distance from the actual and becomes essentially an observer, one who cannot partake in an actual manner within existence. The art object, as objective knowledge and as the product of speculation, is similar, in that contemplation of such removes the individual from an actual engagement with its existence and the actual ideal.

³⁰⁸Ibid., p. 20

What is striking about Crites' interpretation of Kierkegaard is that his understanding of the art object appears to be more esthetic than aesthetic. Rather than determining the positive potential of the art object as it would relate to the existence of the individual and that individual's relation to the actual within existence, Crites allows it to slip back into the terms within which it seemingly exists in Kierkegaard's own thought. This emerges when Crites discusses the notion of the individual's relation towards reality³⁰⁹. For Crites, in his interpretation of such, the aesthetic becomes a viewpoint which every individual adopts as a knower or experience of existence. Objects are merely means of coherent understanding of existence, and perform their task as such to a greater or lesser degree of exactitude. This means, however, that the relation which the objects have to the experiencing individual is a limited one. Crites writes:

A person is... essentially an observer, the subject to whom the objects become manifest. That the experiencing subject also participates in existence, and hence suffers its contingencies and its limitations of perspective, is accidental and irrelevant, is in fact precisely the aspect of his situation which he must try to overcome in the aesthetic relation.³¹⁰

I agree with this to a limited extent but note that such objects- indeed, all objects- therefore become merely esthetic objects within the relation that the individual has to its existence. Thus, the aesthetic becomes merely one object amongst many, all being esthetic. Kierkegaard himself would disagree with this, since it then transforms the individual into a reified individuality who has no relation with existence at all.

This is in contradiction to Crites further statements, since this position seemingly denies a special role for the art object which Crites is trying to establish. He continues with a discussion of the

³⁰⁹Which, I believe, should more correctly be labelled existence.

³¹⁰Crites, introduction to *Crisis*, p. 21

aesthetic and its relation to time and the idea. Within Crites interpretation of Kierkegaard, the art object is a timeless object, one which has been transmuted in order to conform to the requirements of the communication of the ideal. Such a conforming requires that the object remain almost aloof from existence because it is undergoing a process of transmutation whereby the idea is progressed from existence towards the actual, during which time becomes, for Crites, accidental.³¹¹ This means that the art object becomes merely a play of possibilities functioning and communicating within a medium whereby existing is removed as far as possible. It is on this grounds that Crites determines Kierkegaard as being Hegelian in terms of his aesthetics.

Crites identification of Kierkegaard as Hegelian is extremely interesting and admirable to an extent. According to this, Hegel argued that philosophy was the ultimate medium for the idea because the idea exists most purely in thought. Art was able to grasp to a limited extent the pure ideal of thought but, because of its material form, is limited to such. In Hegelian terms, this establishes the inadequacy of the art object, since it is merely idea in material form. However, according to Crites interpretation of Hegel and his identification of Kierkegaard as Hegelian, it is important to note that the ideal cannot enter into the consciousness of pure thought until it has been expressed previously in its necessary forms. This means that the art object contains, within its expression, a communication of the idea to the fullest extent, but one limited in its degree of purity because of its medium as ideal. Therefore, the art object is merely a progression towards and *within* the ideal. For Crites, Kierkegaard is in complete agreement with this. Where Kierkegaard differs from Hegel is by noting that all thought and communication of the ideal (or, in

³¹¹Again, I agree with Crites. However, he seems to be contradicting himself. The art object cannot exist as a process of a movement from immanence to transcendence- from existence to the actual- since such a movement is only possible within the existence of the individual who is experiencing such an existence. However, a variety of art object can show such a progression, while a single individual can indicate a direction.

Kierkegaard's case, of the actual) is removed from the individual's existence. As such, the distinction between idea and ideal are reversed. Crites, doesn't have a problem with this (though he should), interpreting Kierkegaard thus:

...there is no knowledge available to an existing individual from which a real decision could simply follow, as a logical conclusion, from secure premises. Hegel's attempt, however, to absorb ethics and religion into a comprehensive system of objective knowledge [which, by its very nature as objective is therefore removed from the individual and therefore esthetic], by making the ethical or religious consciousness itself into an objectified datum, simply obscures the leap of decision...³¹²

and therefore obscures the individual's potential to act within existence in the direction of the actual. Thus, Hegel's system and description of the art object is merely esthetic in Kierkegaard's mind and, thus, so is the art object itself.

Crites does offer part of Kierkegaard's writing as a means of determining a positive potential for the art object. He does so by focusing on Kierkegaard's attempt to create a form of communication which would not be esthetic in nature but able to introduce itself in the receiving individuals' existence. This does not, however, approach the art object in its own right. Furthermore, Crites offers the fact that Kierkegaard did believe that the art object as such could be approached in a merely esthetic manner, and that this was a valid approach. This carries with it an incorrect stipulation. As long as one approaches the art object in a timeless fashion- aware of its inability to enter into the individual's existence- then one can appreciate the art object for what it is. According to Crites, this went so far as to include Kierkegaard's opinion that each medium was limited in what it was able to express, and thus " he [Kierkegaard] was persuaded that each medium is limited in the range of ideas that can be expressed by it. In fact, he believed

³¹²Crites, introduction to *Crisis*, p. 26

that only a single idea could be perfectly embodied in a particular medium." ³¹³ Thus, the truly classic and, therefore, timeless art object is a limited one, though limited in a manner which I do not believe fits with Kierkegaard's own writings. Despite Crites' own efforts, his approach to Kierkegaardian aesthetics remains very similar to that of others- willing to acknowledge in some sense, but almost apologetic in the final analysis. The art object within Crites is purely esthetic.

Connell's efforts, in *To Be One Thing: Person Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought* seek to address some of the difficulties found in Crites. Connell's approach is similar, in that he understands the art object within the Kierkegaardian framework to be a limited material object which is the embodiment of a communication of the idea of the actual and which is also separate from the individuals to whom it is addressed. Where he differs is in including texts which have already been mentioned by myself but which are generally ignored, specifically the criticism of Anderson's and Gyllembourg's novels. This does not result in an adequate interpretation, because Connell- like all of the others- refuses to follow a development of the potentials of the art object, but it does provide some interesting points.

For Connell, as for Crites, the art object is an object embodying communication in an external form. It is a unified object, essentially complete in itself. Its essentially unified nature means that it is a form of objective knowledge, and therefore external to the subjectivity of the individual. This externality, however, does not preclude the possibility of such a unity affecting the individual's subjective unity. Connell notes Kierkegaard's own criticism of an objective form of knowledge having such an affect on the subjective, but believes that the art object, because of

³¹³Crites, introduction to *Crisis*, p. 29; it must be quickly noted that I disagree with this interpretation, since such a statement is based on an esthetic author rather than on Kierkegaard himself.

its very nature as a communication of the idea, goes beyond mere speculation. This is too dismissive.

Connell's criticism of Crites results from his observation that Crites' interpretation of the art object as idea means that such an object remains necessarily separate from the subjective. For him, "From the Papers of One Still Living" and TA provide ample evidence that Kierkegaard had a different conception of the art object per se. Connell interprets the differences in Kierkegaard's comments found throughout the literature as being indicative of a dualism³¹⁴ which allows the art object to be treated either as an esthetic object or as an ethical object. This is such that

The first Kierkegaardian aesthetic presents the unity of a work of art as uninvolved with the personal unities of the artist and the audience. The second aesthetic asserts a relationship between the unity of a work of art and the personal unities of both the artist and the audience.³¹⁵

In effect, the esthetic art object is one which is a unified object having no actual relation to the perceiving individual, while the ethical art object must necessarily have such a relation.

Connell's interpretation of the art object within the context of Kierkegaard severely limits the possibilities of its potential because of this dualism. Though recognising the discrepancies between the various representations of the art object and, thereby, indicating to a limited extent the determination of esthetic aesthetic objects as authentic within the scope of the esthetic, Connell's understanding requires that the art object become almost an autonomous individuality which is removed from the individuals that created and perceive it and, furthermore, that it exists as either one aspect in relation to the individual or another, but not both. The correspondence of the dialectical natures of the art object and the individuals involved is ignored

³¹⁴One which he credits to Marete Jørgensen's dissertation *Kierkegaard som Kritiker* (Kierkegaard as Critic).

³¹⁵Connell, *To Be One Thing: Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought*, p. 25

in favour of an isolated externalisation. In the above quote, the movement and development of the art object becomes a separation between unities. Connell would have the art object presented as a unity to the individual, but the results of this would be an object which becomes either purely objective for a subjective individual, or purely subjective for an individual within an objective sense and which, according to Kierkegaard, as such, is a communication of a unity which is necessarily subjective to another subjectivity resulting in an impossibility of communication and therefore appropriation.

Moving from Crites and Connell to Pattison, a more accurate approach is apparent. Pattison's recent work is the most interesting of all the commentators on Kierkegaardian aesthetics because he would appear to believe that something positive can emerge from the negativity and because he is one of the few to actually investigate the art object itself within the framework of Kierkegaard's literature. This belief and position is present despite Pattison's own reluctance to accept the positive potential. What is also important about Pattison's work is that he, like Crites, is able to examine the art object within the framework of Kierkegaardian literature while maintaining a distinction from the esthetic (though not a complete distinction).

In Pattison's book *Kierkegaard: The Aesthetic and the Religious*, he traces clearly the background which influenced Kierkegaard's development of his concept of the aesthetic through Heiberg, Martensen, and Møller's Hegelianism or reaction against its perceived nihilism.³¹⁶ Pattison also traces the aesthetic elements which can be found in Kierkegaard's writing with two statements: first, that the artist works not merely in copying from Nature but from the individual's own intuition and imagination to communicate the Idea of the ontological grounding of existence by actuality; second, that art

³¹⁶For an excellent discussion of this material, see Pattison, *Kierkegaard: The Aesthetic and the Religious*, "Chapter One: Idealism and the Justification of the Image", pp. 1-34

initially acquires the means to relieve that individual from the difficulties of existence but that this is only an incomplete means of relief within existence. Recognising this fact, Pattison shows how Kierkegaard's understanding of art acts to such an extent that it becomes esthetic in nature rather than aesthetic and therefore completely removes the individual from existence. With Pattison's *Art, Modernity and Faith: Towards a Theology of Art*, Pattison continues this, but also shows how Kierkegaard's understanding of the aesthetic can be used as a bridge between the exclusivisation of the art object as a communication of the Idea and modern art. Art within the 20th century has, for Pattison, become a sign of the collapsing of the church's position into generalised society, such that art now has a transcending role through following Kierkegaard's emphasis on subjectivity.

This, however, does not address the nature of the art object *per se*. Pattison's most important statement on the subject is found in his article "Kierkegaard: Aesthetics and 'The Aesthetic'"³¹⁷. In this, he rejects the *a priori* character of 19th century investigations and analysis of the art object and addresses the question of Kierkegaard's identification of a particular stage of awareness of knowledge of an individual's ontological grounding as 'esthetic'.

For Pattison, Kierkegaard's conception of the esthetic is derived from his contemporaries' investigations into the nature of the aesthetic art object (a point which Pattison also details in his book). Like Crites, Pattison understands Kierkegaard to be idealistic in nature in this regard. Pattison notes, correctly, that even those writers who came after such idealists as Kant, Fichte, and Hegel remained wholly idealist. Kierkegaard is one example, and Schopenhauer another. Art functions within this sense in a particular fashion:

³¹⁷Pattison, "Kierkegaard: Aesthetics and 'The Aesthetic'", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, Vol. 31, No. 2, April, 1991, pp. 140-151

Art is therefore the point at which the two worlds so severely distinguished by Kant's first two critiques- the worlds of idea and appearances, noumena and phenomena- touch and unite. In art the world of finitude, externality and impermanence is transfigured and illuminated by the light of infinity, inwardness and timelessness. In aesthetic intuition we no longer know in part: we perceive the whole- an image or an anticipation of eternal blessedness in earthly guise.³¹⁸

This statement is loaded with controversy, both in its interpretation of idealistic notions of art as the communication of the ideal, as well as the conception of the aesthetic object as a blessedness, but contains some interesting truths within the context of Kierkegaard's thought. The identification confuses the communication of the idea with the communication of the ideal. The idea, as stated before, is merely the indication of the ideal in an almost objective form. The ideal is that which can be appropriated by the existing individual, but only through personal struggle. This aesthetic intuition (which is strikingly Kantian in flavour) verges on being merely esthetic. It is right, however, to state that Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object is one which is idealistic.

For Pattison, Kierkegaard's idealism emerges as part of his understanding of the idealist writers who conceived of such as being a dynamic process of thought. The idea was identified as part of the Will, either of the ego as in the case of Fichte or the Absolute Spirit in the case of Hegel. In the context of art, the idea emerges as part of the activity of the imagination of the individual. Art is the manifestation of the individual's imaginative activities in a process of making clear the idea or the ideal. What is important to note, as Pattison does, is that Kierkegaard's ideal is very different from Hegel's, for example. He writes:

The external form, in other words, is merely the product of the Idea. But the world of

³¹⁸Ibid., p. 141

ideality is given a quite different ontological status in Kierkegaard's view than that which it had held in idealist thought. From a Christian point of view which presupposes the fall, man's alienation from both God and his own essential being, the human subject cannot determine reality as such solely on the basis of his own inner freedom... But, since God is acknowledged to be the ground and guarantor of reality, it follows that what is merely a product of human imagination will have no claim of itself to be 'real'. Indeed, its 'reality' may turn out to be sheer illusion.³¹⁹

The art object, as a communication of the Idea, supposedly communicates the actual truth of existence. Yet, from a Christian point of view, which concedes the actual to God as the ontological ground of existence, such *hubris* reveals itself as an illusion because the idea is merely a product of human intellect. This understanding of art is something which resulted in iconoclastic spasms against art throughout history as well as in the immediate perception of Kierkegaard's conception of the art object as merely esthetic. Pattison is closest to Kierkegaard's own position that the art object remains merely esthetic, but Pattison and Kierkegaard miss the dialectic possibilities contained within this statement. If we are to be iconoclastic in our relation to art- recognising the inadequacy of the art object's communication of the ideal (and noting that it can be a communication of the idea, which remains wholly abstract and removed from existence)- then surely something positive can come out of this? Pattison's identification of Kierkegaard, and Kierkegaard's own identification of himself, precludes this- a point addressed in the final chapter.

Furthermore, Pattison focuses on the necessarily synthetic nature of the art object. The art object, as a material form of a communication of the idea, is synthetic because it combines into one object the material and the idea supporting that material. This results in a wholeness of synthesis, one in which the

³¹⁹Ibid., pp. 142-143

idea is intuited by the material. This also results in the requirement- within the context of 19th century thought on the aesthetic- that the art object be one of harmony and beauty because it is unable to be incomplete. Art is a reconciliation of life with thought through a pleasing image. "In this way art cuts life's corners and smooths out its rough edges." ³²⁰ In an immediate or esthetic sense this is a good result. However, again, this requires that the art object become removed from existence, which itself is necessarily incomplete. The art object is a communication of the wholeness of the material and the idea, but such a communication remains aloof from the fact that the material object remains within existence and is part of continuing existence. Pattison writes:

The harmonious and joyous quality which is art's chiefest glory thus emerges as a limiting factor in the relation of art to the religious. For the short cut of aesthetic experience might make us think that we have arrived when in fact there is still far to go. Its image of blessedness is an illusion...³²¹

The art object, on one level, is a process of forgetting one's own existence, a process exemplified in *E/O I* for example. This leads Pattison to state that the art object is one which is dangerously timeless. The fact that the art object appears to be a harmonious whole, perfectly communicating the idea of existence, while seemingly remaining outside of existence, means that it would appear to be timeless in nature; i.e. to not actually exist within continuing existence. Even further, Pattison writes: "By virtue of its harmonious perfection, its completeness, art lifts us out of the dispersion of temporal existence. The barriers of separation which time imposes are broken down." ³²²

Pattison's chief mistake (though it really should not be labelled as such, since it is so closely Kierkegaardian) is to remain within Kierkegaard's

³²⁰Ibid., p. 144

³²¹Ibid., p. 144

³²²Ibid., p. 145

category of the esthetic when discussing the aesthetic art object. No room is given for the possibility of a positive potential, nor for an authentic art object which can overcome the difficulties he correctly identifies. This results in Pattison's analysis bearing a remarkable resemblance to Walsh's. Both attempt to determine the art object solely within the context of the subjectivity of the developing individual rather than as an objective material type of communication of the idea of the ideal outside of the individual's existence. It is if they wished to determine a dialectical relationship between the art object and nature.³²³ He writes: " Art comes from life and return to life." ³²⁴ Does this mean that the art object is wholly involved with the individual's existence? Quite the contrary, since the object within a theatrical setting must remain an object of communication wholly outside of the individual's existence (even though it remains a product of an individual's existence at its origin and as part of its identity). With the timelessness of the art object Pattison is correct, but only in the context of an esthetic or inauthentic art object. Pattison posits a positive possibility for the art object, but only to a limited extent, and does so while ignoring the dialectic of the art object. In the case of the timelessness, the dialectical development should result in the communication of the complete immersion within time that the existing individual experiences. Pattison writes that the timelessness of the art object is one of deceit, but does not recognise the necessity of such deceit nor the dialectical implications. To be fair, this is perhaps not so much a mistake as one of the difficulties when writing about Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard too was unable to remove himself from this category.

The one point made by these authors with which I agree is stated by Crites. In his introduction, it

³²³A point that is not without merit, but inapplicable within the context of Kierkegaard.

³²⁴Pattison, " Kierkegaard: Aesthetics and 'Aesthetic'" , p. 149

appeared that he was unable to determine a specific response or description of Kierkegaard's approach to aesthetics. The negativity found in Kierkegaard's writing seemed to be an abiding factor. Crites wrote: "Is all poetry... like unconsecrated food, nourishing but profane? In general it is. Kierkegaard does make a distinction, though it is not made as clearly as one would like."³²⁵ This is the resounding characterisation of Kierkegaardian scholarship regarding the art object- a lament at the lack of clarity. Even though Crites finds positive value- "It may deepen one's sense of the pathos as well as the joy of the world..." - he does also find a limitation which causes uncertainty- "...but in either case the effect is profoundly humanizing."³²⁶- which limits his ability to fully find a determinable value for art within the framework of Kierkegaard's writing. This extends to a position which characterises much of the secondary literature- "When he [Kierkegaard] wrote on art... he did so exclusively on *aesthetic* premises."³²⁷ It is on this particularly point, with the grounding established in the previous chapters, that my own position is affirmed by taking into account the Kierkegaardian dialectic.

Before turning to the art object itself, it is necessary to discuss two authors, Steven N. Emmaneul's book *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Revelation* and some further passages in Adorno's text, both of which have their applications beyond the merely esthetic.

Emmanuel's purpose, in his book, is to determine the nature of revelation amongst the philosophical-theological writings of Kierkegaard, and it is important because the art object must be understood within the context of revelation. He does so by examining revelation as it appears within the framework of the Christianity which he believes Kierkegaard envisioned, one that he characterises as such:

³²⁵Crites' introduction to *Crisis*, p. 41

³²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 36

³²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 42; I have changed the spelling of Crites' text from *aesthetic* to *esthetic* since this coincides with my own emphasis and for clarification.

Kierkegaard's claim that Christian faith exists only in the subjective appropriation of the truth is qualified by the further claim that the Christian form of life must be shaped by reference to dogmatic Christian concepts.³²⁸

These two strands of the approach to Christianity are one part of the task of describing or reintroducing the requirements of Christianity into Christendom, clarifying the ethical requirements of faith which is revealed in revelation. Emmanuel shows how Kierkegaard recognises that the Christ-revelation is the determining factor for Christianity, and how also Kierkegaard elaborates on his understanding that revelation is a limitation to Christianity in a positive sense.

Emmanuel continues his analysis by dissecting Derrida's notion of signification. He does so because so much of Kierkegaard interpretation has based itself on identifying Kierkegaard as an early precursor to deconstruction. According to Emmanuel, Derrida's notion of signification is contrary to the typical, normative, or positive understanding of language. Derrida's negative understanding posits language signification as relational rather than positive, i.e. a word is not directly related to the object but is given meaning because of its relation to other objects and, hence, negatively produces a meaning for the object. Only the differences of signs as a process of that differentiation produces meaning, leading to undecidability. This leads further to an interpretation of the text which denies any inherent unity of meaning to the text, or any inherent meaning to the body of texts produced by a single author.

In Kierkegaard scholarship, Emmanuel is correct to point out that this has lead to people³²⁹ reading Kierkegaard in order to deny any unified meaning.³³⁰ Emmanuel and I agree that Kierkegaard would not subscribe

³²⁸Emmanuel, p. 114

³²⁹For example, Mackey, *Points of View: Readings of Kierkegaard*, "Points of View for His Work as an Author: A Report from History", pp. 160-192

³³⁰Something which I think is a mis-reading of Kierkegaard in the sense that this removal of the initial text is not merely a dispersal of one layer of illusion, but an indication that illusion as sign leads to a dialectical denial of sign whereby the sign is both sign and non-sign.

to the deconstruction of meaning, but view this as merely a recognition of something which, while being valuable in its own right in that it can serve to indicate mere illusion, can be a trap itself which does not acknowledge any possibility of the grounding of the self in existence. Emmanuel notes that a sense of presence must be pervasive in the dialectic of communication; a recognition of the possibilities is necessary, but the finality of those possibilities, the limits of possibility, must also be present as presence (or, in my words, as actual). George Steiner's in *Real Presences* is cited as one example of recent work done in response to the deconstructionists' attacks on a concrete meaning from a moral and theological point of view, and Emmanuel agrees with Steiner in this. Specifically, he writes: "Indeed, all meaningful encounters with art, literature, and music must presuppose this presence."³³¹

Emmanuel would establish Kierkegaard in agreement with both. More particularly, he would establish Kierkegaard as not only both but neither. Based on Kierkegaard's conception of indirect communication, Emmanuel would describe Kierkegaard as one trying to communicate a presence through the absence of that presence, which indirectly acts as a position within which the reader can carry out the necessary interpretative activities without the interference of the author. The all-pervasive religiosity of the authorship, which was one of Emmanuel's initial indications, is enacted through this and through what Emmanuel terms the 'implied author', which is the organising principle giving a common ground for the entire authorship. The implied author grants the interpreter some leeway in the method of interpretation, because it allows the level of interpretation of intention to be deferred.

Appeal to the concept of an implied author avoids the problem of having to "get it right" in the sense that one latches onto the actual authorial intention behind the work. For the

³³¹Emmanuel, p. 17

implied author is at once distinct from both the pseudonym and the historical writer. This concept also avoids the problem of what to do with texts without access to authors, as well as the problem of how to judge the sincerity of their authors.³³²

The idea of an implied author is a means of escaping the necessity of determination of the intention of Kierkegaard. It is Emmanuel's strategy for reading Kierkegaard, and a good one. For my purposes, however, it fails to recognise the importance of the actual texts and, hence, the importance of the possibility of forms of communication or art objects. It focuses and remains focused on Kierkegaard without escaping from him.

This is interesting, and a necessary point of criticism, because Emmanuel begins the second chapter with the following statement:

It is the main contention of this study that Kierkegaard presents a coherent and philosophically interesting view of the nature of Christian revelation, and of the religious form of life that is defined by reference to that central concept.³³³

Already Emmanuel is focusing on the form of the communication which revelation is, rather than on a reading of Kierkegaard himself. This implies that the form or type of communication is his subject. Emmanuel understands Kierkegaard as employing philosophy in the service of reintroducing Christianity to Christendom. In this sense, the revelation begins to make an important appearance. Emmanuel writes:

The philosophical scope of Kierkegaard's task, then, is to recover the original and distinctive meanings of Christian concepts, so that their significance for determining the Christian form of life can be made apparent. To this end, Kierkegaard proposes to reintroduce what he calls the ideal picture of being a Christian, to show that Jesus Christ (the "absolute paradox") is the prototype, the object of Christian faith. The task of recovering the distinctive concepts of Christian discourse involves showing how they

³³²Ibid., p. 20

³³³Ibid., p. 23

bear on the way a person lives, contrasting the Christian form of life and discourse with other forms of life and discourse.³³⁴

Thus, by displaying the particular necessities involved with acting within a Christian existence, Kierkegaard contrasts it to the speculative approach (which Emmanuel and others have cited as constituting a specific manner of existence which Kierkegaard perceived as prevalent in his time) and develops other individuals towards that form of existence. But how can such an introduction take place?

The process of a reintroduction takes place through the presentation of an ideal, which is in an absolute paradoxically relationship to the existence of the receiving individual. Emmanuel identifies this facilitating concept from the writings of Climacus as revelation. Revelation holds a unique position with regard to the existential understanding of the actual. Emmanuel writes:

On the basis of his [Climacus'] analysis, he shows that there are logical reasons why we cannot assess the truth of what is actually given in revelation. The content of revelation transcends human reason and, as such, presents the individual with an absolute paradox. In revelation the individual confronts the unknowable God.³³⁵

Revelation is a communication of the truth, but it stands in total contrast to a speculative or objective communication of an actual truth in that it is received directly as a communication from outside of existence. In this sense, revelation becomes central to an understanding of Christianity; since subjectivity is required as part of the individual appropriation of the paradoxical nature of actuality into the individual's existence, it serves as a vehicle for such a communication. Revelation is not a matter of objectively determined fact, but is an ethical requirement and duty imposed upon each individual receiving it. It is a

³³⁴Ibid., p. 34

³³⁵Ibid., pp. 34-35

communication of a truth about the individual's existence which is directly communicated from within that actuality of the truth, and therefore cannot be resolved within existence through thought. It is the most viable means of communicating truth.³³⁶

Emmanuel recognises that revelation in the hands of Kierkegaard is open to criticism, particularly because of its "irrationalism". As always, this is based upon the view that Kierkegaard puts forward an absolute paradox in the form of Christ, one in which an individual has both the characteristics of a human individual as well as being the incarnation of God. Emmanuel rejects most acceptance of this proposition as a reading from Kierkegaard, regarding the coherency of logic as necessary. He seeks to discover a logical means of understanding the illogical. In this, I admire his efforts, but resist his outcome. Why? Because he fails to take into account the historical (part of the dialectic of historical-ahistorical) nature of Christ, and the conclusions of *PF*. But, his argument is a persuasive one, though occasionally unnecessary. For Emmanuel, Kierkegaard is not trying to put forward a doctrine of nonsense. Rather, he is putting forward a paradox or an absurdity (this is different from nonsense) which understanding is inadequate to grasp.

The terms paradox and absurd are thus introduced as a conceptual means of indicating that God's appearance in the temporal order transcends the possibilities of human knowledge, and that it cannot be grasped at a purely intellectual level. Kierkegaard's strategy is clearly not to demonstrate the

³³⁶I differ from Emmanuel's reading of the concept of revelation so far very little. I think that he places too much value on the contribution of philosophy to the clarification of specific concepts of religion. He would suggest that philosophy allows the individual, according to Kierkegaard, to act in an essential manner to specifically define the nature of revelation. This would seem to slip into the speculative form of philosophy, if care is not taken. A danger is inherent in this process, one which Emmanuel does not recognise. However, he is essentially correct. Regarding art as a communication of the actual, it approaches the vitality and viability of a revelation, but does not achieve it. A recognition of this is necessary, though Emmanuel does not, of course (its not part of his book), treat revelation in such a manner. Art as near-revelation (much as the artist is a near-apostle) can communicate the actual truth of existence, going beyond mere speculative thought or rationalism. But it cannot overstep its boundaries.

impossibility of accepting the truth of Christianity, but the impossibility of appropriating that truth on purely objective or intellectual terms.³³⁷

For Emmanuel, Kierkegaard does so by moving faith from being understanding towards being an existential in nature.

Emmanuel's distinctions are superfluous, but his interpretation makes clear that what Kierkegaard was describing, when he referred to the absurd or the paradox, was not the normal meaning of such words, but an indication of the relationship that God has to existence. The Christian absurd is something which might be true, unlike the secular absurd. The absurd becomes, in the hands of Kierkegaard, a category unable to be understood by reasoning but which may be accepted by faith. It is the limitation of human reasoning, beyond objective understanding. Emmanuel writes:

A paradox in the sense of a logical contradiction occurs within the sphere of reason; it is a point at which reason collides with itself and is thereby brought to a standstill. But Kierkegaard's paradox occurs outside of reason, it is a point at which reason collides with something foreign to itself, something other.³³⁸

This may be tantamount to what would normally be considered nonsense, but it does have its value. The absolute paradox is the limits of reason; human understanding may be able to conceive of and grasp in rational thought all of existence, but the actual grounding of existence is beyond the existence of thought.³³⁹

Thus, human understanding fails to reach the actual. The actual can only be reached through revelation, which comes from beyond understanding; revelation is the actual

³³⁷Emmanuel, p. 43

³³⁸Ibid., p. 45

³³⁹Here, of course, my ideas on the nature of the authentic art object have particular power. Again, the art object approaches revelation, but does not actually achieve it. In this sense, it acts as a near-absolute paradox while not being an absolute paradox itself.

entering into existence. It transcends rationality, revealing its limits. Quoting Kierkegaard:

What I usually express by saying that Christianity consists of paradox, philosophy in mediation, Leibniz expresses by distinguishing between what is above reason and what is against reason. Faith is above reason. By reason he understands, as he says in many places, a linking together of truths (*enchainment*), a conclusion from causes. Faith cannot therefore be *proved, demonstrated, comprehended*, for the link which makes a linking together possible is missing, and what else does this say than that it is a paradox.³⁴⁰

Indeed, not only does the absurd nature of the revelation transcend the rational, according to Emmanuel, but it also acts in opposition to human understanding. It is the means whereby our own natures are determined as limited rather than as infinite. The finite nature of our existence is made clear through the means of the infinite actual. This still creates, however, an impossibility to Christianity. Since belief remains part of human rationality (albeit tenuously), Christianity becomes an impossible task for the individual. Revelation may be a means of determining the limits of understanding, of showing that God is beyond cognitive reason, but it does not necessarily show how one can still believe. Emmanuel asserts that this is possible through pragmatic reasons for belief.

Emmanuel's more contentious statements begins when he starts to describe revelation as the means of communicating divine truth to the individual beyond normal human understanding. He does so by asserting that it is sin that is the initial limitation of human objective reason. Sin is the singular experience of each individual such that it limits the individual in its understanding of itself. Reason may achieve the highest in human achievement, but it also becomes the highest means of asserting human sinfulness. Because each individual is marked by sin, separating human reason from divine reason or understanding, the discovery of the

³⁴⁰JP, vol. 3, pp.399-400; IV C 29

ultimate truth of existence- the ontological grounding of existence in actuality- is impossible. Revelation serves as the only viable means of communicating such a truth.³⁴¹

Emmanuel moves from this point to a more interesting one. He writes: "Assuming that a revelation has occurred, what are human beings to make of it?"³⁴² Revelation can be made to conform to received opinions and doctrines, but this denies the inherent value of revelation as such. Revelation must be accepted as a 'mystery', one which claims to be able to communicate the actual truth of existence while simultaneously denying any objective application within existence. It is a paradoxical presentation of the truth, one which indirectly leads the individual to the truth. Revelation, as Emmanuel points out, is not only an address to the subjective and, therefore, passionately-engaged individual to recognise its nature, to recognise its separateness from the actual while it remains in existence, but it is also a need for 'repentance' or, to interpret that within the framework of the communication of the art object, a rejection and simultaneous acceptance of the nature of one's individuality in the face of the actual truth of one's existence. Revelation is an option both to deny existence and embrace its true nature. For Emmanuel, Kierkegaard's concept of revelation "does not aim at increasing our knowledge or enlightening our intellects, but rather at motivating an existential decision and giving us practical guidance."³⁴³ In this sense, his understanding of revelation mirrors my own interpretation of the authentic art object in Kierkegaard.

³⁴¹Emmanuel, p. 58; I agree with what E. has said, to a point, but do not disagree that it is sin which marks off the limits of human reasoning. Rather, it is the subjectivity of the individuality which does so, rather than the inherent and internal emotions which are described in an external fashion. Subjectivity is the natural limitations of human reason and understanding; sin is an imposition which arises both from the development of subjectivity (without which it cannot be applied to subjectivity) as well as being an external objectification of the individual's relationship to its ontological grounding.

³⁴²Emmanuel, p. 58

³⁴³Ibid., p. 60

If we are to turn to the question of the relationship of history and the art object, Emmanuel's interpretation of revelation in a similar relationship provides some interesting problems. Revelation is necessarily historical in nature but, as Kierkegaard continually recognises (in *PF* and *CUP*), any use of the historical in a purely objective sense confuses the use of the historical in a purely subjective sense. The study of historical facts may be necessary when it comes to an understanding of the purely human state of existence and the history of such an existence; when it comes to the actual truth of such an existence, research into the historical tends to distort the application of such truth into subjectivity.

This question is addressed most directly in *PF*. Kierkegaard asks whether an individual can learn the actual truth of existence from an historical point within that existence; whether such an historical point of existence can be anything more than such; and whether an appropriation of the actual truth of existence can take place from knowledge based upon such an historical point within existence. From a Socratic point of view, these questions are easily answered positively, but, from a Christian point of view, there is more difficulty. For a Christian, of course, prior to any form of revelation there is no knowledge of the actual. Christianity, the historical acts which have allowed the construction of Christianity to take place, not only presents the knowledge necessary for such a development but also enables the conditions within which the individual can come to such a knowledge. This is a qualifying set of conditions, which Emmanuel notes thus:

...the Socratic view maintains that the learner already possesses the truth, and the historical circumstances of the teaching is an accidental feature. History is merely an occasion for making explicit what is already implicit. The Christian view, by contrast, posits a discontinuity in the temporal order, whereby something essentially different is introduced. The learner cannot proceed by quantitative

steps toward the truth. What is required is a qualitative transformation, the condition for which is a divine gift, made possible by God's revelation in history.³⁴⁴

The historical fact of the revelation becomes decisive for the individual. The moment of revelation acts from a specific historical point throughout history to determine the relationship that the individual has to the actual.

What is specifically interesting at this point, for Emmanuel and myself, is that Christian revelation offers a specific beginning which transforms the concept of revelation. This is because the concept of 'historical evidence' would seem to offer a window into the actual truth of existence while also denying such a truth. The art object can function in the same manner.³⁴⁵ If the communication of the art object (as with the communication which the historical evidence embodies) is appropriated subjectively, then the individual can bring into its existence some sense of faith with the necessity of objectivity. However, once the element of objectivity is introduced, then this process of appropriation ceases to continue because the ability to have faith in the subjective appropriation is interfered with. The authentic art object exists as a dialectical material object and so, therefore, can and must function both as an object of faith and as an historical object. Subjective appropriation is evident in the communicative form which is the art object, but objective communication is also necessarily present. Therefore, the art object becomes a dialectical process of communication of the truth and denial of the truth. The Christian revelation is that which occurs in time, producing a relationship between the individual and God in time. Yet, the only form of relationship that can exist for the individual with God must, by its nature, occur outside of time in a spiritual form. Thus, historical evidence becomes something which cannot be used to base eternal happiness on, because an objective inquiry into the historical

³⁴⁴Ibid., p. 63

³⁴⁵Never taken, however, as a progression of thought by Emmanuel.

point of departure produces evidence which denies the possibility of faith (since faith is something which is inherently believed in, and the objective approach introduces doubt). Emmanuel writes:

The underlying point is that faith requires a kind of certainty that historical inquiry cannot provide. Given that empirical inquiry cannot preclude the possibility of error, it is always possible that further evidence will come to light that will force us to revise our beliefs. What this means is that we are never in a position to make a final decision.³⁴⁶

Yet, in Emmanuel's reading of Kierkegaard, the pursuit of final happiness- the knowledge of the actual truth of our existence as being ontologically grounded- through infinite passionate interest is vital.

Choice and certainty about that choice is required for such an attainment of eternal happiness.³⁴⁷ However, belief in historical evidence is not required. The evidence that Emmanuel correctly suggests for this is Kierkegaard's concept of the absolute paradox. For Emmanuel, in his reading of Kierkegaard, objectively viewed, the incarnation of Christ is an event impossible to believe in. The object of faith, however, transcends human knowledge by its very nature. Historical objectivity makes such an event impossible. Revelation of that event, on the other hand, makes faith necessary and therefore makes belief in that event possible.

To take the Christian view, therefore, is to see revelation as absolutely authoritative, and to see the corresponding response of faith as one of trustful obedience. Either revelation is the standard of what is true and false, or else human reason is; but we cannot have it both ways. Given the logic of this argument, Kierkegaard is justified in claiming that the search for historical evidence is incompatible with the claims of revelation.³⁴⁸

And it is revelation thusly which leads the individual into an authentication of its appropriation of faith. And

³⁴⁶Emmanuel, p. 66

³⁴⁷Something that the art object can only lead the individual towards but will ultimately indicate its own inadequacies for such.

³⁴⁸Emmanuel, p. 72

it is faith through revelation (or, more specifically, through the nature of the historicity of revelation), which is the reason that the individual is able to make the choice to develop toward eternal happiness. As Emmanuel notes: "By stressing the centrality of the paradox, Kierkegaard drives a wedge between knowledge and faith, and affirms a practical justification for belief in the historical fact of God's existence."³⁴⁹ The historicity of the fact of faith emerges from its rejection in objectivity and its affirmation in the subjectivity of faith qualified by grace through revelation.

Religious statements do not have a validity in themselves when considered from a human standpoint. Rather, they only have validity and therefore truth when they are understood as having a relationship to and meaning within the divine which is inaccessible to human understanding. This inaccessibility is not absolute, but enters into the realm of human understanding only if it is made a part of that understanding with the condition that it is referable only to the divine. The meaning of doctrine then emerges only when the individual is aware of this limitation on the nature of divine truth within doctrine and, instead of seeking to confirm it, applies it to the individual's existence. Doctrine becomes a means of determining the individual's activities, rather than being merely a descriptive element of those activities.³⁵⁰ "The religious value of doctrinal statement..." according to E,'s reading of Kierkegaard, "lies in the fact that they are vehicles for being related to divine reality or living 'in the truth.'"³⁵¹ The implications of this I shall turn to in the concluding chapter.

³⁴⁹Ibid., p. 75

³⁵⁰This understanding of doctrine is not, of course, strictly Kierkegaardian in nature, but does correspond to what Climacus has to say about knowing what it means to be objectively Christian while simultaneously being able to not be a Christian. However, it does serve as an excellent model for the function of the art object within his literature.

³⁵¹Emmanuel, p. 107

There are even further problems.³⁵² Most importantly, Emmanuel would have us put forward revelation as something that must be accepted without question. This is the key point when discussing Apostolic authority. For Emmanuel, Kierkegaard's Christianity is an existential means of determining and guiding the individual's life, and the revelation is a direction granted through grace to that individual. This revelation is not something which can be judged by human standards, but must be accepted as divine by nature. This does not mean, Emmanuel is quick to point out, that revelation cannot be examined from an objective stance. Such an acceptance could only be characterised as blind or irrational judgement.³⁵³ What is more interesting, at least in terms

³⁵²For example, Emmanuel notes the basis for Kierkegaard's argument with Adler- that he [Adler] is an example of an individual who is so completely bound by Hegelianism or speculation that not only is he unable to understand the nature of a revelation but, even were he to have experienced one, he would be unable to recognise and apply it to himself; Adler's revelation would not make himself more understandable to himself.

Emmanuel goes through the distinctions for revelation and the difference between a genius and an apostle. He also notes that the means of communicating the revelation must be of a specific sort and by a specific person (the areas important to myself). But, his clearest and most interesting arguments arise from his efforts to define a means of determining how one recognises an example of divine authority, a revelation. Quoting T.H. Croxall's "Kierkegaard on 'Authority'," (*Hibbert Journal* 48 (1949-50):151-165)

Are we then to accept the Apostolic authority blindly? By no means. We must examine why we accept it, and also its objective content. But in the last resort we must leave dialectic aside and submit, before we can know the value of Apostolic authority. For Christianity is communicated and kept alive not epistemologically but existentially.†

†Emmanuel, p. 123

³⁵³Such an acceptance could only be characterised as blind or irrational judgement. This near-objectivity is something which I think is most fruitful, since it goes a long way towards explaining how one must accept a revelation and, therefore, how a revelation or (more importantly) near-revelation can take place.

Emmanuel begins with the Christ-revelation. This is, in Emmanuel's reading of Kierkegaard's opinion, an existential communication in which the knowledge of the ontological grounding of the individual self, the actual truth of existence, is posited and communicated. This actuality is presented in embodied form, and this form is a telos for the individual to strive for in imitation. This actuality, the revelation, is also a 'transcendent authority', one which is an absolute judgement on human activity and it serves to define the means of judging future forms of revelation. Yet, it is interesting because it says so little. The material on Adler is much more fruitful than Emmanuel allows in his work, and he should have expanded on it. Instead, he offers simple solutions to a rather complex problem. If I were to conjecture this further, I would apply the same standards that he is applying to the revelation to the art object as a communication. Emmanuel simply equates the 'confusion' which seems inherent in the message of Adler with Kierkegaard's own critique of Hegelianism and the contemporary Danish church. Emmanuel's reading of Kierkegaard on Adler is inadequate, and therefore his understanding of the power of revelation as a form of communication or divine communication is also lacking.

It is with chapter 8 that he tries to repair some of argument, by referring to Kierkegaard's notion of indirect communication. Emmanuel's understanding of this is the same as mine, based as mine on the lectures on

of my own research, is that Emmanuel then goes on to interpret the Christ-revelation in light of the Kierkegaardian understanding of 'ethical' communication. As shown in *PC*, the Christ-revelation is necessarily indirect in nature, rooted, according to Emmanuel's reading of Kierkegaard, in the absolute paradox. Revelation becomes rooted in the existence of the individual, and is therefore necessarily indirect. The Christ-revelation is an example which does not contain doctrine, messages, specific communication of the nature of existence; it is an example of a life to be led. There is apparently no answers within the scope of Emmanuel's interpretation of Kierkegaard.³⁵⁴

Emmanuel concludes by noting his understanding of revelation and one of the salient points which can be derived from his argument. For Emmanuel, deciding whether a communication is such is less important than determining the proper response and appropriation of it. He writes:

Even though the decision to accept the Christ-revelation cannot be decided on theoretical grounds, it does not follow that the decision to believe (to become a disciple) is therefore groundless. For as we have seen, the absolute paradox reveals a basic tension within the concept of rationality itself. Whereas purely evidential considerations do not warrant the decision to believe, there are important practical and ethical considerations that may render that decision perfectly rational.³⁵⁵

communication found in the journals. He continues his agreement when he asks how God can communicate subjective or 'essential' knowledge in an ethical manner (by 'ethical', Emmanuel here means the means necessary to communicate to the subjective individual). Emmanuel writes: "He uses midwives. The Christian midwife is one who gives rise to the birth of a new person by being the for that person to acquire essential knowledge." † I certainly would agree with this. I would also agree with Emmanuel's characterisation of Kierkegaard as communicating in order to try to bring the individual into action, differing from the Socratic maieutic which tried to bring knowledge to the individual (based on the differences between the Socratic and the Kierkegaardian understanding of the nature of knowledge).

† Emmanuel, p. 133

³⁵⁴Emmanuel goes on to note some of the criticisms against Kierkegaard's theory of communication. From John A. Mourant's article "The Limitations of Religious Existentialism" (*International Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1961): 437-452) he notes that Kierkegaard's theory can be understood as excluding, in that the religious truths can only be appropriated by the singular individuality. This leads into the two questions about communication: why should there be any indirect communication (i.e. what motives exist for it) and how can religious truths be appropriated if they are purely subjective?

³⁵⁵Emmanuel, p. 146

This basic tension is Emmanuel's most important contribution. In recognising it, he recognises the dialectical nature of revelation. The connection is tenuous, but this can be applied to an interpretation of the art object within the Kierkegaardian literature.

Where Emmanuel fails is when he refuses to answer the most basic question: how can a revelation be communicated. He strives to find a means of determining the grounds upon which a communication can be termed a revelation, but by pointing to the reception and acknowledgement of the revelation, rather than the revelation itself. "Even if it is finally impossible to say whether a person has in fact received a divine revelation, it is possible to determine whether a person's statements and actions are consistent with such a claim."³⁵⁶ Therefore, a revelation is proven not as such, nor by its effect on an individual, but purely by the reception of the communication which that receiving individual produces once the revelation has taken place. Emmanuel does an excellent job of describing the conditions under which the concept of revelation has within a Christian framework, but leaves much. Examining the art object leads into a greater clarity about the concept itself.

One of the most interesting connections that can be made between a source within the secondary literature and a positive understanding of the art object within a Kierkegaardian framework is Adorno's writing on Kierkegaard and mythical content. As such, it bears a strong relation to the work of Emmanuel. This is the most important engagement that Adorno has with Kierkegaardian aesthetics, even though it is also the most indirect. For Adorno, Kierkegaard's introduction of the mythical as counter-concept to historical movement and in unity with it leads to the mythical in his own thought, concealed by his mature philosophy. In *The Concept of Irony*, Kierkegaard sets out to deduce the difference between the

³⁵⁶Ibid., p. 146

conceptual and pictorial form of presentation in Plato, specifically the necessity of this divergence. What emerges, in Adorno's opinion, is that the mythical, for Kierkegaard, is not a free creation of the mind but a development in history, having an inner history. The mythical is separate from the dialectical in Plato until Plato becomes a master of it, when the mythical becomes image. Kierkegaard wards off the historical implications of the mythical's unity with the dialectic, but Adorno does so mistakenly.

For Adorno, Kierkegaard sees the development of self-consciousness as the means to dispel the myth leading to the Ideal. The mythical holds a specific power over the individual, but, in the development of the individual, the mythical ceases to become a means of revealing. In the mythical image the natural and the spiritual emerges, surpassing the mythical for a spiritual self-awareness. What Adorno recognises in this movement is that the mythical destroys itself.³⁵⁷ "The character of the mythical in conceptual form is thus attributed to Kierkegaard's absolute inwardness as to all forms of idealism of absolute spirit."³⁵⁸ Mythical content, in Adorno's reading, becomes a means of justifying the development of the individual within the dialectic of that development. I would disagree with this completely, since only the relationship that the individual has to its actual ontological grounding in existence justifies the development of the individual. Yet, Adorno does have a point, given the dialectical relationship between myth and such a development. Mythical content, despite its structuring role in that development, continues its own destruction. Adorno writes:

...the origin of the structure is mythical: the
tyranny of spirit, of the created that

³⁵⁷A vital point of agreement between my own reading concerning the art object and Adorno's reading of the myth. What is consistently emerging in the various readings of Kierkegaard is that the production of communication ultimately constructs the necessity of its own annulling.

³⁵⁸Adorno, p. 56

enthrones itself as creator and sinks so much deeper into nature the higher the spirit imagines itself towering above it. In the final product of the idealist spirit, the mythical content simply breaks through the cells of the systematically developed concept, where philosophical criticism has banished it, and takes possession of the old images. Along with the stability of the system, it destroys itself...³⁵⁹

This, Adorno points out, does not lead Kierkegaard into an emphasis of the mythical metaphysics (as Kierkegaard identifies Schelling and others as doing); rather, the mythical remains embedded in the immanent dialectic of the individual's development. Where Adorno fails to realise the potential is when he states that this mythical content is only expelled by the obliteration of subjectivity itself. This is true only in the sense that it happens, but the implications for a positive expulsion are not present. The mythical transforms through subjectivity from the idea to the actual ideal and in so doing obliterates the ideal subjectivity to produce the actual subjectivity (or, at least, an awareness of it). Positive potential for the object whose content is mythical, must be understood first as a communication between individuals. By its very nature as myth, such communication is necessarily understood as applicable idea with the potential of leading towards knowledge of the actual ideal. It is, however, precisely because it is recognised as *myth* that a vital distinction can be made. The nature of myth is dependent on its communication as embodying the idea as ideal or revelation. What is distinct about this, though, is that myth remains a communication between individuals, and is therefore not revelation *per se*. Therefore, such a communication as myth is an inadequate communication in relation to the ideal since it is not an embodiment of the actual ideal, remaining outside of existence and is only communicated within existence as idea. Myth, if it can be understood as communication of truth (which is the nature of myth

³⁵⁹Ibid., p. 57

within an immediate context), as an authentic communication of the actual ideal), is also necessarily distinct from the actual ideal since it remains wholly within existence. As such, myth can be understood as an authentic art object.

Adorno states that only the mythical as a developed and then expired element of the subjective can clarify the relation of the absolute inwardness and objectless nature of the subjectivity for a bleak ontology.

Through conjuration a mythically self-enclosed subjectivity undertakes for rescue "fundamental human relations" and their mean, [while] ontology... And conjuration is no more limited to the "aesthetic sphere" than to the practicing metaphor. Inwardness itself conjures.³⁶⁰

This conjuring Adorno describes as a second interiority, a constructed subjectivity. It is not inwardness itself, but a metaphor for inwardness. Adorno states that the mythical enters into the dialectic of the developing individual as part of its existence and as a perception of a second and deeper dialectic of the self and its ontological grounding which, however, is not developed by the philosophy but is present in the philosophy. Adorno, however, cuts off any positive value for this, identifying in Kierkegaard the progression to despair as denying the mythical's power of redemption, particularly as melancholy. The movement is confined to the reflections of the subjectivity on its own nature as subjective, and the nature as historical character is interpreted as intertwining without the possibility of productivity. But this is, from the result of such a process, a failure- for both Adorno as well as Kierkegaard.

Adorno recognises the failure of the process itself, but fails to see the positive in such a failure or to apply the failure within the context of his own ideas or that of Kierkegaard's. He writes of this process:

³⁶⁰Ibid., p. 57

The figure that separates truth from inwardness, to which truth appears as mere semblance, defines the shape of truth itself... With the historical break between inner and outer, with the collapse of "totality" [into pure inwardly-directed subjectivity], the mythical essence of aesthetic image expresses itself at the same time as discontinuity. The aesthetic region is ambiguous and no more knows the sharp distinction of the individual than the nexus of the whole.³⁶¹

This discontinuity is portrayed as negative in value, when in fact it is positive in that the actual always remains discontinuous to the individual. Myth remains idea, and retains its distinction as communication within existence. For Adorno, the aesthetic becomes a means of declaring the discontinuity, and therefore enacting a despair about the relationship of existence to the actual which feeds into the bourgeoisie mentality of Kierkegaard.

Thus objective images and the subjective modes of behaviour, whose mythical illusoriness is exposed by the plan of his own philosophy, are, for Kierkegaard, aesthetic. In his own philosophy, however, this insight into the mythical origin does not apply to the form of objective inwardness itself. Thus, although the spell of the "aesthetic" in Kierkegaard indeed covers the loving of the immediate, external world, which is jettisoned from inwardness as contingent, and although this spell causes as well the ruins of a transsubjective "meaning" ... it does not extend to the movements of the illusory internality that are unhesitatingly appealed to... as movements toward positive religiosity.³⁶²

Yet, Adorno seems to have missed a vital dialectical point. Myth cannot be extended as impact into the subjectivity of the individual. Yes, the ruins of the illusory or of the images of the objective may be founded on the movement towards the subjective, but these ruins should be recognised as positive in value for the individuality as such, rather than mourned for their loss. For Adorno, this process means that these objects come closest to the denied conditions of objectless

³⁶¹Ibid., p. 65

³⁶²Ibid., p. 66

inwardness in communication with the objects, reflecting an estrangement from reality that is inherent in the philosophy. Furthermore, for Adorno, Kierkegaard's philosophy takes objectless inwardness and pure subjectivity as substantial reality and, in doing so, reverts to that conception of the perceived truth of existence as merely semblance. In this, he is correct, but the perceived truth of existence remains in the positive rather than wholly negative in value for the individual. The result of this is that the truth of existence moves from an ideal truth to an actual truth as appropriatable idea, unable to be fully appropriated into existence as actual, even though it can be known, but which can be applied within existence. For Adorno, Kierkegaard's position regarding this movement and towards the weakness of semblance is merely a capitulation:

Semblance, which illuminates thought from the remoteness of the images like the star of reconciliation, burns in the abyss of inwardness as an all-consuming fire. It is to be sought out and named in this abyss, if the hope that it radiates is not to be forfeited by knowledge.³⁶³

Kierkegaard himself would probably have not agreed with this, holding out in melancholy and despair. In that respect, Adorno is correct to make this statement. But both are wrong; both do not recognise that in the discontinuity and perceived weakness there is a certain hope, one denied by Adorno's statements as well as Kierkegaard's. And it is precisely this discontinuity, the dialectical nature of the art object as both positive and negative, that is its strength. Emmanuel and Adorno come closest to developing out of Kierkegaard a positive potential for the art object. They both appear to be on the verge of recognising the paradoxical, self-negating nature of the art object. Truth emerges through the immanent transcendence of the subjectivity within existence, through an appropriation of the infinite

³⁶³Ibid., p. 67

contradiction as the absolute paradox embodied in a material, finite form. Paradox is primary, and Adorno in particular recognises that this is inherent in Kierkegaard's conception of truth, which he characterises as transparent in nature (i.e. truth is transparent). Paradox infuses all: " Truth appears paradoxical in the subjective- and not only subjective- dialectic that is extinguished in it; truth becomes ambiguous as the quintessence of dialectical movement without being its measure." ³⁶⁴ None of the secondary literature, however, understands the full implications of this statement. Neither does Kierkegaard. It is to his understanding of the art object and his specific failure that I now turn.

³⁶⁴Ibid., p. 73

Chapter Seven- The Art Object

To a great extent, Kierkegaard's understanding of the artist serves to define the nature of the art object, precisely because the artist is an individual communicating to another individual within existence about the idea of the actual ideal; the artist's concerns, and, therefore, its production, are determined with the same desires for results for itself as for the receiving individual. Intentionality is key because any communication must be related both to the existence of the receiving individual as well as the producing individual. In order for the art object to be authentic, it must be related directly to the development of the relationship to the actual, a development which occurs within the existence of the individual. Where the difficulties arise is with the material object itself. The singular and material nature of the art object as the product of an individual is necessarily communication but, by not being present, the communication of the individual is contained wholly within an object which remains outside of the individuals involved. A confusion results in both the mind of Kierkegaard and the secondary literature, since the message of the authentically developing individual is wholly concerned with the individuals by containing the communication in material form and, hence, separate from the existence of the individuals involved. This produces a discrepancy between the object as such (aesthetics in the traditional, Baumgartenian sense) and the object as communication of an embodied idea as ideal. First, the art object is a communication of the idea as actual ideal. As a communication of the idea, it is transcendent in nature, since the idea is communicated in order to be able to be appropriated by a receiving individual within immanence and therefore become an actual ideal through the application of the received idea towards transcendence. However, the art object is in material form. Because of this, the material form- which is

necessarily immanent- is in a contradictory relationship to the ideal. The material form, by removing the individual communicating from the communication, makes the value of the communication for the receiving individual lessened. Within these discrepancies and contradictions lies the true value of the art object in a Kierkegaardian sense- its dialectical nature and, ultimately, its valuelessness. The art object is dialectically both immanent, in the fact that it is in material form as communication of idea, while being simultaneously transcendent as communication of the ideal. The Kierkegaardian notion of the dialectic serves to advance the very definition of the art object, since it now can function both within existence as well as within an indication of the actual. Art is a communication of the ideal, but only in so far that at one point in the development of the receiving individual it communicates its inability to communicate the ideal. It is with this point that the art object becomes a radical aspect of Kierkegaard's philosophy, and acquires a radicality of its own as an unique form of communication.³⁶⁵ It might even be understood, within a postmodern context, to be an answer to the declaration of the 'end of art'. Ultimately, it be said that art's value is its valuelessness, a notion discussed in the conclusion.

The grounds of art, its basis, its medium or its form, have been defined. This involves the exposition and explication of a number of concepts: dialectics; objectivity and subjectivity; repetition, reduplication, and reflection; direct and indirect communication; the artist as producer; and the notion of idea and actual ideal.³⁶⁶ These concepts are the grounds of art as

³⁶⁵Though one based, as always, on certain radical contingencies.

³⁶⁶Again, the idea is the pure thought which is appropriatable by the receiving individuals through a material communication which is, through repetition, applied to their existence. Through this application, the idea acts as a catalyst to allow a self-transformation towards a greater awareness and understanding of the receiving individual's actual ontological grounding. Knowledge of the actual ideal, which is the applicative idea outside of existence, can never be fully known nor applied, but is always the goal of individuals within existence.

communication, being both necessary elements of the existing individual as well as necessary aspects of communication. They are that on which communication is based, the structure of the art object as communication. The form of the art object is those basic elements which are descriptive of individual existence in general.

The second part of the dialectical nature of communication is the actual communication itself, the message from one individual to another, in material form. This is more difficult than the grounds, since Kierkegaard never describes what these actual communications would be if they were in an art form. However, I have taken my cue from those communications which Kierkegaard both describes as between individuals as well as being necessary for the authentic development of those individuals who are communicating and communicated to. They are not the traditional means of describing art,³⁶⁷ but is a type of communications which Kierkegaard would describe as necessary for the individual developing as well as being communication for those who would develop others, where Kierkegaard capable or interested in this subject.

What makes my own research an advance on Kierkegaard is, firstly, the sheer fact that I have dealt with the art object *per se*. Second, I've taken into account Kierkegaard's own understanding of the dialectic and applied it to the object. Both parts of the dialectic of art as communication are necessary for art itself, operating wholly within the framework of Kierkegaard's philosophy. By being described as aspects of art as communication, this advances beyond any other sources and comments on Kierkegaard's aesthetics; these aspects allow and establish the dialectical nature of the art object to act as part of nature of art's identity and purpose as communication. But the development of such a dialectic, while in itself being an advance as well as the means of

³⁶⁷So often associated with beauty, a concept which Kierkegaard would relegate to the esthetic stage and art created solely for that level of development and one to which he almost never refers.

grounding art, it not sufficient to describe art. This dialectic is only the necessary conditions for art as communication. The imagination³⁶⁸ serves as a binding force between the two, but is not sufficient. The art object is a necessarily synthetic object, but this synthesis does not reveal the whole of the ideal being communicated. Though the above is the grounds of establishing art as communication, it produces only the option of art, rather than its nature. This dialectic establishes the relationship between communicating individual, communicated individual, and the ideal truth of the communication and determines the point of development and potential which is contained therein.

The necessity of art is contained within this dialectic. Art must be a form of communication which is dialectical in nature, being both indirect and direct. The communication of the art object is direct to the senses as well as being a type of communication established between two individualities, but the artist must also step back from his production; it must always be indirect and removed from his individuality³⁶⁹ so that the communication can be appropriated by the individual receiving such communication on their own terms. But there are differences beyond mere communication. Art has a basis in the dialectical grounding of communication without the inclusion of individualities, established when the specific qualities of the art object are elaborated upon. The fact that an art object can be both a finite object as well as a representation of the infinite indicates such a dialectical nature. The materiality of the object establishes a return to the individualities receiving the communication.

Certain important points remain outside the scope of this thesis. For instance, the difference between an inauthentic and an authentic artist, and the value of their production. There can be such a thing as an

³⁶⁸A concept very much outside the scope of this thesis, though very important. I would defer to the work done by Gouwens and Ferreira on this subject.

³⁶⁹Though, of course, the problem of reciprocity always is present.

inauthentic artist- one who satisfies the requirements of the esthetic individual- but, for Kierkegaard, there is little value in such production. What is of value in such a description of art is a description of the authentic artist- one who is concerned for other individuals' as well as for his own development towards authenticity; what is being discussed is 'great' art by 'great' artists. The authentic artist is one who is in a reciprocal relationship with his audience, serving through his communication both the needs of the development of the receiving individual as well as his own needs as an developing individual who is concerned with his relation to the actual. The question remains, however, can inauthentic art have value? An answer can be found if one notes that inauthentic art is already indicated as that which directly communicates facts and/or appeals to esthetic requirements. Inauthentic art is not an expression of the actual ideal³⁷⁰ but a clever manipulation of material and message and a belief in man's infinite capacities to produce. Inauthentic art may be an expression of the idea of the ideal, but this idea is not one which can be appropriated by individuals for their own development towards authenticity; though inauthentic communication itself may be an indication of the ideal, it can never be an expression of the actual.

A second problem is to describe art as communication as a singular object which is normally material in nature, which continues to communicate long after the communication has been finished and the artist is no longer present to the communicated; what of art history, for instance? Though the artist must remove himself from the actual indirect communication which takes place, he still remains as an individuality for the receiving

³⁷⁰The actual ideal is opposed to the existential ideal. The existential ideal is that which can be realised within existence, the concept to which the Romantics refer to when speaking about the ideal. The actual ideal is the authentic ideal, being the ontological grounding of the individual. The difference between the existential and the actual is that the existential is the perceptions and assumptions of the individual about their own existence and their interaction within externality (the world about them) while the actual is the truth of existence (that the Christian God grounds everything). Kierkegaard's philosophy is always about accepting the actual truth of existence.

individual. What distinguishes the art object from authentic communication is that it may be present and continue to communicate long after the communicating individual is not present. In effect, does art have a history, and can art objects continue to have an effect outside of their immediate, historical context? This too lends credence to the necessity of the art object.³⁷¹

Third, though an art object is removed from the individual creating it, in the process of creation it always maintains the reciprocity between communicator and communicated involved in the process of communicating and appropriation. The art object sustains its value throughout the individual's development. Thus, it may be created for the development of the esthetic individual, but it also continues to have value for the religious. This aspect of the nature of the art object is created through its dialectical nature and the means of its grounding. It is a product of a developing individual for the communication with other individuals and the development of a reciprocal relationship. In essence, how does the productive individual *specifically* interact with its production?

Fourth, what about style? Does Kierkegaard relegate changes in style to the esthetic stage? And the development of art forms, the history of art? Kierkegaard's own remarks about history are vague, but they seem to indicate that he regards any interest in another age by an individual as superfluous as well as dangerous, since the individual is to be concerned with his own existence. What about different forms of art? Kierkegaard's references are to poetry or theatre throughout most of his writing. This coincides with the general belief of the time that poetry and music were the 'highest' art forms as well as Kierkegaard's own predilections. This is a limitation which can be overcome by taking such prejudices into account, and also by

³⁷¹For further discussion of this, see the second appendix of this thesis. However, this involves a detailed description of Kierkegaard's understanding of the concept of history, something I wish to explore in further research.

noting that Kierkegaard would perhaps distance himself from a material object because it would be able to be related to the esthetic requirements so easily.

These objections to my interpretation of art within the framework of Kierkegaard are minor points. What they do not do is suggest the difficulty involved from the very nature of the art object itself. Though it is possible to describe the art object within the context of the developing individual, this description runs against that which makes direct communication inauthentic. As the individual develops and incorporates the message of the communicating of the ideal, this message becomes more direct the more the individual develops. The closer to the ideal that the individual is, the more clear and direct the message is. This development is paralleled in the development of Kierkegaard's own writing, when he changes from writing indirectly to writing direct attacks on the establishment, which is a change in Kierkegaard's own style (and he had many, throughout his own production).

The art object is elusive within a Kierkegaardian context, but is a possibility. Despite my earlier criticism of Stephen Crites, I agree with him completely on one point. He writes:

Kierkegaard never elaborated his aesthetics in a single major opus. Instead he wrote a number of separate essays, each more or less self-contained. His method in each of these essays was to take up one particular aesthetic idea, and attempt to express its essential character in relation to its appropriate artistic medium or in relation to a particular work of art or artist in which it is successfully embodied.³⁷²

This statement attests to the ambiguous and difficult position that the art object occupies within Kierkegaard's writing. The appearance of the art object, within Kierkegaard's writing, has remained to a limited extent a confused issue. Each of the approaches described in the previous chapter fail to actually meet the

³⁷²Crites, introduction to *Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, p. 30

possibility of including the art object in its broadest sense. This is not to say that they do not attempt to provide an inclusive niche within the framework of such description for the art object *per se*, but that each individual author's approach leaves the art object as an inadequate element within the framework of actuality. Even when such an indication does hint at positive possibilities- as in the case most notably of Pattison's writing on Kierkegaard- nevertheless the art object is not described within a context of its fullest potential as a communication of the actual ideal. Always the art object is shown to be inadequate to the actual and to remain wholly within existence as idea rather than indicating the ideal. The art object is emphasised as a material object is determined to be merely esthetic rather than authentically aesthetic, and, therefore, functions within a very narrow framework of possibility in terms of the development of the existing individual towards knowledge of its actual ontological grounding.

Why does this occur? It might be obvious to blame the authors themselves. In part, this could be because of their inadequate appreciation of the complexities of a dialectical understanding of the art object.³⁷³ Perhaps, more specifically, it can be said that, because most of the secondary authors wish to remain truthfully attached to the position which Kierkegaard established in his writings, they are incapable of advancing beyond such. A certain prejudice has set in amongst commentators on Kierkegaard, one which is very difficult to overcome, because it is so thoroughly based on Kierkegaard's own prejudices. As some have noted, it appears almost impossible to reconcile a position which recognises the positive potential of communication as embodied within static material form as art object with the progressive, developing and existing description of the individual which emerges in Kierkegaard.³⁷⁴ This is a position which

³⁷³A simplification, but one which can be applied in a valid manner to the majority of the secondary literature.

³⁷⁴This is a personal remark which some have directed against my own research. In no way would I be suggesting a lack of respect for such

can be traced throughout the secondary literature. If one only takes the Hongs' comments in the *Journals and Papers* section devoted to art, one can clearly see the almost confused state which is present. The Hongs write:

Art in the narrower sense is symbolized for Kierkegaard by poetry, and in his comprehensive view of the various spheres of existence art is in the lowest sphere. In line with his stronger emphasis later upon the significance of action for existence, he turns against the artist who wants to paint Christ (*Training in Christianity...*) instead of obeying him. Art as a poet's creating and forming activity is of great concern to Kierkegaard. He lays considerable weight on the artistic treatment of material and particularly on the way it is to be communicated. He develops his original theory of the art of communication. He is also attentive to the ethical and religious problems related to the poet's life. Throughout his entire authorship, Kierkegaard wrestles with the question of the extent to which poetic activity is justifiable from an ethical and religious point of view.³⁷⁵

Full credit should be given to the Hongs. Of all the statements on Kierkegaard's position concerning aesthetics this is, despite its briefness, one of the most important. It is also, however, confusing. The Hongs show that they, along with the vast majority of commentators on Kierkegaard, have misunderstood and muddled the issue. The art object becomes merely esthetic, yet Kierkegaard himself confuses the issue. Kierkegaardian aesthetics, as I have hoped to have shown in the previous chapters, is a complicated dialectical issue. This is the reason, I feel, that the secondary literature does not engage with the potential for the art object in Kierkegaard. One can only blame Kierkegaard himself!

The art object within Kierkegaard has positive potential, a potential which- despite the dialectical

positions, since I fully understand them (see my comments on Kierkegaard's own inadequacies concerning art later in chapter), but am using this example as a citation of how *strongly* entrenched such a prejudice against art is within the Kierkegaardian community. This entrenched antithetical position in one found in such strong examples as the *International Kierkegaard Commentary: Two Ages*, which shows almost no recognition of the aesthetic potential involved in that title.

³⁷⁵JP, Vol. 1, p. 502

nature of its effect on the developing individual- is one which can be identified in a specific fashion. In the above statement, the Hongs have actually intermingled specific issues without showing any signs of recognising certain relations. First, they equate the aesthetic with the esthetic (one of the most common misconceptions). Secondly, they use the example from *PC* to back this up, when that passage has a very different purpose³⁷⁶. Third, they state that the production of art is important and was of concern to Kierkegaard throughout his life (which can be shown by the amount of writing he devoted to the method of communication), but this is divided into three separate issues: the nature of communication, the ethical nature of the artist's existence, and the ethical nature of the artist's production. All three are distinct issues, and should be treated as such.

This chapter is devoted to describing and critiquing Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object and its place within his description of the relation of the individual's existence to its actuality. It is divided into three sections. In the first, I will analyse Kierkegaard's negative remarks concerning art (in no way related exclusively to his description of the esthetic), and offer the reason for such (and hence the reason for the confusion of the issue). It can be shown that Kierkegaard's apparent apprehension about art resulted from his own inability to fully assimilate it into his writings. In the second section, I will analyse how Kierkegaard felt he *truly* understood the art object, exploring its positive potential. Despite the negative remarks, Kierkegaard's writings contain a number of positive indications about the art object. It emerges that Kierkegaard believed the art object to be an indication of the idea of the actual, but an indication which held dangers to the existing individual because it

³⁷⁶The passage in *PC* is more concerned with obedience to Christ rather than to the production of the art object. Kierkegaard makes an excellent point in that passage, determining the limited value of the art object as being its very means of constructing a valid and applicable communication. I shall discuss this passage specifically.

did not communicate the possibility of appropriation of the ideal. Because of its nature as static, material form the art object interferes with the individual's progression towards the actual.³⁷⁷ This is why the Hongs make the mistake they do. Third, I will show that Kierkegaard failed to perceive the full positive potential of the art object. Any positive remarks which he makes about the aesthetic can still be interpreted as referring to the esthetic. Contained within many statements, however, is a fuller interpretation and potential for the art object as a communication of the knowledge of the existing individual's actual ontological grounding. There is the potential for a description running completely counter to Kierkegaard's own position, inevitable in the light of his writing. Keeping in mind a particular distinction between the idea of the actual and the actual ideal, the art object can be described as a full indication and as the grounds for the possibility of appropriation of actual knowledge. Unlike Kierkegaard's own specific comments, only allowing the art object to communicate the idea of the actual, contained within his writing, as well as his own specific statements on art, the art object can function as communication of the actual ideal- something that Kierkegaard fails to understand and would object to. This point is always kept in mind. The art object has the positive potential to be an authentic communication of the ideal as an indication of the actual ideal, while the actual is the actual. Inauthentic communication can communicate the idea of the ideal, but never the actual ideal. Inauthentic art only indicates the idea, while authentic art indicates the idea of the actual of the ideal within existence. Coupled with the previous chapter on the artist, the art object

³⁷⁷As always, any analysis of the art object within the framework of Kierkegaard's writing involves conjecturing against his own statements at times- though this section will have the appearance of being a summary of his views, in no way would Kierkegaard have admitted to such a codification. More importantly, Kierkegaard would simply have noted that such a rigid description of the art object merely furthers his own position that it is inadequate and belongs in the esthetic. However, the second section of this chapter will show that Kierkegaard failed to recognise the art object's positive potential even within the framework of his negative remarks.

emerges as a positive element in the dialectic of the individual's progression towards knowledge of the actual.

Before moving on, an understanding is necessary of those who might have influenced Kierkegaard, as well as the secondary literature which deals specifically with the subject of art. This has already been touched upon in the section of the chapter on the artist dealing with the imagination, but some reiteration is necessary. The influences on Kierkegaard's are not great, even though he considered himself more than sufficiently knowledgeable of others. This is because he was more interested in the grounding and development of the individual towards authenticity.³⁷⁸ Socrates, Aristotle, Hamann, Kant, Schelling, and the various Romantic writers show up as minor figures of importance. At times, these points of interest are of little consequence, and interpretation of such is speculation. For example, one of the influences regarding art appear in 1845. At the time of writing *Stages on Life's Way*, Kierkegaard was working on *Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, each part coinciding with the three parts of *Stages*. At the same time, he was writing on the possibility of a Christian communication:

A new science must be introduced: the Christian art of speaking³⁷⁹, to be constructed *ad modum* [in the manner of] Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Dogmatics as a whole is a misunderstanding especially as it now has been developed.

VI A 18, n.d., 1845: *Addition to Pap.*
VI A 17: Reference could be made here also to Carneades' doctrine of probability...³⁸⁰

Another example might be the following:

Aristotle places the art of speaking and the media for awakening faith (*pistis*) in relation to probability so that it is concerned (in contrast to knowledge) with what can happen in a different way. Christian eloquence will be distinguished from the Greek in that it is concerned only with improbability, with showing

³⁷⁸A convenient phrase used to describe the teleological goal of the development of the individual as comprehending and appropriating its ontological grounding in existence.

³⁷⁹Hongs refer to *JP* (I 630, 631; II 1116, 1467; III 3192, 3467-71; V 5786), *Three Discourses On Imagined Occasions*, p. 167

³⁸⁰*JP*, I, p. 627; VI A 17, n.d., 1845

that it is improbable, in order that one can then believe it. Here probability is to be rejected just as much as improbability in the other, but both have in common the distinction from knowledge.³⁸¹

Kierkegaard, for the most part, merely confuses the issues. Kant is particularly interesting, since his conception of art characterises it as purposive and moral in nature as well as an expression of the ideal. Kierkegaard would agree with this, but would also counter that this leaves art limited by rationality, and therefore inappropriable for the individual. Furthermore, as pointed out by Green, establishing a link between Kant and Kierkegaard is tenuous at best.

Two figures are of particular importance, but only in that they too do not seem to fit within the Kierkegaardian description of existence, and, therefore, are rejected by him. Certain statements by Schelling in his philosophy of art have a distinct correspondence to the possibilities of constructing a philosophy of art within the framework of Kierkegaard's writing. This is to be expected, considering Kierkegaard's early enthusiasm for Schelling as a student, but it also bears out upon consideration of Schelling's own writing. For example:

§23. *The immediate cause of all art is God, for God is by means of his absolute identity the source of all mutual informing (into indifference) of the real and the ideal upon which all arts rests; or, God is the source of the ideas. The ideas originate only in God. Art, however, is the representation of the archetypes, hence God himself is the immediate cause and the final possibility of all art; he himself is the source of all beauty.*³⁸²

Kierkegaard would have to be in agreement with this, to the extent that the representation of the ideal has its authority in the actuality of God. This is also particularly true in Schelling's description of the development and distinctions between the various forms of art objects. Could it be said that Kierkegaard himself was following Schelling's own schema in placing the epic

³⁸¹JP, I, p. 628; VI A 19, n.d., 1845

³⁸²Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*, p. 128

and the dramatic arts at the top of this lists in *E/O I* and elsewhere? Most importantly does the discussions of music which is considered separately from opera (in fact, there are almost no discussions of music qua music that I can remember in the texts) included? Whether this is the case or not, Kierkegaard would also disagree with Schelling on many points. For instance, Schelling also provides some interesting points in his discussion of the specific forms of art objects. He writes:

Art as such... is so far removed from deception that in its highest works it must rather *destroy* that particular appearance of reality... [in that it might be a means of perfectly depicting reality] Anyone who views the idealistic constructions of Greek artists must be smitten immediately by the impression of their nonreality. He must recognize that here something is portrayed that is elevated above all reality even though it is *made real* in this sublimity precisely through art. Anyone who needs deception in order to enjoy art, who has to forget that he actually has a work of art before him, is without a shadow of a doubt totally incapable of any artistic enjoyment whatever.³⁸³

It is interesting that Schelling is speaking about enjoyment, but this enjoyment is not simply for the purpose of pleasure but can also be understood as part of the development of the individual since art is the expression of the ideal. This enjoyment would allow Kierkegaard to relegate him to the esthetic.

As indicated from some of the secondary literature, Kierkegaard might also be labelled as subscribing to a Hegelian view (despite his anti-Hegelian stance) on art. Stephen Crites, as already discussed, in his introduction to *A Crisis and The Crisis in the Life of an Actress* and George Connell's *To Be One Thing: Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought* both describe Kierkegaard as being Hegelian when it comes to art. Even Thulstrup cites some parallel between Kierkegaard's and Hegel's thought regarding aesthetics in his book *Kierkegaard's Relation*

³⁸³Ibid., p. 129

to Hegel.³⁸⁴ Others, however, in general keeping with the majority of the secondary literature, criticise any connection between Kierkegaard and Hegel. Louis Mackey, George Pattison, and Sylvia Walsh's are all good examples and have a point, but the link is still there. For instance, Kierkegaard describes the moment as a 'blink' of time and provides the following commentary:

It is remarkable that Greek art culminates in the plastic, which precisely lacks the glance. This, however, has its deep source in the fact that the Greeks did not in the profoundest sense grasp the concept of spirit and therefore did not in the deepest sense comprehend sensuousness and temporality. What a striking contrast to Christianity, in which God is pictorially represented as an eye.³⁸⁵

This passage is one of Kierkegaard's few remarks on the visual arts, and one of those types that are scarcest-remarks that contain some interchange with aesthetics. Quite clearly it is derived from Kierkegaard's reading of Hegelian aesthetics Kierkegaard may have had in mind this remark when he stated the above: "In the plastic figures of classical art the subjective inner element is so related to the external one that this external is the very own shape of the inner itself and is not released therefrom into independence."³⁸⁶ The fact that Kierkegaard read Hegel's *Aesthetics* is undeniable but, as Thulstrup points out:

It is characteristic... of [Kierkegaard's] use of [Hegel's] *Philosophy of Fine Art* that it is only a series of items and opinions on particular phenomenon that Kierkegaard has taken notice of, and his treatment lacks the needed perspective.³⁸⁷

The link is there, in that they are both idealistic when it comes to art, but what distinguishes Kierkegaard's position so clearly from Hegel's is that, for Hegel, the art object is a specific manifestation of an historical moment, of a particular stage in the development of the

³⁸⁴Thulstrup, pp. 224-229

³⁸⁵CA, p. 87

³⁸⁶Hegel, *Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, p. 594

³⁸⁷Thulstrup, *Kierkegaard's Relation to Hegel*, p. 228

Absolute. This requires a lack of personal engagement with the art object, regarding it as only a manifestation rather than an appropriatable communication of the idea or the ideal. This lack of appropriation, of engagement with the communication embodied in the object on a purely subjective, personal level is something Kierkegaard necessarily rejects. To this, I can now turn to describe Kierkegaard's negative position on art.

1. Kierkegaard's Negativity

Kierkegaard's negative assessment of the art object, in terms of the development of the individual, is found throughout his writings, both in his earliest published work as well as in his later, more Christian texts. It applies both to his own production as an author as well as art in general, as noted in the following journal entries:

*Will not light opera as developed here destroy itself in a way, simply because the musical element has been made so important and the point is constantly one of finding the connection between the musical number and the opera from which it is taken; but its stock will so be exhausted, at least as far as it is adaptable to light opera (as commonly known-popular), and therefore the new light opera will finally reach the point of using the same musical number in another production (which has already happened, if I am not mistaken, in *Neil!*) - and so on, until it destroys itself. Is this not a proof of the transitory significance of light opera- significance as a stage of development.³⁸⁸*

and

Should I now blink, shrewdly take it all back because of apprehensions about making ends meet and become a poet- that is, religiously understood, a deceiver.³⁸⁹

The communication of the actual ideal remains wholly an impossibility in Kierkegaard's mind except through the depiction of possibility in indirect communication, which itself is shown at times to be inadequate. For

³⁸⁸JP, vol. 2, pp. 230-231, <<1627; I A 242, September 14, 1836

³⁸⁹JP, vol. 6, p. 151, <<6394; X¹ A 309, n.d. [May 5], 1849

Kierkegaard, any type of communication which attempts to communicate in embodied form the ideal- the appropriated idea- fails. It is thus necessary to trace the negative statements which are found throughout, concentrating on the more important ones. This can be divided into two types of statements about the art object: art as deception, and art as removed from the existence of the individuals involved.

Art as deception has its roots in classical philosophy and the origin of it within Kierkegaard, given his academic training and specific interest in Greek philosophy, can be traced to the discomfort with the visual arts found in Plato. In Kierkegaard's case, art as deception reflects the apparent conflict between representation and an understanding of the represented. At times, Kierkegaard sounds like he would quite willingly subscribe to the statement that a painting of a human being is not a human being because it is merely coloured material on a surface. This ambivalence goes deeper, however, as shown in the following journal entries. In an early passage, Kierkegaard ridicules the requirements of depiction which are imposed on the artist. He writes:

It occurs to me that artists go forward by going backward, something which I have nothing against intrinsically when it is reproduced retreat- as in the case with the better artists. But it does not seem right that they stop with the historical themes already given and, so to speak, think that only these are suitable for poetic treatment, because these particular themes, which are no more poetic than others, are now again animated and inspired by a great poetic nature. In this case the artists advance by marching on the spot. -Why are modern heroes and the like not just as poetic? Is it because there is so much emphasis on clothing the content in order that the formal aspect can be all the more furnished?³⁹⁰

³⁹⁰JP, vol. 1, p. 51, <<119; I A 86, September 29, 1835. Why do artists (of Kierkegaard's age anyway) not express or produce from the contemporary and instead look to the past? The notion of a reproduced retreat is vital and interesting, since it indicates not only the inadequacy of the art object's communicative powers but also the form of indirect communication which is

Kierkegaard is both pointing out the dangers involved in an academy system,³⁹¹ as well as indicating truthfully one error. Academic painting and sculpture at this time would often depict contemporaries in classical garb, as if to grant some specific historical weight to those figures. This, in itself, is a deception. This type of deception is more broad-ranging, though. In two other journal entries, he writes:

Is there not a necessary relation with respect to what results from what a man says and teaches so that he inevitably embraces the consequences, and thus if the consequences are not there, one is justified in concluding: Well, then he has not truly proclaimed this? ...But when Christian self-denial is proclaimed in such a way that the one who proclaims it makes a hit, then he is not actually proclaiming it; perhaps he declaims at a poetic distance from actuality, but he does not express it existentially, and therefore the consequences are omitted.³⁹²

and

A true Christian may involve himself in secular affairs essentially only in order to deceive—that is, to create a situation for introducing Christianity. If, for example, a true Christian has a striking talent by means of which he can make a big hit, he may do it for a few years, will all the honor, esteem, and fame possible—in order to throw it all away suddenly, now after having made sure of getting a hearing which can constitute a situation in which Christianity can make an impression.³⁹³

The very act by which the individual gains respect is an act of deception. The object produced becomes a means for the individual to act within society, not in order to act as a catalyst for appropriation of knowledge of the actual. Christianity may be the subject, but the end result is not to generate a movement in the direction of the Christian, but towards an impression of the producer. The requirements of the author, artist, poet are to interact with the secular world and yet, still, through

necessary for authentic art. This passage also indicates that the product of authentic art should be targeted at the developing, existing individual.

³⁹¹And statements like this make me believe that he understood nothing of the great flowering of art in Denmark at the time! Between the years 1810-1848, there existed what is called the "Golden Age of Danish Painting" .

³⁹²JP, vol. 3, p. 738, <<3748; X² A 604, n.d., 1850

³⁹³JP, vol. 4, p. 123, <<4054; X⁴ A 397, n.d., 1851

indirect communication, be able to authentically communicate the actual truth of existence. This is such that even the criticism which Kierkegaard directs against the artist can be applied specifically against the artist's production:

Even though a poet suffers actual persecution from his contemporaries, he reproduces and transforms even his actual suffering into a work of art and gives his contemporaries occasion- for new enjoyment... In a certain sense the poet is more resigned; he does not actually demand justice; he abandons his case with actual people and transposes the whole scene into the medium of imagination. But the poet lacks courage. His imagination terrifies him; so he does not dare attack the actuality directly; he distills something poetic out of it and holds himself back.³⁹⁴

The suffering, which Kierkegaard identifies as being a vital quality for the production of an authentic, truly Christian (i.e. appropriatable ideal of the actual) here becomes a means whereby the audience enters into a position of admiration. The deception is that the object, which should be purposive in its own right on behalf of the receiving individual and is presented as such, becomes a means of producing a relationship between the producing and receiving individual.

The second type of negative attitude evident in Kierkegaard towards the art object is one more important to an holistic approach. It involves seeing the art object as a communication of the idea which is removed from the existence of the individualities involved. The object is a presentation of an idea, one which could be considered to be appropriatable but, because of Kierkegaard's own inclinations, he does not believe it to be so. The idea is communicated, but in such a manner that the method of communication keeps the idea from becoming an ideal. This is an attitude which Kierkegaard again takes from his academic training, noting:

What Socrates really meant by wanting to have "the poets" expelled from the state was that

³⁹⁴JP, vol. 1, p. 374, <<819; X² A 137, n.d., 1849

by writing in the medium of imagination instead of precipitating men into ethical realization in actuality, the poets spoiled them and weaned them or kept them from it.³⁹⁵

Furthermore, one can cite the Platonic strictures against the art object, seeing it as removed not only one step from the idea, but even further as an imitation of an imitation. Kierkegaard's predilections for this position are clear throughout, and this is a position which Kierkegaard adheres to. The art object is an antithetical position in relation to existence, being merely a pale imitation of it and, by being so opposed to existence, is therefore in opposition to the appropriation of the idea as ideal, the actual into existence.

For the most part, Kierkegaard's position seems to be coloured with a sense of respect for the aesthetic. This is apparent in two of the most important passages on art. Kierkegaard writes in two journal entries:

One suffers only once- but is victorious eternally. Insofar as one is victorious, this is also only once. The difference, however, is that suffering's once is momentary (even though the moment was seventy years)- but the victory's once is eternity. Suffering's once (even though it last seventy years) can therefore not be pictured or portrayed in art. On the altar in Vor Frelsers Kirke there is a work which presents an angel who holds out to Christ the cup of suffering. The error is that it lasts too long; a picture always endures for an eternity. It appears interminable; one does not see that the suffering is momentary, as all suffering is according to the concept or in the idea of victory. The victory, however, is eternal; this (insofar as it is not spiritual) can be portrayed, because it endures.³⁹⁶

and

All art is essentially involved in a dialectical self-contradiction. The truly eternal cannot be painted or drawn or carved in stone, for it is spirit. But neither can the temporal essentially be painted or drawn or carved in stone, for when it is presented in these ways, it is presented eternally; every picture expresses a fixation of that particular moment. If I paint a man who is lifting a spoon to his mouth or blowing his nose, it is

³⁹⁵JP, vol. 4, pp. 212-213, <<4275; X² A 229, n.d. 1849

³⁹⁶JP, vol. 4, pp. 372-373, <<4594; VIII¹ A 32, n.d., 1847

immediately eternalised- the man continues to blow his nose this one time as long as the painting endures.³⁹⁷

What is interesting about these two passages is that they show a difference in Kierkegaard's opposition to art. In the first, the art object seems to be presenting a communication of an idea outside of the temporal aspect of existence. The subject matter then can be depicted in authentic art, authentic art cannot contain as its communication the secular or the momentary but only an intimation of the eternal truth of existence. In doing so, Kierkegaard notes that the art object projects the idea into the eternal. The individual, however, remains within existence, which is always both temporal as well as finite. Therefore, the art object is at direct odds with the existence of the receiving individual. In the second, the moment, which is part of the existence of the individual as one of a series of moments, becomes eternalised; the movement from the ideal to the depiction of the actual ideal is one fraught with dangers. Kierkegaard's concern is focused on the idea as a *presented* idea, however, which is separate from the existence of both the producer and the receiver. In that, he is remaining close to his concern for the esthetic, but the aesthetic is alluding him. What is fascinating about his negative position is how contradictory both these passages (which are indicative of his position until 1847) are. The first is the atemporalising of an idea, the second is the hypertemporalising of the moment. Until 1847, Kierkegaard's position seems to be confused. From 1847 until 1850, there is hostility, but it is subtle. From 1850, the attacks (like the attacks against the church) become very direct. However, Kierkegaard's negativity floats amongst these years.

Moving beyond these approaches to art, the strongest and most important example of Kierkegaard's negative assessment of the art object within the context of Christianity is found in *Judge for Yourself! Speaking*

³⁹⁷JP, vol. 1, p. 61, <<161; VIII¹ A 88, n.d., 1847

about the need to 'become sober' and, specifically, about the need to understand one's relationship to one's understanding or knowledge in order to transform that understanding into action, Kierkegaard is critical about the possibility of the art object to be a tool for understanding or knowledge. For Kierkegaard, knowledge without action is a falsity, a misunderstanding which places importance within the existence of the individual on that which is unimportant within the individual's existing relationship to actuality. Only action changes one's life and one's understanding of one's relationship to one's ontological grounding. Knowledge is applicable within actuality only when it is turned inward, and understanding within the context of Christianity must immediately become action. Kierkegaard uses two examples. In the first, he writes:

When we have understood something, it takes ages before there is action or before reproduction is an action. In the right relation, however, action follows immediately, and then, just because of this, the reproduction is your understanding, accurate, complete, and unabridged. If the action does not follow immediately, this reproduction of your understanding in action is garbled. Alas, so it is with our actions! How do they resemble our understanding? As do Chladni figures you produce by a stroke of the violin bow? As does the exact reprint of a picture? No, as blotting paper resembles the handwriting on which it has lain.³⁹⁸

For Kierkegaard, understanding is usually only an inadequate mirror of the necessity of action, of the requirement of moving immediately from understanding to action. And the references to reproduction or the Chladni figures (a metaphor Kierkegaard uses a number of times) stresses this, and stresses the negativity which Kierkegaard feels towards an artistic representation or reproduction of such action. This negative assessment of the visual arts is extended on the next page in Kierkegaard's strongest and most critical statement against the art object.

³⁹⁸JY, p. 120

Writing about the requirements of the individual, Kierkegaard notes that one might feel convinced that one's knowledge is something which could communicate the truth of actuality to other individuals. Within existence, being able to convince thousands of the truth would seem important. The individual, however, cannot convince himself. Kierkegaard's example denies this even further within the context of the art object. He writes:

Let me take one example. There was a time when art tried to portray the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ. It was no doubt a misunderstanding, since he cannot possibly be portrayed in this way, since his glory is the invisible, the inward, and he, the sign of contradiction- what a contradiction to want to *paint* this!- *concealed in a contrary exterior*. Consequently art will in vain try its hand at this. But what if the art of words tried its hand at this? Imagine a person captivated by these impressions, and now he wants to muster the full power of language to portray the Saviour of the world. But, says he, to do that I must have peace and quiet, an environment that can encourage this work. And he must not be disturbed by anything, says he, and furthermore, he must if possible be supported by everything that can serve to maintain him in the right mood. So he chooses the loveliest surroundings in a beautiful area, arranges everything artistically and tastefully, and never has any poet been so lionized as he- but then, of course, it is the most significant task... Christianity believes that this is intoxication, that compared with this intoxication even the least self-denial is being sober. Christianity believes that being sober is that your understanding is your acting... your understanding is continually issued as action, warm and full and complete, issued immediately first-hand, immediately when you have understood something.³⁹⁹

Though Kierkegaard moves from the visual arts to the written in this example, the intended criticism is clear. The depiction of the idea becomes an end in itself, and is removed from the continual existence of the receiving individual. The existence of that individual is changed as a result of the production, but not in a manner which is an appropriation of the idea as ideal. Understanding

³⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 121-122

is not established in relation to the idea and, therefore, to appropriation into ideal; instead, the object becomes a masturbatory activity on the part of the receiver. The idea in aesthetic form becomes merely esthetic, a thought echoed more obliquely in a journal entry:

For that purpose it was a matter of *keeping oneself unchanged in equability*.. This did not mean that the religious should have this opulence but that one writing it should be able to produce it simultaneously, thus making it clear that the religious did not lack it for some fortuitous reason- namely, that the author lacked the necessary youthfulness.⁴⁰⁰

The production of the art object, within the normal sense of existence as an object communicating knowledge, is an impossibility, and one which is an affront to Christianity's or actuality's requirements for action. The object must not become an end in itself, to be enjoyed merely as production, but should be a catalyst for appropriation of the ideal. Kierkegaard is unwilling to concede that potential for the art object, but he certainly is willing to agonise over it.

Two further examples of Kierkegaard's negativity can be found in the published writings. The first in *CUP* and the second in *PC*. Each address the issue of the value of the art object within the context of the individual's development towards knowledge of its ontological grounding in a similar manner to the example of inadequacy for continual existence. It makes sense to examine these, though, despite their seeming redundancy. Like *Judge for Yourself*, they remain outside of the 'esthetic' literature, and, therefore, can be cited more directly as indications of Kierkegaard's understanding. They also determine the apparent uniformity of Kierkegaard's position, one which we shall see shortly is not as unified as Kierkegaard would like it to appear.

In *CUP*, Kierkegaard establishes a distance between the poetic-existence and actuality. The poet may,

⁴⁰⁰JP, vol. 5, p. 323, <<5893; VII¹ A 106, n.d., 1846

according to Kierkegaard, suffer on behalf of the idea or the poet's understanding of the actual, but the production of the poet remains excluded from embodying this suffering. The actuality of the suffering remains a necessity and an essential continuance rather than the depiction of such. He writes:

Although poetic production is in the medium of imagination, a poet-existence may at times provide a *confinium* [border territory] to the religious, although qualitatively different from it. A poet often suffers in existence, but what is reflected upon is the poetic work produced in the process. The existing poet who suffers in existence does not, however, comprehend the suffering in this way. He does not concentrate upon it but in the suffering seeks to escape the suffering and to find alleviation in the poetic production, in the poetic anticipation of a more perfect (a happier) order of things... But the poet and the actor return from the fascination of the poetic work and imagination's wished-for order of things, from the confusion with the poetic character, to the suffering of actuality that they cannot comprehend because they have their existence in the esthetic dialectic between fortune and misfortune. The poet can explain (transfigure) all existence, but he cannot explain himself...⁴⁰¹

Therefore, because the poet cannot explain himself or his existence and, furthermore, his relation to actuality, his production cannot as well. Suffering within existence is an accidental relationship, and only an essential relationship in actuality. Because the poet and therefore the poet's production are unable to understand the relationship of existence to actuality within the context of suffering, therefore they are unable to understand or communicate an understanding of such a relationship. In essence, for Kierkegaard, the art object as a product of an individual is unable to enact its own existing relationship to actuality and, therefore, it cannot produce the communication of an understanding in another individual.

⁴⁰¹CUP, pp. 443-444

In *PC*, Kierkegaard's negative position to the art object becomes more focused and more critical than in *CUP*, since it is established within the boundaries of Kierkegaard's attack against the established church. It is on these passages which much of the attitude towards understanding Kierkegaard's position on art is based. Kierkegaard writes about art within the text in two passages. In the first, Kierkegaard is concerned with the depiction of the ideal. He writes:

We shall now imagine a youth. With his imagination he perceives image of perfection (ideal). It could be handed down by history, thus from a time past; therefore it has been actual, has had the actuality of being. Or it is formed by the imagination itself, so it has no relation to or determination by time and place but has only thought-actuality. To this image (which, since for the youth it exists only in the imagination, that is, in the imagination's infinite distance from actuality, is the image of complete perfection, not the image of struggling and suffering perfection) the youth is now drawn by his imagination, or his imagination draws this image to him... the imagination is related to this image of perfection, and even if it were the image of the perfect one [Christ]... it looks very easy the way the imagination depicts this image; one sees only the perfection, sees even the struggling perfection only as finished. In other words, the imagination is in itself more perfect than suffering in actuality. It is timeless, beyond suffering in actuality... In one sense the imagination's image or the image that the imagination depicts or maintains is still nonactuality...⁴⁰²

The image becomes a product of the imagination which is outside of existence. This leads into a continuation of the above. For Kierkegaard, no matter what effort is invested into the production of the art object, the product of the imagination remains an impossibility. He writes:

...even if he [an artist] succeeded in the depiction of the image of perfection as no poet had ever succeeded, also in getting the sufferings depicted- essentially it still cannot be done... the imagination is related to

⁴⁰²*PC*, p. 187

the depiction of perfection... it is already made to seem easy simply because it is within or in the imagination... this is precisely the imperfection of the image belonging to the imagination- that the imperfection is not depicted.⁴⁰³

For Kierkegaard, the very product of the imagination remains and maintains an impossible relation with the actual (though he does not make mention of existence). Contained within this statement, however, were Kierkegaard to maintain the dialectic regarding art, is the possibility of the impossibility. The very inadequacy of the perfection of an image can produce a recognition of the imperfection, leading to the actual.

The second set of passages found in *PC* regarding art are more specific, and the most famous comments Kierkegaard made on this subject. In the first, the very possibility of depicting the ideal in the product of the imagination becomes an impossibility. In the second, Kierkegaard becomes more direct, focusing on specific Christian expositions. For Kierkegaard, the depiction of Christ is as impossible as the depiction of the ideal (the implications for this are present in the first passage). He writes:

Only the imitator is the true Christian. The admirer really assumes a pagan relation to Christianity, and this is also how admiration, in the middle of Christendom, gave birth to a new paganism- Christian art... it is... incomprehensible to me from whence an artist would gain the calmness, or incomprehensible to me is the calmness with which an artist has sat year in and year out occupied in the work of painting Christ- without having it occur to him whether Christ would wish to be painted, would wish to have his portrait, however idealized it became, depicted by his masterly brush. I do not comprehend how the artist would maintain his calm, that he would not notice Christ's displeasure, would not suddenly throw it all out, brushes and paint, far, far away, just as Judas did with the thirty pieces of silver, because he suddenly understood that Christ had required only imitators... understood that he scarcely desired or desires that anyone after

⁴⁰³Ibid., p. 188

his death should waste his time, perhaps his eternal happiness, in painting him.⁴⁰⁴

These are very strong words, particularly the comparison of the artist to Judas, as if an equivocation can be made between the production of the art object and Judas' betrayal of Christ himself! For Kierkegaard, the depiction of Christ in artistic form is sacrilege, a product of artistic indifference, because it cannot contain the demand or requirement of the viewing individual to imitate rather than admire. As mentioned in the introduction, Kierkegaard writes: "...this is incomprehensible to me; I repeat, it is incomprehensible to me..."⁴⁰⁵ as if he doesn't even begin to understand the very concept! Does this mean that Kierkegaard doesn't understand art? It might appear so.

The very fact that Kierkegaard takes up such a position indicates that he regards the art object, at least at one specific level, almost as an abhorration against existence itself. Understanding the nature of existence as he does- as a continual development made through the choices of a single individuality towards appropriatable knowledge of the idea as ideal- the art object becomes an obstacle in that progress. Appropriation of the idea of the actual ideal in existence is the goal of the individual, but Kierkegaard continually states that the art object becomes almost a means of denying existence itself, allowing the individual not to engage with existence, but merely to contemplate it. He writes:

But Christianity dare not be communicated in the medium of tranquility (less so because one who does this ventures to affirm that now all are Christians). Therefore, Christianly understood, the artistic, the poetic, the speculative, the scientific, the pedagogical are sin- how do I dare give myself the tranquility to sit this way and piddle with it!⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴Ibid., pp. 254-155

⁴⁰⁵Ibid., p. 256

⁴⁰⁶JP, vol. 1, p. 203, <<508; X1 A 558, n.d., 1849

It fixes the object of appropriation with a timeless and, therefore, beyond-existence state. The example of the depiction of Christ goes furthest of all, because, for Kierkegaard, any depiction of the Christian becomes an arresting of the idea of Christ. This is an idea which should be communicated as ideal, within the potentiality of the individual's existence rather than outside of it. It thus becomes an impossibility, a direct contradiction to the viewing individual's existence, as found in the following journal entry:

Therefore what should have helped to lift society or at least awaken a memory that there is something higher, now strengthens the finite and finite striving in its finitude, yes, in such a way that these very representatives of the idea and of Christianity villainously exploit the finite understanding of the common man to oppose anything, if it did appear, which really bears the idea or is borne by the idea and is really related to Christianity...⁴⁰⁷

The idea as the communication of the ideal becomes, in Kierkegaard's words, an 'homogenisation' of the ideal, and therefore an 'homogenisation' of existence and its relationship to the actual. He is even able to extend this further in noting that not only is this process dangerous for the individual, but it is also dangerous for the whole of Christianity. The idea becomes finitude, is captured in material form, and, therefore, enters into a directly contradictory relation to the infinite. For Kierkegaard, this is a contradiction which he declares to be irresolvable. This is proven to him when he considered what was involved in depicting Christ in an art object. He writes:

The point of the essentially Christian is that it is presence [*det Nærværende*]. For this reason no poet and no speaker can portray it, for they use too much imagination. This again is the very reason (this error) that the poet and speaker themselves come to be loved and esteemed. For it is at a distance that Christianity appears lovable in men's eyes. Only a dialectician can portray Christianity, because by continuously taking away all

⁴⁰⁷JP, vol. 4, pp. 340-341, <<4531; XI¹ A 431, n.d., 1854

illusions he drills it, so to speak, into the present. Consequently it will go hard with such a dialectical person, for Christianity which is wholly present is hateful and disturbing.⁴⁰⁸

Such is the requirements of the authentic artist, writer, poet in communicating the actual truth of Christianity. What is important is that a distinction be made between portraying such a truth which, of course, remains an objective and distant issue from the subjective individual, and the indirect communication which, when indirect and thereby authentic, can produce an authentic communication in the form of an art object. The very act of creating a material object as an embodying communication involves, necessarily, the use of imagination. One cannot produce without the use of this faculty because choices must be made in the very process of production. Once this occurs, however, that act of imagination becomes an act which generates the production from the mind of the artist rather than from the ideal itself. The artist is able to imagine the idea, but this imagination is always a personal indication of the ideal, and therefore not related to the ideal itself. For Kierkegaard, all art should be understood as self-contradiction, without redemption. In both the published and the unpublished literature, this is how he would have us understand his position. The art object is a 'base' object, one neither worthy nor capable of Christianity's message.

The Christian language is wholly and entirely qualitatively different from our language at every point, even though we use the same words. Christendom's great feat was to transpose Christian language back into the old wretched gabble- and in this way we all have become Christians.

And now we are waiting for new apostles, for now presumably mankind has finished and thoroughly learned the lesson assigned by the apostles- what insolence!⁴⁰⁹

There are, though, problems. Perhaps Kierkegaard wouldn't be able to recognise those new apostles were he to

⁴⁰⁸JP, vol. 1, p. 353, <<761; IX A 114, n.d., 1848

⁴⁰⁹JP, vol. 3, p. 11, <<2333; XI² A 37, n.d., 1854

encounter one? Or, perhaps, those new apostles can be found amongst authentic artists and art objects? Reading Kierkegaard's positive statements on art, one becomes aware that Kierkegaard himself wasn't so sure about the art object as he would have us believe.

2. Kierkegaard's Reluctance and an Exploration of His Positive Statements about the Art Object

Kierkegaard's negative statements are often tempered with a positive element, as if he wishes to admit a begrudging respect, but is incapable of doing so. This is clear in the following long journal entry which, despite the fact that it is dripping with sarcasm, appears to be a hint of Kierkegaard's uncertainty.

In order to defend the reality of art in relationship to religious spirit the argument runs like this: the spirit penetrates a man in such a way that one sees what sort of a man he is- for example, when Luther said: God help me, Amen," he said this so that people got to see into his inner self, what manner of man he was. This then is something of a concession, although it must be remembered that it must not be taken too literally, for it transformed a man in this way, then also his enemies might immediately see the same thing. Next, it must be remembered that it does not hold true in respect to the object of "faith", precisely because immediate obviousness is denied in order to test faith and in order that faith can be faith- that is, there can very well have been a human transfiguration... but quite properly there is no corresponding direct immediacy as the token of its being God. And thus the object of faith is not available for artistic presentation... What is "faith," then? Well, of course, nowadays "faith" is this thing and that thing, opinion, and the like- and art is a higher sphere; and then, too, we are all Christians.⁴¹⁰

This is primarily a negative statement, defining the art object in Kierkegaard's understanding as being an illusion, generated to remove the receiving individual from a position of appropriation of the idea as ideal.

⁴¹⁰JP, vol. 1, pp. 64-65, <<170; X² A 380, n.d., 1850

His argument is clearly sarcastic, but contained within it is some sign of potential recognition of the power of transformation, a power which 'must not be taken too literally'. Kierkegaard denies the immediacy present in the material form of the art object, but concedes that it is an embodiment of a communication, a communication which is related to the idea if not the ideal. Despite Kierkegaard's attitude towards the art object, there remains specific instances such as this one when his writing betrays a begrudging respect, and a more positive stance. This does not in any instance extend to a specific example except the literary.⁴¹¹ One could even look at the following "positive" statements and interpret them all as critical. Furthermore, this is a position which must always be carefully understood as separate from any acknowledgement of the esthetic, but its presence is a continual point of opposition to the view that Kierkegaard denied the positive potential of the art object; a view which he always strove to maintain himself. There are specific examples of positivity.

Kierkegaard seemingly rejects the notion of an authentic art object because of its negativity, because it is apparently antithetical in relation to the continual state of existence which the receiving individual remains in, but, as seen in the chapter on the artist- acting between the genius and the Apostle- such an individual has the means of communicating the idea of the ideal in a manner which is authentic and, therefore, appropriatable by the receiving individual. Of particular importance would appear to be the example found in *Fear and Trembling*. Not only because of its influence on artists,⁴¹² but also in the third "Problemata", determining whether Abraham was ethically correct in concealing his intentions from Sarah and Issac. This discusses the ethical requirements of any individual for whom communication of faith is possible. Faith shows up

⁴¹¹And, one could even add that this does not run to any example except, perhaps the Bible.

⁴¹²See Robert Motherwell

in *Fear and Trembling* not only as a product of the grace of knowledge of the actual bestowed upon the individual, but as something which contains within itself an inherent necessity for communication. *Fear and Trembling* brings out the single individual as a subject for the artist. The single individual is bound by his ontological grounding.

The single individual, sensately and psychically qualified in immediacy, is the individual who has telos in the universal, and it is his ethical task continually to express himself in this, to annul his singularity in order to become the universal.⁴¹³

The single individual is one governed by the ethical, whereas Abraham was not. Abraham is governed by the absurd, by the need of God and his own need to declare his faith. He is not one giving up the finite for the infinite, not giving up something certain for something even more certain, but giving up the universal to grasp something which is not universal in order to better arrive at the universal itself. Faith must therefore be communicated. The true artist cannot aspire to this directly, he will always be an individual bound by the ethical in his productions, but he can always indicate it.

It is great when the poet in presenting his tragic hero for public admiration dares to say: Weep for him, for he deserves it. It is great to deserve the tears of those who deserve to shed tears. It is great that the poet dares to keep the crowd under restraint, dares to discipline men to examine themselves individually to see if they are worthy to weep for the hero, for the slop water of the snivellers is a debasement of the sacred. -But even greater than all this is the knight of faith's daring to say to the noble one who wants to weep for him: Do not weep for me, but weep for yourself.⁴¹⁴

The true and authentic artist cannot be equivocated with the knight of faith. "The true knight of faith is a witness, never the teacher... He knows that true greatness

⁴¹³FT, p. 54

⁴¹⁴Ibid., p. 66

is equally accessible to all." ⁴¹⁵ The ethical is the universal and, as the universal, it is disclosed. The single individual, governed by inwardness, is the hidden. His ethical task is to disclose himself to himself and to become disclosed in the universal. The authentic artist, in this process, can also indicate the path of disclosure. This also shows up in a journal entry. Speaking about the esthetic (as opposed to the aesthetic, and therefore a negative indication of the authentic art object), Kierkegaard writes:

Even though a poet suffers actual persecution from his contemporaries, he reproduces and transforms even his actual suffering into a work of art and gives his contemporaries occasion- for new enjoyment. An ethicist goes about it in earnest, actualizes it, and says: It is you, my contemporaries, of whom I speak. He does not publish plays, does not poetically hold the matter at a distance.

In a certain sense the poet is more resigned; he does not actually demand justice; he abandons his case with actual people and transposes the whole scene into the medium of imagination. But the poet lacks courage. His imagination terrifies him; so he does not dare attack the actuality directly; he distills something poetic out of it and holds himself back.

It would probably be one of the most interesting tasks to present a poet who was developed to such a degree and had come along so far that he himself really began to understand that he should make a μεταβασις εις αλλο γενοσ, that is, go over into the ethical, the heroic- but still could not convince himself of this and become dialectical at that point.⁴¹⁶

It is this transformation of suffering into a communication, into a conveyance of faith and, therefore, in knowledge of the actual, which Kierkegaard cites as having potential. But why the change from the esthetic to the ethical individual as the only vehicle for such a communication? And why cannot such a presentation as mentioned take place within existence? Kierkegaard does

⁴¹⁵Ibid., p. 81

⁴¹⁶JP, vol. 1, p. 374; X² A 137, n.d., 1849

not give us an answer, but the fact remains that the potential is something which he recognises.

One specific instance where the positive potential for the art object is apparent is in Kierkegaard's discussion of contemporaneity. Kierkegaard concerns himself with the fact that Christ as embodiment in material form of the actual ideal remains at an historical distance to the individual. Because of this, he investigates the potential for such a communication, and finds it capable of its purpose. A reading of the notion of contemporaneity found in the following journal, and brought up also in *PF* both as negative and positive simultaneously, exhibits this:

One who is proficient in the language in which a poetic work is written but has never lived in the country of its origin would always lack something, the national individuality by which the poet was essentially nurtured, so also one can contemplate a work of art but can never get the characteristic impression, the inner understanding of, for example, a Raphael, which we must imagine to be present for a contemporary generation. For us beholders a certain historical aspect is more prominent-which consists in contemplating that such and such was the case with that people- and a differentiating gradation in the "to what extent" one is able to live into that nationality is indeed conceivable, but one still never gets a perfectly adequate impression as does one who has imbibed with his mother's milk the ideas constitutive of that nationality. Therefore it seems somewhat narrow to want to maintain this view only with respect to poetry just because of language, for it is self-evident that if one is to understand the poem he must know the language, and therefore at he outset I specified proficiency in the language.⁴¹⁷

These narrow set of remarks made by Kierkegaard himself during his student days, holds some ground in determining the art object as inadequate in a full sense as expression of the ideal, but one must also remember that the author must step back, and therefore some understanding must take place in the communication

⁴¹⁷*JP*, vol. 5, p. 64, <<5134; I C 87, March, 1836

despite the difficulties. The contemporaneity of the art object, the nature of the art object as communication of such is present. One has to ask whether the individual has to be contemporaneous with the artist in order to fully comprehend the communication of the actual ideal truth of existence? This is a question which Kierkegaard seems to appreciate, in that the very event is, of course, of vital interest to his writing. He characterises it in such a manner that the Christ-event, or, more particularly, the revelation of the actual ideal in existence, becomes beyond understanding within existence.

This is most evident when Kierkegaard investigates this very question in *PF*. For Kierkegaard, the basic question is whether or not the actual truth can be learned, one which he takes from the Socratic dialogues. Within the Socratic context, truth is learned by the individual through a process of remembering which is instituted through being reminded of the idea, which was already known. Interpreting Socrates, Kierkegaard writes: "In the Socratic view, every human being is himself the midpoint, and the whole world focuses only on him because his self-knowledge is God-knowledge."⁴¹⁸ In this sense, the actual ideal is contained within the individual and the temporal element which determines the individual is unimportant since the idea of the actual ideal has always been present.

Kierkegaard takes issue with this position. For Kierkegaard, the temporal remains important, in that it is only through the temporal that the individual comes to realise its relationship to and knowledge of its ontological grounding. The individual initially exists in a state of ignorance, and the teacher must be within the temporal- a point of departure as the occasion of coming into knowledge. Because the individual is initially in a state of untruth, the teacher must provide him with the conditions to enter into truth. Yet, because of the

⁴¹⁸*PF*, p. 11

nature of Christianity (wherein the truth is the actual, which does not enter into existence wholly until existence becomes actuality- which can occur only in death), in order for the individual to come into truth in existence there must be a teacher who is also the actual. This necessitates that the teacher be God, as Christ is in Christianity. No human is capable of providing the truth of existence since this requires a position within the actual, which no individual can occupy except in death. Therefore only the one individual who occupies both in the absurd paradox can do so, i.e. Christ.

This requires, however, not the teacher immediately granting the actual ideal as truth to the individual but a facilitation of the process whereby the individual comes on its own accord into the truth. The god understands himself, and must continue to be unmoved, since it remains the actual which grounds existence. However, in the descent into existence, the embodiment of the actual becomes a part of existence- the idea and the ideal enter into existence, Christ becomes man- and in doing so demonstrates the ability that man has to move towards the actual in existence.

One problem exists, however. The existence-embodiment of the actual remains a paradox. It becomes an unknown, since individuals within existence can only know existence and can only reach the actual ideal through the end of existence. The entire event of Christ becomes an impossibility, an unknown. "The paradoxical passion of understanding is, then, the continually colliding with this unknown, which certainly does exist but is also unknown and to that extent does not exist. The understanding does not go beyond that."⁴¹⁹ The unknown is at the point of being disclosed, but remained undisclosed. The unknown is defined as absolute different, and therefore remains accessible only through temporal development into actual rather than as knowledge within existence. Thus, an paradox-an unbreachable gap-

⁴¹⁹Ibid., p. 44

exists between the unknown as the actual existence of God and the learner's understanding defined as absolute different.

This leads one to question how knowledge of the actual can ever occur at all, particularly within existence. For Kierkegaard, the answer is found in the dogmatics of Christianity. The presence of God in human form as a paradox must be assumed and believed in faith. The very materiality of the Christ-event implies a sense of analogy with the art object.⁴²⁰ The god does not take on human form in a mockery of human form but in order to be recognised as impossible for the individual to understand, eternally at odds with the individual while at the same time being the individual. For the learner, the appearance of the god is not just a moment for Socratic contemplation of himself, but is a beginning of the eternal as a consequence of the moment, to which the individual can relate.

This is certain within a contemporary context in relation to the God-man event. The contemporary learner follows an historical point of departure with the consequences of the immediate moment. The real question is how the learner who is not contemporary to the God-man event can come to an understanding of the paradox. For Kierkegaard, the understanding in existence of the paradox comes together with the idea of the actual ideal (i.e. the paradox as the actual ideal truth of existence) in the moment through the temporal, generating passion (i.e. devotion to the paradox) and, thereby, faith. It is only through faith- through the acceptance of the absurdity of the paradox- that the individual who comes after the event can accept and appropriate the knowledge of the event. Kierkegaard further states that the contemporary and the 'second-hand follower' are equal, since the temporality surrounding the God-man event means that existence is continually brought into conflict. What

⁴²⁰To this end, one can point to the use-value of Eastern European and Byzantine icons, in which a dialectical relation is established between the image and the figure represented, such that the presence of the figure exists in the very material form itself.

is most important, however, is to recognise the fact that, for Kierkegaard, the individual only comes to knowledge of the actual ideal within existence through faith in that knowledge, which is based on a singular event.

The implications of this are both a negative regarding the art object as well as positive one. If the art object is to be a communication of the ideal (or, at least, of the idea of the ideal), then its temporality must be overcome. This is an impossibility, since the art object remains wholly a temporal object. The art object cannot be a generator of faith, which can only arise through the individual's acceptance of the paradox with the temporal while at the same time indicating the paradox as beyond the temporal. The art object cannot serve as a communication of the ideal within this context- only the God-man event and faith in that event can act thus. Therefore, in Kierkegaard's understanding, the art object is an impossibility if it claims to be a communication of the ideal, the actual truth of the grounding of existence. However, if one maintains the dialectical nature of the art object, then this impossibility becomes possibility. The art object becomes a reflection, a vehicle, for the acquiring of faith.

The question of contemporaneity is interesting in the negative sense because, according to Kierkegaard, it remains an impossibility to portray Christ or to understand more specifically the actual ideal of Christ from a contemporaneous stance. This is, of course, perfectly true. However, does this mean that the actual ideal is an impossibility to communicate as contemporaneous to the individual receiving a communication? If one is to use this logic, then one must note that, for Kierkegaard, the only actual ideal in relation to the existence of the individual is the Christian and all other ideals are merely thought within existence (i.e. merely existential ideas rather than actual and appropriatable ideals). Communication is fraught with dangers, as Kierkegaard notes:

The real trouble in the communication of truth is that one must be anxious and fearful about expressing the truth, about showing what constituted the previous error- for there are ten to one ready to repeat the same error with a little modification- that is, a new and still more dangerous untruth arises- for the closer untruth lies to truth the more dangerous is the untruth.⁴²¹;

and, furthermore:

On closer inspection all this talk about wishing to have been contemporary with Christ is presumptuous; for what is it but fancying oneself to be good enough to be an apostle. And even the apostles fell away, and they had to be equipped with extraordinary divine powers in order to be, that is, to be able to keep on being, contemporary with him- the best evidence that no one can keep on being contemporary with him all by himself.

But those who talk this way about contemporaneity do not know what they are saying; it is the usual think: they take away the glory and leave out the difficulty. It is flirtation.⁴²²

But the potential is there:

It is only, perhaps, in certain passages in the journals that an explicitly positive position is present. Kierkegaard never describe the art object as anything but esthetic, and eschews its aesthetic qualities. This is odd, since he himself wrote and, therefore, wrote to an audience who would appropriate his communication. It is even odder, since he wrote through the use of pseudonyms in his most popular texts- even though he rankled against their popularity- which therefore inscribes such texts as containing poetic and thereby artistic aspirations. It is even further odder still, considering the wealth of artistic production occurring in Denmark; Kierkegaard lived in what has been described as "Denmark's Golden Age" . However, there are a few statements. For example, he writes:

⁴²¹JP, vol. 4, p. 489, <<4853; IX A 4, n.d., 1848. To communicate the truth is to communicate in fear and trembling, aware of the dangers involved even in attempting to communicate the truth. This passage also indicates how close Kierkegaard felt the danger was in an authentic art object to become a communication of untruth.

⁴²²JP, vol. 1, p. 325, <<694; see <<693; X² A 253, n.d., 1849

Truth suffers in the world. The witness to the truth expresses this thesis in character; he suffers for the truth. Upon seeing this, the person who still wants to appear to be of the truth should be motivated to want to suffer in like manner.

But no. Here comes the counterfeiting- instead of personally suffering for the truth, he chooses the task of presenting, depicting how truth must suffer and does suffer in this world. It is easy to see that this is an understanding which will not bring suffering but is a way to make a brilliant success in the world. In fact, this is a poetic task, a theatrical entertainment, *absolutely absolutely* the same as when Nielsen *acts* the Nordic hero and Dame Heiberg *acts* the innocent sufferer.

The closer the poet- or what he could just as well be called, the theater-actor- is to the one who suffers in character for the truth, the more revolting it is. If he is contemporary, then it is as base as it could possibly be... Presenting and depicting how the truth suffers does not incite persecution but bring profit- why? Because it makes demands on a person no different from any other esthetic performance; it does not put the audience under any obligation (and it has not put the orator, the eminent or most revered artist, under obligation, either), but intends merely to divert (edify) them for an hour, merely helps people pass a pleasant hour.

This treachery would be most loathsome in the situation of contemporaneity, just like being at a fire and, instead of helping, taking it all quite calmly in order to travel around later and describe the horrors of this fire, how dreadful the shrieks of the man who burned to death inside- and whom one could have rescued had one not been occupied canvassing the whole situation with the aim of describing it.⁴²³

Kierkegaard seems to be conceding the art object as a presentation of truth (by which he means knowledge of the actual within existence), created by an individual who is aware of the relation that such truth has to existence, who does not profit from it, nor seeks fame for it. The presentation is one meant to be able to invoke persecution or, at least, incite a radical change in the receiving individuality's understanding of the nature of

⁴²³JP, vol. 4, pp. 500-501, <<4881; X⁴ A 609, n.d., 1852

its existence, such that the persecution of the producing individual is not inconceivable. The positive potential-particularly felt when one notes the possibility of an individual describing the idea of the ideal, necessarily antithetical to existence, not for profit but for upbuilding- turns people away from existential concerns to their relation to the actual, to the grounding of their existence. This is extended in another passage:

Fundamentally every generation goes equally far, partly because one generation cannot depend upon the communication of another generation, which providence has no doubt arranged in order to protect itself. What enormous, gigantic strides the race would make if one could depend upon the communications, if what is put in writing were entirely true, if every author, especially every thinker, said outright wholly and precisely what he meant. But this conventional lying, especially the clergy's- how it has damaged spiritual life and the cause of Christianity!⁴²⁴

Here, Kierkegaard is willing to concede the possibility of authenticity, though he does not elaborate on it. One can posit beyond him that the object, as embodied and therefore existing example of the opposition of the idea of existence, serves to induce the motion of appropriation of the idea of the ideal and, thence, through repetition and application of the appropriation, of the ideal itself. Kierkegaard never seems to have given up on the idea of an adequate and authentic art object which would facilitate the appropriation of the actual ideal. He writes:

.....But someone will say: "What if someone actually expresses existentially that he has forsaken and does forsake this world, is it therefore absolutely certain that he will be saved? Maybe not? It could be arrogance or pride, to which God is very much opposed." True, it is not absolutely certain, nor will it ever be, for in the uncertainty is the striving.⁴²⁵

One could, perhaps, ask Kierkegaard: 'and what is someone say that the production of art is carried out

⁴²⁴JP, vol. 1, p. 444, <<1015; IX A 44, n.d., 1848

⁴²⁵JP, vol. 3, pp. 746-747, <<3765; X⁴ A 645, n.d., 1852

existentially in a manner forsaking the world, the existential, in favour of the ideal, the actual?' Uncertainty is present, of course, but the potential is there if the communication is carried out with an awareness and dedication of one's individual existence in pursuit of appropriatable knowledge of the ideal as the grounding of existence. Potential is there, if the art object is understood as diametrically opposed to the movement of existence, opposing existence within existence.

Finally, what can a positive Kierkegaardian position on the art object be understood as, if there is one? The art object is a material embodiment of a communication of the idea of the ideal, of the actual grounding of existence, which is intended, when authentic, to be appropriated by the receiving individual in order to further that individual's growing knowledge and relation within existence to the actual grounding of its existence, always in opposition both existence and its own existence. There is one more thing, though, which creeps in Kierkegaard's positive statements, which serves to define the Kierkegaardian art object. Kierkegaard establishes the initial stage of knowledge of the actual as occurring in the immediate understanding and portrayal of the character by the young actress in *Crisis*. The fact that it is immediate in nature in the first performance is clear to Kierkegaard because the nature of the aesthetic object presented is one in which a communication of an authentic ideal occurs, but it occurs in an indeterminate state. He writes:

She is in possession of- well, what it is that she possesses is very difficult to define, just but because it is something indeterminate, which nevertheless asserts itself overwhelmingly and demands an unconditional response.⁴²⁶

The performance is a communication of an ideal, a representation of knowledge of the individual's existence in relation to the actual or ontological, which is

⁴²⁶*Crisis*, p. 72

nevertheless unclear. Yet it still demands to be seen and recognised as such.

One of the most interesting examples of dialectics applied to Kierkegaard's work and one indication of a reading of Kierkegaard's understanding of art is found in one of the texts which discusses the art object in the least productive manner- Connell's *To Be One Thing: Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought*. Connell, citing research by Marete Jørgensen, notes that two different types of aesthetic exist within Kierkegaard's literature: the esthetic and the ethical. This I would believe is a great simplification of the nature of the aesthetic, but Connell does at least ask why such differences should exist, thereby posing the possibility of answering and determining the nature of the dialectical development of form. He notes:

Marete Jørgensen is correct in attributing this difference between the two aesthetics to a difference in perspective. While the "ethical critic" (that is, the aesthetician who follows the principles of criticism employed in *Af en Endnu Levendes Papirer* [From the Papers of One Still Living] and similar works) writes from an existential position high enough to comprehend the functions and importance of a life-view, the "aesthetic critic" does not. The instances of aesthetic criticism that Marete Jørgensen identifies are for the most part writings attributed to representatives of the aesthetic stage, notably the young aesthete A and Constantine Constantius.⁴²⁷

Thus, for Connell, specific types of aesthetic expression are determined by the stage of existence of the individual, which is part of Kierkegaard's indebtedness to Hegel, i.e. Hegel's notion that the manifestation of the art object is necessitated by its historicity. What this leads Connell to believe, however, is inherently incorrect. For Connell, the differences between the stages of existence of individuals determines the form of their communication, but he would also state that this determines the desire for unity and the communication as

⁴²⁷Connell, *To Be One Thing, Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought*, p. 35

clarification of existence. Art, for the esthete, constitutes a communication of the idea of the actual, removed from the individual, while for the ethical individual this is a communication of a life-view which allows some expression and appropriation of the idea as ideal into the individual's receiving existence. Connell rejects the possibility of Kierkegaard's acknowledgement of the positive potential of the art object, and allows only for the function of such as an object of beauty. He writes:

...room must be made for aesthetically valid immediate art. Such art in no way communicates a life-view, but since it does not represent an evasion of existential responsibilities and is not the product of an attempt to make art fulfil nonaesthetic needs, it is to be appreciated and enjoyed for what it is.⁴²⁸

But this simply does not acknowledge the dialectic of the art object! Art stands apart from the individuals involved in both the creation and appropriation of its communication. This does little to answer how art can truly function. What is necessary is to return to the idea found in the *Crisis* text. Kierkegaard's incomprehension at the presentation of the character in the play strikes him as authentic, but he does not understand why. Kierkegaard is unwilling to provide the answer to a definition of the authentic art object at all, though it is always present. This double-movement is a transition whereby the first step is made, and the second step follows on without the activity or guidance of the actor and also to his amazement- a movement without movement. The Hongs reference *Fear and Trembling* subsequently:

He [Abraham] climbed the mountain, and even in the moment when the knife gleamed he had faith- that God would not require Isaac. No doubt he was surprised at the outcome, but through a double-movement he had attained his first condition, and therefore he received Issac more joyfully than the first time... It is commonly supposed that what faith produces is no work of

⁴²⁸Ibid., p. 37

art, that it is a coarse and boorish piece of work, only for the more uncouth natures, but it is far from being that. The dialectic of faith and the most extraordinary of all; it has an elevation of which I can certainly form a conception, but no more than that.⁴²⁹

It is the indeterminacy which is vital, along with its immediacy and its indirectness. Kierkegaard's inability to comprehend the presence of the idea of the ideal present here is striking. The indeterminacy is a reflection of God's creation and man's relation to the actual within existence, which is always a dialectical relation. The indeterminacy itself reflects the very nature of the opposition of existence and actuality. Kierkegaard writes:

It seems remarkable to me that the great geniuses among the poets (such as Ossian and Homer) are represented as blind. Of course, it makes no difference to me whether they were actually blind or not. I only make a point of the fact that people have imagined them to be blind, for this would seem to indicate that what they saw when they sang the beauty of nature was not seen with the external eye but was revealed to their inward intuition. How remarkable that one of the best, yes, the very best writer about bees was blind from early youth. It seems to indicate that however much one believes in the importance of the observation of externals, he had found that [Archimedean] point and now by a purely spiritual activity had deduced from this all the details and had reconstructed them analogously to nature.⁴³⁰

This is a very interesting point, and completely true, but also denies the communicate capacity of the art object, something which later develops continue in an ambiguous manner. The blindness of the poets,⁴³¹ is an example of faith in the face of uncertainty. Their production, therefore, *must* be considered as an act of faith, because they have no means of determining the outcome of their production. This is faith and confusion, an indeterminate relation to the natural world, which is

⁴²⁹FT, p. 36

⁴³⁰JP, vol. 1, p. 50, <<117; I A 8, September 11, 1843

⁴³¹Kierkegaard seems to have been duped by Macpherson's Ossianic tales as well as everyone in Europe.

still channelled into a production which affects that world. As it is with the indeterminacy of faith that Abraham has, faith remains. Yet, this is something which Kierkegaard does not see. It is to this lack of recognition on the part of that I shall turn now.

3. Kierkegaard's Inadequacy to Perceive the Full Potential of the Art Object

A further indication of the positive potential of the art object contained within Kierkegaard's writing can be found in CA. In the section devoted to anxiety about good which results in sin, Kierkegaard analyses the demonic individual. This conception of the individual Kierkegaard offers has a positive means for the individual to overcome its demonic state through the introduction of an external communication. The demonic is an individual which closes itself up in upon itself; in this sense, it is one of the most important and difficult individuals to whom the authentic artist can communicate. The demonic individual is able to rationalise its existence and its relation to actuality, but refuses to act upon this. The demonic is in sin, in an existential position in opposition to the idea of the actual, while having knowledge of the actual nevertheless. So how does the artist then produce an art object which can overcome this? Kierkegaard would seem to believe that this is an impossibility. The demonic individual is characterised by inclosing reserve, which denies the possibility of reception of an actual ideal communication. Yet, within his definition of the demonic, he also describes a form of communication which allows the demonic individual to overcome its existential knowledge in relation to the ideal. Kierkegaard writes:

An obdurate criminal will not make a confession (the demonic lies precisely in this, that he will not communicate with the good by suffering the punishment). There is a rarely used method that can be applied against such a person,

namely, silence and the power of the eye. If an inquisitor has the required physical strength and the spiritual elasticity to endure without moving a muscle, to endure for sixteen hours, he will succeed, and the confession will burst forth involuntarily. A man with a bad conscience cannot endure silence... this silence while the judge is present, while the clerks are ready to inscribe everything in the protocol, this silence is the most penetrating and acute questioning.⁴³²

What emerges from this description is that the demonic can possibly be overcome by art, through which the individual develops the means of overcoming which are indirect communication and which are presented in silence (i.e. not directly communicated). What does this have to do with art? Kierkegaard does not recognise the fact that silence requires, in his description, an almost visual aspect, completely external to the individual's subjectivity. This silence becomes one of indeterminacy, indirectness, and also immediacy. And, furthermore, this example of the necessity or justification of understanding and utilising the art object as a communication of the idea or the idea of the actual ideal can be found if one parallels Kierkegaard's understanding of sin with art; i.e. sin as objective knowledge and subjective truth.

Kierkegaard states correctly that such a communication and, therefore, its possibility as an authentic art object, is difficult to achieve. There are specific conditions under which such a communication as actual can take place. Kierkegaard writes:

The only thing that can constrain inclosing reserve to speak is either a higher demon (for every devil has his day), or the good, which is absolutely able to keep silent, and if any cunning tries to embarrass it by the examination of silence, the inquisitor himself will be brought to shame, and it will turn out that finally he [the inquisitor or, in my interpretation, the artist] becomes afraid of himself and must break the silence... the tormentor of inclosing reserve may also relate

⁴³²CA, p. 125

himself selfishly to his own inclosing
reserve.⁴³³

What this implies, however, is that such a silence is a positive potential for the art object, one which produces a reaction in the viewer (and it must be noted that Kierkegaard here is speaking in purely *visual terms*, something he does not seem to be aware of) and which prompts what Kierkegaard describes as disclosure. Such a disclosure reveals that which the individual, who has been racked by inclosing reserve, was unable to reveal—namely, its knowledge and the relation of its existence to its ideal actuality, which then becomes knowledge of such, necessitating the movement towards further knowledge of the actual.

What the inclosed person conceals in his inclosing reserve can be so terrible that he does not dare to utter it, not even to himself, because it is as though by the very utterance he commits a new sin or as though it would tempt him again.⁴³⁴

But, the external form of communication— one which can easily be imagined and interpreted as being an authentic art object (because it is external, communicates the actual ideal, and is not related to the receiving individual's continual existence but to the one particular moment)— prompts such a disclosure from the receiving individual. Embodied in specific characteristic— indirectness, since it is related to self-knowledge, while still being external; immediateness, because of the presentness of the individual and the communication within existence; and indeterminacy, which is the total structure of the communication, since the communication never says anything directly to the receiving individual within existence, let alone actuality. Most importantly, it prompts such a disclosure from the individual to itself. Thus, sin, as externally communicated or prompted, becomes a means of exposing the demonic individual to

⁴³³Ibid., pp. 125-126

⁴³⁴Ibid., p. 128

itself and therefore to knowledge of its actual grounding within existence. Thus, one can cite sin⁴³⁵ as an art object created by the actual.

The authentic production of communication of the ideal is integral and a responsibility, passionately attached to the individual's existence, and taking into account as well as expressing anxiety. Anxiety can either be expressed to the individual (correctly by one who has experienced it) so as to induce a proper understanding of the concept of anxiety and to allow the individual through indirect means to come to terms with its existence, or it can be a means by which the individual comes to terms with its own anxiety through the expression of anxiety. In both cases, anxiety is embodied as a form of communication, but becomes an embodiment which the receiving individual within existence goes through the process of repetition. A third possibility is suggested with the notion of continuity, which is negated by the demonic individual's suddenness of existence. Kierkegaard, referring to the individual who has not come to terms with anxiety and the eternal nature of the individual, writes:

Art is an anticipation of eternal life, because poetry and art are the reconciliation only of the imagination, and they may well have the *Sinnigkeit* [thoughtfulness] of intuition but by no means the *Innigkeit* [inwardness] of earnestness. Some paint eternity elaborately with the tinsel of imagination and yearn for it. Some envision eternity apocalyptically, pretend to be Dante, while Dante, no matter how much he conceded to the view of the imagination, did not suspend the effect of ethical judgement.⁴³⁶

Clearly, both the negative and positive possibilities of art are indicated. In one specific passage, Kierkegaard indicates not only the positive potential in a negative sense, but also shows clearly Kierkegaard's indebtedness to Hegel's idea of the necessity of form, generating its

⁴³⁵Specifically, one can cite the Kierkegaardian notions of anxiety and despair as indications of the demonic or the wilful opposition to the actual within existence to an extent as art objects.

⁴³⁶CA, p.153

own potentiality. On the difference between wonder (which is ambivalent worship containing fear and blessedness about the unknown) and worship (which is worship as a state of mind of the unknown that mixes fear and blessedness), worship is clearly more authentic, vital for the individual. This can have its reflection in the communication, in the art:

To be sure, a poet has rightly said that a sigh to God without words is the best worship; then one could also believe that the infrequent visit to the sacred place, when one comes from far away, would be the best worship, because both contribute to the illusion. A sigh without words is the best worship if the thought of God is only to shed a twilight glow over existence, like the blue mountains on the distant horizon, if the unclarity of the soul's condition is to be satisfied with the greatest possible ambiguity. But if God is to be present to the soul, then the sigh presumably finds the thought, and the thought presumably the words-but also the difficulty, of which one has no inkling at a distance.⁴³⁷

The fear and trembling becomes a path through repetition to the actual. The wonder, and the sigh as a communicative act resulting from that wonder, initiates movement towards knowledge of the actual.

The art object emerges within a Kierkegaardian context as a dialectical opposition between finitude and infinitude, between its material existence as the embodiment of a communication of the idea of the ideal and the ideality of its actuality which is beyond the material form. Yet, despite its oppositional position, in regards to the actual, if one is able to maintain the dialectical relationship between the two, then the art object serves as an indicative means of allowing the receiving individual to existentially appropriate knowledge of its grounding by the ideality of the actual through recollection and repetition within its own self-knowledge. The art object serves as a catalyst for such knowledge, and then remains in opposition to the actual as material, embodied communication dialectically opposed

⁴³⁷*Three Discourses on Imagined Occasions*, p. 16

to actuality, but prompting its intrusion into existence through the dialectical movement of opposition. Kierkegaard is able to point this out. He writes:

All art is essentially involved in a dialectical self-contradiction. The truly eternal cannot be painted or drawn or carved in stone, for it is spirit. But neither can the temporal essentially be painted or drawn or carved in stone, for when it is presented in these ways, it is presented eternally; every picture expresses a fixation of that particular moment. If I paint a man who is lifting a spoon to his mouth or blowing his nose, it is immediately eternalized- the man continues to blow his nose this one time as long as the painting endures.⁴³⁸

What Kierkegaard does not recognise, nor is he capable of recognising, is the fact that by *not* being able to paint the temporal, the continuing existence of the individual and therefore its continual relationship to its knowledge of its actual grounding, nevertheless the art object, through its very opposition, still *indicates* that continual state of existence. By being atemporal within temporality, the idea of such dialectics is a further indication beyond the idea of the temporal-atemporal duality; the inability to embody the actual dialectical only prompts further awareness of the lack of knowledge of the actual, and acts as a catalyst for further movement towards that knowledge. Concerning contradiction and the dialectical element of the art object, Kierkegaard indirectly demands this:

Above all, it is asking too much of an ordinary reviewer to be interested in the dialectical battle in which the exception arises in the midst of the universal, the protracted and key complicated procedure in which the exception battles his way through and affirms himself as justified, for the unjustified is recognized precisely by his wanting to bypass the universal.⁴³⁹

Such is the dialectical requirements of the art object, but Kierkegaard does not follow through. The communication must be a process that destroys the

⁴³⁸JP, vol. 1, p. 61, <<160; VIII¹ A 88, n.d., 1847

⁴³⁹R, p. 226

individual's personally understood existence- his relationship to his own existence and therefore his understanding of actuality- while at the same time affirming a new view of actuality, a new form and content constructed within a new individual existence through the individual's own activity, simultaneously maintaining in justification the superseded existence and understanding of actuality. As *R* shows, action reflects actuality as possibility, rather than as actuality itself. The artist does so by and for the purpose of placing the possibilities of actuality into pure thought (in an esthetic manner), but the object does not go beyond its own creation. The young poet in *R* is an example. The young man is realised as a poet, able to inwardly understand his existential relationship to actuality, yet the only poetry he recites (and nothing is ever shown to be written by him, despite his esthetic position as a poet) is by another poet at the time when he has not yet completed the movement into the religious (though Constantin could, but does not, recognise this after the fact, based on the chronology of the writing of the book). That one poem does not retain its value as the individual develops, yet, as Gouwens points out;

Kierkegaard reflects his broader concern to delineate the legitimacy as well as the inadequacy of an objective understanding of ethical and religious existence. In *Repetition* as elsewhere, his refusal to oversimplify the issues is striking. Both the claims and the limits of the respective types of imagination and understanding are fully presented; Constantin must be given his dues, and so must the young man.⁴⁴⁰

The point of this is that Kierkegaard's conception of the art work shines through in this interpretation of the nature of *R*.

Kierkegaard has set up the object as the communication of the idea, but then denies its dialectical possibilities as a communication of the

⁴⁴⁰Gouwens, David J. 'Understanding, Imagination, and Irony in Kierkegaard's *Repetition*', *International Kierkegaard Commentary*, ed. Perkins, R. Mercer University Press, Mercer, GA, 1993, p. 303

ideal. He would appear to recognise the potential, but doesn't follow through on it. For example:

It would be very interesting sometime to develop examples of what is meant esthetically and artistically by eternal images, what basic mood-relationships ought to exist between the particular details of the image in order for them to cohere as an eternal image.⁴⁴¹

And furthermore, he writes:

Make it an actuality- and everything is changed. No longer do you charm others, but all flee from you. You only make the girls anxious and cause men to avoid you. You inspire no one, hardly get permission to enter the pulpit- in Christendom, where all are Christians and that presentation is admired, that poet-presentation.⁴⁴²

Despite his objections, it is precisely this poetical presentation which causes Kierkegaard's own problems. The poetical potential is there, inferable in his own statement. Each of these journal entries describes an approach to the art object which is negative, dismissive of the authenticity which is embodied as a material communication of the artist's own relation and knowledge of the actual and as the potential to communicate in indirectly bring about appropriation of that knowledge in another individual. Despite his uneasy respect for the art object, Kierkegaard cannot bring himself to allow the type of relation between an existentially-continually existing individual and a material object. It is precisely this that is the problem in the Kierkegaardian corpus and its relation to the art object. The potential is there, even more so when one remembers that in the Kierkegaardian structure of existence the actual is always in opposition to existence itself, and therefore the art object as embodied can reflect that opposition. The art object is an indirect communication of the idea of the ideal in appropriable form, through which the receiving individual⁴⁴³ is able to come to a better

⁴⁴¹JP, vol. 1, p. 62, <<163; VIII¹ A 621, n.d., 1848

⁴⁴²JP, vol. 1, p. 375, <<821; X³ A 151, n.d., 1850

⁴⁴³And, by inference, the producing individual, though this requires more space to explicate than allowed.

understanding of its relation to the actual. Kierkegaard's reaction is against this embodiment, against the pleasure of the esthetic, and correctly so, since the material form is dangerous as a temptation for losing oneself in romantic contemplation, but he does not admit the potential of the material embodiment. In this, he fails to understand the art object as if fits within his own description of existence, as seen in further examples.

For instance, towards the end of his life, one of the most interesting negative statements regarding the art object can be found in *Judge for Yourself*. Kierkegaard devotes a number of pages to describing what it means to become sober within the context of Christianity. This requires that the individual must act in reliance on the actuality of God, without relying on the perceived strengths of the existential. This should be such that an individual is able to act sagaciously within existence, but does not apply that sagaciousness to its own existence because of its perception of the relation of its existence to actuality. What this results in is Kierkegaard's definition of what it means to be sober: "To become sober is: to come to oneself in self-knowledge and before God as nothing before him, yet infinitely, unconditionally engaged."⁴⁴⁴ The majority of this statement is clear within the context of Kierkegaard's texts, but it is his specific comments on portions of what this means that are interesting in the context of the art object. Kierkegaard concentrates on self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is, of course, the only true form of knowledge which an individual can appropriate fully into its subjectivity. Knowledge which is external to the individual- which must be regarded as objective- can only be appropriated to a limited extent. What does this have to do with art? Kierkegaard writes:

To come to oneself in *self-knowledge*. In self-knowledge. In any other knowledge you are away from yourself, you forget yourself, are absent

⁴⁴⁴JY, p. 104

from yourself. Yet precisely this the purely human view calls becoming sober. To forget oneself, to come, not to, but to go away from oneself by losing oneself in knowing, in comprehending, in thinking, in artistic production, etc.- precisely this is called being sober. From the Christian point of view, this is intoxication.⁴⁴⁵

Kierkegaard has failed to understand his own point about intoxication and sobriety, if he includes authentic artistic production. The art object is an object of external knowledge, one which an individual can attempt to appropriate into its existence but which will fail to be an adequate appropriation. It is true that the art object cannot be self-knowledge, since it is both aesthetic and esthetic, and therefore external. However, in this statement, Kierkegaard is specifically referring to *artistic production*. This is, on one level, irreconcilable with his own production- which he often labelled as poetic (and which Adorno has shown to be an inaccurate description anyway)- but is also irreconcilable with those statements concerning an artistic individual as shown in the chapter on the artist. Kierkegaard writes:

The one who presents this ideal must be the very first one to humble himself under it, and even though he himself is striving within himself to approach the ideal, he must confess that he is very far from being it. He must confess that he is related only poetically to the ideal picture or *qua* poet to the *presentation* of this picture, while he (and here he differs from the ordinary conception of a poet) personally and Christianly is related to the *presented* picture, and that only as a poet presenting the picture is he out in front.⁴⁴⁶

The poet can create an ideal awakening, but only as an authentic artist occupying the existential position in relation to actuality between the genius and the Apostle. How can one believe that Kierkegaard had an understanding of the art object within the context of his own writing if he writes such a contradictory statement? Artistic

⁴⁴⁵Ibid., p. 105

⁴⁴⁶Armed Neutrality, p. 37

production is clearly not a form of knowledge, but a means of communication which Kierkegaard has continually described as possibly authentic. Kierkegaard is correct to define the art object as external,⁴⁴⁷ and, therefore, in contradiction to self-knowledge, but it can act as a catalyst leading to self-knowledge, a starting point from which the individual begins the process of recollection and repetition.

Judge for Yourself contains another one of the strongest indications or reconciliations of the positive potential of the art object, though Kierkegaard again does not seem to be aware of it. The passage must be read as metaphor, indirectly, rather than as a direct description of the positive potential of the art object. It does contain, however, a return against Kierkegaard's criticism of a material object as communication of the actual. He writes:

in our thieves' jargon we human beings express it differently, we maintain that we are sagacious, sensible, level-headed people, that we are sober, and that it is precisely the unconditioned that would make us intoxicated.. It is not the unconditioned that makes one intoxicated, but it is the unconditioned that makes manifest that we are intoxicated-something we ourselves know well enough and therefore sagaciously stick to the finitudes, hug the line of buildings, stay in the alleys, and never venture out into the infinite.⁴⁴⁸

Though Kierkegaard is referring to the unconditioned as determining the state of intoxication with the finite, it

⁴⁴⁷Some area of agreement between myself and Kierkegaard on this subject exists. the development of form and content alongside imagination and the requirements of the artist implies that a certain necessity exists in the production of an authentic communication of the idea as art object, a notion derived from Hegel. Kierkegaard has a number of objection which he raises to the idea of introducing necessity into any historical process since existence and the movement to actuality remain one of the choices of possibility. specifically, in *CUP* (SV VII, 297). these must be addressed, but one answer lies in the dialectical nature of the art object and the fact that an historical process is not a consistent element of an authentic art object. if the art object is inauthentic, i.e. ideal or merely an indication of the actual, then one half of the dialectic of existence will be favoured. this may be, for example, the temporal against the eternal. such a favouring denigrates the art object as communication of the actual into a merely historical communication of the ideal. if, to use the opposite and more difficult example, the eternal is favoured over the temporal, this is part of a historical necessity. the communication is done by a single individual who is stressing one singular element of its existence.

⁴⁴⁸*JFY*, p. 114

is also precisely the finite which in a metaphoric- and therefore potentially artistic- manner that determines the individual's relation with the infinite. The finite always has the potential with Kierkegaard, and thereby the art object as finite does also.

All of the above still does not answer the question of the reason for producing art. Why produce art at all when the communication of the idea of the ideal, the actuality of existence, can be communicated merely between single individuals, and, thereby, might be even more successful? The answer lies in the Judge's description of marriage which, for the character of the Judge, has aesthetic qualities in its own right. It is interesting to observe the Judge's opinion on the *why* of their marriage and, hence, apply this opinion to asking the *why* of art. This is not, of course, the full answer, in an Kierkegaardian sense, because it is firmly rooted in the ethical viewpoint of the Judge, but it does provide an interesting note to compare later to the full understanding of *why* is there art at all, in a Kierkegaardian view.

The Judge's views on marriage can be applied to establish the development of the formal qualities of art. The ethical understanding of the formal qualities of art establishes it as the stage in which art is understood as the form of communication which is inclusive of other individualities, rather than being exclusive of them. Interestingly, the Judge writes:

Since marriage is an inner harmony... it of course has its teleology in itself; it is, since it continually presupposes itself, and thus any questions about its "why" is a misunderstanding, which is very easily explained by prosaic common sense...⁴⁴⁹

But is it? The Judge certainly does not think so in most of the text. But one thing is very clear- the Judge believes that marriage is something beautiful, something necessarily inviting and akin to a parallel interpretation with art, particularly since he sees such

⁴⁴⁹E/O II, p. 62

beauty as derived from the teleological nature of marriage itself. He writes:

What I want to stress, however, is the beauty in the marriages that have as little "why" as possible. The less "why," the more love- that is, if one perceives the truth in this... Indeed, the less "why," the better.⁴⁵⁰

The Judge concludes, after deliberating at length on possible reasons, that purposes extraneous to marriage make marriage not only immoral but also unesthetic. "Marriage can be undertaken with only one intention, whereby it is just as ethical as esthetic..."⁴⁵¹ This is true in the many situations which the Judge cites- e.g. the desire for a home.

Those who marry to have a home always plead that there is no one who is waiting for them, no one who welcomes them, etc. This adequately indicates that they actually have a home only when they think of being outside it. Thank God, I never need to go out in order to remember or to forget that I have a home.⁴⁵²

Marriage must have no finite *why*, because, for the Judge, "this is the esthetic in marriage, that it hides in itself a multiplicity of "whys" that life discloses in all its blessedness."⁴⁵³

The multiplicity is further reflected in the nature of the marriage, for the Judge, since marriage is an act which is bound to the truth of actuality in that it is the interpenetration of the universal and the particular.

The more the universal and the particular penetrate each other, the more beautiful the love. The greatness is not in being the particular either in the immediate or in the higher sense but in possessing the universal in the particular.⁴⁵⁴

The first love in the ethically-religiously oriented marriage becomes actual love between and created by two individuals, as communication of the truth of the actuality of their existences. The marriage is a

⁴⁵⁰Ibid., p. 62

⁴⁵¹Ibid., p. 72

⁴⁵²Ibid., p. 82

⁴⁵³Ibid., p. 88

⁴⁵⁴Ibid., p. 90

teleological expression; its purpose is the embodiment of the love as communication between two people. Marriage and, hence, the art object, have their own teleology within them for the Judge and his ethical view. Kierkegaard himself would agree, but the actual *why* of art within the whole of his authorship has much deeper dialectical implications and purposes. What emerges is that marriage and, hence, the art object, since both must be considered as object *external* to the individuals involved, remains separate from the relation between the individuals while still providing a basis for grounding their existence in a form of the ideal. Marriage becomes a means of expressing the individuals' relation to the ideal of the other individual, to the actuality of that individual within the practice of existence. The communication which is the art object- in this case, marriage- creates an interpenetration as idea between the ideal and the particular, an interpenetration between immanence and transcendence. Existence becomes focused on both the universal as the idea and the particulars of existence as existence, and are able to reveal to both within a balance of the relation of the actual and the existential. There is always a danger of being caught up in the particulars of the art object- in the example of marriage, in the specific features of the married one- but marriage and therefore the art object understood as a communication which becomes both present within the relation and removed from the relation allows the ideality to be appropriated and acted upon by all. Kierkegaard uses a further example in *WL* when he discusses the relationship that an individual has to one who has died.⁴⁵⁵ In both cases, a balanced relationship within an abstracted and removed concept, within an embodied form which remains separate from the individuals after appropriation, serves to allow both the receiving idea of the ideal and the produced idea of the ideal (which is the actual itself) to remain in their proper

⁴⁵⁵*WL*, pp. 317-329

relation without resorting to an esthetic stance; it allows a movement through immanence towards transcendence. The art object allows the idea of the ideal, the actual in existence, to function in removing itself from itself as communication once appropriated; the idea is presented in embodied form within existence, and its removal emphasises reciprocally its teleological necessity already present in the individual's existence.

Two last final points. In the *Crisis*, Kierkegaard identifies the art object as accidental (i.e. the fact that it material in nature and therefore, to some extent, static within time whereas the individual is continually moving within time). Kierkegaard, writing about Fru Heiberg, notes: "If she is to play Juliet, it must be an eminent presentation, or more concretely a presentation in an eminent sense. And this is just the metamorphosis."⁴⁵⁶ This is confusing to some extent, because it almost negates what I have stated in this chapter concerning the art object as a positively potentialised communication of the actual ideal. It is as if the immanent or esthetic element of the art object remains a barrier to transcendence despite the authenticity of its communication and the artist. Yet, if the dialectical nature of the art object is maintained, then this functions in a positive sense as well. Kierkegaard, as always seemingly unaware of the potential of his words regarding the art object, writes that this somehow functions within the interaction between the individuals in the process of the communication embodied in the art object. He writes:

Time has asserted its right; there is something which has been consigned to the past. But then again an ideality of recollection will cast an illumination of the highest sort over the whole presentation, an incarnation that was not present in those days of the first youthfulness. Only in recollection is there absolute rest, and therefore the still fire of the eternal, its incorruptible glow. And she is

⁴⁵⁶*Crisis*, p. 89

soothed in the eternity of her essential
genius.⁴⁵⁷

Kierkegaard is speaking of Fru Heiberg, making a comment on her various performances and the metamorphosis that she has made from being the immanent embodiment of the idea of feminine youthfulness into the transcendent embodiment of such. The implications, however, can be applied to the art object. Recollection occurs, but within Kierkegaard's framework recollection and perhaps repetition is also a denial of the continuing existence and communicative possibilities of the art object. It is on this point that leads into the final chapter- the death of art. Positive potential exists but, as with the development of the individual, such potentiation requires some degree of fulfilment. Kierkegaard writes:

...the metamorphosis of which we have spoken is one of potentiation, or a more and more intensive return to the original condition. This metamorphosis will be of absolute concern to an aesthetician, because the dialectic of potentiation is precisely the aesthetic-metaphysical dialectic.⁴⁵⁸

This intensive return to the original condition requires that the art object- which originally did not act within the existence of the individual but then, within a specific moment or moments of time, did- no longer function once its function has been fulfilled. The material nature must always be recognised in existence, and therefore in opposition to actuality from within existence.

Finally, one of the most vital passages found within Kierkegaard relating to this issue, and to a transition into the conclusion of my research, is the following:

The great poetic power of folk literature is expressed in various ways, also in the intensity of its craving and coveting... this covetousness... is very conscious that the neighbour no more possesses what it seeks than it does itself, and therefore it does not need to desire what is his, and it if gets what it desires, it will have a superabundance for the

⁴⁵⁷Ibid., p. 89

⁴⁵⁸Ibid., p. 90

whole world, and if eventually it covets sinfully, it will nevertheless tower so imposingly over the chicken-thieves of our time, since it is so scandalous and titanesque, that it inevitably must at least shake people up, and in its description it does not allow anything to be scaled down by the cold calculation of probability and pedestrian understanding. [Don] Juan still glides across the stage with his 1,003 mistresses and no one smiles at it, but if this were created in our time it would be laughed to scorn; no one dares do it, out of respect and deference for tradition no one dares do it; indeed, one is carried away by it *momentant*, although in the next moment he is ashamed that this enthusiasm has "made a fool of him" .⁴⁵⁹

What is so important about this passage is that it constructs the positive potential for the object in relation to folk literature, to a specific type of art object which Kierkegaard held in high esteem.⁴⁶⁰ Folk literature here functions as a means of communication which directly engages the individualities involved as well as, by its very nature as *folk* literature, engaging an entire community. It does so, though, in a manner which does not directly affect the individualities involved. A communication of an ideal is embodied in the material form as idea, but this establishment does not act as a means of affecting the communication and appropriation of the ideal as embodied. Interaction becomes present, but it is important that interaction occurs only after the object has been removed. The nature of the folk literature in Kierkegaard's description is such that it acts within existence in order to establish a concrete sense of community, while being dismissed in its own right from that establishment. The specific point about Don Juan can be interpreted to mean that the positive potential of the art object is a production of impact, of appropriation of the ideal through the presentation of the idea as ideal, but that this impact only occurs once the object itself has been removed,

⁴⁵⁹JP, vol. 5, pp. 139-140, <<5426; II A 575, n.d., 1839

⁴⁶⁰Which can be related to Adorno's conception of myth.

appearing within existence and then outside of it.
Kierkegaard writes:

A condition for the unity of the divine and the human given in faith is doubt (which corresponds to the doubt prior to the unity of the divine and the human, of the infinite and the finite, given in knowledge) whether sinful humanity, after the original relationship has been altered, is able to return to unity with God- a doubt or, a more pathos-filled and concrete expression, a *concern* (which, like everything Christian, is a concretion).⁴⁶¹

and

Every step forward to the ideal is a backward step, for the progress consists precisely in my discovering increasingly the perfection of the ideal- and consequently my greater distance from it.

One cannot love the ideal selfishly; for the progress would make me happy only if I were to come closer to the ideal in a *direct* way- yes, in a certain sense I might then with the ideal not to be all too perfect or that I might not learn too much about its perfection- so that I could better attain it.

To love the ideal in truth (so that as a consequence progress is retrogression, or my making progress means that I step back out of respect because I see its sublimity even more perfectly) is therefore like hating oneself.⁴⁶²

This doubt and backwards step is something that is a necessity for the art object. It must maintain its distance, and not be contemplated or produced merely as an esthetic object for the pleasure of its reception. In fact, the doubt and the backwards step must always be present, so much so that the art object must die to the receiving individual upon the completion of its reception and appropriation. It is with this point that I turn to the conclusion of my thesis.

⁴⁶¹JP, vol. 1, p. 358, <<773; III A 4, n.d., July 5, 1840. A condition for the authentic work of art as well- indeed, perhaps the continually-present theme or communication which underlies all authentic art objects.

⁴⁶²JP, vol. 2, p. 287, <<1789; X³ A 509, n.d., 1850

Chapter Eight- Conclusion: The Death of Art

The art object is thus an indirect, indeterminate immediate communication of the idea of the ideal which is appropriated as ideal into the existence of the individual and becomes, within the individual's recollection and repetition, as means of developing the individual's knowledge of the actual grounding of and relation to the actual. It is this indeterminacy which allows one to conclude that the description of the art object, derived from the Kierkegaardian texts, is involved in a process of self-annihilation. The art object communicated the idea of the ideal in existence but, because of its material form as embodied communication, it is inadequate to the idea in-and-of-itself in relation to the actual. As communication of the idea of the ideal, the Kierkegaardian art object is directly related to the thought of the time, and a case can be made for labelling it as Hegelian in tone. What makes the Kierkegaardian description different, and provides it with further uses beyond Kierkegaard's own philosophy, is the fact that art object denies itself. The art object as indeterminate within immanence as existence, leading through to transcendence into the actual, acts as a catalyst for the appropriation process of and in confrontation with the actual for the single individual receiving the communication therein embodied, and then removes itself from the continuing existence of the individual. In effect, the art object opposes existence within existence, indicating the actual through its existence as material and directing the individual through its inapplicability. The result from this is that the value of the art object is its valuelessness because, once it has served its purpose, it then becomes an impediment to the continual progressive development of the individual.

This ties in neatly with various postmodern theories, but takes them one step further. Rather than simply denying the veracity and the presence of the art

object- its idealism- it links the idealism to the same issues which postmodern theory has so rightly indicated as over-emphasised in previous theories of art. It can be said that the Kierkegaardian art object creates an entirely new category for understanding the art object. Again, the value of the object as embodied communication is its valuelessness- it indicates, communicates, and then, as material form, is quickly understood to be no longer applicable to the existence of the individual because it remains outside of the individual's existence, in opposition to the appropriatable idea of the actual ideal, and hence to the individual's relation to the actual. This is something that Kierkegaard recognises, as always:

God can appear to man only in the miracle, i.e. as soon as he sees God he sees a miracle. But on his own it is not possible for him to see the miracle, since the miracle is his own annihilation.. It is more accurate to say that to see God or to see the miracle is by virtue of the absurd, for understanding must step aside.⁴⁶³

However, he fails to understand the implications of his thought. Even though the production of an authentic art object is always a possibility, there is always a denial of that object because of its ultimate inadequacy to the communication of the ideal. Yet, the very denial has value. This progression of thought is furthered by such statements as such:

Every striving which does not apply one-fourth, one-third, two-thirds, etc. of its power to systematically *working against* itself is essentially secular striving, in any case unconditionally not a *reforming* effort.. What does it mean to work against oneself? It is quite simple. If the established, the traditional, etc., in the context of which a beginning is to be made, is sound, thoroughly sound- well, then apply directly what has to be applied; in any case there can be no talk or thought of reforming, for if the established is sound, then there is nothing, after all, to reform.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³JP, vol. 1, p. 4, <<6; V A 78, n.d., 1844

⁴⁶⁴JP, vol. 6, pp. 294-295, <<6593; X² A 560, n.d., 1850

And, further:

To die to the world is the requirement. But compel- no, says, God, that I will absolutely not do, not at any price will I force a man to do that, and neither is it possible, since it is an act of freedom.⁴⁶⁵

The striving, the acting, the act of communication should contain failure; it must contain failure. Not only must the artist work against itself, but the implication is that the object must do so as well. But this has potential. Kierkegaard is speaking of the artist, but the object too, especially if the artist is aware of these strictures, can be an indication, and an even stronger one. Rigorousness and a dying-to-the-world is a requirement and, therefore, a requirement for the production of an authentic art object; the value is its valuelessness.

This is not something generally recognised in the secondary literature, though Pattison comes closest. He writes about the art object and its relation to faith in an interesting fashion. In it, he almost recognises the dialectical result of the art object's confrontation with time as a 'timeless' object. Pattison writes:

The task of faith, by way of contrast, is (in an expression from one of the *Edifying Discourses*) to become 'older than the moment', in patience and long-suffering to imitate the unchangeable character of God, a character powerfully described in Kierkegaard's last-published discourse in which it is made abundantly clear that this unchangeableness is not conceived in negative or metaphysical terms but in the quality of persistence and endurance through time- and only in this way also *beyond* time.⁴⁶⁶

It is this *beyond* time which is what the individual is striving for, and which the art object, by communicating its presence as a timeless object, dialectically determines for the individual as its path towards the actual truth of the ontological grounding of its existence. Art is inherently limited in its capacity to

⁴⁶⁵JP, vol. 3, p. 749, <<3770; X⁵ A 29, n.d., 1852

⁴⁶⁶Pattison, "Kierkegaard: Aesthetics and 'Aesthetic'" , p. 146

communicate such, but since each individual must arrive at the truth of its existence subjectively, the rejection of such an objective communication is a powerful and valuable, though, ultimately inadequate, guide.

Kierkegaard provides an interesting remark which shows, once again, how unaware or unwilling he was to recognise the dialectical possibilities for art that were contained within the framework of his literature. In *SUD* he writes:

...the self in despair is always building only castles in the air, is only shadowboxing. All these imaginatively constructed virtues make it look splendid; like oriental poetry, they fascinate for a moment; such self-command, such imperturbability, such *αταραξία*, etc. practically border on the fabulous. Yes, they really do, and the basis of the whole thing is nothing. In despair the self wants to enjoy the total being itself; it wants to have the honor of this poetic, masterly construction, the way it has understood itself. And yet, in the final analysis, what it understands by itself is a riddle, in the very moment when it seems that the self is closest to having the building completed, it can arbitrarily dissolve the whole thing into nothing.⁴⁶⁷

Kierkegaard is quick to point the difficulties and disappointments which are an inherent element in constructing an object- be it written or made of material- through which the individual seeks to establish some sense of identity. He is, of course, quite right when he continually points out that the external is a danger for the development of the individual self; a danger in that the individual can lose their sense of subjective self. However, this remark from his discussion of despair prompts a further, dialectical inquiry. It has been shown that Kierkegaard's understanding of the art object is, in general, idealistic in nature. Thus, as I have tried to stress throughout this research, for Kierkegaard the art object- if it is authentic- is a communication of the idea of the ideal to the individual. This means that the ideal is the truth about the

⁴⁶⁷*SUD*, pp. 69-70

existence of the individual, but its communication is always outside of existence; the ideal authentically communicated is the actual ideal rather than the merely ideal. However, Kierkegaard evades, at every turn, the possibilities inherent in his writing for the art object. In doing so, the very value of the art object is put into question within the framework of that writing and his description of existence and actuality. It is important to note, though, that Kierkegaard simply did not address this issue. And it is in the silence that the answer to the value of art is arrived at, both metaphorically and 'literally'.

The art object, in its fullest authentic manifestation as a communication of the idea of the ideal, becomes not merely a communication of that ideal. A second level exists once such a communication has been established or, when it has been made concrete, can be recognised as successful. This level is one of appropriation. Reception by an individual of another individual's ideal communication requires that this ideal be made part of the receiving individual's existence. It is part of the dialectic of the art object; both the producing and receiving individualities involved have a relationship to the ideal which applies to their own existences, transforming such towards knowledge of the ontological grounding of such within actuality. The reception of such a realisation of actuality within existence implies a transformation of the individualities on an ethical level, one consistent with a developing sense of moral decision, but one which is nearly outside of existence. Because of this development, the individualities must necessarily turn away from the art object towards themselves, abandoning the art object as a communication of knowledge. In effect, the art object is left out of the understanding of actuality which the individuality has taken into its existence. If this is so, then what of the art object? What is its value after such a process?

The art object is something that requires seriousness, a commitment to the authenticity of the actual truth of existence, but which it cannot achieve as a material, unified, and yet unexisting object. Only the divine can achieve this completely.

Only divine authority could impress the human race in such a way that the thing of absolutely willing the eternal became absolute seriousness. Only the God-Man can unite these two things: to work absolutely for extension, and absolutely to hold back on the question what is to be understood by being a disciple.⁴⁶⁸

Perhaps Kierkegaard is suggesting only Christ can be an authentic communication of the ideal in existence? The implications, however, for a material embodiment nearly achieve the potentiality of Christ. The death of art implies a limitation of the art objects potential for expressing the ideal or the actual as an idea within existence, but also allows an infinitising. This bears some similarity to the Hegelian interpretation of the art object, in that Hegel's conception of the communication of the art object is of the idea is that it communicates within material, and therefore limited, form. This allows to a limited extent, as always, the labelling of Kierkegaard as Hegelian in terms of aesthetic matters. However, a Kierkegaardian interpretation goes beyond this.

1. Initial Grounding

Kierkegaard's existential aesthetics are concerned primarily with the notion and explication of the existence of the individual and his relationship to his actuality, with the reduplication of the ideal nature of the truth of existence in the existence of the individual human being. In this sense, it is both informed and constrained by the religious, which is always present both in a dictation of the form of communications utilised as well as the subject matter of such

⁴⁶⁸Attack Upon "Christendom", 'The Instant, No. 5', July 27, 1855, p. 160

communications and which is always the primary direction of the development of the authorship. What can Kierkegaard teach us about the creation of material or externalised objects which are labelled art objects? What would he have to say not only about art objects created in the past, but also those being created now? Indeed, what prescriptive does a study of Kierkegaard's writing bring with itself when it is applied to the production of art? Or, more specifically, does it have anything to say at all? One criticism which I have of recent scholarship in the field is that it is generally limited to a discussion of works of art mentioned by Kierkegaard rather than applying his ideas to others. I have come up with a number of immediate answers to these questions. Kierkegaard's writing allows a number of interesting interpretations about the art object. However, Kierkegaard's answers more often than not produce questions of their own. For example, once the developing individual has come to terms with the esthetic stage, and is in the process of a development towards an appropriation of the truth of his existence, does art continue to have any value? Or, once that process of development has finished (and the individual has become an authentic Christian), can it continue to have value? Does it have value at all? Can an individual continue to create art once he is more fully aware of the nature of his existence? The answers to these questions will continue to provoke debate. What I would like to do is ask and answer a further question, one which is informed by recent theory in the arts and which radicalises art within a Kierkegaardian sense. The question changes the nature of any approach to art within Kierkegaardian sense, colouring not only the analysis of art works but also their production. That question is: is art dead?

What exactly do I mean by asking this question? How can art be dead? Analysing art works is partially asking after their value. It is a process of decision about the appropriateableness of such objects. Can we continue to take part in the communicative structure constructed as

part of the creation of the art within the light of certain theories of art? Or does art no longer have value. I believe that Kierkegaard provides an excellent answer to this question, but first I must consider the possible reasons for the labelling of art as dead.

What I would like to do is to analyse first of all some theory of Postmodernity, particularly as it is related to the writing of Arthur Danto and his 'end of art'. Second, I would like to clarify what I believe a Kierkegaardian prescriptive response would be to Danto's claim that art is dead. Taking into account certain difficulties, I would like to reverse that position and show that, in some areas, Danto and Kierkegaard are in agreement- though they themselves would never have realised it. This final argument is the third part of the dialectic of the value of the art object.

2. Postmodernity

Postmodern art and theory is no longer concerned with the impressive issues of the day, but with simply an exploration of playfulness and idiocy. Whims and fancies take the artist and the theorist to expand their horizons, but they actually say little at all, and nothing about the existential actuality of the individual. Certain statements epitomise this attitude. The work of Kroker and Cook posit the current trends as an age of schizophrenic delusion and illusions, where all that matters is double-edged and double-meaning statement. For them: "Words are no longer necessary; merely the seductive pose which entices the eye of the tourist. Codes are no longer required, as long as silence is eliminated... The postmodern scene is a panic site, just for the fun of it."⁴⁶⁹ In the writing of Foucault, the artist as an autonomous individual, constructing its own vision of the future and rejecting the past, is itself rejected. The author is dead. The artist is dead.

⁴⁶⁹Kroker, Cook, *The Postmodern Scene: Excremental Culture and Hyper-Aesthetics*, p.27

The author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works, he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. In fact, if we are accustomed to presenting the author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention, it is because, in reality, we make him function in exactly the opposite fashion. One can say that the author is an ideological product...⁴⁷⁰

And, if the author is dead, then Barthes has killed off the art object. Rather than privileging the art object as a communication of truth (or even untruth) which is self-contained, whose priority is to enliven a reciprocal gaze between viewer and object, the art object or text emerges in his work as being completely contingent. The art object is a product of shifting interchanges from an infinite variety of sources which deny the internal coherence of any meaning which might be attached to the identity of the object. The object is a field of play, a field of interactions, denying its own value, done solely for the pleasure of the text.

Just as Einsteinian science demands that the *relativity of the frames of reference* be included in the object studied, so the combined action of Marxism, Freudianism and structuralism demands in literature, the relativization of the relations of writer, reader and observer (critic). Over against the traditional notion of the *work*, for long- and still- conceived of in a, so to speak, Newtonian way, there is now the requirement of a new object, obtained by the sliding or overturning of former categories.⁴⁷¹

The text is not constructed with closure. It is experienced in a plural sense, regulated not by comprehension but by associations, contingencies, and a liberating of symbolic imagery. The reader is a text is at a loose end-

⁴⁷⁰Foucault, Michel, "What is an Author?" , Harrison and Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory*, pp. 923-928

⁴⁷¹Barthes, Roland, 'From Work to Text', Harrison and Wood, *Art in Theory*, p. 941

" what he perceives is multiple, irreducible, coming from a disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives... all these incidents [signifiers] are [only] half-identifiable... woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?), antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony."

The text is a new thing, asking the reader for co-operation in completing itself, asking the reader to play the game. Reading is reduced to a consumption in which the individual reader is making up his own recipe as he goes along.

Contemporary artists have taken this on board. Shirley Levine writes

We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture... We can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. Succeeding the painter, the plagiarist no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense encyclopaedia from which he draws.⁴⁷²

Or Peter Halley, whose emphasis on the individual artist at times bears a remarkable resemblance to the author A of *E/O I*: "The art of this period is overwhelmingly concerned with the situation of the individual as a perceiving and deciding entity."⁴⁷³ But these are choices based on the simulation of media images, of commercialism, of externality, in rejection of the responsibility to the existing individual's actuality. All of these statements point to an end to art, and end to the art as a strongly identified object whose purpose is the communication of an idea, or, the communication of the possibility of an idea leading the individual through their own sense of appropriation and reflection to the

⁴⁷²Baldwin, Michael, Ramsden, Mel, Harrison, Charles, 'Letter to a Canadian Curator', in Harrison and Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory*, p. 1067

⁴⁷³Halley, Peter, "Nature and Culture", in Harrison and Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory*, p. 1071

ideal. This is further aggravated by the writing of Arthur Danto.

Danto ends his book *The State of the Art* with a chapter titled "Approaching the End of Art". In it, he describes the transformation of the concept of art, showing that it has become a purely philosophical enterprise rather than solely a material exercise with intrinsic value. He begins the chapter by citing three quotations from Hegel's lectures on art:

Art no longer counts for us as the highest manner in which truth furnishes itself with existence.

One may well hope that art will continue to advance and perfect itself, but its form has ceased to be the highest need of the spirit.

In all these relationships, art is and remains for us, on the side of its highest vocation, something past.⁴⁷⁴

Art, for Danto as for Hegel, has come to a logical end. We have been living in an epilogue of art, a concluding postscript to its endeavours. Until recently, it has been a series of historical breakthroughs. Art has been considered historical rather than timeless by its creators, and its imperative has often been as simple as producing an art form which is different from previous ones:

a great deal of art was made that would have made little sense but for the belief that one had achieved a historical advance by means of it. The discoveries in questions had to do with the nature of art itself, for it is possible to read twentieth-century art as the collective quest for the essence and nature of art- a reading that is confirmed by the intolerance each stage in this advance provoked when the new forms were displayed as having captured and distilled the pure being of art.⁴⁷⁵

In essence, each new art form had been a rejection of the past in favour of the present. It had been an affirmation of those conditions in which specific individuals resided. But this has changed in recent days.

⁴⁷⁴Danto, p. 202

⁴⁷⁵Ibid., p. 204

In the 1970's, the art world became obsessed with two ideas. First, that everything had been done before and should simply be repeated.⁴⁷⁶ Indeed, this repetition became itself an art form, whereby the fact the one artist was quoting another was ascribed a certain artistic value- as long as it was being done with a sense of irony. Second, that a pluralistic value system transformed the previously convictions and puritanical intolerances: "the charge that everything other than what one was doing was *not really art*- gave way to a sort of pluralism, which is itself a concession that one no longer believes in a truth of art."⁴⁷⁷ Those movements which should have found themselves dialectically opposed to each other discovered that they had just as much in common as different. Why do one thing when something else- *no matter how different*- is just as acceptable? From the 1970's, the whole of history, the whole of the future, was consigned to a simple repetition of meaningless facts which would offer brief respite from the anxiety of the creative process, but which would never have an element of truth to them.

The forms of art had been used up. The *esthetic* in a purely Kierkegaardian sense has been realised, and a general malaise has set in. Art's truth was no longer to be discovered in the production of art but, as with the beginnings of Conceptual art, must be found outside of art. The question about the truth of art must consist amongst the known forms of art, and therefore answering this questions requires an outside perspective, neatly provided by philosophy. Danto's metaphor is particularly descriptive:

I thought at the time that there was an influential segment of the art world that rushed about the scene with Cinderella's glass slipper, but the slipper was huge and the feet were tiny. There would, even so, be ecstatic cries of "It fits! It fits!" as one very small foot after another found it could not fill enough of the immense slipper to take even a

⁴⁷⁶A position similar to that of Mannerism in the 16th century.

⁴⁷⁷Danto, p. 204

baby-step into the historical future. And those who believed in historical closure might have said that in any case there would be no place to set one's foot, because art was walled in by its own internal logic. History was over.⁴⁷⁸

Art had become meaningless. Those forms- even if they were as new as could be expected, were simply empty repetitions which were not indications of the actual but merely of themselves as ideas, and could no longer muster enough originality to cast off the burden that history had become, and instead found themselves comfortably in bed with those very functionaries who would abuse them. Form had become an empty repetition of quotations, feeding off other art objects in an effort to authenticate themselves by imitation. Content had become a matter of indifference, occasionally linked to a political motivation but, even so, still empty of any reference or reduplication in relation to the existence of the individual in the direction of the actual ideal. No art form is historical enough that it can continue history. The history of art was exhausted.

Danto's premise is based on Hegel's own claim about the end of art. This is not a claim that the production of art has come to a stop, that it has ceased to happen, but that the pattern of recurring revolution, transformation, and consummation has ceased.

Hegel had thought that art had come to an end in the *narrative* sense of ending, namely a an episode in a larger narrative in which art played a certain role. The story of art is the story of art's role in the grand history of the spirit. There was art before and there will be art after, but the highest vocation of art was to advance some grander matter. There was a moment when the energies of art coincided with the energies of history itself- and then it subsided into something else.⁴⁷⁹

Art's function was to occupy a specific period in the development of the self-consciousness of the Absolute, and once it had fulfilled its function, its ceased to be an innovatory form of human production. No matter how

⁴⁷⁸Ibid., p. 205

⁴⁷⁹Ibid., p. 211

narrativistic one might construe the history of art as being, it ends at some point. Art had to begin a quest in the direction of determining its essence.

In Hegelian terms, it had reached a kind of consciousness of itself as a problem. Up to now, art had a set of problems, but it was not a problem for itself. Perhaps it had been a problem for philosophers. But now, in becoming a problem for itself, it began to attain a certain philosophical dimension.. It could no longer assume that its history had to be the progressive endeavour it had seemed up to then to be.⁴⁸⁰

And, on the basis of such Hegelian terms, art no longer was a product for the development of the individual. Form and content were constructed no longer for the purpose of describing other than themselves. Art, through the 'logical', systematic development of itself, had to discover what it was. It had to work out its forms and become, through such a dialectical working out, self-aware. And, in that process, it closes itself off from the existential, from a revealing of the eternal element inherent in all.

3. Kierkegaard's First Response

Kierkegaard's writing provide a complicated and dialectical response. First, a response to Danto and Postmodern theory would be in agreement, speaking as if in criticism of the esthetic. Second, a further clarification of a Kierkegaardian response would disagree, since the art object is a form of communication which is ideal and indirect in nature and therefore has some value for the developing individual. Finally, to continue the dialectical thread, a Kierkegaardian response would find itself back in agreement with Danto, but only in that the value of art as a communication lies in the death of art, in an embodiment of its own valuelessness, and only in a manner which Kierkegaard failed to do.

⁴⁸⁰Ibid., p. 214

In the first position, Kierkegaard is more in agreement than disagreement. Art is dead, merely a product of the esthetic. The esthetic has no value beyond the requirements of the esthetic, and therefore does not allow a continuation of its value structure. The esthetic is a product of the immediate, and incapable of determining the future authentic possibilities for the developing individual. Art is not a communication assisting through indirect means such a development, but serving to facilitate an alleviation (albeit briefly) of the needs of the esthetic, and ultimately indicate that it is a dead endeavour. This is a position notable in Kierkegaard's negativity towards art. Art as object and communication is an expression of the idea truth of existence for the esthetic individual and the expression of the idea may be couched in concrete terms which might have relevance for the individual, but there is a failure also which is a further indication of possibilities for the future of the specific individual.

Analysing the arts, the author of the first half of *E/O I* states that the requirements of a classic work of art are its concrete communication of the idea:

The more abstract the idea is, the less the probability. But how does the idea become concrete? By being permeated by the historical. the more concrete the idea, the greater the probability. The more abstract the medium is, the less the probability; the more concrete, the more. But what does it mean that the medium is concrete except that it either is, or is seen in its approximation to, language, for language is the most concrete of all media. Hence, the idea that is disclosed in sculpture is totally abstract and has no relation to the historical; the medium through which it becomes manifest is likewise abstract.⁴⁸¹

But, the more concrete the communication of the idea is, the less appropriatable it is for the individual receiving such a communication. The failure to embody the historical denies the presentness of the individual existence and his relationship to the paradoxical nature

⁴⁸¹*E/O I*, p. 55

of his ontological grounding. As in *PC*, the artist does not paint in fear and trembling but in calm and contemplative detachment to produce the image. By being concrete, the idea becomes inappropriatable since it is absolutely separate from the individual's existence within actuality. By being concrete, the very static nature of such a communication denies further possibilities. Such a denial of possibilities leads the developing individual to reject the aesthetic as containing the possibilities which might continue to supply it with succour from its self-imposed necessities.

4. Kierkegaard's Second Response

In the second response, Kierkegaard would have had serious problems with this interpretation about the state of the arts today. At a most basic level, Danto's reliance on Hegel closes off the opportunity inherent in the art object as a production of an individual. Danto's description agrees with Hegel's that art is a product whose completion separates it from the individual who is producing the object as a form of communication. Kierkegaard would argue that art is not a teleological development of an expression of thought but the embodied form of communication of a singular individual communicating the idea of the ideal truth as it appears to him in the present. An art object is not that which Hegel has described. For Kierkegaard, it is both the aim of art, religion, and philosophy to show that truth does not consist of vague generalities but is the universal, particular, and determined for the individual existence. But, because the art object is so particular, it is also abstract, which does not communicate for Hegel the truth of the Idea. Kierkegaard would agree to this, since the object is a particular form of communication, but he would differ in an interpretation of its implications.

Kierkegaard would have also criticised Danto because he is describing an inauthentic art form- an esthetic object. What is obvious when reading Kierkegaard is that

he is critical of the esthetic stage of existence, which is characterised as childish, selfish, and barely aware of anything beyond its immediate concerns. This has led most critics to comment disapprovingly of art within a Kierkegaardian framework. No immediate value for the art object is found, and art is confined to the esthetic stage as something which the individual develops out of completely. This is based in part on Kierkegaard's own statements on individual art object. However, if one reads Kierkegaard negatively- with the understanding that what he is saying describes art as it should not be- one can begin to describe art within the context of his writing as it should be.

Danto's use of Warhol's art is an excellent field on which to compare the two. For Danto, Warhol's art objects are the culmination of the development of art as a human endeavour. They are not simply representations (though they are representations in the most basic sense, at a pre-iconographic and iconographic level) but are philosophical treatises whose questions and answers describe succinctly the nature of art. For Kierkegaard, Warhol's boxes are a sign of despair in a deep, demonic sense, aware of the potential, but refusing to translate possibility into actuality. Indeed, despair might be considered the subject of some of the best modern art. With Warhol, his objects are communications of the despair not to will to be one's self, to seek an identity which is beyond the individual self. Could we also look at other examples of 20thc. art in the same manner? Could Cubism be considered despair in the sense to be one's self? And Dada art, especially the work of Duchamp, as despair not to be one's self as well? Art of this kind is empty of meaning for the individual; it is alienated from the existential situation of the individual, and does not communicate the truth of its actuality. But it has meaning and positive value for the individual in a negative sense- it indicates through the negative the positive path to truth. Warhol's art (and so much of the postmodernists art products as well) is an expression of

despair, of a development towards that stage before the individual is capable of coming to terms with his ontological grounding; despair is developed negative content. And, in this sense, it not only constitutes the development of a high art form, but also prescribes the continuing possibilities of art.

Art as communication is a communication of the ideal. It can exist in a variety of increasingly authentic forms, from the purely inauthentic products of the esthetic individual to the fully expressive products of the religious. At its most authentic stage, art is a product of an individual situated existentially between the genius and the Apostle, being a facilitated communication (facilitated by the capabilities of the individual) while at the same time nearly containing the requirements of a revelation. Art cannot be at an end, since it is always the product of an individual contained wholly within their own existence. While a history of art is fine to maintain knowledge (something which Kierkegaard would not have problems with), art products must always be understood as the communication of one individual in a reciprocal relationship with other individuals in the context of their presentness. Danto's point that art has exhausted itself is entirely without grounds in Kierkegaard's thought because art, for Kierkegaard, is something which can be continually produced and has no relation to history except in the most material sense. Knowledge of art and art techniques may change, as may style,⁴⁸² but the fact that it is communication of the truth of existence, of actuality, is something which does not change. Therefore, art itself is never dead.

Positive and authentic art as communication can develop along with the individual. At the most esthetic level, it can act in a negative fashion, wholly a part of the dialectics of communication, to make the individual

⁴⁸²Which is something which an individual artist will take into account, since it is only a communication which is fully based in the existential situation of its viewers that can be authentic.

aware of the emptiness of their existence and indirectly allow them to advance. As the individual develops, the art object can function on an increasingly vital level, communicating the ideal truth in an increasingly direct fashion. Direct communication of facts was necessary, but was insufficient. They were required for the individual's activities within existence (within day-to-day activities), but they did not begin to express the ideal truth of the actuality of existence. The very nature of both the individual's ontological grounding as well as the individual's own nature made this an impossibility. What is necessary for communication of the ideal truth of actuality is indirect communication. Indirect communication fulfills the role of allowing the individual on his own existential terms to come to accept, to appropriate for his very actuality, the truth of existence. This presentation is not direct, in that its purpose is not to simply communicate facts, but is indirect, in that its intended purpose is to allow the receiving individual to reflect upon the message of the communication. In this very sense of indirectness, the negativity becomes positive; the Kierkegaardian notion of dialectics transforms the object into potential. This reflection is then applied to the individual's own existence and actuality, such that the receiving individual uses the knowledge of his existence, which he himself believes he has created, to transform his existence towards a better understanding of his ontological grounding. In clearer terms, the communicator wishes to change the way the receiving individual thinks, tells him something (often the opposite of what he intends, whereby Kierkegaard labels indirect communication as dialectical), and then allows the receiver to think that the change was brought about by his volition (the better to bring him peacefully to think a certain way without rebellion). But, as evidenced by the later writing of Kierkegaard, at some point in the individual's development the communication of the ideal

truth becomes necessarily direct in nature. Accordingly, one can ask where the art object fits into this.

5. A Kierkegaardian Third Response

In the third response that can be constructed from Kierkegaard's writing, but which is unrelated to his own position, he is again dialectical, in agreement with Danto that art is dead, but for a specific purpose rather than as a sign or indication of the state of the individual communicating or being communicated to. Art is created by individuals who have either developed towards an understanding of their ontological grounding or who are developing in that direction, and for individuals who are in the process of developing. My problem lies in the fact that appropriation, unlike the development of the individual, is a historical event and exists only within the context of repetition and its developed forms. Unlike an existential activity, which has implications for the individual's actuality within existence on an eternal basis, the appropriation of the ideal communication of an art object is historical; it happens once, and then ceases to continue to occur. The existential change becomes part of the existential and eternal nature of the individual receiving the message, but the object no longer continues to function in the same manner. The acceptance of Christianity by the individual is an appropriation of an historical event into the individual's eternal existence, but this is, for Kierkegaard, the only historical event which can be understood in such a manner. Kierkegaard writes:

Every step forward to the ideal is a backward step, for the progress consists precisely in my discovering increasingly the perfection of the ideal- and consequently my greater distance from it.⁴⁸³

The art object must reflect this concern, acquiring value through an expression of its own inadequacy, through its ideal communication of its distance from the truth of the

⁴⁸³JP, vol. 2, p. 287, <<1789; X³ A 509, n.d., 1850

actuality of existence. It is clear that the art object, once it has served its purpose in assisting the individual to make an existential decision about its own development, no longer continues to have value, for it shows in its embodied form as communication of the ideal how distant it is from being a communication of the actual truth.

In order to defend the reality of art in relationship to religious spirit the argument runs like this: the spirit penetrates a man in such a way that one sees what sort of a man he is- for example, when Luther said: God help me, Amen," he said this so that people got to see into his inner self, what manner of man he was. This then is something of a concession, although it must be remembered that it must not be taken too literally, for it transformed a man in this way, then also his enemies might immediately see the same thing. Next, it must be remembered that it does not hold true in respect to the object of "faith", precisely because immediate obviousness is denied in order to test faith and in order that faith can be faith- that is, there can very well have been a human transfiguration (although one should always bear in mind that the enemy did not see it- to take a lower example, the ones who stoned Stephen did not see his face as the face of an angel), but quite properly there is no corresponding direct immediacy as the token of its being God. And thus the object of faith is not available for artistic presentation. And even in the relations among men, to the extent to which a man in relationship to something may be the object for a kind of faith, to the same extent he cannot be painted or depicted in this relationship. For the fact that there must be accompanying faith signifies precisely that there is no direct immediacy; otherwise everyone would have to see the same thing...⁴⁸⁴

of miraculous revelation The direct immediacy is the only means of truly communicating the actual. The material immediacy of the art object makes this an impossibility. The fact that the immediacy is present, that communication of the idea of the actual ideal exists, gives initial value, but this communication then denies itself in the face of the actual. Art is dead because it is always dead, even if the individual creating it would

⁴⁸⁴JP, vol. 1, pp. 64-65, <<170; X² A 380, n.d., 1850

completely disagree. This position is found even in *E/O I*, in the section "The First Love" :

The occasion, therefore, is of the greatest significance for every literary work- yes, that is what really determines its true esthetic value. Literary works without any occasion always lack something- not outside themselves, for although the occasion belongs to it, yet in another sense it does not- but they lack something within themselves. A literary work in which the occasion is everything also lacks something. That is, the occasion is generative in the negative sense, not the positive. A creation is a production out of nothing, but the occasion is the nothing that lets everything come forth. The whole wealth of thought, the fullness of the idea, can be present, and still the occasion is lacking... So the occasion is simultaneously the most significant and the most insignificant, the highest and the lowest, the most important and the most unimportant. without the occasion, nothing at all actually occurs, and yet the occasion has no part at all in what occurs. The occasion is the final category, the essential category of transition from the sphere of the idea to actuality...⁴⁸⁵

The occasion, the moment, is the catalyst towards the beginning of appropriation of the actual into existence. Once the movement has occurred, however, the art object, whose necessity is its embodiment of the idea, is no longer necessary; while still maintaining necessity and unnecessity within its continuing existence. The art object becomes inadequate; for the receiving individual, in the face of the actual, it is lacking in movement towards the actual, once the actual has been initiated as knowledge in the existence of the receiving individual. Then, the possibility of the object which has moved into actuality through necessity, is negated. The occasion is the object, the expression of the ideal. But, it fails. Why? Because it is doomed to failure, because it must be an embodied form of failure, of inadequacy. An art object is not simply a means of reliving, re-experiencing an experience, so as to engage in romantic irony, but is communication which can be of an authentic sort but which

⁴⁸⁵*E/O I*, pp. 236-238

also ends itself. It acts only as a witness to the existence of actuality, as can be seen in the following passage:

The idea of proving the existence [*Tilværelse*] of God is of all things the most ridiculous. Either he exists [*er til*], and then one cannot prove it (no more than I can prove that a certain human being exists [*er til*]; the most I can do is to let something testify to it, but then I presuppose existence)- or he does not exist, and then it cannot be proved at all.⁴⁸⁶

And, thus, it is not capable of, acting as a communication of the actual, but its incapability directs the individual yet again inward into the receiving individual's existence, leaving the responsibility of its existence in relation to the actual to itself.

This position is further clarified if one takes into account Kierkegaard's understanding of two modes of communication: despair and love. Despair is a misrelation of the synthesis, though it is not the synthesis itself. Despair is a result of God releasing the individual to determine the balance of the synthetic elements out of which the individual being is constructed. God allows the individual to construct itself, but also allows the individual to create a lack of equilibrium. The individual creates a misrelation, and this misrelation of the relation relating itself to itself which is a continually renewed effect of the relation to the synthesis, since its manifestation can be traced to every instance of possibility occurring within the existence of the individual.

Every actual moment of despair is traceable to possibility; every moment he is in despair he *is bringing* it upon himself. It is always the present tense; in relation to the actuality there is no pastness of the past: in every actual moment of despair the person in despair bears all the past as a present in possibility.⁴⁸⁷

Despair is a process of self-negation which is continuously affirming the individual. It is an impotency

⁴⁸⁶JP, vol. 2, p. 93, <<1334; V A 7, n.d., 1844

⁴⁸⁷SUD, p. 17

for the individual to act which manifests itself also when the individual despairs in being itself. By attempting to determine one's self, the self is also attempting to determine the self as what the self is not; therefore, the individual self creates a misrelation in the self which is the continuation of despair. Thus despair is continually present, even in the face of death. Despair over the eternal requires more imaginative capability, and this very fact indicates the potentiality for the object. The art object must embody a sense of despair in itself. This despair is a significant step towards an authentic appropriation of the ontological grounding because "this is *despair over his weakness*"⁴⁸⁸ where the individual has risen to a new form of consciousness. First comes consciousness of the self, then a further understanding of what despair is, then, despair becomes an act. It is still a step forward, in that it is a closer realisation of the significance of despair, and closer still to an understanding of knowledge of the actual ontological grounding of existence, but is still despair of weakness. Kierkegaard identifies this as the development of inclosing reserve, which is the opposite of immediacy. And breaking out of it is only a further intensification of despair as an attempt. Kierkegaard cites the pursuit of great activities, restlessness, sensuality, etc.; all are noted as attempts to return to immediacy, all failing because of the increased separation from immediacy in the direction of the truth of actuality.

Despair is defiance, consciously an act as a individual against the eternal while simultaneously recognising the eternal. It is an act which contains the possibility of a recognition of the actual truth of existence, but a possibility which is realised only if the act of despair is overcome. The individual beings to fashion out of a form of the self the self which the individual desires- "he does not want to put on his own

⁴⁸⁸Ibid., p. 61

self, does not want to see his given self as a task- he himself wants to compose his self by means of being the infinite form." ⁴⁸⁹ The self in defiance is despairing through acts which are imaginary constructions grounded in existence rather than in actuality. The individual recognises no power over itself, simulating earnestness. But this is imaginary precisely because self-redoubling remains contained within the self.

In so far as the self in its despairing striving to be itself works itself into the very opposite, it really becomes no self. In the whole dialectic within which it acts there is nothing steadfast; at no moment is the self steadfast, that is, eternally steadfast.⁴⁹⁰

This is a hatred towards existence, but a form willing to remain in it. This is a rejection also of eternity's position regarding the individual's actual existence (as is all despair ultimately), which will have the final say in death. The esthetic aesthetic product is concerned with finite needs. The authentic art object, in contrast (and indicating the communication of the ontological or Christian truth of existence), is concerned with a synthesis of the finite and the infinite, but always with an indication of the infinite at hand as an interested object. From the point of view of an authentically developing individual, as well as from the requirement of the necessity of an authentic form to communicate truths, death and the heroism of Christianity (the death to the world in favour or as a martyr to the truth) is an indication of truth. This is particularly interesting when one considers that death still has an element of ending and finality. In application to the art object, acts in despair indicate death, since it indicates nothing else but a break from the finite (including its specific objectness), and the object indicates the same, if its communication is authentic. This break from the finite leads to the infinite. Death indeed becomes almost

⁴⁸⁹Ibid., p. 68

⁴⁹⁰Ibid., p. 69

an abiding factor. In a journal entry, Kierkegaard writes:

Therefore the art now is to be a reflective martyr, a person who from the beginning moves in all consciousness toward this, employing all capacities (which otherwise are used to gain earthly advantage) to engage in everything in such a way so that men cannot get rid of him- and then becomes a martyr. This is a protracted and difficult process, to do all this and to hold on year after year, simply to achieve one's downfall, but to fall, of course, in such a way that truth is decisively victorious. This is the ultimate means for extricating men out of the self-satisfied fascination with prudence and shrewdness. Such a martyr I would call "truth's secret agent."⁴⁹¹

The martyr is, for Kierkegaard, an individual. For myself, beyond Kierkegaard, the art object must also be a martyr. The beginnings of despair are the beginnings of a recognition of the self as an individual who is determined according to the synthesis. The art object cannot make an individual fully aware of their identity as self, as individual self separate from other externality.

This position can be created through interpretation even in those areas of the authorship least likely to be a discussion of art. Kierkegaard devotes the final chapter in *WL* to a discussion which has profound implications for the art work within his system- "The Work of Love in Praising Love"⁴⁹² For him, to speak of love is no art. To do so is to restrict both love and art as a product of a superficial level of accidental talent. Speaking of love is an universal aspect of the individual, since it is upbuilding and since everyone can speak of it.

Self-renunciation, as noted, is a requirement for love. God is love and, therefore, only in self-

⁴⁹¹*JP*, vol. 3, p. 155, <<2646; IX A 495, n.d., 1848. An important statement about the artist's role in relationship to other individuals. The martyr is "truth's secret agent" and the authentic artist, writer, poet must also act in such a capacity, to produce such that individuals must act towards his production, his communication, as if it requires martyrdom. Also an indication of the final death of art.

⁴⁹²*WL*, p. 359-374

renunciation can one truly praise love. "What a human being of himself knows about love is very superficial; he must get to know the deeper love from God, that is, in self-denial he must become what every human being can become... an instrument for God." ⁴⁹³ The art object may be an act of self-renunciation but "the work of praising love *must* be done inward in self-renunciation" ⁴⁹⁴; this indicates, in contrast to superficial praise for love, an existential path for the artist to authentically approach and use love as a subject matter for his art. The artist can praise erotic love and friendship, relying on his rare gift, the invention of presence, the relationship to his muse and the abilities of production. The part of the artist, however, cannot be to praise love in its fullest glory solely through such means, since love requires self-renunciation.⁴⁹⁵ Inward self-renunciation and a desire to fully understand his fellow human beings as individuals within a community of individuals is potential for art which should meet Kierkegaard's approval. The outward aspect of the art would be achieved through sacrificial disinterestedness, making oneself merely an unprofitable servant, while the inner would be achieved by the object's own individual growth towards an understanding of his ontological grounding. Love expressed and embodied to the highest degree in a Christian sense is the point at which Kierkegaard might be willing to agree to an authentic art object, containing within itself both an expression of the nature of the individual as well as expressing what it means to be an individual within the dialectical requirements of the individuality's ontological grounding, grounding this as an authentic art form. Art and love become almost synonymous. Both are the communicative acts of authentic individuals towards other individuals for the purpose of indirectly inducing a development towards authenticity in another individual, directing the individual to

⁴⁹³Ibid., p. 334

⁴⁹⁴Ibid., p. 331, my emphasis

⁴⁹⁵And this is something which most artists are unwilling to grant themselves to produce their art, relegating them to the esthetic.

understand the necessary being of his individuality, revealing the individual task of his existence, and grounding that existence and the individual's self, and assisting others in a recognition of this through self-renunciation, through its communication in God. Love is the most direct path to this, but art can function as an indirect path, communicating between individuals and revealing this communication as being based in God's existence.

This description of the art object points the way to a new manner of thinking about the art object, one in which the art object no longer has value and identity intrinsic to its nature, but has value only in assisting the development of the authentic identity of the individuals involved. Once completed and then given, the art object destroys itself as an identifiable Being and asserts the identities of those included in the process. Hence, art too must be a demonstration of death, its own death. In the first position, Kierkegaard finds himself in agreement with Danto. The necessities for the continuing production of the art object, of any art object, is a dead issue. Since the individual is in a process of authenticating himself solely in terms of his own relationship to the ontological grounding of the actuality of his existence, the work of art is a superfluous element which does not assist the individual to come to terms with the paradoxical truth of his existence. In the second position, the art object as a communication is a continually reflective element in the development of the individual which ultimately kills itself off. Finally, while maintaining the Kierkegaardian dialectic, the absurd becomes potency. Kierkegaard writes:

The human dialectic cannot advance further than to the admission that it cannot think this [revelation], but also to the admission that this does not imply any thing more than that it cannot think this. But the human dialectic, if it wants to understand itself, consequently, be humble, never forgets that God's thoughts are not man's thoughts, that all this about genius

and education and reflection makes no difference but that divine authority is the decisive factor, that the apostle is the one whom God calls as such... *The divine category* is the category, and here, also, quite appropriately, is the characteristic mark of it: *the possibility of offense*. Undoubtedly a genius can be an offense, *esthetically*, for a moment or 50 years or a 100, but he can never be an offense *ethically*; the offensive factor is that a man has divine authority.⁴⁹⁶

The application of this position regarding the art object beyond Kierkegaard's authorship is as such- the actual is not part of man's existence. The art object's potency, its possibility, is in its communication of the idea of the actual ideal, but its existence is always in opposition to its existence as embodied communication. As such, the art object acts to begin the movement towards knowledge of the actual within existence while remaining outside of the existence of the individual, moving through indirect communication to transform the existence of the receiving individual closer to actuality, within the process of repetition and reduplication. After this process has begun, the art object does not continue to have importance for the individual within existence. The object communicates, but its material immediacy is immediately nullified by itself within the existence of the receiving individual (though it may continue to exist and impact on other individuals). The absurdity of the object establishes a requirement to a returning reflectiveness in the individualities involved, and no longer functions to facilitate such reflectiveness once the embodied communication is fully appropriated. The art object, once appropriated as the idea of the actual ideal, then withdraws from the existence of the receiving individual. The conclusion is that art's value is its valuelessness.

⁴⁹⁶JP, vol. 3, p. 365, <<3026; VIII² B 15, n.d., 1847. Divine authority and revelation are beyond human understanding and conception, and the production of an art object, no matter how close to the actual truth of existence, remains inadequate.

Appendix One- The Self in Fichte and Kierkegaard

Fichte states that his method is Kantian and, unlike many who called themselves Kantian, he believed that he was the only one to positively build upon Kant's system. The important element of Kant for Fichte is his method- Fichte stressed the deductive method as a means of demonstrating a certain concept deriving its conception and identity from an activity which designates it. Kant takes as his starting point our experience of spatial and temporal aspects of experience in causal connection- Fichte does not deny the value of this method, but he maintains that deduction must have its source in our immediate but nonsensible acquaintance with an absolute and infinite self, a process of deduction which arrives at the totality of the structure of experience.

This process has, as its goal, a definition of the self as absolute and unconditioned. In Fichte's understanding "a finite, rational being has nothing beyond experience"⁴⁹⁷ and, thus, a philosopher must raise himself above experience through his freedom of thought. This is strengthened when the philosopher, in Fichte's understanding, accepts idealism as the means to described actuality, in that with idealism concentrates on the self-in-itself which occurs as something real for the consciousness and not as a thing-in-itself as determined by itself. For Fichte, the highest concern for a philosopher should be himself. Within idealism, the intellect, as but a part of the self, acts without grounding external to itself, without external determination. The intellect is act- Fichte stresses that it is not activity- and as such is determinative in its own right such that the intellect as determinative acts within law which are necessary to limit its own being.

The self is nothing but reversal into itself such that it is not necessarily present a priori to itself to make itself an object of its attention. The self emerges only as a matter of reflection, not as a conceiving and

⁴⁹⁷Fichte, J. G., *The Science of Knowledge*, p. 8

not as consciousness but as an act leading to self-consciousness. This act is an act of self-consciousness which leads to consciousness and through it to the self as the original positer of the self.

This proposition of the existential of the self is only possible if the self, in positing itself, posits itself as absolute and valid. "It is a ground of explanation of all facts of empirical consciousness, that prior to all postulation in the self, the self itself is posited." ⁴⁹⁸ For Fichte, "that whose being or essence consists simply in the fact that it posits itself as existing, is the self as absolute subject. As it posits itself, so it is; and as it is, so it posits itself; and hence the self is absolute and necessary for the self. What does not exist for itself is not a self." ⁴⁹⁹

With the positing of the self, there is thus a positing of the not-self by the self, i.e. that which is opposed to the self is not-self. Though the not-self is posited by the self, it negates the self as the self negates the not-self, thus both positing and annulling the self. Both the self and the not-self are posited in and through the self as mutually limiting each other. The process of annulling is checked by the self which acts to check itself and through checking itself creates its own reality. This process of checking is one in which the self determines and limits itself imagination and activity as absolute and infinite through the finite, thus creating the finite conditional self and its counterpart, the objective world, which is the not-self. The self determines itself as determined by the not-self through absolute activity and thus, through activity, the self posits itself by determining itself through absolute activity which posits the not-self.

The self is positive, while the not-self is negative; in positing itself the self posits negative qualities to itself, thereby checking itself, producing a series of interdetermination. The grounding of the

⁴⁹⁸Ibid., p. 96

⁴⁹⁹Ibid., p. 98

interaction as interdetermination is absolutely grounded by the fact that it is posited by the self- this interdetermination as activity grounds the not-self within the self as positing the not-self. The objective of the not-self is thus determined by a check on the subjective of the self whereby the self sets bounds for itself- thus, the self moves beyond a requirement of a not-self towards pure determination and the activity of the intellect. This activity becomes an interplay whereby the self posits itself both as infinite and absolute and finite and bounded by the not-self (which is a creation of the self). This interplay Fichte calls imagination, which reconciles contradictions. Thus, the not-self is but an imagined and reconciled aspect of the self's positing itself within itself as itself. Reality exists through this process, for Fichte, whereby the self imagines the object and thus intuitively grasps the object by stabilising it, determining it, and producing it so as to understand it. "Understanding is a dormant, inactive power of the mind the mere receptacle of what imagination brings forth."⁵⁰⁰ Thus, by limiting itself, the self, through imagination, posits the not-self and understands it as reality, thus positing and determining actuality.

Though there are a number of problems with Fichte's thought- the absolute, in checking itself, becomes no longer absolute; the transcendental method used by Fichte does not adequately match his description of experience; and Fichte's dialectical method of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis is inadequate to the process of thought that he is describing- nevertheless, Fichte does produce a form of thought that has certain value, embodying the Romantic. The central aspect of Fichte's thought sees the self as positing itself, as setting its own value for itself; the absolute posits the not-self and, through this positing, posits the self-conscious self. The absolute self is an active being, having two drives: the practical and the theoretical. The practical drive seeks

⁵⁰⁰Ibid., p. 207

to fill out infinity, to engage in an activity which does not have any finite end and to transform its surroundings into something similar to itself. The theoretical drive is one that forces the absolute self to reflect upon itself, limiting the infinite process of conditioning which the practical drive undertakes and thus limiting itself. The conflict which takes place between these two drives limits the self's activities to a contemplation of its self, positing both an external world to transform as well as to limit, and also positing a finite self through which to act in practical as well as theoretical terms governed by the activity of the imagination.

The self in Kierkegaard's philosophy, in contrast to Fichte's conception, is not a particular phenomenon, an imaginative construction, nor an imaginatively constructing phenomenon; it is, instead, a process of development which the individual undertakes. The self comes to a fuller realisation of itself through contemplation of itself as such. The self of the individual thus constitutes itself to some degree but, lacking a grounding for this self as such, continues to evolve towards a fuller understanding of the self's actual ontological dependence upon God for the grounding of its being in a process of reflection. The self is constructed of specific dialectical elements which grant the individual human being the ability to continue to ground the development of itself- the process of becoming an authentic self- and are a necessary part of that individual. Through these, the self becomes able to relate itself to itself and to its own formal structure. Therefore, because of this self-relational activity, the self constructs a form of communication with itself which informs its communication with other individualities. Thus, the formal structure of the self and its relation to itself structures the communication between it and other selves. In this sense, the self must be looked at as part of the formal structure of any aesthetic object.

Kierkegaard utilises a definition of the self as a concept to describe the individual throughout his

writing, expressed most clearly in the opening lines of *SUD*. The opening lines have provided much confusion, but are easily understandable if read within the context of Kierkegaard's understanding of the three stages. Kierkegaard begins:

A human being is spirit. But what is spirit? Spirit is the self. But what is the self? The self is a relation that relates itself to itself or is the relation's relating itself to itself in the relation; the self is not the relation but is the relation's relating itself to itself. A human being is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short, a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two. Considered in this way, a human being is still not a self.

In the relation between two, the relation is the third as a negative unity, and the two relate to the relation and in the relation to the relation; thus, under the qualification of the psychical the relation between the psychical and the physical is a relation. If, however, the relation relates itself to itself, this relation is the positive third, and this is the self.

Such a relation that relates itself to itself, a self, must either have established itself or have been established by another.

If the relation that relates itself to itself has been established by another, then the relation is indeed the third, but this relation, the third, is yet again a relation and relates itself to that which establishes the entire relation.

The human self is such a derived, established relation, a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another.⁵⁰¹

This description of the self takes three stages: first, the self is seen as a synthesis of opposing elements- the infinite and the finite, temporal and the eternal, and freedom and necessity- thus constituting the initial or esthetic stage of individual existence; second, the self is seen as a relation between the two elements while at the same time being a relation negatively to the relation itself, i.e. a form of self-consciousness, thus constituting the ethical existence of the individual;

⁵⁰¹*SUD*, p. 13-14

finally, the self develops such that it understands itself as dependent upon God as a positive third in a dialectical relation with its negative aspects. Through this progression the self comprehends itself such that it becomes an authentic self- a vital process in Kierkegaard's thinking.

The first stage defines for Kierkegaard what he means by a "human being". A human being is not yet a self as such, but only has the capacity to become an authentic self in that it is a synthesis of both form as body and content as spirit. It is composed of the various elements- the infinite and the finite, temporal and the eternal, and freedom and necessity- which are the source of conflict within the spirit of the human being. The conflict arises when the individual stresses either one or the other aspect of the above pairs- either the infinite or the finite, etc.- to the point that he is overcome by anxiety and despair. What follows is a discussion of the these pairs.

The infinite/finite aspects of the individual are "the synthesis of which the finite is the limiting and the infinite the extending constituent."⁵⁰² To stress the infinite capacity of the individual is to stress the constructive nature of the individual's imagination and capacities. The danger is that "the self becomes only more and more volatilized and finally comes to be a kind of abstract sentimentality."⁵⁰³ This aspect of the volatilization of the individual takes place on the level of feeling, knowing, or willing, such that the individual is no longer recognisable as itself, but has believed itself to be constituted infinitely, and thus finds itself without grounding except within its own constructions. To stress the finite aspects of the individual is to emphasise the grounding of reality in a mere prudential attitude towards life. To stress finitude is to stress reductionism and narrowness, to be concerned only with secularity and to "lack primitivity... to have

⁵⁰²Ibid., p. 30

⁵⁰³Ibid., p. 31

emasculated oneself in a spiritual sense... [in] fear of men not to dare to be itself in its more essential contingency... in which a person is still himself for himself." ⁵⁰⁴ The individual at this level of selfhood is either immersed in its own powers of imagination, thus rejecting reality, or so immersed in reality and its care within that it has rejected its powers of imagination.

To stress either the eternal or the temporal is not directly handled in the text of *SUD*, but is found in a journal entry included in the publication as well as in *CA*. A correspondence exists between the eternal and the infinite, and the temporal the finite. The individual who stresses the eternal stresses his individuality as if it is immortal, capable of being dispersed throughout eternity, throughout different moments. By understanding the individual's individuality as such he constructs himself such that he is not bound within the present moment. The individual who stresses the temporal stresses the individual moment, such that he is unconcerned with the future but concerned only with present moment as it occurs for his individuality- "one may say [of such a] man that he lives only in the moment" ⁵⁰⁵. Neither aspects of the individual if they are stressed allow the individual to come to terms with the moment as an existentially-dialectically qualified aspect of being, allowing the individual to exist both within temporality and eternity simultaneously. As seen in *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*, the emphasis on one or the other is to be either unaware of the limitations of the individual as such or to have no knowledge of the eternal aspects of the individual as an immortal soul.⁵⁰⁶

To stress either freedom or necessity also corresponds between the infinite and the finite to a degree. In stressing possibility (as freedom, in an undeveloped manner), the individual finds no grounding not only for its imaginative activities, but also no

⁵⁰⁴Ibid., p. 33

⁵⁰⁵*CA*, p. 88

⁵⁰⁶*Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*, p. 35

grounding for its activities as an individual. "The self runs away from itself in possibility, it has no necessity to which it is to return."⁵⁰⁷ Possibility becomes greater for the self such that reality for the individual no longer has any meaning but is understood only as possibility for the individual. The individual lacks actuality and has become unreal. To stress necessity, the individual removes itself from all possibility, and finds its future to be non-existent. "To lack possibility means either that everything has become necessary for a person or that everything has become trivial."⁵⁰⁸ The individual has removed the hope of possibility to become bound by determinism, a fatalist.

In *SUD* Kierkegaard analyses the effects of the above, when an individual emphasises either one or another aspects of his individuality. In Kierkegaard's understanding, the emphasis of one or another in the individual results in "the sickness unto death", which is despair as a development from anxiety. This despair, which will be analysed in a later essay, directs the individual to investigate his own nature through reflection and, in the process, reveals the individual as determined only by these pairs to be groundless with regards to its own being.

What is clear is that Kierkegaard regards the emphasis that an individual at this point makes is something to be rejected in favour of reflection. This process of reflection leads the individual towards an understanding of his ontological grounding. Yet, these pairs which constitute the individual self at this level must still be understood to be a necessary aspect of the individual; by reflecting on itself, the individual self does not remove itself from these pairs as governing and defining aspects of its being. It is thus clear that the pair of the infinite/finite, temporal/eternal, and possibility/necessity are necessary and inherent aspects of the individual self such that they constitute the

⁵⁰⁷*SUD*, p. 36

⁵⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 40

initial grounding of the self as a human being. Concerning this, Adorno writes: "Kierkegaard's 'self' remains mythically-ambiguously between autonomy as the immanent production of meaning and a reflection that perceives itself in the semblance of ontology."⁵⁰⁹ Even if the individual self in Kierkegaard's eyes is required to remain wholly within the process of reflection towards ontological transcendence and revelation, the self still is dependent upon itself as human being, such that its reflection is a necessary aspect in that it relates itself to its relations within itself. It is this aspect which leads into the second part of the definition of the self.

The second stage of the self occurs as the individual comes to acquire reflection as an aspect of its individuality. It is at this point that the individual becomes a true self to a limited degree, understanding the relation of the psychical as spirit to the physical form of the individual being, and thus coming to an understanding of itself in reflection as a relation to the relations which define its initial being and thus as a third relation in a negative and defining relation to the relations of the previous groups of pairs. "The self is not a simple sum of the factors that compose its synthesis; its direction is not to be determined by mere analysis of the 'vectors' of its component aspects. Everything about the self is subject to an independent variable- namely, the stance which the self takes toward it."⁵¹⁰ The individual self becomes self-relating, from which arises self-consciousness.

Through anxiety and despair (to be examined in later essays) the self becomes volitional, capable of determining itself as it exists in relation not only to the pairs of determinants which were discussed as part of the first stage but also as external to these pairs as a relation to their own relations. It is difficult to

⁵⁰⁹Adorno, T. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, p. 81

⁵¹⁰Glenn, John D. "The Definition of the Self and the Structure of Kierkegaard's Work" in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Sickness Unto Death*. p. 11

separate Kierkegaard's conception of the self at this stage from despair as a dialectically defining concept—he describes the self to be fully governed by despair. At this point its development has occurred precisely because, through despair, it has become self-consciousness. Therefore, it can either will to reject the aspect of itself in consciousness of its own despair and its relation to the eternal and its ontological grounding and thereby will to be unaware of the lack of its grounding in this manner or it can will to declare the validity of itself as residing wholly within itself as an active self-consciousness and willing being, and thereby be made aware of the lack of its grounding in this manner. What is clear is that the self is to be regarded as the unity of the diverse aspects of the self which appear in the first stage of its development as well as an individual self who contains the possibility to recognise that the grounding of its being is beyond itself and ontologically dependent. The freedom which is the governing aspects of the self, in despair, to will to be either not itself or will to be itself at this stage forces the individual to understand that its conception of itself is correct if it is seen as being self-reliant. "The person in despair believes that he himself is the evidence, and that is what he wants to be, and therefore wants to be himself,"⁵¹¹ but finds that it is only in undertaking an absolutely unconditioned affirmation of the self that the self enters into authentic selfhood, ultimately dependent upon a condition for the existence of its being.

In this third aspect of the individual self, the self comes to a relationship within itself such that it recognises both itself as being ontological dependent upon as well as that the relation which relates itself to itself and therefore to the diverse elements of the first aspect of the self relates itself to that which grounds itself, which is the positive third of God. This occurs

⁵¹¹SUD, p. 73

when the individual self wills to be itself to the most authentic degree that it can, willing to be oneself in the fullest sense to take up an affirmative stance towards one's foundation such that "consciousness is decisive. Generally speaking, consciousness- that is, self-consciousness- is decisive with regard to the self. The more consciousness, the more self; the more consciousness, the more will; the more will, the more self." ⁵¹² The self becomes a new self in that it recognises the gradation of the self prior to the revelation of the ontological grounding, and thereby "this self takes on a new quality and qualification by being a self directly before God. The self is no longer the merely human self but is... the theological self, the self directly before God." ⁵¹³

This grounding of the self takes on two aspects. First, the self comes to understand the ontological grounding of itself as being a transparent aspect of its being. This is a product of the development from the first stage of the self, when the self was unaware of the nature of the grounding of its being and could be described as being unaware while at the same time futilely searching for the answer in immediacy- the self now has come to terms with that which grounds its being, which is the ontological nature of its relationship with God. "In general, 'transparency' seems to mean this: the self's awareness of its ontological and ethical status (in particular its creaturehood and sinfulness), both as part of the human race and as a specific individual, especially in its relation to God as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer." ⁵¹⁴ Second, the "power" on which the self is dependent upon is identified conclusively as God as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer. This identification is constructed from the concept of despair, in which Kierkegaard declares that the synthesis of the individual at the first stage of individuality as well as the

⁵¹²Ibid., p. 29

⁵¹³Ibid., p. 79

⁵¹⁴Glenn, John D. in *International Kierkegaard Commentary: The Sickness Unto Death*. p. 13

development of the individual through anxiety and despair could only come about through the possibility of redemption from the effects of despair and sin (which is only understood once the individual posits its possible relation with God and is thereby as a self a product of the development of anxiety and despair within the individuality). The individual recognises that it exists within a state of despair from which, on its own, it is unable to remove itself. Redemption from despair and sin is not self-granted, but must come from without. Thus, the self comes to a state in seeking redemption from sin whereby "in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it."⁵¹⁵ It is at this point that the self comes to term with itself and its relationship to the necessary ontological grounding of its being through God and, for Kierkegaard, becomes an authentic self. The self thus becomes what Kierkegaard would define as a authentic self: "a derived, established relation, a relation that relates itself to itself and in relating itself to itself relates itself to another."⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵*SUD*, p.1 31

⁵¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 14

Appendix Two- The Application of these Ideas

To fully apply the ideas contained within this thesis is an impossibility. The clearest reasons for this are two-fold. First, any Kierkegaardian description of the art object is proscriptive, i.e. it is an indication of *how* to produce art first and foremost. It is also, and dialectically, descriptive and opposed to any proscription. Because of this, an application would involve the creation of an art object within this thesis, something which is beyond its scope.

Second, and more importantly in my opinion, is the fact that this description *is* applicable within an art historical sense. While the primary aim of Kierkegaard's description of the art object would be to promote the authentic production of the art object, the primary aim of the *Kierkegaardian* description could be analysis. However, this is even more strewn with pitfalls than the proscriptive. This involves two levels of sustained thought.

First, the artist must be analysed *in toto*, not only the individual artist's objects produced throughout its lifetime in an holistic fashion, but also the artist's life. Furthermore, the artist must be examined as it relates its life to the idea of the actual ideal, i.e. whether or not it has successfully appropriated its ontological grounding. This is, of course, an impossibility, since the artist remains a subjective individual outside of the interpreting subjectivity, and its relation to the actual is beyond the knowledge of another individual within existence.

Second, since one is thereby making *judgements* about the individual artist's life and production, one then has to question the validity of one's judgements. Reception theory enters into the formula, and the receiving individual is, thereby, required to determine whether or not it has appropriated the production's communication in a manner which will lead to a fuller development of the knowledge, understanding, and appropriation of the

individual's relation within existence to its ontological grounding of the idea of the actual ideal.

This is one of the most difficult problems to reconcile within the thesis. On the one hand, Kierkegaard does make mention of a number of examples of art objects throughout his writing. However, these are usually controversial and, in some cases, are written from a the point of view of a specific stage of existence. The discussion of Mozart in *E/O I* is a good example, but Mozart is analysed from a purely esthetic viewpoint within a pseudonym, making it difficult to extract a distinct and encompassing understanding of the artist and his objects within the entire range of Kierkegaardian thought. On the other, I could mention and discuss artists who are either outside of the Kierkegaardian definition of the art object or within it. A number of artists can be understood within the range of this thesis or have been specifically influenced by the writing of Kierkegaard himself. Anselm Kiefer, Keith Haring, Picasso, Poussin, Rembrandt, Michelangelo (whose identification by both himself and Vasari as 'genius' would be most interesting), Walter Anderson, Christian Købke, Fra Angelico, Dürer, Jackson Pollock, and many others (I have listed only visual artists, but others could also included) are candidates for being "acceptable" within a Kierkegaardian framework, and many of the Abstract Expressionists (notably Robert Motherwell⁵¹⁷) are known to have read him. In light of the length of this thesis (and in light of its concluding length), however, for the sake of brevity, I have excluded any lengthy references to specific artists of art objects. Merely to attempt a discussion within the entire range of this thesis, as would be required to remain faithful to the intent of Kierkegaard, is something beyond its scope.

⁵¹⁷I believe that it would make an extremely interesting line of research to investigate the influence of Kierkegaard on artists, in particular those influenced by Walter Lowrie's translations during the 20thc.

Yet, I would like to indicate some of the positive potential involved. At first glance, any application of this theory would necessarily involve an level of sustained thought which is almost unnecessary. I would agree. Not only is it an impossibility for the receiving subjectivity to make a judgement while at the same time as receiving the communication and appropriating it into its existence, but to make a judgement about the producer of that material form of the communication would involve the same process twice over. What my thesis does do, however, is allow a deeper understanding of the relations between the artist and the receiving individual and the production. This is still being judged on radical contingencies, but it has always been clear to me that the radicalness of the theory is part of its value.

Furthermore, the radicalness of the contingencies involved allow another lever of judgement, and perhaps this is where the Kierkegaardian description of the art object is best suited. It has been continually clear to myself that the only objects which could function within these strictures are those which are labelled "great art". This may be a way of determining why some singular objects become the target of adulation, and others are confined to the back storage rooms of museums.

Finally, could these ideas be applied to specific art objects. Can the Kierkegaardian notion of dialectics inhabit certain images? Can the relation between the subject and the object be part of the mindset involved in the creation of an example of architecture? Could repetition be present, not only in the display of forms but in the Kierkegaardian sense, in the appropriation and continual engagement within the existence of the receiving individual, perhaps within a sculptural type? Could the artist be found to have a sustained life-view, and understand the impossibilities and possibilities involved in communicating with other individualities? And, finally, could the art object produced by the artist, within its sustained life-view, be understood by the creator to meet only certain needs for the existences

of the viewers, but yet function in such a manner so as to lead them into fuller understanding of their ontological grounding? Certainly. Examples? Michelangelo's *Sistine Chapel*. Or much of the work of Jackson Pollock. And the work of Walter Anderson, in the isolated context of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, in silence, would be even more fruitful. They meet certain requirements, and the radicalness of their work, the contingencies involved in the productions, are enough to make it certain that the reception of each example within the existences of individuals leads to a fuller awareness and understanding of the actual within existence itself. The idea of the actual ideal is present, generated in the viewers. When it is present and applied, then there is no more need to look. The implications of this thesis are to establish some sense of criterion about what is 'great' art.

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