History of European Ideas, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 19–29, 1990
Printed in Great Britain

0191-6599/90 $3.00 + 0.00

THE SUBJECTIVE THINKER AS ARTIST

SYLVIA I. WALSH*

In both the pseudonymous and nonpseudonymous writings of Søren Kierkegaard a number of passages give the impression that the author opposes poetic or artistic forms of expression in human life. Romantic poetry and the romantic mode of 'living poetically' in particular are subjected to severe criticism in *The Concept of Irony* and *Either/Or*, but in many instances the charges brought against the poetic in the authorship range beyond romantic forms to include poetry in general.[1] A negative attitude toward the poetic is especially prominent in writings from the middle period of Kierkegaard's authorship, e.g. Stages *On Life's Way, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Works of Love,* and *The Point of View For My Work as an Author.* These works declare, for example, that a union between the aesthetic and the ethical is a misalliance (SLW, 400), that a poetic relation to actuality is a misunderstanding and a backward step (CUP, 347), that religious pathos does not consist in singing, hymning, and composing verse but in existing (CUP, 348), that the poet cannot help us to understand life (WL, 63), and that we must move away from the poetical to a religious, more specifically a Christian, mode of life (PV, 74). Even in the later religious literature, where Kierkegaard views his own role as a 'poet of the religious' (JP, 6: 6511) and his writings as a form of 'poet-communication' (JP 6: 6528, 6574), imagination is likened to 'an actor clad in rags' (TC, 186), and the poet (next to the priest, who is regarded as no more than a poet) is declared to be the most dangerous of men (KAUC, 201-202).

Although this decidedly negative posture toward the poetic is present throughout the authorship, it should be seen as constituting only one side, not the total viewpoint, of Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms on this subject. Running counter to it is another perspective in the literature which regards the poetic as an essential ingredient in ethical and religious forms of life.[2] Sometimes these forms of existence themselves are understood and characterised in aesthetic terms, making it possible to discern what may be called an existential or ethical-religious aesthetics in Kierkegaard's thought.[3] In the *Concept of Irony*, for example, the religious is described as an inward infinity that constitutes the truly poetic, and the ethical task incumbent upon every individual is understood as a demand to 'live poetically' in a religious sense (CI, 305, 313, 314). Similarly, Judge William in *Either/Or* claims that the highest in aesthetics is reached when the ethical ideal is given concrete expression in daily life, and the ethical individual is described as feeling himself both 'creating and created', having become like 'the experienced actor who has lived into his character and his lines' (EO, 2: 137).

We cannot consider here all the places in Kierkegaard's writings where aesthetic categories are employed in portraying ethical and religious existence.

*Clark Atlanta University, U.S.A.

One that particularly invites attention, however, is the characterisation of the subjective thinker as an artist in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*. In the course of an extensive discussion of this figure, Johannes Climacus, the pseudonymous author of the work, makes the following observation: 'The subjective thinker is not a man of science, but an artist [*Kunstner*]. Existing is an art [*At existere er en Kunst*] (CUP, 314).[4] It is clear from this statement that Climacus intends to distinguish the subjective thinker, whose thought is directed inward to the thinker's own existence, from an objective thinker, who is essentially disinterested in existence and abstracts from it in order to consider everything as a cognitive possibility. This contrast is well drawn in the work and will not be elaborated here.[5] What is much less apparent and calls for explication is the sense in which the subjective thinker may be regarded as an artist. Consideration of this matter is made even more pertinent in light of the fact that Climacus also distinguishes the subjective thinker from a poet: 'the subjective thinker is not a poet... though he may also be a poet' (CUP, 313). Being a poet, Climacus maintains, is something accidental to the existence of a subjective thinker. Essentially a subjective thinker is an existing individual whose reflection is focused on existential problems relating to the thinker's own personal existence. In this respect the subjective thinker stands in sharp contrast to both the poet and the objective thinker, for the existence of the poet is nonessential in relation to a poetic production, just as the existence of the objective thinker, such as an ethicist or a dialectician, is nonessential to the content of that thinker's thought. The products of their imagination and reflection have validity quite apart from any significance these may have for their lives. Indeed, with respect to the poet, Climacus states:

> That a poet, for instance, refuses to permit his own poetic production to influence his mode of existence is aesthetically quite in order, or altogether a matter of indifference; for aesthetically it is the poetic production and the possibility it expresses which embodies the highest value... Aesthetically it would be the highest pathos for the poet to annihilate himself, for him to demoralize himself if necessary. in order to produce masterpieces (CUP, 349).

Climacus even goes so far as to suggest that 'aesthetically it would be in order for a man to sell his soul to the devil' for the sake of producing 'miracles of art' (CUP, 349). For the subjective thinker, however, quite the opposite holds. From an ethical standpoint the thinker's mode of existence is of infinite importance, and any poetic productivity that may result is a matter of indifference. In fact, Climacus suggests that 'ethically it would perhaps be the highest pathos to renounce the glittering artistic career without saying a single word' (CUP, 349).

This being the case, how are we to understand the subjective thinker as an artist? In what sense is it appropriate to use an aesthetic category, an artistic metaphor, with reference to the subjective thinker? And what does this add, if anything, to our understanding of the ethical demand to be subjective thinkers in our respective occupations and endeavors in life?

W may begin to discern any Climacus characterises the subjective thinker as an artist by looking at the personal qualities and the form of communication associated with this figure. Besides being essentially inner-directed in reflection,

the subjective thinker is described by Climacus as manifesting passion, action, and a simultaneity of imagination, thought, and feeling. Let us briefly consider these factors.

(1) *Passion.* Of all the characteristics associated with the subjective thinker, priority is given to passion:

> There is required for a subjective thinker imagination and feeling, dialectics in existential inwardness, together with passion. But passion first and last; for it is impossible to think about existence in existence without passion ... To think about existential problems in such a way as to leave out the passion is tantamount to not thinking about them at all, since it is to forget the point, which is that the thinker is himself an existing individual (CUP, 312–313).

The requirement of passion in reflection is what links the subjective thinker most closely to the poet but is also what further serves to establish a distinction between them. For the poet, too, passion is a *sine qua non.* As the pseudonym Frater Taciturnus most emphatically and succinctly states it in *Stages On Life's Way*: 'without passion no poet, and without passion no poetry' (SLW, 369). Both the subjective thinker and the poet, in contrast to an abstract thinker, possess an 'idealising passion' or aesthetic pathos for the ideal (CUP, 277, 313). But whereas the poet invests that passion in imaginatively constructing a work of art that represents the ideal in something external to the poet's existence, the passion of the subjective thinker is directed inward toward fashioning the thinker's own existence into conformity with the ideal so as to make it a work of art. Contrasting the Greek thinker, who was a subjective thinker, to an artist who pursues an artistic career without any personal reflection, Climacus says: 'I know in Greece, at least, a thinker was not a stunted, crippled creature who produced works of art, but was himself a work of art in his existence' (CUP, 269). In a related passage in his journals, Kierkegaard remarks: '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 which he taught—we have learned to rattle this off by rote but have scarcely understood it' (JP, 6: 6360). In a note to this passage, the English translators point out that Kierkegaard is using the term 'artistically' (*kunsterisk*) here as derived from its Danish root *kunne*, 'to be able', in the sense of 'a being able, a making, a doing, an embodying in personal being of what he [the existential thinker] understands' (JP, 6: 2151).

Like the ethical individual of *Either/Or* who is both actor and character, the subjective thinker is thus both an artist and a work of art, the producer and product of an idealising passion that does not forget or lose the life of the artist in representing the ideality of the possible in an external form of art but is engaged in transforming the existence of the artist/thinker into the actuality of the ideal. In Kierkegaard's early works this transformation is characterised as a 'transubstantiation' or inward change in the given actuality of the individual, in contrast to the 'transfiguration' or abandonment and glorification of actuality in the realm of ideality that ordinarily takes place in poetry (CI, 312; EO, 2: 124; JP, 1: 136). Although the former term is not used in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, it is consistent with the way the transformation of the subjective thinker is understood in that work.

(2) *Action.* The characterisation of the subjective thinker as the product of artistic endeavor as well as its artistic producer underscores another distinguishing feature of the figure, that of action. For the Greek thinker, Climacus maintains, 'philosophizing was a mode of action' (CUP, 295). Ordinarily thought is associated with the static sphere of the abstract, the possible, and the objective, where, in the view of Climacus, there is no movement or process of becoming. Readers of the *Postscript* may recall how mercilessly he criticises and lampoons Hegel for having confused abstract thought with existence in such a way as to suggest the latter can be conceived and embraced by thought. Every thought of action is only an anticipation of action, not the action itself, which belongs to the realm of the subjective. Yet there is, Climacus concedes, a *confinium* or 'twilight zone' between thought and action in which 'the interest of actuality and of action already reflects itself' (CUP, 302). Indeed, Climacus even goes so far as to claim that action itself is determined by an internal decision, not by an external act: 'Actuality is not the external act but an internal decision in which the individual does away with possibility and identifies himself with the content of thought in order to exist in it. This is action.'[6] Thus, from the moment when Luther, for example, decided with subjective passion to appear before the Diet of Worms, he may be counted as having acted. Any further deliberation on his part would have been regarded as a temptation.

The existential pathos of the subjective thinker, then, consists in action, which falls under the category of the ethical. This would seemingly place the subjective thinker in opposition to the aesthetic, where poetic pathos is defined as 'the pathos of the possible' (CUP, 348). In associating the poetic with possibility, Climacus relies on the view of Aristotle as set forth in his *Poetics*.[7] There is also a passage in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which provides a precedent for a distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical in terms of action.[8] Kierkegaard refers to this passage in his philosophical notes from 1842–43, noting that 'with respect to the concept of poetry it would be good to point out how Aristotle distinguishes *poiein* and *pratein* and defines art' (JP, 5: 5592). Kierkegaard does not elaborate further on this distinction, but in the text to which he refers Aristotle associates *poiein* or 'making' with art, and *pratein* or 'acting' with practical wisdom. Practical wisdom here is similar to the ethical knowledge of the subjective thinker in that the person who possesses practical wisdom is, according to Aristotle, a thinker who is concerned with his own interests with respect to what is 'good and expedient for himself'.[9]

If the subjective thinker is understood on the basis of Aristotle's distinction between art and practical wisdom, however, this would militate against an understanding of the figure as an artist, since in Aristotle's view art is a matter of making rather than of acting. To the extent that the subjective thinker stands in contrast to the usual poet and the kind of aesthetic productivity with which that person is engaged, the distinction is a useful one for highlighting an important difference between them. But it does not allow us to see how the action of the subjective thinker, and thus the thinker's own person, can be understood in aesthetic terms.

For that let us turn briefly to Kierkegaard's first work, *From the Papers of One Still Living*, where he undertakes a literary assessment of Hans Christian Andersen as a novelist. One of the chief criticisms which Kierkegaard levels

against Andersen in this review is that Andersen lacks a life or 'epic' development.[10] In Kierkegaard's opinion such a development is essential for becoming a personality as well as for being a writer of novels, a genre that grew out of the epic tradition in literature. As Kierkegaard understands it, the epic involves action and heroic striving toward a single goal in life—something the current age, being a 'period of fermentation' (*Gjaerings-Periode*) rather than a 'period of action' (*Gjernings-Periode*) has not fostered in Andersen he thinks.[11] Having been tempted to produce literary works instead of developing himself, Andersen, in Kierkegaard's opinion, had not progressed beyond a lyrical stage of elegaic moodiness in which he was continually turned in upon his own person. He was, therefore, only 'a possibility of a personality', not an actual personality.[12] This explains why, as Kierkegaard sees it, none of Andersen's novels has an epic character. Not having gone through an epic development in his own person, he has also omitted it in his literary works. For all Andersen's shortcomings as a novelist, however, Kierkegaard finds his lyric 'self-absorption' (*Selvfortabelse*) more pleasing than the 'self-infatuation' (*Selvforgabelse*) of the modern epic literature of that era, which in Kierkegaard's opinion amounted to no more than 'a literary paying of compliments' to the author's own person.[13] A proper epic development, as Kierkegaard sees it, involves 'a deep and earnest embracing of a given actuality' so as to acquire 'a life-strengthening rest in it and admiration of it' as well as the forming of a 'lifeview' or overall positive perspective on life from which to understand and transcend the various moments and vicissitudes of existence.[14] Without such a development an individual is not an authentic person nor is that individual properly qualified to be a novelist. Any literature produced by such an individual is nothing more than an egotistical projection of the writer's lyrical moods and unreflected life experiences.

From this excursion into *From the Papers of One Still Living*, written at a time when Kierkegaard was very interested in aesthetics, we can see how he tries in this early work to establish a connection between existential and aesthetic categories, employing them not only in the interpretation of literary forms and productivity but also to designate stages of development in human existence. The categories of the lyric and the epic employed in the work correspond closely to what he later comes to call, respectively, the aesthetic and the ethical stages of life. From his association of the epic with the category of action, we can see too how the subjective thinker, whose internal action brings that individual under ethical qualifications, can also be construed in aesthetic terms as an artist, even if he or she never produces a work of art. For what is essential to both the artistic and personal development of an individual is the forming of an authentic personality through ethical or epic action.

(3) *Simultaneity of Imagination, Thought, and Feeling.* A third feature of the subjective thinker, and one which, according to Climacus, sets this type of thinker off sharply from the scientist or speculative thinker, is the coordination of imagination and feeling with thought. In the evolution of scientific or speculative reflection, Climacus claims. 'imagination and feeling have been left behind' and thought is considered to be the highest stage of human development (CUP, 307). In existence, however, Climacus maintains that this does not hold true; there, 'the task is not to exalt the one at the expense of the other, but to give them equal status [*Ligeligheden*], simultaneity [*Samtidigheden*], and the medium

in which they are unified is in existing [*at existere*]'.[15] From this standpoint, Climacus points out that it is just as bad for a thinker to lose imagination and feeling as it is to lose reason, and he laments the tendency of his generation to dismiss poetry as a transcended phase because of its close connection with imagination. 'In existence', Climacus asserts, 'the principle holds that as long as a human being makes claim to a human form of existence, he must preserve the poetic in his life, and all his thinking must not be permitted to disturb for him its magic, but rather to enhance and beautify it' (CUP. 311). For Climacus, therefore, the aesthetic elements of imagination and feeling are essential ingredients in the make-up of the subjective thinker and are what partly determine that individual as an artist. Even if the subjective thinker is not a poet or artist in the usual sense, the poetic must be present and contribute to the formation of a truly human life.

This positive role of imagination and the poetic is not developed in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* but it is spelled out more in other works of Kierkegaard, e.g. *Repetition* and *The Sickness Unto Death*.[16] In *Repetition* imagination is credited with being that which awakens an individual at a very early age to the possibility of personality. The self or personality appears in the imagination not as an actual shape but as a variety of shadows, all of which resemble the self and vie equally for constituting the self (R, 154). Constantin Constantius, the pseudonymous author of the work, points out that this 'shadow-existence' requires satisfaction and that 'it is never beneficial to a person if this does not have time to live out its life' (R, 154–155). He adds, however, that one must not make the mistake of living out one's life in it. That is the danger or temptation of imagination to which *The Sickness Unto Death* calls attention in its analysis of despair. In this work imagination is again viewed as the capacity by which the self is reflected in its infinite possibility; in fact, Anti-Climacus goes so far as to claim that imagination is the capacity by which all other capacities of the self, such as feeling, willing, and knowing, are constituted. But when imagination (*Phantasien*) goes wild, as it were, leading a person out into the infinite in such a way as to get lost there and to prevent the individual from returning to the finite self in the concrete, it becomes fantastic (*det Phantastiske*) and the self is volatilised (SUD, 30). The process of self-transcendence or infinitising of the self through imagination is necessary and valid in itself but must be combined dialectically with a process of finitising in the medium of actuality.

Insofar as the subjective thinker is characterised by imagination along with thought and feeling, imagination must function in the manner indicated above, in coordination with these other capacities. As an artist who employs imagination, however, the subjective thinker should not be understood in an Aristotelian manner as a poet or artist who makes or imaginatively constructs the self in the realm of ideality or in an illusory actuality. Since the subjective thinker is oriented toward existence, has the task of acquiring self-understanding in the process of existing, and is characterised by action, the ideality of the self must be reflected in the medium of existence, not merely in imagination. 'There is no special difficulty connected with being an idealist in the imagination', Climacus says, 'but to *exist* as an idealist is an extremely strenuous task, because existence itself constitutes a hindrance and an objection' (CUP, 315). Moreover, since that which constitutes the ideally or essentially human is already given as a

potentiality within the individual (either immanently, as supposed in Socratic subjectivity and in Religiousness A, or via a relation to the Eternal in time, as believed in Christianity), the subjective thinker does not possess the poetic license to imaginatively create or construct the self simply as she or he pleases. The function of imagination in the ethical-religious therefore, is better understood as one of depicting or portraying the ideal self rather than imaginatively constructing, making, or creating it. That this is how Kierkegaard understands the proper role of imagination in human existence becomes particularly evident in his later religious writings and journals, where he views his own task as a 'poet of the religious' to be one in which he merely describes or portrays (*fremstille*) the existential ideals, not imaginatively constructs (*experimentere*) them (AN, 35-39; JP, 6: 6391, 6433, 6497, 6511, 6528).[17] Experimentation is a mode of poetizing characteristic of the German romantics which he strongly criticises in *The Concept of Irony* and *Either/Or*. In the latter work, Judge William maintains that 'as soon as the ethical person's gymnastics become an imaginary constructing [*Experimenteren*] he has ceased to live ethically' (EO, 2: 253). To be sure, some of Kierkegaard's own pseudonyms engage in a bit of 'experimental psychology', namely Constantin Constantius in *Repetition*, Frater Tactiturnus in *Stages on Life's Way*, and even Johannes Climacus himself, but with quite a different aim than the German romantics: the pseudonyms' experiments are designed in the interest of indirect ethical-religious communication rather than as capricious and arbitrary forms of play with different possibilities of selfhood as advocated, in Kierkegaard's view, by the German romantics.[18]

(4) *The Subjective Thinker's Form of Communication.* Lastly, an artistic character can be observed in the subjective thinker's form of communication to others, both in terms of the way in which the subjective thinker is related to the communication and the way in which it is presented to others. With respect to artistic communication, the principle holds that 'the reduplication of the content in the form is essential to all artistry [*er det Kunstneriske*], and it is particularly important to refrain from referring to the same content in an inadequate form' (CUP, 297).[19] Thus the form or style of the subjective thinker's communication must reflect the content or make-up of that individual as a thinker. Inasmuch as the subjective thinker is an artist, the form will constitute an expression of that artistry as well as manifest it in the content of the communication. The subjective thinker's communication will take, then, an aesthetic form, but since the subjective thinker is not a poet or artist in the usual sense, it will not take that form directly. The same holds with regard to ethical, dialectical, and religious modes of communication. These are to a certain degree at the disposal of the subjective thinker, but must be employed in a manner consistent with the concrete nature of the thinker's being and thought. 'First and last', says Climacus, the form of the subjective thinker 'must relate itself to existence', to the person of the subjective thinker (CUP, 319). This means that in presenting his or her thought, the subjective thinker essentially 'sketches' (*skildrer*) and communicates his or her own self (CUP, 319). In this way the form of the subjective thinker becomes dialectically concrete and artistic—a 'portrait of the artist' at home and at work, if you will, passionately, actively, imaginatively thinking in existence, relating the content of that reflection to daily life, and striving to exist in it.

However, Climacus points out that, unlike the ordinary poet or artist, 'the subjective thinker does not have the poetic leisure to create [*at skabe*] in the medium of the imagination, nor does he have the time for aesthetically disinterested elaboration. He is essentially an existing individual in the existential medium, and does not have at his disposal the imaginative medium which would permit him to create the illusion characteristic of all aesthetic production' (CUP, 319). The subjective thinker is not free, therefore, to present an imaginary, illusory self-portrait, utilising the variety of enhancing scenes and settings ordinarily employed in poetic construction. No, Climacus says:

> the subjective thinker has only a single scene, existence, and he has nothing to do with beautiful valleys and the like. His scene is not the fairyland of the imagination, where the poet's love evokes the perfect; nor is the scene in England, and the task to make sure of local color and historical exactness. His scene is inwardness in existing as a human being; concreteness is attained through bringing the existential categories into relationship with one another' (CUP, 319–320).

In line with this aesthetic restriction upon the subjective thinker's communication, Climacus later in the work describes a presumably religious person who depicts eternal happiness 'in all the magic colors of the imagination' as 'a runaway poet, a deserter from the sphere of the aesthetic [*en fra det Aesthetiske bortrømt Digter*], who claims the privilege of native citizenship in the realm of the religious without even being able to speak its mother tongue' (CUP, 349).[20] Since ethical–religious pathos consists in action, it would be more appropriate for the religious individual, he suggests, to describe instead what that person has suffered for the sake of eternal happiness.

In the final analysis, however, Climacus concludes that existential actuality (*Existents-Virkelighed*) can be communicated to another only in the form of possibility (CUP, 320). In order for others to form a cognitive and existential relationship to the self-communication of the subjective thinker, therefore, the thinker must be careful to cast the communication in the form of the possible. This means that instead of giving a direct account of personal actions so as to become an object of admiration by others, the subjective thinker should present that which constitutes what is admirable in the universally human ideal to which the thinker is related and present that as an ethical requirement, as a challenge to the recipient to exist in it (CUP, 320–321). In presenting the universal human ideal as a possibility, the subjective thinker's communication conforms to the traditional concept of poetry as concerning itself with ideality, but there is an important difference here too, in that the ideal is set forth as an ethical requirement, not merely as an imaginative possibility.

The subjective thinker thus combines in communication as well as in thought and existence elements of the aesthetic and the ethical in such a manner that it is appropriate to speak of the figure as an artist, even though in some respects the artistry of the subjective thinker is quite different from that of the traditional poet or artist. At the same time Climacus is critical of the poetic, therefore, he presents an alternative type of artistry in the subjective thinker. Seen in the context of both earlier and later works in the Kierkegaardian corpus, the subjective thinker as artist is both illumined by and conceptually consistent with a broader concern in

the authorship to fashion the rudiments of an ethical-religious or existential aesthetics that unifies the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. This unity is not merely one which incorporates the aesthetic into the ethical and the religious, but is one in which the ethical–religious itself is understood in aesthetic terms as the truly poetic, the true ideality, the true reconciliation of ideality and actuality.

Although other attempts have been made in modern and contemporary philosophy to formulate an existential aesthetics or philosophies of art that relate art to life, their emphasis is primarily upon traditional art forms as media for expressing human feeling and meaning.[21] With Kierkegaard we can begin to see how human existence itself can become a mode of artistic endeavor and representation, giving expression to human ideals which other forms of poetic production can only hint at or give a semblance of in time. As thinking individuals, we are challenged by him to don the artist's frock, take up our palettes, and sketch self-portraits in existence which reproduce the human ideals toward which we strive.

Sylvia I. Walsh

Clark Atlanta University

NOTES

1 'The poetic' or poetry is generally understood and used in a broad sense by Kierkegaard as referring to all forms of artistic or imaginative activity, not merely to verse, and is associated with an aesthetic mode of life in its gratification of a person's natural capacities and desires through the imagination. By itself the poetic is regarded by Kierkegaard as being insufficient and even dangerous when adopted as a mode of life. Far from orienting us properly in existence, it distorts and directs us away from actuality to self-abandonment in imagination and elusive ideals. It may be used as a foil for avoiding relations with others and is inadequate for representing and dealing with the complexities those relations sometimes impose. In a number of respects it stands in tension and contrast with the ethical and the religious, making an alliance with those spheres appear inappropriate and impossible to form.

2. Since both negative and positive statements about the poetic appear in pseudonymous writings as well as in works issued under Kierkegaard's own name as author, the usual procedure of trying to distinguish between Kierkegaard's own views and those of his pseudonyms to account for differences of viewpoint will not suffice in this instance. Rather, the differences must be explained, on the whole, in terms of a critique of traditional poetry by Kierkegaard and the pseudonyms, who set forth an alternative conception of the poetic.

3. Jørgen Schultz, in 'Om "Poesi" og "Virkelighed" hos Kierkegaard', *Kierkegaardiana* VI (1966), 7–29, also uses the phrase 'existential aesthetic' (*eksistens-aesthetik*) to characterise this other viewpoint in the authorship. Although aesthetics has been a relatively neglected subject in Kierkegaard scholarship, a number of recent studies offer interpretations in line with the present study which recognise positive as well as negative perspectives in his literary criticism, philosophy of art, and more general understanding of the poetic as an aspect of the aesthetic dimension of human life. See especially David Cain, *Reckoning With Kierkegaard: Christian Faith and Dramatic Literature*, Ph. D. Diss., Princeton University (1975); George Connell, *To Be One Thing: Personal Unity in Kierkegaard's Thought* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985); Rune Engebretsen, *Kierkegaard and Poet-Existence With Special*

Reference to Germany and Rilke, Ph. D. Diss., Stanford University (1980); David Gouwens, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of the Imagination*, Ph. D. Diss., Yale University (1982); Merete Jørgensen, *Kierkegaard som kritiker* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1978); Louis Mackey, *Kierkegaard: A Kind of Poet* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971); Gregor Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Thought*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); George Pattison, *Kierkegaard's Theory and Critique of Art: Its Theological Significance*, Ph. D. Diss., University of Durham. Great Britain (1983); Richard Summers. *A Study of* Kierkegaard's Philosophical Development Up to 'Om Begrebet Ironi', Ph. D. Diss., University of London (1980); Vanina Sechi, 'The Poet', *Kierkegaardiana* **VI** (1977), 166–181; Nelly Viallaneix, *Ecoute Kierkegaard. Essai sur la communication de la parole*, 2 vols (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1979); G. Vogelweith, 'Le Poéte et le Religieux Selon Kierkegaard', *Revue D'Histoire et De Philosophie Religieuses* **LXI** (1981), 37–42 ; and Sylvia Walsh Utterback, 'Don Juan and the Representation of Spiritual Sensuousness', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* **XLVII/4** (1979), 627–644..

4. For the Danish version see Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Vaerker*, 3rd edn, 20 vols, ed. A.B. Drachman, J. L. Heiberg and H.O. Lange (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1962–64), Vol. 10, p.52.
5. For recent discussions of the distinction between subjective and objective reflection in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* see C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard's 'Fragments' and 'Postscript': The Religious Philosophy of Johannnes Climacus* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1983), pp. 95–135; and Louis P. Pojman, *The Logic of Subjectivity* (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1984), pp. 22–75.
6. My translation. See *Samlede Vaerker* 10: 42; cf. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 302.
7. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 1464; cf. *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, p. 282.
8. Aristotle, *Ibid.*, VI, 4, 1140a, 1–23.
9. *Ibid.*, VI, 5, 1140a, 25–26; 8, 1142a, 1–2.
10. For more detailed discussions of Kierkegaard's views on life development and the category of the epic, see Oluf Friis and Uffe Andreasen, *Dansk Litteratur Historie* (Copenhagen: Politikens Forlag, 1976) Vol. 3, p. 408; Paul V. Rubow, *Dansk Litteraer kritiki i det 19. århundrede indtil 1870* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1970), pp. 103–118. *From the Papers of One Still Living* has scarcely been analysed in English studies, but the few that do discuss it tend to focus only on Kierkegaard's critique of Andersen's lack of a life-view, which results from a more fundamental lack of a life development. See Gouwens, pp. 95–96; Connell, pp. 21–35; Malantschuk, pp. 183–188.
11. Søren Kierkegaard, *Samlede Vaerker*, **1**, 30.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.* **1**, 29.
14. *Ibid.* **1**, 29–30.
15. *Samlede Vaerker*, **10**, 49 (my translation; cf. *Concluding Unscientific Postcript*, p. 311).
16. For more extensive studies of Kierkegaard's view of the imagination, see Gouwens and Engebretsen.
17. On this issue compare my interpretation with Engebretsen, pp. 165-167 and the Hongs' historical introduction and extensive note on the subtitle to *Repetition*, pp. xxi–xxx and 357–362.
18. On Johannes Climacus as an experimental psychologist, see Evans, pp. 21–28. On Kierkegaard's critique of the German romantics, see Robert L. Perkins, 'Hegel and Kierkegaard: Two Critics of Romantic Irony'. *Review of National Literature* **1** (1970), 232–254.

19. For the Danish see *Samlede Vaerker,* **10,** 36.
20. For the Danish see *Samlede Vaerker,* **10,** 85.
21. On developments in modern and contemporary aesthetics see Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 244–388; Richard Kostelanetz, ed., *Esthetics Contemporary* (New York: Prometheus, 1978), pp. 19–35; Arturo Fallico, *Art and Existentialism* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall), pp. 1–17. Similar to Kierkegaard, but minus any *a priori* or fixed concept of the essentially human or ideal self, Nietzsche has been interpreted by Alexander Nehamas in *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) as trying 'to create an artwork out of himself' by exemplifying the character type about which he writes (pp. 8–39). Nietzsche's aestheticism, however, more closely resembles that of the German romantics whom Kierkegaard criticised than the ethical–religious alternative which he offered. Indeed, Nehamas describes him as 'the last romantic' (234). Somewhat like Kierkegaard also, Wilhelm Dilthey made 'lived experience' the basis for art as well as religion and philosophy, but in his poetics it functions primarily as a source for poetic imagination and creativity in traditional art forms (see his *Selected Works*, Vol. 5: *Poetry and Experience*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985], pp. 223–227). Heidegger as well sees an integral connection between poetry and human existence, but for him poetic creation through language is what enables us to live authentically in the world (see his *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter [New York: Harper & Row, 1971], pp. 213–229). Somewhat closer to Kierkegaard but more explicitly utilising and inverting Dewey's association of art with experience, Joseph H. Kupfer, in *Experience as Art: Aesthetics in Everyday Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983) locates aesthetic values in the moral, social, and personal concerns of everyday life.