MILESTONES OF THOUGHT

# HEGEL: ON THE ARTS

*Selections from G. W. F. Hegel's*
AESTHETICS OR THE PHILOSOPHY OF FINE ART

*Abridged and Translated with an Introduction by*

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art is here wholly acknowledged and the two are treated as separate. And yet, since the essence of art consists in their unification, we are left at this point with a task the solution of which is to be found elsewhere. For what constitutes the symbolic as such is precisely its incapacity to get beyond an imperfect unity of the soul of the meaning with its bodily shape.

# III

# THE CLASSICAL ART FORM

*A unity of meaning and shape that coincides with the true concept of the beautiful is the central achievement of the classical art form*

The unification of artistic content with a wholly adequate shape, self-contained so as to form a free totality, is the midpoint of art's entire development. This totality, toward which the symbolic art form strove in vain, coincides with the true concept of the beautiful, and its achievement belongs to classical art. In the diverse stages of the symbolic which we have reviewed, the elements of true beauty and true art are certainly present. But they are at first confounded together, wrenched apart and scattered, and then brought not into true identity but only into a false relationship. Classical art overcomes this reciprocal deficiency and the result is a true congruence of content and form.

We must not, however, mistake this congruence for a mere accord between any content as such and its external shape. Otherwise every picture drawn from nature, every sort of face, landscape, flower scene, etc., that becomes the aim and content of a representation would at once rank as classical if its form and content seemed to correspond. On the contrary, in the classical art form, it is the content itself, as Idea, or spirit, that determines the shape that can adequately embody it. Now the shape with which spirit invests itself for expression as a temporal phenomenon appropriate to mind is and can be nothing less than the *human form*, which art has not to *invent* but merely to find

and bring into perfect congruence with its informing idea. This is the correct approach to the notion that art has imitated the human form. The ordinary view assumes that this has happened by accident. Yet the fact is that, once art has reached maturity, it must make use of the external appearance of man for its representations, for only in that form can spirit give itself a sensuous and natural material existence.

*Where spirit is art's content, the human body, as spirit's dwelling place, must be its form*

One often hears it said that artistic personification and anthropomorphism degrade the genuinely spiritual. In the case of the Greeks, Xenophanes very early raised the charge with his suggestion that, had lions been sculptors, they would have fashioned gods that looked like lions. In this respect, as compared with the following form of art, the romantic, we may say that the content of the classical beauty of art is indeed defective, yet not because it is too anthropomorphic. On the contrary, we must maintain that, while the anthropomorphism in classical art is enough for art, it is too little for higher religion.

As for the actualization of the classical in history, we need hardly specify that it is to be sought among the Greeks. Their view of the world occupies the middle ground between the Orient's unfree absorption of the subject in universal substance and the deepening of subjective life in itself that characterizes Western Christendom. That middle position between the extremes is precisely the milieu where beauty can begin its true life and build its bright realm: the milieu of a free vitality which has not only a natural and immediate existence but is present also as produced by spirit and transfigured by art; that intermediate development of reflection and of an absence of reflection which, while it does not isolate the individual, is also not able to bring his negativity, pain, and misfortune to positive unity and reconciliation; a middle position, moreover, which, like life in general, is also only a point of transition, though what is here brought to actualization is the very summit of beauty in its ideal form of plastic individuality.

What from the Greek standpoint has gone before in the development of artistic consciousness has a place still, though not as absolute and unconditioned. The Greek people has, for instance, used its inherited gods to bring its own spirit to perceptual consciousness and



representation, giving them external embodiments that exactly match their true content. And inasmuch as the very concept of Greek mythology as well as art is founded on such a correspondence, art becomes in Greece the supreme expression of the absolute; the Greek religion, it may be said, is the religion of art itself, while the later romantic art, though it is art, quite clearly points to a higher form of consciousness than art is capable of providing.

It is important to stress that, with respect to content, the classical artist is in a significantly altered position. Symbolic art cannot escape the preliminary labor of having to produce and clarify for itself its own content. The classical artist, on the contrary, finds his content already at hand, formed for the imagination as a spiritual legacy of personal or national faith or in the form of an actual event as myth and legend have transmitted it. What is to be art's content comes to him not obscurely and suggestively out of nature but already formed by spirit; and because he doesn't have to "work it out" for himself initially, he can all the more directly concentrate on giving it a congruent artistic representation.

*The stages of symbolic art are presupposed by classical art as false ways of linking the spiritual and natural, which it must overcome*

Classical art, in other words, is not to be regarded, like the symbolic, as a first phase or *beginning* of art. As we have tried to show, the stages of symbolic art are its presupposition. Through those diverse stages, artistic consciousness struggled in vain or rather, in a false way, toward a true unity of the spiritual and the natural. In the sphere of classical art, that false unity is what has to be invalidated and at the same time absorbed and transformed, so as to become a necessary moment of the artistic Ideal's determination of itself as Ideal. The question as to whether or not the Greeks took their religion from foreign peoples is relevant here. Herodotus says that Homer and Hesiod gave the Greeks their gods, but he notes also that one or another of these gods was originally Egyptian, etc. Before the two great poets refashioned them, in other words, those inherited gods had already undergone mythological transformations to make them elements in the past history and progress of the Greek people themselves.

In the religious mythology of the Greeks we find that the natural and the spiritual are very differently related than they are in symbolic art. Instead of looking to see itself mirrored in the merely natural and living, spirit comes to regard that entire sphere as unworthy of it. On the other hand, the ideal of the Greek gods does not permit an absolute retreat into subjective spirituality; the merely natural element gives way to spiritual individuality which has, however, a corporeal side, where natural power and activity are intertwined with the spiritual. The degrading of the natural, merely animal element serves to remove that element from what must be freely and purely beautiful in the classical art form. The ancient Indians and Egyptians revered some animals as sacred because in them the Divine itself was supposed to be visibly present. The ancient Hebrews, as we saw, went to the opposite extreme. In the whole natural world, they saw neither a symbol nor the actual presence of their God but only such force and life as is actually to be found in external things. Yet even among them there are at least the vestiges of oriental reverence for the living as such; as when Moses, for instance, forbids any tasting of animal blood because blood has life in it.

The degradation of the merely animal is linked in Greek mythology with the story of Prometheus' theft of fire from Zeus for mankind's sake, so that, instead of sacrificing animals reverentially and fearfully to their gods, men might also be able to cook and make a feast of the edible remains not consumed on the altar. But Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, especially in the early books based on pre-Homeric materials, are our richest source on this theme. Whereas among the Egyptians there is a raising up of the gods of elemental nature to the status of animals, in those early metamorphoses the change to animal existence is invariably a terrible punishment—indeed a misfortune so painful that man's very manhood is unable to endure it.

Paralleling this debasement of the animal world, there is also, in the shaping of the classical art form, a comparable debasement of the universal power of nature into particularized natural powers that communicate their spiritual individuality or willfulness to men still formlessly, as in the case of the oracles, by means of natural phenomena. The *content* of the oracles is nothing less than the knowing and willing of the gods; and it is indeed to Apollo, the god of



knowledge, that the most famous of the oracles is dedicated. Yet the *form* in which this divine knowing and willing is declared remains something crudely natural and completely vague—a rustling of leaves, the tone of a brazen vessel responding to the wind, a natural voice or voice sounds that are inarticulate. The reverse of this is a superficial personification of the natural powers themselves, beginning with ancient Chaos, Tartarus, Erebus, all those savage beings of the underworld; and, following these, Uranus, Gaia, the Titanic Eros, Cronos, etc. Out of these arise in turn the more determinate powers, such as Helios, Oceanus, etc., which later become the natural basis for the spiritually individualized later gods.

We get here, that is to say, another theogony and cosmogony born of imagination and shaped by art, the first gods of which are still for our view too ill-defined or exaggeratedly overdrawn and at the same time weighted down with much that is still essentially symbolic. This represents, on the one hand, a rise from the more abstract and formless to the more determinately shaped natural powers and, on the other, the beginnings of an ascendency of the spiritual over the natural divinities.

### *Greek mythology has represented art's own advance from the natural to the spiritual, in both content and form, as a great battle of the gods*

Even within the race of the old gods, the course of the theogony showed a degrading of the earlier abstract powers by the more substantive, self-concentrated later ones. But the really important advance, represented as a battle between the old gods and a distinctively new race of gods, is the advance from nature to spirit, for it is that advance that provides the true content as well as the proper form of classical art. The war in which the difference between the old gods and the new is made visible is thus not to be regarded as an ordinary myth, but as the myth that marks the major turning point for classical art. With that myth, the inherited gods of Greece are thoroughly transformed and given roots that extend historically deep into the national spirit and faith of the Greek people. Those gods become, particularly in Homer's treatment of them, the absolute forces, the

crowning achievement of the Greek imagination, center of the realm of all that is truly beautiful, freely given to poetry by the Muses themselves.

With the triumph of the new gods, spirit's mastery of the titanic powers of the natural world is virtually complete. The Titans are returned to the depths of the earth out of which they came or are sent to brood in banishment on the dark edges of the bright inhabitable world. Defeat, in other words, brings the old gods punishments that match the formlessness of their powers—punishments that are inherently limitless, boundlessly prolonged, endlessly repeated, churned up inwardly by cravings never to be satisfied. For the Greeks, with their divine sense of proportion, passage into the inherently boundless was not what a modern longing may mistake it to be—man's fulfillment or divinization—but rather a damnation, which they therefore relegated to Tartarus. Just as in the Trojan war, it was as *one* people that the Greeks fought and conquered, so too, the Homeric gods, with the struggle against the Titans behind them, come to make up an essentially secure, well-defined world of divinities, made ever more determinate in themselves by the poetry and plastic art of later times.

But the powers of nature that submit to spirit are not lost; the new gods have still a natural base which is venerated as an essential constituent of the classical Idea. For the Greeks, the natural is not divine, but control of the natural certainly is, and that belongs to the spiritual individuality of the later gods. In Poseidon, for example, as in Pontus and Oceanus, there is the might of the earth-circling sea, upon which his further power and activity are supported. He built Troy and was a protector of Athens; he is honored, generally, as the founder of cities because the sea, as the element of shipping and commerce, links and binds men with one another. Similarly Apollo, the new god, is the light of knowledge, of oracles; yet there is in him a reminiscence of Helios, the natural light of the sun. The same applies in the case of Aphrodite; the further back we trace her origin in Asian sources, the more she becomes a sensuous natural power. Only when she makes her appearance in the genuinely Greek world does she reveal the spiritually more individualized aspect of her grace, charm, and love which, however, by no means lacks a natural base. The Muses too, of course, have a natural base, which is the murmur of spring-waters.



Zeus himself, worshipped as the Thunderer, is certainly to be taken as a universal power of nature, although even in Homer thunder is already a sign of misfortune or assistance, an omen, which relates it directly with the spiritual. Juno, similarly, has a natural echo in her of heaven's vault and of the airy regions where divinities roam. For it is said, Zeus put Hercules to feed at Juno's breast and that, from the milk that then overran, the milky way was spewed into existence.

And even as the humbled elemental powers of nature survive the victory of the new gods, so too is the degraded animal world brought back into a suitably positive relation with the spiritual. The eagle stands beside Jupiter and the peacock beside Juno, while doves attend Venus, and the dog Anubis guards the underworld, etc. But with this re-acceptance of what had previously been degraded, the ascent to a spiritually individualized higher autonomy is complete, and the classical art form can leave behind what have been the presuppositions of its necessary historical origin. Having taken the *spiritual* for its content, classical art, for the reason we indicated earlier, now takes from nature the human shape in deed and action as the form through which the spiritual shines forth clearly in complete freedom, permeating the sensuous being of that shape not as if it were a merely symbolically significant thing but as an actuality that in itself gives spirit adequate existence.

### *The Greek gods are blessed in the artistic adequacy of their ideal human embodiment, and yet its very adequacy seems to sadden them*

The Greek artists and poets are also, of course, prophets and teachers who are to reveal to their fellows the nature of the absolute and Divine. But they have come into possession of a religious content that is anything but abstract, transcendently vague, or shapeless. In their gods there is nothing that is external or alien to the human spirit. Man can freely identify himself spiritually with such gods, for he finds their roots in himself; and when his absorption in them is given artistic expression, it is man's own most beautiful self-creation that issues forth. Classical beauty, from this perspective, can only incidentally be *symbolical* in form and cannot ever be taken as *sublime* in the strict sense. It is beauty that coincides with itself in determinate

expression, which expression it receives in the idealized human forms of its gods and heroes. The gods, it has been said, have a loftiness, an immortal seriousness that is suffused over their entire shape, and that seems to raise them above their own artistic corporeality. They have no higher spiritual mode of being. They are blessed where they are and as what they are. And yet, as all who have most deeply experienced the power of Greek art have felt, those blessed gods, even in their unmatched loveliness, seem to be saddened by their blessedness in bodily form. In their very faces we can read the fate that awaits them—a fate which, by making manifest the inherent contradiction between loftiness and particularity, between spirituality and sensuous existence, must bring classical art as such to its downfall.

From what has been said of the Ideal of classical beauty and its adequate external configuration, it should be clear why the divine actuality, as individuality represented in immediate existence, must of necessity give itself a *plurality* of shapes. Polytheism, that is to say, is a necessity in the very principle of classical art. It would be a fool's errand to so much as think of shaping in plastic beauty the one God of Eastern sublimity and pantheism, or of that absolute religion that grasps divinity as spiritual and purely inner personality; or to imagine that, among the Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, there could ever have been developed, for the expression of the content of their faith, such classical art forms as the Greeks produced.

The plurality of shapes that the Divine gives itself in Greek polytheism is, however, a plurality in which each shape, in its essential divinity, is also always the whole. The specified individuality of the single god does not deny him attributes of the other gods; and the plurality of the gods cannot therefore constitute a *systematic* totality. Because they combine universal divinity with individuality, the inhabitants of divine Olympus cannot be given purely abstract characterizations that precisely differentiate them. Thus, for example, Zeus holds dominion over gods and men, without in any way seriously jeopardizing the true autonomy of the other gods. He is the supreme god, but his might does not absorb the might of the others. It is in classical sculpture, with its ideal shapes, more than in poetry, that the characters of these gods that are at once particular and universal are most perfectly defined; and it is there that the anthropomorphism of the classical Ideal is brought to perfection.



We must take notice next of the sort of materials upon which Greek art drew to individualize and particularize its gods. The gods themselves had long before Homer's time acquired roots that ran deep into the *human* actuality of the ancient past of the Greek people; and traces of the national beginnings of Greek life adhere to their gods even in later times. Thus many details of the theogonies point to historical persons, heroes, ancient tribes, natural disasters, and the occasions and circumstances of battles, wars, and other sorts of human affairs. All that helped to shape the Greek communities, with their historically distinct local characteristics, thus colors the portrayal of the gods in such a way as to give them the attractiveness of living men.

Even more particularizing is the tradition of divine intervention in everyday human affairs, decision-making for times of crisis, and the actual course of uncertain events. The artistic side, here, consists in interweaving the divine and human so as to raise the particularity of events to a level of divinely universal significance. Certainly in Homer, the gods often rush to the aid of particular heroes, but they appear invariably only as the universal side of what the man is and does as an individual for himself and at a moment when he is exerting the full force of his heroism toward that end. Otherwise, in giving the Greeks full help, the gods need not have refrained from slaying all the Trojans at once. Homer, in his description of the main fighting, focuses on the combat of individuals; and it is only when the tumult and clash of arms is generalized, when the mass and force of all is pitted against all, that Ares himself storms across the field, and gods fight gods. This is fine and splendid for heightening the effect; but there is also this profounder significance: on the level of the singular and exceptional, Homer insists on the importance of the individual hero, and only in the collectivity and generalization of effects do the universal mights and powers receive their due.

### *When Homer's Apollo disarms Patroclus on the field of battle, we sense that the hero has been overcome not by mortal enemies but by natural exhaustion*

Accordingly, Homer brings Apollo upon the scene when Patroclus, who wears the invincible armor of Achilles, is to die. Like another Ares, Patroclus had three times stormed the ranks of the Trojans and

three times nine men had he slain. When he tried it a fourth time, Apollo, enveloped in the blackness of night, advanced through the melee toward him, smote him on the back, tore his helmet from his head so that it rolled on the ground and resounded sharply among the horses' hooves, its plume soiled in blood and dust, a thing unthinkable before that moment. Phoebus Apollo shatters the brazen spear in his hands, his shield slips from his shoulder, and he is stripped of his breastplate. Apollo's intervention must stand as poetic evidence that exhaustion, or natural death, has overpowered Patroclus in the heat and surge of the fourth assault. Then only can Euphorbus, striking from behind, drive a spear between his shoulders. Before Patroclus can retreat from the field, Hector too has rushed upon him, thrusting a spear deep into his gut. As the hero sinks, Hector mocks him; but Patroclus, in a faint voice, retorts: "Zeus and Apollo subdued me without trouble, since it was they who stripped my arms from my shoulders; twenty like you I could have felled with my spear; but damned fate and Apollo killed me, Euphorbus did it a second time, and you, Hector, a third."

Whenever Homer highlights specific events by bringing gods on the scene, we can be sure they represent something that belongs to man's inner self, the power of his passion or interest, or of his place in society, and of all that he must do or suffer as a consequence. Not that Homer's purpose in bringing on the gods is always serious. Sometimes they intervene when they shouldn't, and the effect may be comical, or they fail to intervene when they should. The Greeks knew that the deeds of the gods were poetic inventions; and what belief they accorded them was always permeated with appreciation that they represented the universal side of man's own spirit as effectively present in actual events. We don't have to flirt with superstition, therefore, to enjoy these poetic portrayals of the gods.

Such is the general character of the classical Ideal; its particular elaboration will come under consideration in our study of the particular arts. At this point, by way of transition to the next art form, we want to expand briefly our earlier observation that the Ideal of classical beauty, with its humanized gods, contains in its very principle the germ of its own dissolution. Its principle, we said, is spiritual individuality that finds its adequate expression in an immediately objective corporeal existence. Since the divine individuality requires a plurality



of corporeal shapes for its adequate sensuous representation, polytheism was an inescapable constituent of the Ideal itself. The result is a group of gods that cannot, however, constitute a spirtual totality. Above them, binding them, there is only an undefined necessity, or fate, in relation to which their particularity or distinctiveness is emphasized. In relation to fate, they increasingly assume human attitudes and all the obviously finite traits of anthropomorphism. Ruin must therefore come to these beautiful gods of art as an inherent necessity, since mind fails finally to find in them the spiritual substance it seeks, and withdraws, as a consequence, into itself. But that these gods should eventually lose significance for both religious and artistic faith is seen to be implicit, when we look closely, in the very nature of Greek anthropomorphism. In the individualized external shapes of the Greek gods there is still lacking the inner world of subjective consciousness. If we feel spiritually animated in their presence, we know that what we experience is essentially in us and not in the beautiful shapes we contemplate. It is only in the third form of art, the romantic, that inherently infinite and true subjectivity finds an object in which it can truly contemplate itself.

### *The Divine subjectivity which Greek anthropomorphic art cannot express becomes the higher content of Christian romantic art*

The transition to the higher sphere of romantic art could conceivably have been represented for us imaginatively as a new war of the gods, patterned on the war that marked the transition from the symbolism of the gods of nature to the spiritual Ideals of classical art. It occurs, instead, on an altogether different plane. In the course of a conscious struggle about the real and present, art finds itself forced upon new ground. The new and higher content which it is called upon to embody in new forms is not a content established and revealed initially by *art*; its revelation has an independent historical validity as actualized in a course of events brought up to a present that is not merely imagined but *factual*. The Divine, God himself, has become flesh; he was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose from the dead. This is a content received by art from the outside. The old transition with its battle of the gods had been a work of artistic intuition and imagination:

except as shaped for them by art, those divinities had had no objective embodiment. It is Christianity that introduces us to a human, living embodiment of the effectiveness of God in flesh and spirit, whereby flesh is brought into honor and anthropomorphism is sanctified. Just as man was originally God's image, so God now is man's image, and who sees the Son sees the Father, who loves the Son loves the Father also; God is to be known in real existence.

Art could not in itself have made the transition to such a content. The disparity between the old and new in this case would have been too striking. In both content and form, the God of revealed religion is the true and actual God; his rivals, as mere creatures of imagination, could in no meaningful sense be matched against him. The natural and spiritual divinities of Greece, on the other hand, were equally products of imagination, and their opposition and struggle could therefore be seriously conceived and represented. Had the transition to the God of Christianity been taken up originally by art as another war of the gods, it would have lacked all seriousness.

In fact, only in recent times has the transition that concerns us here been made a topic for art. We have had poems, especially, of some fame that lament the downfall of classical art or that take for their theme a longing for the Greek gods and heroes. Often there is in such laments an undercurrent of opposition to Christianity; and even where it is granted that Chrisitianity contained a higher principle, there is an insistence that, from the standpoint of art at any rate, the supersession of classical antiquity was to be regretted. This is the theme of Schiller's "Gods of Greece." In any event, the notion of a struggle and triumph of the new art form over the old has no historical significance in the actual development of artistic consciousness. Classical art, as we said, contained within itself the germ of its own dissolution, and here we mean to conclude with a brief indication of its chief features.

When the human spirit, no longer finding full satisfaction in the plastic beauty of the Greek gods, withdraws into the infinity of its inner self, there is experienced an absolute cleavage between spiritual subjectivity and external reality. The subject's return into itself is an abstract mode of spirituality, but it is not that of the one oriental god. Here the self-knowing subject retains in his inner consciousness all that is universal in intellect, truth, goodness, and morality that he has ceased to find in the externally objective world. We have in this an



essentially prosaic relation between a subject who wills the good and is firm in himself and an objective state of affairs in which he can find no spiritual satisfaction. Art can for a time deal with this opposition by portraying external reality as inwardly undermined and consumed by its own folly and corruption. In such portrayals of external disintegration, the *true* finds itself mirrored as the secure and abiding power against which self-destructive reality opposes itself in vain. Comedy, as Aristophanes developed it among the Greeks, was this sort of art, applied without anger, in pure and serene joviality, to all significant spheres of human interest.

### *Satire, especially as the Romans perfected it, is the genre of transition that marks the exhaustion of the Greek ideal of classical beauty*

But such comedy in fact deepens the opposition, and in the end the classical art form is superseded. The genuinely transitional form of art is not comedy in the strict sense, but *satire*. Satire has nothing of the epic in it, but does not belong to the lyric either. It is a genre that we find fully developed, therefore, not in Greece, which is preeminently the land of beauty, but in the Roman world. Among the Romans, it is usually a virtuous exasperation with the actual world that seeks relief in artistic expression and that only too often finds it, unfortunately, in hollow declamation. This form of expression, essentially prosaic in perspective, can become poetic only in the measure that it shows us corrupt reality in such a way that its corruption seems to collapse of itself; Horace, for example, who, as a lyric poet, had thoroughly assimilated in himself the spirit and manner of Greek art, traces for us in his *Satires* and *Epistles*—where he is truly original—a living picture of the manners of his age and the folly of its pursuits that are made self-destructive by virtue of the stupidity of the means employed.

But art cannot remain in this breach between abstract inner conviction and external reality without abandoning its own principle. The subject, absolute and infinite in itself, must not permit what is external to represent itself as truth, but its relation to the external must not be purely negative. It must advance toward reconciliation; for only then, as contrasted in this activity with the ideal individualities of the classical art form, can it come to expression as absolute subjectivity.

# IV
# THE ROMANTIC ART FORM

*To express its new and higher spiritual content, romantic art abandons the self-limiting perfection of the classical ideal of artistic beauty*

The form of romantic art is determined, as was the case in our treatment of the two preceding art forms, by the significance of the content art is called upon to represent. We must begin, therefore, by trying to define as clearly as possible the distinctive principle of the new material which now comes to consciousness as the absolute content of truth for both a new vision of the world and a new artistic representation of it.

In the first stage of art's development examined above, spirit works imaginatively to give external spiritualized form to a content which is derived from the natural sphere either directly or through conceptual abstractions above its underlying substance. In the second stage, the relation is reversed: spirit itself is recognized as art's proper content, and nature supplies, with the natural form of man, the sensuous shape most adequate for spirit's external manifestation. Art attains *classical* perfection here because spiritual individuality and bodily representation interpenetrate one another completely. The human body, that is to say, is treated in the classical art form not as a merely sensuous existence but as the natural outer shape of spirit itself. Art's task is then to purify that shape so that it can fully express





in itself a content adequate to itself. That content, in turn, must be of a wholly corresponding kind—so determined in itself as spirit that it can express itself *fully* in the natural form of man, without suggesting some higher significance that might transcend sensory expression. As we noted in discussing the dissolution of the classical ideal, this self-limitation is at once the principle of perfection in classical art and its inherently fatal defect, in which the demand arises for a transition, on artistic grounds, to a third and higher art form.

It must be stressed once again that classical art raised the capabilities of sensuous expression in art to the highest possible level of perfection. Nothing made by human art can be or become more beautiful. If the result is in any way defective, therefore, the defect must lie in art itself, in the limitation of its own sphere. This limitation consists in the fact that spirit, which is infinite concrete universality in itself, cannot be presented according to its true concept in sensuously objective form.

That true concept of spirit becomes the content of romantic art. As it cannot be directly presented in sensuously objective form, romantic art proceeds to dissolve the unity of the divine and human attained in the self-limiting perfection of classical art. In more familiar terms, we may say that this new content coincides with what Christianity affirms to be true of God as spirit. In Greek art, the unity of the divine and human that is offered us is purely immediate in its sensuous objectivity. It is not for spirit a possession of inward subjective knowledge. To *actualize* the unity of the divine and human in itself, to actually *know* what is only *implicit* and potential in the plastic beauty and individuality of the Greek gods, spirit must withdraw out of externality into itself; for the true medium in which the unity of divine and human nature is actualized must be, not the sensously existent *shape* of man as immediately perceived in its externality, but *self-conscious inward intelligence*.

Now it is Christianity, not art, that brings the unity of the divine and human before our intelligence as a subjectively conscious unity to be realized only by spiritual knowledge, and in spirit. When romantic art takes this Christian unity of the divine and human for its content, it abandons altogether the ideal of a reciprocal adequacy of content and form attained by classical art. And in its efforts to free itself from the immediately sensuous as such, in order to express a content that is

*not* inseparable from sensuous representation, romantic art becomes indeed the self-transcendence of art itself—achieved, however, in its own sphere and in a form entirely appropriate to art.

### *With Christianity, art for the first time wins a higher right to use the human form to express the spiritual consciousness of God*

Absolute inwardness, or the infinite subjectivity of God, is thus the true romantic content which we set out to define. Yet such inwardness would obviously escape art's hold and remain accessible to thought only if, to actualize itself, it did not first enter into external existence, so that there could be an actual withdrawal out of that reality back into itself. For romantic art, therefore, the absolute inwardness of God is no vague ideal tentatively shaped in the imagination; it is an inwardness that has in fact placed itself at the very heart of finite and contingent external existence. And there, because it is the actual externally existent subject in its humanity that is God's appearance, art acquires indeed for the first time the higher right to use the human figure, and externality in general, as an expression of the absolute.

The new task of art, however, is to use the human form hereafter not as it was used by Greek sculpture—to represent the satisfied immersion of spirit in a bodily form deemed wholly adequate for its expression—but to express the withdrawal of spirit out of corporeality into its own subjective depths. The lofty divinities of classical art, as we saw, lack genuine subjectivity of the kind that knows and wills itself as spirit. Absent in them is the light of the eye that most immediately expresses the soul's presence. The masterworks of Greek sculpture are sightless; the light of the soul that the living eye discloses falls outside them, or rather, it belongs to the spectator alone, who therefore cannot confront those figures soul to soul and eye to eye. The God of romantic art appears, instead, to be sightful, self-knowing, inwardly subjective. His human embodiment is such that we sense at once the presence of the Divine in it. Manhood has indeed been assumed, but it is not man as merely human in character, in sufferings, aims, and attainments, or as merely conscious *of* God—but as the self-knowing, universal God himself, in whose life and suffering, birth, death, and resurrection there has now been revealed even for



finite consciousness what spirit is, what the eternal and infinite is, in its truth.

We may say, therefore, that the center of this third great sphere of art, in its essentially religious phase, is supplied by the history of redemption—Christ's life, death, and resurrection. In its substantive significance, redemption consists in God's reconciliation with the world and thereby with himself, through man. Such reconciliation would seem to satisfy the demands of the classical ideal on the highest possible level, for there is no denying that the union of spirit with its own essence, which is the determinate principle of the classical ideal, is actualized here. Yet there is a fundamental difference. In the classical ideal, the blessedness of the particular gods is suffused, with their soul, through their entire bodily shape. In such blessedness, the negativity of an inwardly shattered self, of bodily and spiritual anguish, of sacrifice and renunciation, could hardly be introduced as an essential moment.

The religious reconciliation of romantic art, on the contrary, cannot escape the *actuality* of deep opposition to a finite world of evil, sin, and suffering that must be cancelled in its finitude, before the infinite can make itself explicit to itself as spirit. The appearance of that actuality on the ground and in the form of the human spirit is far removed in its objective configuration, therefore, from the appearance of the ideal figure of classical art. Classical art gives us an individual who, as a self-enclosed totality, rejects, in his unresponsive reserve, all that is not already his own. For this reason, we cannot approach those Greek divinities as if they in any sense mirrored back to us what we are in ourselves. Though the shapes are human, they do not belong to the realm of mortality, for those gods have not experienced in themselves the frailties of finite existence. It is otherwise with the infinite subjectivity of romantic art which is not, to begin with, blessedly immersed in its appearance. Its external shape or embodiment in the world is, in fact, not for itself but for others—an external manifestation of self graciously offered up or surrendered to everyone. It is an embodiment by means of which God actually descends into finite, temporal existence so as to mediate and resolve what are the inherent contradictions in the absolute's own concept of itself. Empirical man is not put off by that embodiment; rather, it invites him to find in himself an aspect that makes a direct encounter possible. He can approach with confidence, as

if he were approaching himself; for the figure before him mirrors back what he himself has, or what he knows and loves in the people around him.

*Because its embodiment is a gracious surrender of self to everyone, the absolute of romantic art is not, like a Greek god, lonely in itself*

The infinite subjectivity of romantic art that surrenders itself to everyone cannot therefore be lonely in itself like a Greek god. It does not remain self-enclosed in perfect blessedness, but comes out of itself into relation with an other, which is, however, its own, in which it finds itself again so that, even in coming out, it remains in unity with itself. This being in unity with itself in another is the truly beautiful content, the ideal, of romantic art. It is not, of course, the ideal of classical beauty. For in its new Pantheon, which is Christ, the beautiful divinities of the classical ideal are in fact all dethroned and consumed by the flame of subjectivity. But it is nevertheless ideal according to the true concept of the ideal itself which, on its highest level, is the absolute union of the divine and human. That very union is the content of the redemptive history of Christ, for, in him, an individual man is God and God is an individual man.

What gives the moment of *individuality* a distinctive importance in this history is the fact that every individual has in it the vision of his own reconciliation with God—not as a mere possibility, but as a reality which, for that reason, had to appear as accomplished, as actually realized, in this one man. That one person, casting aside his physical and spiritual individuality, suffers and dies; and yet, through death's anguish, he rises from death, and ascends in glory as God, as spirit in its actuality—which, having indeed come into existence as a single individual, in this one subject, is nevertheless essentially nothing other than God as spirit in his church.

Yet it might seem that art, functioning merely as art, might well be of little relevance for the expression of a theme of such high religious significance. What is primary here is the religious actuality of suffering, death, and redemption. And that is an actuality for inner certainty, for *faith*, which validates its truth for itself. For a developed faith, which brings its truth to consciousness on the strength of faith,



whether there is beauty in its appearance becomes a matter of indifference, for truth can be present to consciousness quite independently of art. And yet there is in this religious material an element which not only makes it accessible to art but even makes its artistic expression a virtual necessity. As we noted before, in the religious substance of Christianity, anthropomorphism is in effect pushed as far as it can go. The substantive center is the real union of the absolute and Divine with human subjectivity in a visibly existent human body. That appearance of God in the world, which eyes have seen, art can of course picture vividly and specifically, from Christ's birth to his ascension to the right hand of God; and indeed, when the actuality of that appearance has passed into history, art alone can give it sensory permanence and perpetual renewal.

Art's task is no longer to bring beauty to appearance by means of an idealized transformation of objective shapes penetrated by spirit. On the level of the romantic art form, beauty resides in the shape of the soul's subjectivity and, as a consequence, takes the form of feeling. Reconciliation with the absolute is an act of the inner life. It has an ideal element which, in its purity, transcends the possibility of expression in art, for its truth is operative on a level much higher than the appearance of beauty. If art is to deal with it at all, it must be not on the level of its truth, which belongs to faith and inner conviction, but on the level of feeling. Art, in other words, must itself as art assume the form and feeling of the subjective inwardness which is its content; as art, it too must surrender its appearance to everyone without ceasing thereby to remain in unity with itself. Thus, depth of feeling alone, as both the form and content of romantic art, fulfills the double demand that is made upon it, which is that its content be essentially spiritual, on the one hand, and entirely intelligible and portrayable by art, on the other hand. But the depth of feeling that answers to all this may be more specifically identified as *love*.

*Love, which supplies both the form and the content of romantic art, is a surrender of self that finds itself in another*

Love as *content* has in it all the phases through which absolute spirit passes in its reconciled return out of its other into itself; and as *form*, it is the same content compressed into a point of feeling which, instead

of externalizing what it contains, proceeds to draw into the heart's depth the entire breadth and immensity of all that ultimately pertains to that content. As concentrated feeling in the depth of the heart, that content is not obliged to display or explain itself at length; and yet, in its being concentrated, as feeling, it acquires a form that connects it directly with the sensuous and corporeal, so that now bodily appearance itself, a glance, facial features, and on a more spiritual level words and tones, can be moved by love to disclose the innermost life and existence of spirit.

The true essence of love consists in surrendering one's consciousness of self, in forgetting one's self in another, while yet, in that very surrender and oblivion, coming to true possession of oneself for the first time. This differs from the mediation of spirit with its other that characterizes the classical ideal, for there the spirit's other is its own bodily organism, whereas in love—which is the ideal of romantic art—spirit's other is, as we said, another spiritual consciousness, another self or person. Spirit ideally fused with body is the principle of the perfection of *plastic* beauty achieved by Greek art. In romantic art, that kind of beauty must be virtually forsaken. The fusion of spirit with spirit in love is a very different kind of principle, especially since, for the romantic consciousness, it has actualized itself not in works of beautiful art but in the history of Christ, where God's appearance in man, as absolute spirit fused with human spirit, culminates on Golgotha. The earthly body and the frailty of human nature is exalted in the fact that God takes that nature upon himself; yet it is that very human bodily existence that comes to appearance in its grief. Christ scourged, with the crown of thorns, dragging his cross to the hill of execution, nailed to the cross, expiring in the agony of a torturously prolonged death—this can hardly be presented in the forms of Greek beauty. Indeed, there enters here, especially in what happens around the Christ figure, an element for the expression of which the nonbeautiful, as compared with the plastic expression of classical art, is indispensable. These situations have in them, however, an aspect of the inner life's inherent sanctity that raises its infinite grief to the height of self-sacrificing love. And the beauty of such love, we may say, is *spiritual* beauty as such.

For the romantic consciousness, God in his profoundest essence is love; and art grasps him in a form suitable to art, and expresses him as such, in Christ. Christ is, however, *divine* love; and as such, what



he must make manifest is, on the one hand, God himself in his invisible essence and, on the other, humanity in need of redemption. For this reason, it is not so much the fusion of one particular subject in another that we see in him, as the idea of such love in its universality. When art attempts to portray Christ as self-absorbed in subjective feeling, the expression of love is indeed more personalized; yet even then it must be in some measure discernibly exalted by the essential universality of its content.

But what art can most suitably express in this sphere is the love of Mary—maternal love—the most successfully conceived object of the romantic religious imagination. Mary's love is intensely real and human, and yet entirely spiritual, without the interest and pangs of appetite, not sensuous, yet actual. It is love without craving, but not friendship, for, however deeply felt friendship may be, there must always be in it a content of some sort that is its essentially shared aim. Mother's love, on the contrary, without shared aims or interests, has the immediate support of a natural bond. But here the natural tie is by no means all. In her child, carried under her heart and brought to birth in pain, Mary has a perfect knowledge and feeling of herself; and while that child is indeed raised high above her, that exalted height itself belongs to her and is the object in which she at once forgets and possesses herself. The natural intimacy of maternal love is here altogether spiritualized, for the Divine is its true content; yet because this spirituality in its natural oneness is so wonderfully permeated by human feeling, it remains humble and unassuming. It is motherhood's blessed love, and of that *one* mother alone who is from the beginning in its bliss. Certainly this love too has its sorrow, but it is the sorrow only of the pain of loss, of grief for her suffering, dying, and dead son, not the kind that besets us through wrongs and torments suffered from without, or from our endless struggle against sins, or the troubles we give ourselves. This kind of inwardness is spiritual beauty, the ideal, man's thoroughly human identification with God, with spirit, with truth; a pure forgetting and complete surrendering of oneself which, by its self-forgetting, makes itself freely one with what has absorbed it, and now finds blessed satisfaction in that oneness.

*Only as feeling can man's spiritual union with God enter art, and, as feeling, it is most beautifully pictured in Mary's love of her child*

In this beautiful way, maternal love—a *picture* of spirit, as it were, instead of spirit itself—enters romantic art. For spirit can be grasped by art only as feeling; and, as feeling, the unity of the individual with God is made present in a wholly original, real, and living way only in the Madonna's love for her child. This must necessarily enter art if the ideal, the affirmative experience of reconciliation, is not to be excluded from its sphere. There had been a time, therefore, when this maternal love of the Blessed Virgin ranked generally with the highest and holiest of things, and was revered and represented as such. But when spirit in its own element, separated from all natural supports of feeling, brings what is its very own to consciousness, it is only a spiritual mediation equally free of such supports that can be looked upon as the way of genuinely free access to the truth; in Protestantism it is accordingly the Holy Spirit and spirit's inner mediation, over against this Mary-worship of art and faith, that has become the higher truth.

On the other hand, where faith seeks its bliss exclusively in the absolute, as occurs in romantic mysticism, it becomes a virtual abstraction which, instead of accepting and permeating the world, contrasts itself with it, as feeling, and rejects it. The entire external sphere thereby becomes for art a wholly repellent material which it cannot begin to master. Yet this abstract elevation of faith contrasts sharply with its practical manifestations in the daily life of the community of the faithful, which is the Church.

Christ did indeed say: "You must leave father and mother and follow me"; and also: "Brother shall hate brother; they will crucify and persecute you," etc. But when God's kingdom has won a place in the world and is busy penetrating worldly aims and interests in order to transfigure them; when father, mother, brother are already joined in it, the worldly as such also begins to defend and press a claim to validity in its own right. If that right is sustained, there must be an end to the negative attitude of what was at first an exclusively religious state of mind toward human things as such; and so spirit now extends itself, takes a sweeping view of the present, and lets its heart, which is essentially worldly, swell at the prospect. The fundamental principle itself is not changed; inherently infinite subjectivity merely turns toward and enters upon another sphere of its own content. In the direction of negativity it has gone the entire course; and now, having become for itself inherently affirmative, it emerges freely as subject, with the demand that, in its infinity—which is here still only formal—it must secure, for both itself and others, the fullest possible respect. In this subjectivity which is its very own, therefore, it places the entire inwardness of its infinite heart which till now only God had filled.



### *When romantic art overflows its purely religious bounds, chivalric honor, love, and fidelity become its chief themes*

But if we ask what precisely it is that fills the human breast at this new stage, we must say that it is only its own subjective, infinite self-relation. The subject, in his inherently infinite singularity, is full only of himself; and no concrete content of finite interests, ends, and actions can have essential importance for him. More specifically, when brought into positive relation with the world, this infinite self-reflection of romantic inwardness displays itself in three interrelated feelings—subjective honor, love, and fidelity—each of which implies a demand of infinite personal respect made upon the subject himself as well as upon others. These three, which are not really ethical qualities or virtues in the strict sense, constitute the content of *chivalry*. They provide the transition from religious inwardness to the mundane, social actuality of spiritual life. Among the particular arts, it is especially poetry that can make appropriate use of the themes of chivalry (even as painting can best express the maternal love of Mary), for it can represent both the inwardness of infinite self-reflective subjectivity and its not less infinite demands of personal respect in outward relationships of honor, love, and fidelity.

Yet with this chivalric material that man now draws out of his own breast, out of what is obviously a purely human world, it might seem that romantic art has entered upon the same ground that classical art had previously occupied, and a brief comparison and contrast of the two would therefore seem to be in order at this point. To begin with, the motive of honor as such was unknown to classical art. In the *Iliad*, Achilles' wrath is certainly the central theme, the spring that sets off all the subsequent action, but it hasn't much to do with what we understand by honor in the modern sense. Agamemnon has taken Achilles' share of the war booty away from him, and Achilles is enraged because this injury, representing a real loss to him, was done contemptuously, in the presence of the Greek armies. Still, it is not an injury that cuts to the depths of personality.

Romantic honor is basically very different. It involves injury not to some substantive actual value or right that can be objectively infringed, i.e., property, rank, office, etc., but to personality as such, in its own idea of itself. Here, some particular thing that might not much matter on its own account is raised to a level of universal significance and given infinite worth because the individual places the absolute validity of his subjective personality in it. That is why romantic honor can have the most varied sort of content. All that I am, all that I have done, or do, or suffer to be done to me by others, pertains to my honor. Loyalty to rulers, to country, to my profession, fulfillment of parental responsibilities, marital fidelity, honesty in trade, conscientiousness in research, and other things of substantive value can of course be made points of honor. Yet for honor even such relationships are not sanctioned and recognized as valid in themselves but only in the measure that I place my willfulness in them, thereby making them points of honor. Honor is thus the independence of personality reflected back into itself. Because that reflection is its entire essence, it leaves to chance whether its content will be something ethical and necessary or contingent and trivial.

In chivalric love, on the contrary, the highest thing is not subjective independence in this absolute sense, but rather the subject's willful surrender of self to a person of the opposite sex: a sacrifice of one's self-consciousness as a separate being which is made because of a compelling need to find one's true knowledge of self only in another. Love and honor are in this respect opposites. Yet in another sense, we may take love to be the actualization of what was already implicit in honor. For honor's deepest need, in making itself known, is to see its infinite personal essence fully recognized and accepted in another person. But recognition is hardly full if it is only my personality in the abstract that is respected by others. What is required is that my subjective being in its entirety—all that I truly am, have been, and will be, as this determinate individual—shall so wholly penetrate the consciousness of another as to constitute that other's true willing and knowing, yearning and possessing. I exist as myself thereafter only in that other, even as that other then lives only in me, and in the unity which first gives us meaning for one another, our souls and our worlds are completely identified.

At the basis of love there is, of course, not rational reflection but natural feeling, though the difference of sex tends to spiritualize even



the essentially natural element of romantic love. The lover involves the infinite subjectivity of his personality in the sex relationship as well. Here, too, there is a loss of consciousness of self in the other. In the disinterestedness and unselfishness of his feeling, the lover ceases to exist, or care, or live for himself; all that he really is he finds rooted in another, and in that other it is therefore also himself that he fully enjoys. That is love's infinity. Beauty enters this sphere because romantic love excites the imagination to build upon its foundation an entire world in which all other interests and circumstances serve only to adorn this one emotion and have no value apart from it.

### *The self-surrender of romantic love, which satisfies honor's need to be fully recognized in another, has no true counterpart in classical art*

Such depth of feeling in love is not to be found in classical art. Where love makes an appearance at all in ancient art, it is represented either as something relatively insignificant or as limited to purely sensuous enjoyment. In Homer, for instance, if it is introduced at all, it is almost invariably shown to us in its most dignified form: in the marriage ties of the household, as in the figure of Penelope, in the concerns of a wife and mother, as in Andromache, or in other similar ethical relations. The tie that unites Paris and Helen, on the other hand, is recognized as immoral and as the cause of the horrors and misery of the Trojan war; and Achilles' love for Briseis has little spiritual depth, for she is a slave entirely at his disposal. In the odes of Sappho the language of love is indeed raised to the heights of lyrical enthusiasm, yet it is the lingering, burning passion of the blood that is expressed here rather than the depth of spiritual subjectivity. Love shows another side in the charming little songs of Anacreon. We find there a cheerful, generalized enjoyment which, without inner torments, takes what delight comes its way innocently. That this particular girl rather than some other should be the one possessed has therefore about as much relevance as the monkish notion that the sexual relationship is to be altogether renounced.

Even in their great tragedies the ancients show no knowledge of passionate love in its romantic sense. Particularly in Aeschylus and Sophocles, no inherently essential interest is claimed for love. Antigone is the intended bride of Haemon, who kills himself, finally, because he

cannot save her; yet in pleading for her life before his father, Creon, he speaks only of objective ties, not of the depth and power of his feeling which, in fact, he certainly does not manifest as a modern lover would. Euripides does, of course, treat love as a more essential "pathos," in the *Phaedra*, for instance; yet even there it appears as a criminal aberration of the blood, as a passion of the senses, excited by Venus who wants to destroy Hippolytus because he refuses to sacrifice to her. Similarly in the Medici Venus, for all its beauty, the plastic representation of love lacks the expression of inwardness that romantic art demands. The same is true of Roman poetry in which—once the Republic with its ethical strictness has collapsed—love appears as a merely sensuous enjoyment.

With Petrarch, the very opposite is the case. Although he dismissed his sonnets as playthings and based his hopes for fame upon his Latin poems and other works, he has been made immortal by precisely this self-absorbed love-phantasy which, under the Italian sky, and in the heart's artistically informed fervor, fused itself with religion. Dante's exalted fame, too, sprang out of his love of Beatrice, which was then transfigured in him into religious love; his courage and boldness, meanwhile, gained the soaring energy of a religious-artistic vision of the world, in which, daring to do what no one had ever dared to do before, he became the world's supreme judge, apportioning all mankind to Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. A counterimage of Dante's exaltation is the love that Boccaccio offers us, which is sometimes impetuously passionate, and sometimes frivolously immoral, at least as represented in his colorful tales, where he lays before us the customs of his time and country. In the songs of the German Minnesingers, love's expression is full of feeling, tender, not richly imaginative, playful as well as melancholy, and often monotonous; among the Spaniards, it is fanciful, chivalric, subtle in defending what are its rights and duties in terms of honor, and verging always on fanatical excess even in its highest splendor. Among the French in later times, however, love becomes more gallant—a feeling tending toward vanity, artificially churned up for the uses of poetry, presented at one time as a sensuous enjoyment without passion, at another as passion without enjoyment, as a feeling or sensibility wholly charged with thought and sublimated.

*Chivalric fidelity differs from fidelity in friendship or love which subsists only between equals*



The third moment which is of importance for romantic subjectivity in its worldly sphere is fidelity. Yet what fidelity means for us here is neither steadfastness in keeping a vow of love once given nor constancy in friendship. In relationships of love and friendship, fidelity is possible only between equals, whereas the fidelity we have now to consider relates to a superior, to a person of higher station, to one's lord. We have a beautiful instance of it in the swine-herd of Ulysses, who sweats through night and storms to tend his swine, full of concern for his master and hostile to the very end, as we learn, toward the suitors. No less moving is the picture of fidelity that Shakespeare draws for us in *King Lear*, though here it becomes a matter of the mind alone. When Kent offers to serve him (I. iv), Lear asks: "Dost thou know me, fellow?" "No, sir," Kent replies, "but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master." That comes very close to what we must here identify as romantic fidelity. For at this point we have no longer to do with the fidelity of slaves or serfs which, however beautiful and affecting it may indeed be, has no place in it for the self-dependent autonomy of the individual in his ends and actions and is therefore of a subordinate kind.

What presents itself here, on the contrary, is the fidelity of the chivalric knight. Despite his pledged submission to a superior, whether it be prince, king, or emperor, the subject retains at all times his inherent independence for it is an inviolably essential element of his service. This is a principle of supreme importance in chivalry because it provides the chief bond of a community, at least when it is first being formed. It is not however, a bond-like patriotism that sustains a generalized interest in relationships of objective and universal value. A single vassal is pledged to serve a single lord, and the substance of the pledge is inherently conditioned by the vassal's own sense of honor, advantage, and self-esteem.

Such pledged fidelity and obedience very easily comes into conflict with other chivalric interests and it is therefore always something precarious. A knight, for instance, is loyal to his prince, with whom, however, his friend has had a falling out; he is forced to choose between two loyalties, and in so doing he has above all to consider himself, which is to say his own honor and advantage. We find a truly beautiful example of such a conflict in the Cid. He is true to himself as well as to his king. When the king acts as he should, the Cid's arm is at his service; when he acts wrongly, or when the Cid feels injured in

a point of honor, his powerful support is withdrawn. It is the same with the Paladins of Charlemagne. The tie of obedience to a lord is certainly there, but it is rather like what we saw to be the relation between Zeus and the other gods. The lord commands, blusters, argues, but the powerful and free individualities around him resist him how and when they will. What it amounts to is perhaps best pictured in *Reynard the Fox*. For just as in that poem the magnates of the realm really serve only themselves, so the German princes and knights of the Middle Ages manage never to be at home when they are supposed to do something for their Empire or their Emperor; and perhaps that explains why the Middle Ages have come to be so highly praised, for under such circumstances every one feels justified, and takes himself to be a man of honor, when he does exactly what he wants—something that can hardly be allowed him in the life of a state that has been rationally constituted!

This is where romantic art takes possession of the fairest part of the sphere that falls to it outside religion as such. With chivalry, it is the present, the here and now, that must give satisfaction. Even if it means that beauty and ideality of content have to be sacrificed, man now wants to see the real world, just as it is, recreated for him by art, set before him as a living presence which is manifestly a work of his own spirit. In other words, the mundane sphere that had to be sacrificed for man's subjective reconciliation with God at the first awakening of the romantic consciousness gains an affirmative yet still subjective significance in this final phase. The need to sacrifice the present was the distant beginning; the need to reaffirm that present, to discover and will one's subjectivity in it, thereby giving it positive value, is the conclusion of the development of romantic art: it is the very last thing reached when, in retreating into his own subjectivity, man brings his entire experience of the world to focus there in a single point.

### *Romantic art perfects its artistry even as its richest content—the present world in its subjectivized fulness—is fragmented in its grasp*

But in being thus brought to subjective focus, the material of romantic art undergoes an internal dissolution that separates and isolates its



constituent parts. On the one hand, its self-dependent characters are brought before our consciousness in particularized dramatic focus; and, on the other, the vast multiplicity of actions motivated by chivalric honor, love, and fidelity is displayed in bits and fragments, each with an unfettered individuality that justifies its artistic isolation. Art manifests at this stage what is indeed a sharpened subjective skill in depicting this fragmented multiplicity realistically, just as it actually appears to us, while at the same time displaying the total mastery of both content and form which its wholly subjective outlook has at last made possible.

In this concluding phase of the development of romantic art, the subjective infinity of man, which was our point of departure, remains of central importance. Indeed it is the depth of that subjective infinity itself that is first of all set before us with the dissolution of the content of romantic art. We have it in the particular individuality of the character who wishes to remain precisely what he is, pursuing ends which he has determined for himself, which neither originate in nor are justifiable by appeals to some higher objectively valid "pathos" or principle. Shakespeare's characters are for the most part of this type. What is supremely admirable in them is their unyielding firmness, their singlemindedness of purpose. There is here no question of religious feeling, of acting for the sake of religious reconciliation, or of morality in the strict sense. These characters adhere to the strict logic of their own passions in doing what they have proposed to do, and they must give satisfaction, in the end, only to themselves.

The tragedies especially, i.e., *Macbeth, Othello, Richard III*, etc., usually have one character of this sort at the center, surrounded by several less eminent and energetic characters. Macbeth, for instance, is inwardly shaped entirely by the passion of ambition. At first he hesitates, then he extends his hand toward the crown, commits murder to secure it, and, to keep it, storms ahead through horrors of the worst order. Nothing can deter him, not respect for the majesty of kingship, not the madness of his wife, not the defection of his vassals, not the destruction racing toward him, not man's laws or God's; he cannot be made to turn back, but simply persists all the more in his course. Lady Macbeth's character is of the same kind, and it is only the tasteless chatter of recent criticism that wishes to regard her as a woman acting out of love. When she first appears on stage with the

letter that reports the prophetic words of the witches to Macbeth, "Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor, hail to thee, king that shalt be!", she exclaims: "Glamis thou art and Cawdor; and shall be what thou art promised. Yet do I fear thy nature; it is too full of the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way." She takes no affectionate satisfaction, no joy in her husband's good fortune, and shows no moral emotion, sympathy, or pity of the kind that a noble soul might feel. She merely fears that Macbeth's character will stand in the way of his ambition, which is for her only a means. There is in her no hesitancy, no uncertainty, no reflection, no weakness, such as we find at first in Macbeth himself, no remorse, but only an abstract firmness or severity of character which relentlessly pursues its course till it cracks. Macbeth's action appears to result from a brutalization of his soul; once there is an end to his internal wavering, once the die is cast, what follows is in no way to be averted. His wife, on the contrary, is decided from the beginning; what alone develops in her is an inner anguish that intensifies till it has plunged her into the physical and spiritual ruin of the madness in which she perishes. A similar self-dependence in all that they do or suffer characterizes most of Shakespeare's figures, both important and unimportant.

Yet, while all that these characters do is rooted in their individuality and finds its force there, there is always also present in that individuality a sense of detachment, an elevation of spirit, that serves to cancel out what they actually are as evidenced by their aims, interests, and actions; and by that means, these figures are aggrandized and elevated above themselves. We see this even in Shakespeare's vulgar characters, such as Stephano, Trinculo, Pistol, and that absolute hero of them all, Falstaff. Though steeped in vulgarity, these figures nevertheless present themselves as men of intelligence, with a genius for working things out that enables them to pursue an essentially free existence and to be, in short, all that great men are. In all these characterizations we find neither justification nor condemnation. What we see is the operation of a universal destiny. Individuals, without complaint or remorse, are raised to awareness of the necessity of things; and from that vantage point, as from the outside, they are able to see how inevitably everything perishes, including themselves.



But the necessity of things that overwhelms these characters in their isolated individuality appears itself to be merely an inexorable, endless flow of particular events that have no inherent connection. The self-subsistent individual with his wholly contingent aims moves forward into a world with which he cannot identify himself, with which he can deal at all only as a pure contingency of external conditions and situations permits. Even where inherently universal and substantive ends are projected, what must actually be done to realize them is in no sense adequately pre-defined; on the contrary, the aspect of actualization has to be yielded entirely to chance, and thus to the *spirit of adventure*, which supplies the fundamental form of romantic action in general.

From the point of view of action, the romantic world really had but one absolute work to accomplish, namely the spread of Christianity, which is proof of the community's spiritual vitality. In a hostile world, flanked by pagan unbelief on one side and mindless barbarism on the other, this work could pass from doctrine to deeds at first only in a passive way, sacrificing temporal existence in pain and martyrdom for the soul's eternal salvation. In the Middle Ages, serving the same end, there is added the great undertaking of Christian chivalry, which is the expulsion of the Moors, Arabs, and Mohammedans generally from Christian lands and, above all, the conquest of the Holy Sepulchre in the Crusades.

The Crusades may in this sense be considered the collective adventure of the Middle Ages—an inwardly fragmented, fantastic adventure in the execution of which aims and actions of an altogether contradictory character are linked without reconciliation: piety becomes an almost bestial, barbaric cruelty and that cruelty, in turn, reverts back into a deeply spiritual penitence, which was the thing at issue from the start. What the reconquest of the Holy Land was supposed to achieve is in fact cancelled in the accomplishment. The Crusades were supposed to have given truth once more to the words, "Thou wilt not let him lie in his grave; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Yet, whatever value Chateaubriand may wish to ascribe to it, this longing to find the living Christ in the places where the Crusaders sought him—even in the grave, in the place of death—and to find spiritual satisfaction in the attempt, is a corruption

of spirit out of which Christianity had finally to rise, so as to free itself for a return to the fresh existence of the concrete world. With this, but on another, more fantastic and mystical level, we must associate also the adventures that make up the quest for the Holy Grail.

*Shakespeare's characters, the adventures of the Crusaders, and Dante's judgment of the world suggest the breadth of content of romantic art*

A much higher work is that which every man ought to perform in himself, in the course of his own life, by means of which he settles for himself his own eternal destiny. This is what Dante, for example, offers us from the Catholic point of view in his *Divine Comedy*, as he leads us through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. Here too, despite the rigorous construction of the whole, there is no lack of fantastic representations and adventures, since the work of salvation and damnation is set before us not simply in its absolute universality but as actualized in a unique way for a virtually incalculable number of particular individuals; besides which the poet claims the prerogatives of the Church for himself, takes hold of the keys to the heavenly kingdom, absolves and condemns, so that, as the world's judge, it is he who assigns the best-known personalities of the ancient and Christian world—poets, citizens, warriors, cardinals, popes—to Hell, Purgatory, or Heaven.

Proceeding beyond this on the mundane side, we have the vast sphere of isolated actions that result from the wholly contingent promptings of chivalric honor, love, and fidelity. Here we run into men fighting for personal fame or glory, there we see them leaping to the rescue of persecuted innocence, undertaking utterly fantastic feats for their lady's honor, vindicating violated rights with their fists and arms, even if the "innocents" thus shielded turn out to be a company of knaves. For the most part, in all of this, nothing surfaces—no condition, situation, or conflict—that makes the action necessary. The heart simply wants an outlet for what is pent up in it and so it deliberately seeks adventures. Chance determines what course of action our knight will choose to pursue; and when he has chosen some end that has only his willfulness to sustain it, it is again left to chance to determine, finally, whether external circumstances will permit him



to succeed in his venture or not. Worked out consistently, this whole sphere of chivalric contingency proves to be in the end a self-dissolving and therefore essentially comic world.

From the standpoint of chivalric adventure, this comically self-dissolving world is most appropriately portrayed in Ariosto and Cervantes, while it is Shakespeare above all who most consummately portrays its effects in the particularity of individual characters. In Ariosto, what especially delights us is the endless complexity of personal destinies and aims, the fabulous interweaving of fantastic relationships and foolish situations. In the play of the poet's adventurous imagination, nothing is so extravagantly foolish, frivolous, or insane that his heroes cannot manage to take it seriously. Love especially is brought down from the heights of Dante's divine love and Petrarch's romantic tenderness to the level of obscenely sensuous tales and ludicrous conflicts, while heroism and courage are twisted up to such heights of exaggeration that, instead of exciting astonished disbelief, they simply make us smile at the fabulousness of the exploits. Still, the seeming carelessness about how situations develop actually permits the poet to introduce astonishing complications and conflicts; one after another, actions are begun, interrupted, resumed, criss-crossed, apparently cut off for good, and yet in the end all somehow marvelously resolved. Moreover, along with his comic treatment of chivalry, Ariosto highlights and reaffirms all that is truly noble and grand in knighthood, in courage, love, and honor, even as he excellently represents other passions, including astuteness, guile, and presence of mind.

While Ariosto develops the fabulous side of chivalry, Cervantes pursues its romance. In his *Don Quixote*, Cervantes offers us the spectacle of a noble spirit in whom chivalry has become a form of madness, because its adventures are now set in a stable social environment the relationships of which are accurately pictured for us in precise detail. This sets up a comic contradiction, with a rationally constituted social order played against the antics of an isolated mind that is determined to create for itself what already exists, and by chivalric means that could only destroy such a social order. Despite this comic inversion, however, there is to be found in *Don Quixote* all that we earlier praised in Shakespeare. Cervantes too has given us a hero whose natural nobility is richly graced with spiritual gifts and

who never ceases to interest us. In his madness, Don Quixote reveals a heart that is always sure of itself and its affairs; or rather, his madness consists in nothing other than his being always thus sure of himself and his affairs. Without such absolute confidence in his aims and the results of his actions, he would not be the truly romantic figure he in fact is; besides, his self-assurance is about what really matters in his disposition, which is to say about his finest traits of character, and that makes it something inherently grand. On the one hand, the whole work is a mockery of romantic chivalry, completely ironic from start to finish—whereas in Ariosto the narration of adventures serves basically only as light entertainment; yet, on the other hand, what befalls Don Quixote is merely the thread upon which a series of truly romantic tales is charmingly strung so as to display the genuine value of all that the rest of the romance represents in comic dissolution.

Chivalry's internal dissolution is similarly treated by Shakespeare, who either sets his comic figures and scenes beside his one-sidedly individualized characters and tragic situations, or else, by treating such figures with a profound sense of humor, he raises them above themselves, above their crude, limited, and false ends. Falstaff, for example, the fool in *King Lear*, the musician scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, belong to the first type; *Richard III*, to the second.

### *After running its course through the masterworks of Ariosto and Cervantes, chivalry's dissolution enters the "apprenticeship" plots of modern fiction*

The third and final phase of this dissolution of the romantic is entered with the development of romantic fiction, or the novel, in our modern sense of the term, which is preceded historically by the chivalric and pastoral romances. Romantic fiction is chivalry once again taken seriously, with a real content. The old contingency of personal relations has become the stable order of civil society and the state; instead of the chimerical ends that knight errantry pursued, we now have the organized routine of local public administration, courts, army, and political government. The knightly character of the heroes of these modern romances has therefore also to be basically altered. As individuals with their personal aims of love, honor, and ambition, or with their ideals of world reform, they find themselves obstructed this way and that by the rigidity of the social order, by the prose of reality. The



response is an intensification of subjective desires, a pressing of demands and expectations raised to unprecedented heights.

The hero faces a bewitched and alien world, which he must fight because, instead of yielding to his wishes, it repeatedly sets against him the obstructive will of a father, or aunt, or some other social hindrance. These new knights are of course mostly young people who have to cut paths for themselves through a world which is busy realizing simply itself, as if their ideals counted for nothing. For them, it is plainly a misfortune that there should be families, civil society, state, laws, professions, etc., because such substantial relations with their rules and restraints serve only to suppress the noble ideals and infinite rights of the heart. The immediate aim has to be to cut through this order of things, to change the world, improve it, or at least to cut off a piece of heaven on earth; or, more specifically, to look for the one girl who is what she ought to be, find her, win her, wrench her out of the clutches of her parents or other wicked relations, and carry her off.

But in our modern world, struggles of this sort are but the trials of "apprenticeship," the education of a young man that prepares him for reality. Such apprenticeship has its importance, even if in the end it amounts to no more than this: the subject sows his wild oats, brings himself, his wishes and opinions, into rough harmony with the fixed relationships of his social environment, finds a place for himself in its complexity, and in the end develops a suitable attitude toward it. He may have struggled fiercely against the world and been much buffetted by it, but a time usually comes when he gets his girl, when he takes his more or less suitable place, marries, and becomes as much a Philistine as anyone else. The woman runs the house, children come along, the adorable wife who was at first his one and only angel of a girl behaves exactly like the rest; his profession brings toil and vexation, his marriage is one boring petty crisis after another, and so the usual picture, with its daily headaches, is complete. This, we might say, is knight errantry which has found its proper corrective.

The last matter we have still to consider is the moment when the romantic, which in its very beginnings was already *implicitly* the dissolution of the classical ideal of art, makes that dissolution evident as an artistic actuality. Meaning and shape are indeed separated from one another in the final phase of the development of romantic art, yet, as we saw, we do not have here a return to the reciprocal inadequacy of the two that characterized the symbolic stage. There it was a defi-

ciency of meaning, of the idea in itself, that produced a corresponding deficiency in the external manifestation. As romantic consciousness comprehends it, on the contrary, the idea is more than adequate; if it withdraws out of externality into itself, therefore, it is because all possible external embodiment is inadequate for its full manifestation, which transcends the expressive capacity of art. Insofar as it nevertheless seeks artistic manifestation, it presses art to a height of expressiveness beyond which it ceases to be art. That is the moment of art's romantic self-transcendence, its self-dissolution as art.

### *In its final phase, romantic art frees the artist from all bondage to the past, with respect to content as well as form*

In that self-dissolution, both the content of art and its forms can have, as we saw, an independent development. The romantic artist can, on the one hand, take the objects of the external world just as they present themselves to his subjective consciousness in their particularity and contingency; and there, since it is in large measure a matter of accident what particular object presents itself, the element of central importance is the artist's individual talent, his subjective intuition and representational skill in showing the object just as it is. On the other hand, the artist may shift his focus to the heart's inwardness as such, and then it is all the more a matter of accident what specific external material or shape will serve as the means of expression.

In either case, the artist's subjectivity stands above both the content and the forms of artistic representation, and that is the aesthetic standpoint of our most recent times. In his romantic subjectivity, the artist ceases to be dominated by any substantive religious or philosophical world view that predetermines what he shall represent and how he shall represent it. In the case of each of the universal art forms we have examined, there came a time, as we saw, when art had fully revealed the essential content of the dominant world view of the age, when it had said all that it had in mind to say. Its irresistible need was then to turn against itself, against the very content it had fully expressed.

In ancient Greece, Aristophanes thus turned against his own age, and Lucian, against the entire Greek past; similarly in Spain and Italy at the close of the Middle Ages, Ariosto and Cervantes turned against chivalry. But in this last phase of the dissolution of romantic art, we move beyond a negative as well as a positive bondage to any predetermined artistic content or form. Today, the development of critical reflection and of freedom of thought among all peoples has overmastered our artists as well, so that their artistic consciousness has become in effect a *tabula rasa*, upon which anything and everything can be freshly written.



If, despite the modern artist's absolute liberty of choice, we nevertheless persist in asking about the content and range of forms that may be regarded as more or less *peculiar* to contemporary art—viewing it from its own aesthetic vantage-point—the following may serve as an answer.

We have stressed that the universal art forms have a common basis in the absolute truth that art attains, and that their differentiation derives from the diverse interpretation each of them gives to what counts as absolute for human consciousness. In the symbolic, as we saw, natural meanings were the content while natural things and human personifications supplied the forms; in the classical, what came before us was spiritual individuality, but only as a physical presence that recalled nothing beyond itself, and over which there reigned only an abstract necessity; in the romantic, it was the spiritual in its infinite subjectivity, for the inwardness of which the external shape that art might supply remained entirely contingent. In the process of the human spirit's withdrawal into itself, romantic art strips itself of everything that tends to bind the artistic consciousness externally to a specific content or meaning. Not any specific content, but *whatever pertains to man*, whatever he can bring with him into the depths of his spiritual subjectivity, now becomes art's holy of holies.

The artist can still, of course, associate himself with what has already been, with the art of classical antiquity, for instance, or even of remoter times. It is a fine thing to be a follower of Homer, even if one of the very last; and surely works that reflect the medieval tendencies of romantic art can have true merit. The great works of the past are not to be denied their universal validity. Yet greatness of content in art is one thing and vitality of artistic treatment quite another. No Homer or Sophocles, no Dante, Ariosto, or Shakespeare can reappear as such in our time. What they sang so magnificently, what they so freely expressed, has in fact had its say. Only the present can be fresh; all the rest is stale and tasteless.

The French are surely to be reproached for having offered us not only Greek and Roman heroes, but Chinese and Peruvians too, as French princes and princesses; yet, if developed with profounder insight, the principle of drawing the past into the present to re-animate it artistically is a sound one. Indeed, it is only when imbued with the interest of the living present that the content of art, whatever its ultimate origin, can have any genuine truth for art. In the measure that it can be made present for us, therefore, all that mankind has been and done through all times, in its most varied significance and in the infinite multiplicity of its configurations, may now constitute the absolute content of our art.

In suggesting what may be the characteristic form of art when so vast a content has been drawn into the depths of romantic subjectivity, we may recall that, in discussing the transition from symbolic to classical art, we singled out the metaphor, simile, epigram, etc., as examples of a transitional genre. Here too we can identify a transitional genre. From all that we have already said about the dissolution of the content of romantic art, it is clear that the required transitional form must be one peculiarly suited to express the heart's total immersion in its object, whatever that object may be. Such subjective self-surrender, such total penetration of an object by subjective spirit, has its limits, for it is intimacy concentrated in a point of no dimension that tends to dissolve what it penetrates. It can be suitably expressed therefore only on a small scale; in poetry, only within the compass of a lyric, perhaps, or as part of some larger whole.

Art of this concentrated sort—which is by no means limited to poetry—has had a permanent vitality, as we shall see, among the Chinese. Brilliant examples, even for the present with its subjective depths of spirituality, are to be found particularly in the lyric poetry of the Persians and Arabs. The Spaniards and the Italians too have in the past done excellent work in this genre, and among modern poets there is especially Goethe in his *West-östlicher Divan*. In true instances of this enduring transitional genre, which has a remote formal ancestry in the ancient Greek epigram, we find neither personal longing, nor love-sickness, nor mere desire; only pure delight in the present object, a full yielding of the imagination to it, an innocent playing, an easy, fanciful lingering over it, and an uninhibited toying with all sorts of rhymes and possible meters. Beyond this, there is always also the pulsing joy of the heart's free movement that raises the spirit, in the exhilaration of its own expression, above all the painful entanglements and restraints of the real world.



*Romantic art's enduring form is the modern lyric which, with an inexhaustible self-yielding of the imagination, absorbs itself in its object*

Here we can bring to a close our consideration of the particular forms in which the ideal of art has displayed itself in the course of its development. I have made these forms the object of a rather extended inquiry so as to provide a clear indication of their content, in which their mode of representation is also determined. Indeed, as in every other work of man, so here in art it is the content that is decisive. Art, according to its own concept, can have no other calling than to give sensuously adequate *presence* to a content that is already complete in itself; and the philosophy of art must therefore make it its chief business to offer a thoughtfully comprehensive account of what art truly is in its fulness of content as well as in its beautiful mode of appearance.

# V

# INTRODUCTION TO THE SYSTEM OF THE INDIVIDUAL ARTS

*The universal art forms are mere abstractions till they are embodied in actual works of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry*

Throughout our discussion of the ideal of art and its universal forms—symbolic, classical, and romantic—our focus has been on the relation or complete mediation of meaning, as the inner side, and shape, as the external or phenomenal side of art. Yet, as we have been considering it thus far, that relation is itself still only an inner product of art's purely conceptual development. The actuality of the relation belongs, of course, to the world of concrete works of art, where the ideal of artistic beauty as such and the differences of the universal forms together determine the character and limits of the individual arts. In other words, the individual arts contain within themselves the same basic relations of meaning and shape, or content and form, that distinguish and define the symbolic, classical, and romantic art forms in their universality. Each of the individual arts, it may be said, belongs to one of the universal forms, in the sense that it gives that form its most adequate external embodiment; yet each of the individual arts also undergoes an historical development in the course of which the totality of universal art forms is recapitulated.

The one-sided understanding has searched everywhere for criteria according to which the individual arts might be distinguished and





classified. A valid classification must of course derive from the nature of the work of art itself. Since art must first of all address itself to the senses, the nature of the senses, and of the corresponding materials in which art objectifies itself, can provide a valid basis of classification. This gives us in fact the three-fold familiar division into *figurative* art, which elaborates its content visually in form and color; *sonoral* art, or *music*; and, thirdly, *poetry* which, as the *speaking* art, makes use of sound simply as a sign, in order to address itself inwardly to the spiritual subjectivity of our imagination, feelings, and ideas.

But if we limit ourselves to a classification of the arts on this purely sensuous basis, we are certain to run into difficulties once we try to apply so essentially abstract a principle to the concrete details of art. Far more suitable in this respect is the three-fold division we have already elaborated in the preceding chapters on the symbolic, classical, and romantic art forms. What concerns us here, however, is not how those forms, as general principles, determine the inner development of artistic beauty, but rather how they pass into actual existence, how they distinguish themselves externally, actualizing every distinguishable aspect of the idea of beauty as a *work of art* and not as a *general form*.

Art in its actuality, in other words, transfers into *objective* existence the differences implicit in the very idea of beauty. Through the individual arts, in their particular creations, that idea unfolds itself as an existent *world* of actualized beauty. At one extreme it gives us an artistic objectivity as yet devoid of spirit—an objectivity that is merely a suitable environment for spiritual expression of the divine. This environment has its spiritual aim and content not in itself but in another. The other extreme is the divine as inward, as something known, as the variously particularized *subjective* existence of the Deity. It is the truth as operative and vital in the sense, feeling, and intelligence of particular persons, where the objective manifestation of Deity passes into the diversity of particulars which belongs to all subjective knowledge—emotion, perception, and feeling.

In the analagous province of religion, with which art in its highest phase is immediately connected, we conceive this same difference as follows. First there is earthy, natural life in its finiteness confronting us on one side; but then, secondly, consciousness makes God its object, in which the distinction between objectivity and sub-

jectivity falls away; and, thirdly and finally, we advance from God as such to the devotion of the community, that is, to God as living and present in subjective consciousness. These three fundamental differences appear also in the independent development of the world of art.

The *first* of the fine arts that confronts us, as the beginning of art itself, is architecture. Its task consists in so manipulating external inorganic nature that it becomes, in its artistic treatment, cognate with mind. Its material is matter itself in its immediate externality as a mechanical heavy mass; its forms remain the forms of inorganic nature, set in order according to the relations of symmetry of the abstract understanding, so that the reality is a mere reflection of mind, not an embodiment of it. The fundamental type of the art of building is therefore the *symbolic* art form. Architecture prepares the way for the adequate actuality of God. It levels a space, gives form to his external environment, and builds him his temple as a fit place for concentration of spirit and for its direction to the mind's absolute objects. It raises an enclosure around the congregation of the faithful, to protect them, and reveals the will to assemble in a way that, while still only external, conforms to the principles of art. Thus, the temple of God, the house of his community, stands ready.

Into this temple, *secondly*, the God himself enters as the lightning-flash of individuality that strikes and permeates the inert mass; and the infinite form of mind, no longer merely symmetrical, is now concentrated in shaping its corresponding bodily existence. This is the task of *sculpture*. Since the spiritual inner being to which architecture can only point makes itself at home in the shape of sculpture, it must be assigned the *classical art form* as its fundamental type. External sensuous matter is no longer manipulated in accordance with its mechanical qualities alone, or given shapes belonging to the inorganic world; rather it is shaped in the ideal forms of the human figure, in the fulness of its three spatial dimensions. The spirit which sculpture represents is spirit which is solid in itself, not splintered in the play of trivialities and passions. It does not, accordingly, dissolve its external shape into multiple modes of appearance, but shows itself in this one aspect only, as the abstraction of space in the totality of its dimensions.

Now, after architecture has built the temple, and the hand of sculpture has provided the statue of the God, then, *thirdly*, this



sensuously present God is confronted in the spacious halls of his house by the *community*. It is only at this point that God comes to be really and truly spirit. In the community, God is released from the abstractness of undeveloped self-identity as well as from immediate absorption in a bodily medium, as represented by sculpture. Manifested here as the main thing is not the untroubled calm of God in himself, but appearance as such—being, or rather self-manifestation, which is *for another*. In the community, the object of artistic representation is the full range of subjectivity, as human passion and action and, in general, feeling, will, and its negation. Media suitable to the expression of such subjective inwardness we have in color, in musical sound, and finally in sound as the mere indication of inward perceptions and ideas; and as the arts that make use of these media for the expression of such inwardness, we have painting, music, and poetry. Since they abandon both the symbolic character of architecture and the classical ideal of sculpture, these three take the *romantic art form* as their fundamental type, and their articulation as a totality may be determined as follows.

The *first* of these arts, which is closest to sculpture, is painting. Its medium is visibility as developed into color. The material used by architecture and sculpture is of course visible and colored too. But painting's visibility is subjectively idealized. It needs neither the abstractly mechanical attribute of mass as operative in the heavy matter of architecture, nor the sensuous attributes of space which sculpture retains in its organically formed shapes. The visibility and the rendering visible that belong to painting have their differences in the more ideal particularity of the several kinds of color, and they serve to liberate art from the sensuous completeness of space by restricting themselves to a plane surface.

The content of painting, for corresponding reasons, attains on the contrary the widest particularization. Whatever the human spirit can experience as feeling, idea, and purpose; whatever can be shaped into human action—the whole realm of particular existence, from the loftiest content of mind to the simplest isolated objects or scenes of inorganic nature—finds a place here, so long as some allusion to spirit is discernible in it.

The *second* art, which is the opposite of painting in the romantic sphere, is music. Its medium, though still sensuous, takes it to a level of subjectivity and particularization that is far more profound than

that of painting. Music idealizes the sensuous by concentrating the externality of space, whose semblance is fully retained by painting, into a single point. The single point, excluding space in its negativity, is an actual cancellation of matter in the shape of a motion and tremor of the material body in itself, and with relation to itself. Matter's ideality, appearing no longer as spatial but as temporal ideality, is sound. By converting abstract visibility into audibility, sound liberates the ideal content of art from its immersion in matter. Or rather, it is matter's own inwardness that here provides the medium of expression for mind's still-indefinite self-concentration; and the heart, with its whole gamut of feelings and passions, finds an outlet in the tones of that medium.

Thus, just as sculpture occupies a middle ground between architecture and the arts of romantic subjectivity, so music lies at the very center of the romantic arts and marks the transition-stage between the abstract spatial sensuousness of painting and the abstract spirituality of poetry. However, as the antithesis to emotion and inwardness, music has in itself, like architecture, also a quantitative rational aspect: there is a fixed conformity to law in the intrinsic character as well as in the variety, conjunction, and succession of its tones.

As for the *third* and most spiritual mode of representation within the sphere of romantic art, we must look for it in poetry. Its characteristic distinction lies in the power with which it subjects to mind, and to its ideas, the sensuous element from which painting and music had already in some measure delivered art. For sound, the only external material retained by poetry, ceases here to be a feeling of the sonorous itself and becomes instead a *sign* of the idea which has become concrete in itself. Sound thus develops into the *Word*, as voice, articulate in itself, as a self-concentrated point of mind which, self-consciously producing out of itself the infinite *space* of its ideas, unites it with the *time* of sound. Thus regarded, sound may just as well be nothing more than a mere letter of the alphabet, since the audible, like the visible, has been reduced to a mere indication of mind.

The true medium of poetical representation is therefore not the audible or visible word as such but the poetical *imagination* or intellectual intuition as such. And as this element is common to all the art forms, poetry runs through them all—symbolic, classical, and romantic—and develops itself independently in each. As for its mode



of artistic configuration, poetry shows itself to be indeed in this respect the truly universal or total art, since it repeats in its sphere the modes of representation which characterize the other individual arts—something which painting and music do only in a very qualified measure.

Specifically, as *epic* poetry, on the one hand, poetry gives its content the form of *objectivity*, though this is not brought to actual external existence, as in the visual arts; still, for the internal contemplation or imagination, the world that epic narration constructs is truly objective.

Conversely, in the *lyric*, poetry gives its content the form of *subjectivity*, expressing the inner life as inner, and calling upon music to aid it in penetrating all the more deeply into feeling and heart.

Thirdly, poetry is brought to utterance within the compass of a self-enclosed *action* which, in manifesting itself objectively, reveals at the same time its inner, subjective significance, so that it can link itself closely also with music and gesture, mime and the dance. This is *dramatic* art, in which the whole man sets before us, by *re*producing it, the actual work of art produced by man.

### *Beyond the five major arts there are hybrid varieties which, though not conceptually distinctive, can attain high levels of excellence*

These five arts make up the organically self-articulated system of the arts as actually existent. Apart from these five, there are, it is true, other arts, such as gardening and dancing, etc., about which we can, however, speak only incidentally. Philosophical study must limit its inquiry to distinctions that can be conceptually determined and to comprehending, in terms of those distinctions, their actual artistic embodiments, even while acknowledging that the intermediate varieties of art may still provide us with much that is gracious, pleasing, and meritorious.