

*Hegel's A&esthetics*  
&  
THE  
END  
*of*  
ART



Analysis, Critique &  
RECONSTRUCTION



Submitted in fulfilment of the regulations for the degree  
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# Hegel's Aesthetics and the End of Art: *Analysis, Critique, and Reconstruction*

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## ABSTRACT

To many Hegel's monumental lectures on aesthetics are famous for one thing: his thesis about 'the end of art'. As we shall see, it is not insignificant to note the irony of this fame in light of the fact that although Hegel's lectures occupy over 1,200 pages in two volumes of Malcolm Knox' translation, he never once uses this phrase. What he does discuss is what he describes as the 'dissolution of romantic art'. As the third form of art -the other two being symbolic and classical- it might seem that Hegel means to suggest that art is over and done with forever, but, in the most famous phrase he ever *did* utter, Hegel says (in the *Philosophy of Right*): 'The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk'; in other words: it is not the place of philosophy to speculate upon the future course of world history, art, or anything else, but instead to be satisfied with its sober reflection upon what has been, and thus what may be reasonably considered in its proper context and full significance.

What this means, clearly , is that in addition to the fact that Hegel himself does not actually say anything about art as such being over , or more dramatically, as some see fit to argue, that art is dead and that Hegel has become a sort of spokesman for its death, he, by his own definition of what philosophy is, *cannot* say anything about what will or will not happen in art. These claims, however , cannot be seen to be anything other than a mass hallucination, and 'the death of art' itself, then, as akin to an 'apparition' of the Virgin Mary in the clouds.

To get at the truth of what Hegel actually did say we shall devote some time to what Hegel himself believed to be the truth. Accordingly the first chapter is entitled 'A Circle of Circles'- which alludes to Hegel's own characterization of his philosophy . As we shall see, rather than simply addressing one topic and then moving on to another and another and so on, Hegel's philosophy constitutes a system- in which each subject is considered in its proper place and in relation to all the others. Hegel describes each area of enquiry as a circle, and thus the system in which they all inhere as a 'circle of circles'.

In order to familiarize ourselves with this system we shall examine Hegel's two most significant philosophical works: his first book *The Phenomenology of Mind* and his

second *The Science of Logic*. It is in these texts that Hegel sets out the core of his philosophy- which, as we shall see, is grounded in the 'science experience' (i.e. phenomenology) and develops outward to encompass logic [the objective structure of thought (and experience itself)], nature, world history , geography, religion, political systems, and so on until everything finds its proper place and the expression of its genuine philosophical significance.

One of the more important aspects of Hegel's system is the place he assigns to art (or, as he would say , the place art assumes of itself). Appearing at the end, it falls within the same 'absolute' domain as religion and philosophy . The chapter treating the subject of art in general is called 'Beauty Born of the Spirit'- suggesting that art is no mere luxury or frivolous pursuit of beauty, but instead that beauty itself is something of universal significance. Indeed we shall see that beauty (like religion and philosophy) is bound up with truth- that, in fact, it is nothing other than the sensuous appearance of truth itself. All art which deserves the name strives toward this goal, Hegel says, and when in human history it is perfectly achieved -in 'classical' art- Hegel calls it 'ideal'.

Genuinely 'ideal' art, however, constitutes a very small part of the total out-put of art history , and, under the heading of 'A W orld of Actualized Beauty' we shall consider this history as Hegel unfolds it. Art's classical phase is preceded by 'symbolism' -which Hegel characterizes as ' *struggling toward true meanings* '- and ultimately superseded by romanticism. In our endeavour to make sense of what Hegel says about 'the end of art' it is this last artform which shall concern us in most detail. Thus the next chapter is headed: 'Bowing the Knee No Longer ' - which is the phrase Hegel uses to describe our relation to art today- i.e. no doubt curious and enthusiastic, but no longer reverent. We shall see that Hegel attributes this decline to what he describes as 'the spirit moving on', i.e. our inability to see in art the absolute truth which we experience in other institutions, namely: religion and philosophy . For this reason, he says, '*art has become for us a thing of the past*'.

The first chapter of our final section, accordingly , is called 'Philosophy Paints its Grey in Grey'- a phrase from the same paragraph of the *Philosophy of Right* in which Hegel invokes Minerva's owl. The implication, of course, is that when, in Hegel's words, '*a shape of life has grown old*', as he believes art has, all we can do as philosophers is try to understand what has happened and why . Having said that, in this chapter we acknowledge that Hegel did not -and, indeed, *could not*- make any claims as to the future of art, there are clear implications in his lectures on æsthetics that although romanticism has reached a sort of logical conclusion, he has every reason to believe that art will continue on indefinitely as a cultural institution. Most famously he says: ' *We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection* '. The main purpose of this 'Grey in Grey' chapter, then, is to consider Hegel's arguments about romantic art's 'dissolution' and then to reconstruct them in line with the logical precedent of Hegel's philosophy as a whole (whose structure, as we shall see, these final arguments do not exhibit in their present form). We will see that in this reconstruction it is possible to

conclude that a logical space is opened up for a genuine future for art rather than the eternal recurrence of the problematics which signalled the end of romantic art to Hegel in the early nineteenth century (i.e. what we shall see are the extremes of 'academicism' and 'mannerism' in art).

With this space thus revealed we shall turn, after the Conclusion in an Epilogue, to the work of contemporary Slovene artist and philosopher Mojca Oblak. The title - 'Obsessed with Originality'- is drawn from the text of Oblak's large scale artiso-philosophical system 'Transcendental Mannerism', which, as the phrase suggests, is concerned to go beyond art in its traditional sense to a new plane not only of artistic creation, but also of experience itself- thus offering us a tangible example of what a post-Hegelian form of art could be like. In our study we shall see how Oblak has based her system on Kantian ideas of autonomy , the sublime, and transcendental freedom. Her results, however , are utterly Hegelian in their achievement of a genuinely 'absolute' form of art which is able to embody the truth (rather than merely allude to it) in the æsthetic dimension.

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## ABSTRACT

Hegel distinguishes two essential elements in art: '*something inward -a content-and something outward which signifies that content; the inner shines in the outer and makes itself known through the outer since the outer points away from itself to the inner.*' (*Lectures on Fine Art* p.20) These components may either correspond or diverge. For their correspondence Hegel reserves the accolade '*ideal*'. This is the highest achievement art can produce and it constitutes not only the goal of what Hegel calls the '*classical*' form of art, but also of the history of art in general. Of the two '*diverging*' arts: the first -'*symbolism*'- Hegel refers to as '*the threshold of art*' because it is still seeking the unity of the ideal; the other -'*romanticism*'- constitutes the '*sundering*' of art's form and content, and thus leads to the focus of our study: '*the end of art*' (which, it is worth stating, is not a phrase Hegel himself ever uses- a fact which we shall recognize to be significant in due course).

These three '*moments*' of art constitute Hegel's logical and more or less historical division of the subject of æsthetics, and we shall examine them in turn- making our way to the end of the third where Hegel explicitly and at length addresses the issue of '*the dissolution of romantic art*'.

In concluding the exegical portion of our study we shall focus on the particular arguments and examples employed by Hegel in his presentation of art's dissolution. We shall then offer a critique and reconstruction of these arguments which not only theoretically restores the logical consistency of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, but also, in practical terms, opens up the possibility of a new future for art (in place of the '*eternal recurrence*' Hegel sees for it himself).

As an epilogue we shall consider the work of contemporary Slovene artist and philosopher Mojca Oblak whose '*System of Transcendental Mannerism*' - though based ostensibly upon Kant's ideas of autonomy , the sublime, and transcendental freedom- constitutes a unique and significant way forward- both artistically and philosophically- opening up new possibilities of free creation and æsthetic experience in what she calls the '*Transcendental Dimension*'.

# *DEDICATION(a)*



Every word, phrase, and concept (made into an idea) of this work is dedicated with love & unreserved gratitude to my brother

~ *Bruce Miller, Jr.* ~

AND

to my incomparable colleague and partner in inter-continental strategies (and other phrases)

~ *Ioanna Kopsiafti* ~

AND

to many other people and places,  
including:

~ *Roy & Grace Fong* ~

AND

~ *The Imperial Tea Court* ~

without whom and which it might all still have been possible, but not as rewarding.



# **DEDICATION(b)**



This dissertation is also dedicated with  
love and thanks to my parents

*-Pat and Jerry Burke-*

who encouraged it from even before the  
beginning all the way to the end,  
and also to the memory of my  
grandparents

*-John and Rose Sweeny-*



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# INTRODUCTION

## ~ Of Old Hegels and New ~

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Ottolie von Goethe -daughter-in-law of the famous poet and polymath- tells the story of the following encounter between her sister and the philosopher G.W .F. Hegel in the summer of 1827 in Weimar:

One day Goethe announced... that there would be a guest for lunch without -as was always his custom- revealing his name or introducing him as he made his appearance... During the meal Goethe was comparatively quiet- no doubt so as not to disturb the flowing speech of his very voluble and logically penetrating guest. An entirely novel terminologya mode of expression mentally over-leaping itself, the peculiarly employed philosophical formulations of this ever more animated man in the course of his demonstrations- all this finally reduced Goethe to silence... The lady of the house likewise listened in silence- no doubt somewhat taken aback... After the meal had ended and the guest departed, Goethe asked... 'Now how did you like the man?' 'Strange,' she replied, 'I cannot tell whether he is brilliant or mad...' 'Well, well, we just dined with the most famous of modern philosophers- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel!'<sup>1</sup>

As Frau Goethe's account suggests, a single afternoon with Prof. Hegel himself was hardly sufficient to gain any understanding of what he said and thought; and -as so many books which purport to be 'about' his philosophy equally attest- it is possible for one to emerge from many years of study not much better informed.

### HEGEL'S STATUS TODAY

It may be true to say that Hegel is the most famous unknown philosopher in the world- meaning that unlike, say, Fichte or Cassirer, Hegel's name is well known both inside and out of academic philosophy , yet the difference between the Hegel presented in so many of the books written about him and the Hegel who emerges from his own words could hardly be more dramatic. As Allen W ood suggests in his introduction to a recent translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* , the reason for this discrepancy can easily be accounted for by the fact that

Hegel is cited much more frequently than he is read, and discussed far oftener than he is understood. Some of those who discourse of Hegel with the greatest sophistication know him only through warped, inaccurate or bowllderized second-hand accounts (for instance, accounts of the Hegelian dialectic as 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis'). The Hegelian ideas which capture the popular imagination are often not present in Hegel at all, or have only the most tenuous

and dubious connection with what Hegel actually thought or wrote.<sup>2</sup>

**NOTE:** The example Wood alludes to here perfectly illustrates his point since almost everyone who claims to know anything about Hegel believes the most important thing about his philosophy is its tri-partite 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' structure. Unfortunately however, this formula -though present in the writings of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling- has little, if anything to do with Hegel himself- which means, of course, that anyone who thinks Hegel can be 'explained' through its imposition upon his philosophy possibly has not read Hegel at all and definitely has appropriated it from someone else (who himself clearly does not understand Hegel either).

Elsewhere Wood speaks of the subtleness and complexity of Hegel's thought- from which, he says, 'his meaning can be separated only with skilled and careful surgery, [and] even then usually not without risk of mortal injury'.<sup>3</sup> The danger he refers to is perhaps the greatest source of incomprehension and error in trying to understand Hegel- that is, the attempt somehow to skim the 'meaning' of his philosophy away from his presentation of it- or, in other words: the desire somehow to separate its 'content' from its 'form'.

The contrary approach of the present study takes its cue from Hegel himself who remarks in his introductory lecture to the philosophy of history:

*Our ideas, or our intelligence generally, demands that the whole, the universal, be surveyed, that the aim of the whole be grasped before coming down to details. We want to see the individual parts in relation to the whole- for it is only in this relation that they have their preeminent meaning and worth.<sup>4</sup>*

For Hegel perhaps more than any other philosopher it is essential to concern oneself first and foremost with the entire range of his thought before focusing in on any single aspect of it. This approach is essential because, unlike other philosophers, Hegel is unique in having essentially only one philosophy , i.e. a single universal system rather than a multitude of diverse and isolated 'treatments': e.g. of theology, aesthetics, logic, ethics, etc. '*Only from an elevated position*', he says, '*can one view a subject properly and see everything in its correct place*'.<sup>5</sup>

In his own system, for example, Hegel does not cut art off from religion, nor religion from philosophy; and, by his own advice, we should not feel tempted to do so ourselves- lest we fall into the trap of other commentators who try to 'saw off' some piece of Hegel's system and then end up criticizing him for their inability to understand what Hegel himself would admit has lost much, if not all of its significance severed from its context and therefore, as he would say , 'in abstraction'. '*It is easier to refute than to justify,*' he says in the history of philosophy.

*Nothing is easier than to show up the negative element. We give ourselves the satisfaction of mind in finding -when we recognize the negative element- that we stand higher than what we are judging. This flatters our vanity. To refute something is to*

*be above it. When we are away above something we have not worked our way into it. But to find the affirmative means having worked our way into the thing and having justified it, and this is far more difficult than refuting it.<sup>6</sup>*

We should recognize in this statement Hegel's advice to us to truly penetrate -i.e. 'work our way into'- what we wish to comprehend- which means, as we saw him suggest above, to see everything in its proper perspective, and further, as he says below in his early 'Fichte and Schelling' essay, we must 'bring it to life':

*If the living spirit which dwells in a philosophy is to be revealed, it needs to be born through a kindred spirit. It slips by the historical approach -guided as it is by some interest or other in information about opinions- [which] takes it as an alien phenomenon and does not disclose its inner being... For during the process of gathering the information, [the living] spirit itself slips between the fingers of curiosity.<sup>7</sup>*

Hegel thus calls for an *engagement* with his thought rather than a mere 'fact-finding' or 'historical' study of it. Merely to gather information about philosophy rather than genuinely participating in it -i.e. noting who said what on this or that topic- disengages us from thought's systematic development as a whole and thus lets its most significant aspect -this development itself- slip past unnoticed.

The inevitable result of such so-called 'curiosity', of course, is incomprehension and criticism of Hegel for what are more often than not our own mistakes rather than his. As Hegel puts it:

*People often think they have done their job when they have found something which can be justly criticized; they are right, of course, in one respect; but they are wrong insofar as they fail to recognize the positive factor. To see only the bad side in everything and to overlook all the positive and valuable qualities is a sign of extreme superficiality.<sup>8</sup>*

In order to avoid superficiality and, therefore, also confusion and undue criticism of Hegel we can do no better than heed his own advice from the end of the *Science of Logic*- where he says that in a genuine intellectual confrontation one '*must penetrate the opponent's stronghold and meet him on his own ground; [for] no advantage is gained by attacking him somewhere else and defeating him where he is not.*'<sup>9</sup>

In the case of so many books about Hegel's philosophy (especially those written in English) it is not hard to see that their authors have taken what Hegel describes as the easy (and therefore inadequate) route: they pick and choose from the vast range of his philosophy , 'showing up' what they take to be its negative element, all without the slightest attempt to work their way into it and meet Hegel 'on his own ground'. But '*to look for the substance and enduring value of things*', Hegel says, '*is not so much equity as justice*' <sup>10</sup>- an admonition we may take as our motto here, while considering this thesis as a whole as an attempt to

do justice to Hegel- that is, to explore the universe of his ideas as they are elaborated across the wide spectrum of his philosophical system.

## OBSTACLES

In his excellent study of Hegel's influence on the philosophical world (and beyond)- *Hegelianism: The Path toward Dialectical Humanism* , John Toews quotes the eulogies of two Hegelian disciples -Friedrich Förster and Philipp Marheineke- who, in praising their famous mentor , at the same time unwittingly predict the root causes of his decline and fall from academic prominence and respectability:

'Let the dead bury the dead,' Förster proclaimed at Hegel's grave-side; 'to us belongs the living; he who having thrown off his earthly chains celebrates his transfiguration.' Marheineke also placed the burial of Hegel's earthly remains in the context of the immortal life of his spirit which [he said] 'still lives and will live forever in his writings and his countless admirers and students.' In fact, Marheineke claimed that the departure of the empirical, individual Hegel allowed his eternal spirit to be appropriated by his followers in 'a purer fashion than before' [presumably when the 'empirical Hegel' himself could no longer get in the way]. 'Emancipated from all sensuous appearance,' [he continued] Hegel was now 'no longer susceptible to misinterpretation,' but [instead] 'transfigured in the hearts and spirits of all who recognized his eternal worth.'<sup>11</sup>

I do not doubt that the 'transfiguration' which Marheineke predicted at Hegel's funeral has taken place (though clearly his opinion concerning the insusceptibility of Hegel's thought to misinterpretation has proved false). It is, in fact, Hegel's 'transfiguration' -that is, his philosophy's appeal to so many different individuals and schools of thought- which, far from a lasting, coherent Hegel, has resulted instead in a widely divergent multiplicity of Hegels- most of which have little if anything to do with what I believe emerges as the 'real Hegel' from a serious and comprehensive consideration of his works on his own terms. It is these divergent and conflicting 'Hegels' which I regard as the greatest obstacle to achieving a reasonable understanding of Hegel' s philosophy itself and its genuine value to us today and our philosophical concerns.

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**NOTE:** It is not hard to imagine in Hegel's mouth Nietzsche's famous words from the opening of his philosophical autobiography *Ecce Homo*: 'Listen to me! for I am thus and thus. Do not, above all, confound me with what I am not'<sup>12</sup> Hegel approaches this plea himself in the *History of Philosophy* when he says: '*An historian of philosophy must adhere strictly, historically, precisely to the very own words of his author and not draw conclusions from them and so make something different of them.*'<sup>13</sup>

The origin of today's motley band of Hegels can, I believe, be traced back as far as the publication of Hegel's first book, the *Phenomenology of Mind*, in 1807. In the preface to this work Hegel asserts his conviction that ' it is the nature of truth to prevail when its time has come, and that it appears only when this time has come, and therefore never ... prematurely, nor finds a public not ready to receive it '<sup>14</sup>.

There can be little doubt, however , that far more people were bewildered by Hegel's truth -i.e. the *Phenomenology* itself- than enlightened by it, and also that the unfamiliarity and difficulty of its contents were responsible for a wide and diverse range of interpretations of Hegel's philosophy right from the start with its public inauguration in this work (many of which persist to this day).

With Hegel's death only 24 years later , as was suggested above, the philosophical world's Hegel population was able to multiply unchecked (i.e. 'emancipated' from the living proximity of the 'empirical' Hegel himself). It is thus no wonder -considering the vastness and intricacy of his published books and lectures- that both conservatives and revolutionaries (intellectual and political) as well as atheists and true believers alike have acknowledged themselves as his heirs through the glorification of various aspects of his thought in isolation.

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**NOTE:** Toews' *Hegelianism*, as well as his essay 'Transformations in Hegelianism' and William Brazill's book *The Young Hegelians* all provide comprehensive accounts of the misadventures of Hegel's philosophy (and its enthusiasts and detractors themselves) following his death.

In addition to the multiplicity of interpretations of Hegel, another point to note -particularly in relation to the English-speaking tradition- concerns the unlikely appearance in 1857 of Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of world history as the first of his works to be translated into English. In a recent edition of the first of these lectures, Duncan Forbes remarks in his sensitive introductory essay that Hegel's philosophy of history is often used as a 'popular introduction' to his philosophy as a whole, and that for this reason 'one suspects that much of the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Hegel has been due to this.'<sup>15</sup> Hegel's philosophy of history does in fact contain his whole philosophy (as all subjects treated by Hegel implicitly do), but this content is so 'speculative' (to employ Hegel's term) that one would have to have mastered the entire *Phenomenology of Mind* , the *Science of Logic* , and probably his three-volume *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* as well before being able to recognize, let alone comprehend it.

The point here is simply that many of bizarrest opinions of Hegel (for example: that he believes the universe is a mind, that nature is somehow 'derived' from thought, that we are all the pawns of the 'cunning of reason', and so on) are more than likely attributable to the attempt to approach Hegel from the parts of his philosophy which may at first appear to be the most 'concrete' or 'accessible', but which, in fact, turn out to require competence in its most speculative (and therefore most complex) aspects.

A further phenomenon to note in our consideration of Hegel's reputation is the rise of idealism as the dominant intellectual force both in Britain and the United States in the second half of the 19th century (i.e. in the works of Royce, Green, Bradley, etc.). From the publication of J.H. Stirling's influential *Secret of Hegel* in 1865 through Charles Taylor's still-popular *Hegel* of 1975, the old-fashioned and unfounded image of Hegel as grand metaphysician has continued to persist in English language philosophy- virtually undisturbed for nearly a century and a half.

As for Hegel's reputation as a poor stylist and needlessly complicated philosopher, I defer to the statement of one of his most important translators and sensitive scholars, Malcolm Knox:

The common idea that Hegel's is a philosophy of exceptional difficulty is quite mistaken. Once his terminology is understood and his main principles grasped he presents far less difficulty than Kant, for example. One reason for this is a certain air of dogmatism [in Kant]: Kant's statements are often hedged around with qualifications; but Hegel had, as it were, seen a vision of absolute truth and he expounds it [clearly and] with confidence.<sup>16</sup>

### THE 'NEW' HEGEL

In the introduction to his recent book *Hegel's Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason*, Terry Pinkard remarks:

[A]fter the Second World War a set of German commentators began crafting an original, precise, and insightful interpretation of the Hegelian texts that can fairly be said to have demolished (one hopes forever) most of the old myths about Hegel. In the period from roughly 1979 to the present, the seeds of that German debate have begun to flower in the Anglo-American world as a whole host of new interpretations of Hegel have been emerging that have taken that German scholarship... in new directions.<sup>17</sup>

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**NOTE:** Knox even goes so far as to declare that: '[B]y the time of his bicentennial in 1970 a Hegelian renascence was in the making.'<sup>18</sup>

These points are well-taken, but I believe we may trace the emergence of the 'new' (and much improved) Hegel even further back to the 1950s- especially in the work of Walter Kaufmann (who, it is interesting to note, is not well known for his Hegel scholarship but instead for his commentaries and translations of Nietzsche). In his *Hegel: Reinterpretation, Texts, and Commentary*, Kaufmann acknowledges the need to go back to the beginning and start over with Hegel, and indeed does so himself by presenting what he describes as an 'intellectual biography' which reveals the origins of Hegel's ideas and charts the course of their development and maturity.

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**NOTE:** Even earlier than Kaufmann's book, we should note the publication in English of

Herbert Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution* in 1941 with its wide-ranging discussions of Hegel's early pre-*Phenomenology* manuscripts- most of which were not considered worthy of translation until the mid-1980s (presumably because they did not seem relevant to the Hegel who had already been consolidated in English philosophy).

Knox translated some earlier works as Hegel's *Early Theological Essays* shortly after the appearance of *Reason and Revolution*, but it was not until very recently that the official Hegel-Archiv in Bochum released scholarly editions of Hegel's writings predating the *Phenomenology* which have thus enabled us to witness first hand his transformation from young Christian theologian to mature philosopher of logic and system.

The intention of the present study, however, is not to return to basics with Hegel, at least not biographically speaking, but instead merely to acknowledge the innovative example of these ground-breaking scholars as a model for an open-minded and fair treatment of Hegel's philosophy . As we saw Hegel state above, the committed and comprehensive approach they exemplify is ' *not so much equity as justice.*'

The main point to grasp here, then, is that before we try to say something new about Hegel -that is, engage critically and constructively with his philosophy- it is imperative that we know both what he himself said and understand what he meant.

As a first step toward familiarizing ourselves with Hegel in this way we should briefly consider the two most important aspects of his philosophy: one which we have alluded to already which is 'system', and the other: 'spirit'- terms which will be significant not only in the chapters ahead, but also in the remainder of this introduction.

### **INTRODUCING 'SPIRIT'**

Stephen Bungay opens his general study of Hegel's aesthetics, *Beauty and Truth*, with the following statement:

It may not be completely wrong to say that there is just one issue which is specifically and uniquely philosophical. It may even be possible to argue that philosophy is simply the body of discourse connected with that issue. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say what the issue is.<sup>19</sup>

In this remark Bungay refers to philosophy in general, but if we consider Hegel's philosophy on its own, however, the answer to the question 'What is the issue?' is clear (or at least its statement is); Hegel calls it simply '*Geist*'.

Throughout his writings (and even in several of his book and lecture titles) Hegel employs the German word 'Geist'- which may be translated into English both as 'mind' and 'spirit'. Yielding Ockham's razor one might feel reluctant to use 'spirit' in addition to 'mind' since this could be interpreted as suggesting the existence of two entities in English whose German origin is a single word. Most people are wary enough of such intimidating Hegelian

creatures as 'the Concept', 'Absolute Idea', 'Objective Mind', and so on, so one may legitimately wonder: why add 'Spirit' unnecessarily to Hegel's cast of characters? Further consideration, however, reveals that there are certain times when Hegel is clearly discussing far more than is ordinarily suggested by the common usage of 'mind' alone. I have thus retained the option to employ either 'mind' or 'spirit' for Hegel's '*Geist*' in accordance with this principle. When 'spirit' does appear, then, it is intended to suggest that Hegel's subject is something greater than we usually intend by 'mind'; but there must be no mistake about the fact that what Hegel definitely does *not* intend is some *thing* other than mind. This is where Ockham's razor may be employed productively to draw the line: 'spirit' always has *to do* with the mind, but it is clear that we must never construe it as also being something *in addition* to it. Hegel insists upon this point often enough that we should see fit to take him at his word and refrain from trying to make 'spirit' into the autonomous entity it is often presented as being.

To initiate a discussion of the distinctions within *Geist* -i.e. between 'spirit' and 'mind'- we should consider the following points: first, it bears repeating that Hegel's 'spirit' is not *a spirit* -such as the 'holy spirit'- or , as the word '*Geist*' suggests, a ghost- as in 'the ghost of Christmas past'. Instead, 'spirit' is more akin to the much broader implications of 'Christmas spirit' in general. Hegel's own particular meanings of 'spirit' -and several are distinguishable- include: the spirit of the age or times, national spirit, world-spirit, and so on. In the philosophy of history, for example, Hegel remarks: '*spiritual totality constitutes a single being- the spirit of a nation.*'<sup>20</sup> What he means is that there is something which is identifiable as national spirit. (In the case of the passage just quoted, Hegel is referring to the 'English spirit'.) Hegel no more than anyone else would want to go so far as to claim that there is such a thing as *the English Spirit* existing somewhere independently of the English nation or people. The same, of course, is true of his references to 'the spirit of mediaeval Europe', the 'oriental spirit', just as it is even of the most comprehensive of Hegel's 'spirits': the 'world-spirit' itself- the collection of national and temporal spirits considered as a whole. This 'universal' spirit, Hegel says, ' *is essentially present as human consciousness. Knowledge attains existence and being for itself in man. Spirit knows itself and exists for itself as a subject, and its nature is to posit itself as immediate existence; as such, it is equivalent to human consciousness.*'<sup>21</sup>

In the first part of chapter one below where we consider Hegel's *Phenomenology*, it is specifically the mind as such as we ordinarily understand it which shall concern us. A reason to use 'spirit' here instead (as, indeed, the book's title is sometimes rendered) would be that even though it is definitely the mind which Hegel is discussing, it is not any *single* mind- that is, ontogenically

speaking there is no independently existing mind which goes through all the transformations of consciousness discussed in the *Phenomenology*; instead, what Hegel presents is a *phylogenetic* account of the mind- that is, as we shall see, a 'history' of consciousness in general.

To be clear about spirit before moving on let us consider the following example: if we picked up a book entitled *History of the Automobile* we would expect to read inside about the automobile's origins, uses, technological developments, design history, and so on. What we would definitely *not* expect such a book to be about is a single, universal 'spirit-car' which persists eternally outside space and time- all the while embodying the changes which constitute automotive history. As ridiculous as this sounds, this is precisely the sort fantasy many people accuse Hegel of propounding throughout his writings and lecturing, and for which he is unjustly criticized and even lampooned time and again.

My position in this thesis, clearly , is that Hegel's philosophy is neither founded upon such an idea of spirit, nor bears any relation to it in any respect. In the same sense that there is no particular automobile to which the phrase 'history of the automobile' refers, neither is there an individual mind or spirit which Hegel intends by the phrases: 'spirit of the age', 'phenomenology of spirit', and so on. This is not to suggest, of course, that there are no cars or minds or that to speak generally of either subject is futile; just as the car is not reinvented every model-year , every individual mind does not have to pass through the evolution of human experience, consciousness, and civilization when it comes on the scene; each is part of a historical development which carries all that preceded it gathered up in its latest result. This process -as far as the mind is concerned- constitutes the general subject-matter of Hegel's system and, in particular, his philosophy of '*Geist*'. Therefore, terminologically speaking, it is when Hegel is clearly referring to the historical development of mind in general that we shall use the word 'spirit', while all other references will be rendered simply as 'mind'.

### SCOPE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

If we may say that the general content of Hegel's philosophy is spirit (the comprehensive understanding of which, we shall see, Hegel calls 'absolute knowing'), then we may identify its form as that of a *system*. It is in chapter one - 'A Circle of Circles' (Hegel's characterization of this system)- that we shall properly consider the systematicity of Hegel's philosophy , but it is necessary here to make a few introductory remarks regarding system in general and its

role in determining the scope of the present study.

As a system Hegel's body of philosophical works does not constitute a simple amalgam of books and lectures treating various subjects in a philosophical manner, but instead represents a unified conceptual whole composed of separate yet related aspects. Keeping in mind what has been said so far about method and approach -especially Hegel's own statements- if we are to do our job well and consider Hegel's philosophy fairly and on its own terms, we must *necessarily* consider it in the entirety of its scope; for , as we shall see below, any attempt to treat some particular aspect of it -e.g. *aesthetics*- in isolation from the systematic philosophical whole of which it is a part is doomed to failure.

Therefore, as has already been suggested, chapter one shall be concerned mainly with the presentation and analysis of the systematic structure and significance of Hegel's philosophy as a whole- i.e. the groundwork upon which the major ideas of this thesis will be based. The material of this chapter will be drawn from the following texts: the *Phenomenology of Mind* which lays the foundation for Hegel's system, the *Science of Logic* which demonstrates its logical basis and structure, and the philosophical *Encyclopædia* which presents the entire system in outline.

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**NOTE:** The three major areas of Hegel's thought which do not receive detailed treatment here are: the philosophy of religion (mainly because well over half of Hegel's aesthetics concerns art's links with religion and theology), his well-known text-book the *Philosophy of Right* (whose subject-matter of ethics, law political theory etc. exceeds the scope of the present study), and finally the philosophy of nature whose systematization of early 19th century physical, chemical, and biological science also need not concern us here.

Chapter two -'Beauty Born of the Spirit'- presents a detailed account of Hegel's aesthetics and discusses art in general and as it relates to truth, freedom, nature, religion, and so on.

Section two's 'World of Actualized Beauty' continues the story from the point of view of Hegel's division of aesthetics and art history into 'forms' of art, of which Hegel identifies three: 'symbolism', 'classicism', and 'romanticism'. Following chapter three's overview of this 'practical' side of Hegel's aesthetics our focus in chapter four -'Bowing the Knee No Longer '- will settle upon 'romantic' art and, as the title of this thesis suggests, the details of Hegel's (not surprisingly misrepresented) idea of a logical conclusion or 'end' for art.

Section three opens with 'Philosophy Paints its Grey in Grey'- a consideration of the implications of Hegel's final words on the philosophy of art and art history and discusses the possibilities of what I have already alluded to as

the major project of this thesis- which is a constructive engagement with Hegel's ideas and, further, a critical development of them in light of post-Hegelian art and aesthetics.

In the concluding chapter -'The Aesthetic Dimension'- I hope to lay the 'problem' of the 'end of art' to rest and to consider how , removed of this fabricated burden, space may be seen to be opened up in Hegel's aesthetics for a rich and continuing history - both of art and philosophy.

In the Epilogue -'Obsessed with Originality'- we part company with Hegel in order to consider the contemporary artistic and philosophical phenomenon 'Transcendental Mannerism' and how it may be seen to constitute a genuine contribution to the post-Hegelian history of art, philosophy , and human experience and cognition themselves.

### ONE POTENTIAL PROBLEM

One problem which must be addressed before proceeding arises in light of the declared scope of this thesis. As we have noted: seen as a whole, Hegel's philosophy constitutes a *system*- that is, a *completed* whole, a *totality* of thought. What this would suggest, of course, is that any attempt to expound and *critically develop* this system -as I have just proposed to do- should be flawed from the start; for, after all, how can one develop and extend the range of that which is already complete? As we shall see in chapter five, I believe it is Hegel himself who provides the key.

What we should note in advance is that at the end of his aesthetics lectures Hegel leaves several issues unresolved- not, it must be said, because he could not think of anything to say about them or because his philosophy was somehow lacking or incomplete, but because they were for him *contemporary* issues. Anyone familiar with only one line of Hegel will recognize the famous passage in the *Philosophy of Right* where he says: '*the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.*'<sup>22</sup> In addition to the undeniable poetry and drama of this image, it also expresses a significant and much-ignored aspect of Hegel's thought- i.e. that it is everywhere (and, as we shall see, *necessarily*) *reflective*- that is, a philosophical consideration of what has *been*, or what *is*, but never the future. The meaning of Hegel's words is that only at the end of the day are we able to reflect with wisdom upon what has happened and consider it in context and perspective. My own point here is simply to state that nothing after Hegel can automatically be ruled out as philosophically insignificant in his own terms simply because it did not exist in his time.

Rather than starting out, as Stephen Bungay humorously suggests, with

the idea that Hegel is a philosopher whose books are 'very long, very obscure, in a foreign language, and written by a man rumoured to have been a foolish old wind-bag, and probably a Nazi or a communist or both' <sup>23</sup> (which, by the way, is not far from Hegel's own characterization of Germans in general as: '*headstrong, stubborn, gnarled, unapproachable, and perfectly unreliable and contradictory in their actions and speech.*' <sup>24</sup>), we must entertain here a much more sympathetic possibility- namely that it is not *despite* the systematicity of Hegel's philosophy that it has anything to say to us today, but instead *because* of it. This is my reason for considering art not on its own (as if we could simply 'surgically remove' anything interesting Hegel says about art from the rest of his philosophy), but in its relation to the Hegelian system as a whole (i.e. logic, phenomenology, and the *Encyclopædia*) rather than just in terms of its own logical consistency , historical and theoretical accuracy, and so on.

## TWO INSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUES

A preliminary survey of the literature relating to Hegel's philosophy and art reveals the surprising fact that in English there exists only one notable full-length study- namely, the one already referred to: Stephen Bungay's *Beauty and Truth: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics* (1984). Two other similarly sub-titled books also appeared briefly: William Desmond's *Art and the Absolute: A Study of Hegel's Aesthetics* (1985) and Jack Kaminsky's *Hegel on Art: An Interpretation of Hegel's Aesthetics* (1962), but Desmond's book is far from the systematic philosophical analysis of the subject one might expect from its title and presents instead a highly idiosyncratic reading of Hegel- some of whose aesthetic theories Desmond then grafts onto his own equally idiosyncratic appropriation of post-structuralist notions of 'deconstruction' and '*différance*' in particular. Desmond does manage to provide some useful insights concerning -as his title suggests- the 'absoluteness' which art embodies and retains even after , in Hegel's terms, it loses its favoured absolute status to religion and philosophy . In short, Desmond's book may be characterized as 'interesting', but not significant enough to engage us here.

Kaminsky's *Hegel on Art* , however, presents special problems which, I believe, warrant our particular attention. Bungay himself -even in his bibliographical rigour and comprehensiveness- mentions Kaminsky only in passing, and then only in the original unpublished version of his doctoral thesis- deleting this reference from his text when it was later published; but I believe Kaminsky's approach and 'interpretation' bear consideration for their exemplification of the flaws common to much English-language Hegel

commentary in general, and also have the added advantage for us here in doing so in the context of Hegel's aesthetics- making their critique doubly relevant to the present study.

The most serious of Kaminsky's problems -and the one which I believe is responsible for the failure of his book as a whole- is his total negligence of the two aspects of Hegel's philosophy which we considered briefly above and saw to be essential to a proper understanding of *any* aspect of Hegel's thought: namely *spirit* and *system*.

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**NOTE:** As a cause for this surprisingly un-Hegelian approach to Hegel I would suggest Kaminsky's extreme and puzzling lack of direct quotation from Hegel or even specific reference to any of his texts, including his lectures on aesthetics.

What Kaminsky presents instead of a consideration of Hegel's system is a distorted analysis of 'the Idea' (Hegel's 'concept of logic', as he calls it)- which, for no apparent reason (and unsupported by textual evidence) he characterizes as Hegel's 'theory of reality'. This 'metaphysics', as he also refers to it, is what he claims provides the 'subject-matter and meaningfulness'<sup>25</sup> of art for Hegel. In fact, Kaminsky entitles an entire chapter: 'The Idea *in* Art' (my emphasis) even though this is a phrase never used by Hegel, and which is, in fact, incoherent in terms of his philosophy . What just this title alone reveals is the basis of Kaminsky's whole 'interpretation' of Hegel's aesthetics upon the mistaken belief that Hegel regards art as having some sort of illustrative relation to 'the Idea' or 'metaphysics' or simply philosophy . As we shall see in chapter one the only 'illustration' of the Idea is its own unfolding in logic. In Hegel's terms, the Idea constitutes the content of only the first part of a philosophical system consisting of three parts: logic, nature, and mind- none of which provides the subject-matter of art since art is itself an aspect of the final realm of mind. This flaw is responsible for Kaminsky's further error in claiming: 'For Hegel, art is a highly important instrument for giving us insight into the nature of the Idea'. Due to its elevated position near the end of Hegel's system, however , art is not able to 'give us insight' into either logic (the Idea 'in itself ', in Hegel's phrase) or nature (the Idea 'in its otherness'), but instead expresses *our relation* to both. In fact, art, for Hegel, does not tell (or show) us anything *about* the Idea, but provides the first manifestation of the process of the Idea's explicit unfolding in history as 'spirit'. (Only much later -from the standpoint of philosophy itself- is art recognized in its true relation to the Idea- which is as this manifestation.)

In a revealing passage expressing what he takes to be an explanation of part of Hegel's aesthetics concerning the progression of individual periods in art

history, Kaminsky's claims:

[M]an advances. Knowledge increases. The symbolic outlook toward nature gradually disappears as philosophy changes from a simple imaginative study into a complex conceptual inquiry. Because they lacked a fully developed philosophy, the Hindus and Egyptians were unable to give their artists a subject-matter that was clear and distinct.<sup>26</sup>

Kaminsky's error here, as suggested above, is his equivocation of artistic subject-matter with philosophical discourse- that is, his suggestion that art can somehow be adequately characterized by claiming for it the ability to illustrate philosophical ideas. 'Hegel assumes', Kaminsky continues, 'that the artist must be a child of the philosophical... climate of his age, and that therefore, all artistic endeavours must necessarily reflect the results of such metaphysical speculation.'<sup>27</sup> Without any quotation or even references to Hegel himself Kaminsky goes so far as to claim (erroneously) that 'Hegel elaborately tries to prove that art is a resultant product of the... philosophical conceptions that prevail at any given time.'<sup>28</sup> As we have already seen, however , philosophy's explicit relation to art comes only at the very end of Hegel's system where it is able to reflect upon art's role in its own development. (That role, we shall discover, is as the created *image* of what is 'absolute' or ultimate- which thus provides the foundation for further development first in religious belief and ultimately in what Hegel calls philosophical 'speculation' itself.)

Kaminsky's 'interpretation', then, entails an utterly un-Hegelian divorce between art and philosophy in which one is regarded as merely externally related to (i.e. a mere 'illustration' of) the other , rather than as two distinct, yet inherently related aspects of the same process (i.e. the mind or 'spirit's' development in history). It is this flaw which sets Kaminsky up for his final error- which is his conclusion that 'Hegel's metaphysics [i.e. his 'notion of the Idea'] is not a crucial element in his aesthetics, so that a rejection of the metaphysics does not entail a rejection of the aesthetics.' 29 With this statement Kaminsky is unfortunate in contradicting not only Hegel but also what he has already said himself (i.e. that art's main function is to illustrate or express the Idea) by claiming at the same time that the Idea may nevertheless simply be cut away (as if by Ockham's razor) as an irrelevant and superfluous metaphysic. The reason Kaminsky wants to do this is clear (and apparently well-intentioned) since he obviously wants to preserve what he regards as the 'less controversial' (i.e. 'more concrete') aspects of Hegel's aesthetics- namely , what he describes as: 'his many valuable insights'<sup>30</sup>, 'thought-provoking observations'<sup>31</sup>, and the 'fantastic amount of information about all the arts'<sup>32</sup>. 'Who has ever brought so much erudition to aesthetics!' he exclaims- unfortunately missing the point of

Hegel's aesthetics altogether. When Kaminsky declares that 'while Hegel's metaphysics can be sharply criticized, his aesthetics cannot be dismissed lightly'<sup>33</sup>, what he really means is that Hegel's aesthetics *can* be dismissed because all that interests him is Hegel's capacity as an insightful critic or commentator rather than a *philosopher* of art.

What *Hegel on Art* provides, then, rather than an 'interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics', is as an instructive example of two of the commonest and most serious errors in Hegel commentary in general: namely the failure both to adopt a systematic approach in treating Hegel's philosophy , and to consider and present his ideas on his own terms and in his own words where possible- that is, to attend to what Hegel actually said rather than what we or someone else may think he said.

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Our second critique concerns Stephen Houlgate's recent *Freedom, Truth and History [FTH]*, which we should start out saying is commendable in its attempt to consider Hegel's philosophy as a systematic whole, but, as we shall see, which is also seriously problematic both in its presentation of this material and its conclusions- due in large part to a failure (similar to Kaminsky's) to adhere to Hegel's own words and way of thinking more generally.

*FTH* is unusual in including a lengthy chapter devoted solely to Hegel's aesthetics- presumably in response to Houlgate's own admission that '[s]adly few commentators on Hegel have paid much attention to his lectures on aesthetics.'<sup>34</sup> Our critical suspicions should be aroused immediately , however , by the particularly un-Hegelian-sounding title under which this chapter appears: 'Art and Human Wholeness'. We should be wary not simply because, in another similarity to Kaminsky, Houlgate's title is a phrase not seen anywhere in Hegel's texts themselves, but also because even if 'human wholeness' were part of Hegel's vocabulary , Houlgate is not able to present any evidence that it represents the core of (or even has anything to do with) Hegel's philosophy of art, as he would have us believe <sup>35</sup>. As we shall see in chapter two, Hegel's aesthetics can, in fact, be said to concern 'wholeness', but, unfortunately for Houlgate, not of the 'human' variety , but instead *aesthetic* wholeness, i.e. wholeness achieved through the unity of art's own constituents of meaning and shape- which Hegel calls 'beauty'.

Houlgate claims:

the greatest art for Hegel is that which allows us to dwell with it primarily for the sake of the harmony and beauty which it expresses... Such art is free art because the harmony it expresses is of value in itself and the response it elicits from us is one of free contemplation and enjoyment in what is shown.<sup>36</sup>

What Houlgate expresses here is indeed consistent with Hegel's philosophy of art, but, logically speaking, it is also consistent with anyone else's aesthetics as well, since all he really states are the philosophical parameters of beauty itself (i.e. that it is 'free', a source of delight, an end in itself, etc.) rather than anything which may be identified as unique to Hegel's aesthetics. In fact, if these concepts can be identified as central to the aesthetic theory of any philosopher in particular it is not Hegel but Kant- who isolated and defined them at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the *Critique of Judgement*. Time after time it is clear that when Houlgate purports to be discussing Hegel's philosophy of art, he is really just making general logical points about beauty straight out of Kant's third *Critique*. As an example we may take his claim that 'the aesthetic response which free art elicits [is] a response which lets things be and which enjoys them for their own sake without feeling impelled to proceed to practical action in the world'<sup>37</sup>. This claim, of course, is nothing more than a restatement of Kant's key notion of the aesthetic as 'disinterested', or in his phrase: 'apart from any concept' (i.e. 'purposiveness without purpose'). Houlgate makes a similar point in remarking that 'art does not give us direct practical guidance', but then goes on to say: 'Nevertheless art initiates us into an appreciation of the value and harmony which religion and philosophy translate into concrete social and historical terms.'<sup>38</sup> What Houlgate seems to believe, then, is that art *does* give us guidance- i.e. it is for him a sort of propaganda for religion and theology; it is, he says ominously, 'our education into civilized values'<sup>39</sup>.

The significant point here is that regardless of Houlgate's consistency about art's freedom and disinterestedness, his focus on this and other more specifically Kantian ideas -while not *inconsistent* with Hegel- does lead us away from what is unique in his aesthetics. As a result, Houlgate's Kantian emphasis of the individual experience and the judgement of beauty comes at the expense of the more universal and historical significance of art which represents Hegel's significant contribution to aesthetics. Indeed, Hegel himself declares that Kant's third *Critique* 'constitutes the starting point for the true comprehension of the beauty of art'<sup>40</sup>, but he also remarks that 'only by overcoming Kant's deficiencies could this comprehension assert itself as the higher grasp of the true unity of freedom and necessity, particular and universal, sense and reason [etc.] '<sup>41</sup>- that is, of the true function of art to express freely its necessary and universal content in a particular, sensuous form- the achievement of which, in Hegel's philosophical sense (as we shall see), constitutes genuine beauty.

To consider a specific issue raised by Houlgate which further illustrates the limitations of his study we may consider a point he attempts to make in relation

to modern art. He states: 'the radical freedom which contemporary artists enjoy should not be totally unrestricted, in Hegel's view , because the purpose of art is always to afford us a sense of reconciliation and wholeness.'<sup>42</sup> Now it may be correct in Hegelian terms to say that art does create a sense of reconciliation (as we shall consider in chapter two), but Houlgate's fixation on 'wholeness' remains dubious. 'What has become crucial for many artists of Hegel's generation and since', he continues, is that they 'be true to their own experience and give free expression to their own vision of the world, whether that vision exhibits unity and wholeness or not.'<sup>43</sup> In fact, Houlgate goes so far as to declare that in modern culture we have 'precipitated ourselves into an artistic crisis because the immense variety of æsthetic styles now recognized and the artist's insistence on his right to create whatever he wishes have rendered the criteria for evaluating art extremely problematic.'<sup>44</sup> In this statement Houlgate reveals that he believes not only that artworks have to be appear balanced and unified in some conventional sense, but also that art as a whole should be characterized by 'wholeness'. In other words: Houlgate believes Hegel's aesthetics justifies his own belief that a multiplicity of artistic styles and individual modes of expression is undesirable (presumably, as his final remark suggests, because art is, in this case, harder to divide into categories of good and bad- which, as we saw in Kaminsky's case above, it is a strange thing to expect a *philosophy* of art to do.)

What Houlgate's remarks seem to reveal, then, rather than anything particularly relevant to Hegel's aesthetics, are his own preferences and prescriptions for art- most importantly , in effect, that art present a 'pretty' picture and not challenge established traditions. This, unfortunately, seems to be the only thing Houlgate can mean by his singular insistence that art exhibit 'wholeness' and his general rejection of modern art [which, admittedly, does not usually conform to traditional (i.e. Houlgate's) preconceptions and expectations of beauty].

Without explaining how or why , Houlgate goes on to claim that his 'wholeness' theory shows how 'Hegel has identified a trend which dominates much nineteenth and twentieth century art and literature, and indeed much philosophy, too- namely the tendency to unsettle, sometimes even to destroy the coherence and integrity of human character and identity.'<sup>45</sup> In modern plays and novels, for example, he says (bizarrely), 'characters are no longer as certain of themselves as in, say, the paintings of the seventeenth century Dutch masters'<sup>46</sup>. 'In the art of Francis Bacon or in the Cubist works of Picasso', he continues, 'the human form is actually savagely distorted'<sup>47</sup>- as if this were a valid æsthetic or even stylistic criticism- i.e simply that Bacon and Picasso do not paint in a traditional, academic manner (or like seventeenth-century Dutch masters, for

that matter). 'The danger ever-present in... post-Classical art', he concludes, 'is that disharmony will get the upper hand.'<sup>48</sup>

**NOTE:** Contrary to the petty aesthetic of 'wholeness' Houlgate expounds in Hegel's name, it is significant to note that one of his own counter-examples -Cubism-, ~~may~~ fact, be regarded as a prime example of Hegel's relevance to twentieth century art; for instead of an exclusive ideology of prettiness and superficial unity (in other words, read 'aesthetic blandness' for 'human wholeness'), Hegel's aesthetics is able not only to accommodate an artistic phenomenon as radical, complex, and unexpected as Cubism, but also to illuminate its genuine significance. Picasso's collaborator in Cubism, Georges Braque, said: 'When the fragmentation of objects occurred in my painting... it was as a technique for getting closer to the object within the limits tolerated by the painting.'<sup>49</sup> For this reason, what Houlgate regards as Cubism's ugly and insignificant 'distortions and dislocations' may be seen, even at its lowest level, to represent Braque and Picasso's project to fuse (i.e. unify) objects with their environment in artistic representation, and, in so doing, as Braque suggests, to bring themselves closer to their subjects *and* to painting (as creative artefice) itself.

**NOTE:** It is also interesting to note that Houlgate's 'wholeness'-based criticism is not confined exclusively to modernist art, but extends even to criticize the great French landscape painter Gustave Courbet (1819-77). Houlgate says: '[W]e might point to another painter such as Courbet as someone who willingly forfeits the techniques of idealization for the sake of rendering more realistically "what he sees".'<sup>50</sup> Houlgate's problem seems to be that he thinks Hegel's aesthetics does exactly what Hegel says it cannot do- that is instruct artists on how to make art or 'images of wholeness'.

If Houlgate were more knowledgeable or simply more open-minded about modern art perhaps he would see that it aims at a greater and more profound unity (or 'wholeness') than any previous period in art history- for , as we shall discuss in chapter six, it sets out to achieve this goal *consciously*. (This consciousness, in fact, was a major factor in art's general abandonment of the restrictive formats of the antiquated 'classical' paradigms Houlgate seems so intent upon perpetuating.) Had Houlgate realized this progressive unifying project of modernism, he would then have been in the happier situation of being able to show the comprehensiveness and continued relevance of Hegel's aesthetics well into the twentieth century , rather than misinterpreting and denying the full scope of its philosophical achievement and lasting significance. Luckily, of course, as we shall see in later chapters, Hegel's aesthetics is neither so limited nor so obsolete as Houlgate seems to believe, and, in fact, retains much of its original power and meaningfulness even into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

From what we have seen so far there seem to be many reasons to fault Houlgate's interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics- not least, of course, being that it hardly appears to be an 'interpretation' at all since Houlgate does not seem particularly concerned to discuss what Hegel actually said about art in general or about art history . We might have attributed this flaw and other infelicities of argument to simple carelessness or failure to attend to Hegel's own words, but

in the end we realize that it has all been part of what is not unfairly characterized as a 'secret plan'- which we shall rout out below . This discovery is notable here because the present thesis itself can be seem to harbour something of a secret plan, but my agenda, however, is one which, quite contrary to Houlgate's, takes full consideration of Hegel's philosophy in his own words, and is demonstrably consistent not only with his ideas, but with his *way* of thinking as well.

In *FTH*'s last and longest chapter 'Philosophy and Christian Faith', we find, as its title suggests, Houlgate's cunning fusion of Hegel's philosophy with Christianity. A major part of his thesis turns out to entail the suppression art's absoluteness and therefore the fact of its equal footing with religion and philosophy in Hegel's terms. That he devotes an entire chapter to art on its own and then compresses philosophy and religion (in that order) into one results from his apparent desire to play off Hegel's eschatological view of philosophy- according to which philosophy constitutes not only the highest form of knowledge, but therefore also the goal (or 'end') of world history . It is important to note that in reversing Hegel's presentation Houlgate reverses his meaning as well. In his final chapter , after briefly considering philosophy as such, Houlgate bizarrely proposes that only *now* have we come to what he identifies as: 'the point at which we can turn to Hegel's understanding of Christianity and its relation to speculative philosophy' <sup>51</sup>. But for Hegel, as we have seen, philosophy -as the conclusion of his system- supersedes religion- which only then makes sense, we could say , philosophically speaking. Houlgate admits:

In speculative philosophy Hegel maintains the true character of dialectical reason is given its clearest, most precise articulation. However philosophy is purely conceptual knowledge of the truth, and Hegel recognizes that humanity cannot live by concepts alone. If we are genuinely to take hold of the truth and be transformed by it, that truth must not just be the concern of our intellect, but must enter our hearts, resonate through our innermost feelings and permeate the whole of our life.<sup>52</sup>

Houlgate's glib remark that man 'cannot live by concepts alone' clearly falls far short of a legitimate philosophical argument for his theological position, and for this reason does not give him the right to suggest that because of this 'fact' Hegel must then regard religion as equally if not even *more* valuable than philosophy. The best reason for not claiming that Hegel would have agreed with this proposition is Hegel's own wide-spread remarks and demonstrations to the contrary.

Houlgate says: 'Hegel claims that Christian religion and speculative philosophy express the same basic truth- namely that reason rules the world' <sup>53</sup>. This is true, but what Houlgate suppresses is the fact that both art *and* religion

have the same 'absolute' content as philosophy in Hegel's system, and further that *both* are superseded by the comprehensively reflective scope of philosophy alone- not philosophy *and* religion, and certainly not 'Christian faith' on its own.

Houlgate admits that '[f]rom the strictly cognitive [that is, *Hegelian*] point of view, philosophy is a more precise account of reason and its activity in the world than is religion'<sup>54</sup>; but for some reason he feels compelled to go on to contradict this statement in favour of his own thesis- which, as he says, is that 'religion is in many ways of greater value than philosophy since it penetrates so deeply into our consciousness'<sup>55</sup>, while 'philosophy plays no direct role in most people's lives.'<sup>56</sup> (One assumes that *Houlgate's* consciousness is deeply penetrated by religious ideas, but it is a mystery why he should therefore feel entitled to claim that everyone else's must be as well.)

Houlgate rightly remarks that 'Hegel did not consider faith and philosophy to be offering two rival accounts of the world. Rather , he thought that they both... reveal the same truth, but that they take hold of that truth in different ways'<sup>57</sup>. This statement is correct Hegelianly speaking, but only as far as it goes. What Houlgate fails to mention is not only , as we have seen, that art shares in this revelation of the truth (a fact suppressed, as we have seen, by the smoke-screen of 'human wholeness'), but also that both art and religion -on Hegel's terms- are not simply 'different' from philosophy , but inferior to it in their revelation of the truth. In the *Philosophy of Mind* Hegel himself says:

*Philosophy indeed can recognize its own forms in the categories of religious consciousness, and even its own teachings in the doctrine of religion- which, therefore, it does not disparage. But the converse is not true; the religious consciousness does not apply the criticism of thought to itself, does not comprehend itself, and is therefore, as it stands, exclusive.*<sup>58</sup>

Houlgate seems to want us to accept not only that art is irrelevant to truth in absolute terms, but also the strange proposition that Christian faith is just as valuable in Hegel's philosophy as philosophy is itself (if not more so). In the *Philosophy of History* , however, Hegel makes a very clear distinction between on the one hand the '*the Christian who worships the truth in symbolic form*'<sup>59</sup>, and on the other '*the philosopher who immerses himself in eternal truth through rational thought*'<sup>60</sup>.

Referring to the specific relation between philosophy and religion in the *History of Philosophy*, Hegel says:

*By thinking in terms of the Concept [i.e. strictly philosophically] and grasping its content in thought, philosophy has this advantage over the pictorial thinking of religion- that it understands both [religion's cognitive content and pictorial form], for it understands religion and can do justice to it... But the reverse is not true. By making its stand in pictorial thinking, religion as such knows itself only in thinking of that kind and not philosophically- i.e. in concepts and universal categories of thought.*<sup>61</sup>

In short Hegel concludes: '*religion does not understand philosophy*'<sup>62</sup>, while conversely, philosophy is the only way to make sense of religion. '*The [true] content of the Christian religion*', he says, '*can only be grasped in a speculative way*'<sup>63</sup>, i.e. philosophically. '*Philosophy rightly so-called begins when the absolute is no longer regarded pictorially*'<sup>64</sup>, Hegel explains, and the content of religion is thus '*set free*'<sup>65</sup>, i.e. when the Christian image of the absolute as triune god-head (i.e. father, son, and holy spirit) has been superseded. Hegel's clearest and most irrefutable statement of religion's inferiority (and, therefore, of the non-credibility of Houlgate's project) comes in the *Philosophy of Mind*- where he says the content of Christianity, '*presented in the guise of picture-thinking, has to be raised by philosophy into the form of the Concept or of absolute knowledge [i.e. philosophy]- which... is the highest manifestation of that content.*'<sup>66</sup>

What should be quite apparent by now is that far from simply expounding or even engaging with Hegel's philosophy , Houlgate's project has instead been to misrepresent and reinterpret him in accordance with his own theological agenda. Houlgate clearly wants us to believe that Christianity and philosophy are somehow equally valid for Hegel and, therefore, should be for us as well. '[T]o find truth through letting go of oneself ', he says, referring to the flow of Hegel's logic, is

to do precisely what faith does when it accepts... God's will. In each case we let go of... our concern to preserve ourselves and our thoughts... and [accept] to be determined by God, by reason... And in each case we gain thereby the highest freedom and truth.<sup>67</sup>

But how, we must ask, can Houlgate propose that religious and philosophical freedom are both 'the highest'? Perhaps it may make some sense to him personally to say so, but, as we have comprehensively seen, to Hegel it is incoherent. The furthest Houlgate can reasonably take his point is analogy- in that he is fully entitled to draw comparisons between the structure and development of Hegel's philosophy and his personal experience of Christian faith, divine love, and so on, but that is as far as it goes. Hegel clearly and repeatedly states that Christianity's cognitively inferior imagistic presentation of individual characters, dramatic narratives, and so on precludes the possibility of actually expressing the absolute in absolute terms (i.e. philosophically); and, in fact, Hegel also holds that it is only from the point of view of philosophy itself that religious imagery can be seen as having any relation to truth at all (i.e. in its revelation of the true content of those characters, narratives, etc.).

To sum up the problems of *Freedom, Truth and History* , then, it may be Hegel himself who says it best when in the preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind* he speaks of Houlgate's approach as philosophizing in a '*holy manner*'<sup>68</sup>- a

manner, he says, which '*hides the truth from itself*'<sup>69</sup>. Such minds, he explains,

*when they give themselves up to the uncontrolled ferment of [the divine] substance, imagine that by drawing a veil over [their own] self-consciousness and surrendering understanding, they become the beloved of God- those to whom he gives wisdom in sleep; and hence what they in fact receive and bring to birth in their sleep is nothing but dreams.*<sup>70</sup>

Houlgate's 'philosophizing', then, as far as Hegel is concerned, is not properly philosophical at all, for philosophy, he says, '*is not somnambulism but the most wakeful consciousness*'<sup>71</sup>.

After such prolonged and unrelenting criticism it is no doubt refreshing to hear that our assessment of *Freedom, Truth and History* is not entirely negative, and, in fact, Stephen Houlgate is deserving of some credit, if not for his treatment of Hegel, then at least for his attempt to respond to issues not far removed from those confronted in the present thesis (i.e. what I have referred to as my own 'secret plan'). If we were to sum up Houlgate's project in a positive way , we could say that he aims to recuperate (in allegedly Hegelian terms) religion's most significant aspect, i.e. the spiritual, *feeling* form of its practice. This feeling is something Houlgate recognizes as a fundamental aspect of our human existence in the world and, at the same time, as something potentially under-valued in the final *philosophical* conclusion to Hegel's system.

Houlgate's results, as we have seen, are unconvincing, but this need not be an utterly devastating conclusion if we consider that the genuine value of his enterprise lies in his recognition of and response to deep human needs bound up with the origins and structure of consciousness itself. Even if Houlgate does not articulate this point in such phenomenological terms, he clearly recognizes its significance and implications. His thesis about Hegel's philosophy being 'profoundly Christian'<sup>72</sup> is clearly misguided, but *FTH* succeeds in bringing out the important question: If the comprehensive conceptual analysis of speculative philosophy gets the last and most significant word in Hegel's system, where and how do our own individual selves and subjective existences fit in, if at all? Hegel himself might be able to answer that as 'absolute' his philosophy (in theory at least) encompasses both 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity'; but our question remains: After philosophy, what becomes of the *other* side of existence, i.e. the non- or , at least, not-so-rational dimension which is either ignored or , worse, denuded and thus degraded within the purely intellectual parameters of conceptual thinking. In this category fall not only our own personal experience, but also the cultural space of our shared social and historical world. Philosophy may be able to provide a comprehensive cognitive analysis of these domains, but we must ask how much, then, is 'left over ' ; what is the remainder which philosophy is not

able to give its full due? As I have suggested above, I do not believe that this sort of enquiry calls the validity or systematicity of Hegel's philosophy into question, but instead considers what is possible *after* his system and in light of it—that is, from the point of view of 'absolute knowing'.

For this reason my project is thankfully exempt from the problems we discussed above associated with 'interpretative' approaches which aim to bring Hegel 'up to date' and make him seem 'relevant' to philosophy and life more generally today. What often happens in 'interpretation', as we have seen, is that the self-imposed limits of 'exposition' lead the 'interpreter' simply to over-emphasize some aspect of Hegel's thought (or presumed aspect, as in the case of 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis', 'the Idea in art', and so on) at the expense of everything else—resulting in a grotesque, if not wholly unrecognizable distortion of Hegel rather than a legitimate, critical development based on his true merits and sensitive to his intentions. In the examples we have considered, this sort of interpretative approach has produced the caricatural representations of Hegel as universal art historian and critic (i.e. through Kaminsky's exaggeration of the pragmatic over the conceptual in Hegel's aesthetics), and Hegel as arbiter of taste and eschatological Christian missionary (in Houlgate's fabrication of the 'human wholeness' criterion for art production and appreciation, and his equivocation of dialectical reasoning with divine love).

To return to the present project—the above discussion has been useful in that it has provided us with a demonstration of how unambiguously Hegel rules out religious belief as maintaining any significant standing in absolute terms. What is important to note in addition is art's much better standing in Hegel's judgement. True—Hegel does not foresee any philosophically significant future for art, and, in fact, regards it as having reached its fullest potential long ago. But all is not doom and gloom, for Hegel does not speak of art with the comprehensive refutation he reserves for religion. Instead he goes so far as to express what he describes in his lectures on aesthetics as his '*hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection*'<sup>73</sup>. It is this statement, we could say, which puts us in the happy position of being invited by Hegel himself to collaborate in his philosophical project—that is, to work with his system considering and developing the logical implications embedded therein. Because art functions at the direct level of sensuous experience—rather than through religious stories and faith, or the theoretical concepts of philosophy—yet at the same time expresses a particular meaning, the aim of the present study is to consider—in the absence of the conceptual viability of religion as such—just how close art may be able to 'come to perfection' in Hegel's terms. It is worth repeating that I am not proposing a challenge to Hegel's system and its philosophical conclusions, but

instead exploring the practical, theoretical, and experiential parameters of the æsthetic dimension- a dimension which by its very nature holds the potential to expand both experience *and* cognition -in other words: consciousness as a whole- and perhaps also, therefore, even to contribute to philosophy (rather than simply to learn from it). My project, then, does not seek to refute Hegel, but instead to engage with and develop his thought in light of recent phenomena which he could neither have logically ruled out nor possibly imagined.

## METHODOLOGY

Perhaps the most significant problem in any attempt to understand Hegel's philosophy is not simply its fantastically large scope, but also, as has already been suggested, the interconnection of its many individual aspects (æsthetics among them)- that is, as we shall see in chapter one, its *systematicity*. One could probably open almost any book by Aristotle, Locke, Wittgenstein, or even Kant and pretty quickly glean both the general subject and what the author was trying to say about it, while with Hegel one could easily wade through page after page without gaining much idea of what he was talking about. (Sometimes not even the titles can help: for example, just what could a philosophy of nature be, or the *phenomenology of mind*?) The main reason for this unfamiliarity and incomprehension may be that we often try to approach Hegel as if he were just any other philosopher- i.e. as if he simply had a political philosophy , and a philosophy of religion, and a logic, and a metaphysics, and so on. But philosophy, Hegel thinks, forms itself into a *system* and if we are to meet with any satisfaction or success we must be willing to engage with him 'on his own ground'- that is, at the level of system itself.

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**NOTE:** On the positive side of the difficulties presented by Hegel's comprehensiveness, we are fortunate in not having to negotiate the added complexity of multiple personalities- as in the case of the two Wittgensteins, several Nietzsches, or discrepancies between different editions of major works- as we find, for example, with Kant. We thus spared the inelegant task of constantly distinguishing between different periods of thought and development. (Hegel famously criticized Schelling -5 years his junior- for 'conducting his education in public', and we should be grateful that Hegel conducted his in private and did not publish his first book until he was nearly 40.)

In an attempt to avoid 'interpretative' and other exegical problems in my presentation of Hegel's general philosophical position I rely heavily on quotation, and for the most part refrain from embellishing Hegel's words with my own. This abstention from the usual running commentary and analysis method of looking at Hegel stems from my belief that -contrary to received superstitions- the best account of what Hegel means is provided by Hegel

himself. Therefore, I hope that any intrusion of myself into the expository part of this thesis will not exceed my goal of clarification and slide down the slippery slope of 'interpretation' to misappropriation and distortion.

## TERMINOLOGY

It seems that a reliable method for determining the age of a Hegel translation or commentary is to note the number of capitalized terms- the more capitals, the older the text. For as long as Hegel has been translated into and discussed in other languages, there has been a tradition of leaving many words in their original capitalized form (as all nouns are traditionally rendered in German). This universal practice emphasizes certain words (which Hegel does not) by leaving them capitalized in English in a way which would otherwise be inappropriate. Thus the capitalization of such words as 'Idea', 'Spirit', 'Nature', 'Concept', 'Absolute', and so on has probably contributed to the belief that such words not only have a modified, if not altogether different meaning for Hegel than for anyone else, but also refer to far-fetched metaphysical entities which Hegel is supposed to have postulated (as we have already seen in the case of *Geist*). While still retaining some capitalization I have tried to keep the practice to a bare minimum. This is because words such as 'absolute' and 'spirit' are already clearly specialized terms which, I believe, the tradition of capitalization merely complicates by suggesting somewhat more than Hegel intends. The only terms which do retain their traditional capitalization here are ordinary words which have an explicitly idiosyncratic significance for Hegel -such as 'Concept' and 'Idea'- which could go unnoticed in their regular forms and thereby cause confusion.

Another practice I shall not subject the reader to is the alternative choice of some commentators to leave important words in the original German. My opinion on this linguistic quirk is two-fold: first, Hegel's meaning is often specific to himself and therefore, of course, initially unfamiliar . The reason for this foreignness, however, is not that we do not speak German- i.e. not that we do not understand the word '*Geist*' or '*Begriff*', but instead that what Hegel is talking about and the way he says it are peculiar to his own thinking and system of philosophy. Therefore, whether we say: 'Spirit', '*Geist*', '*L'Esprit*', or simply 'X', the problem of understanding what Hegel means still remains to be addressed.

Another belief seems to be that the use of German terminology is more authentic or closer to Hegel's original meaning. The fear , presumably, is that what Hegel is trying to say might only be comprehensible in the language in which he originally expressed it. But if the 'absolute' is something which can

only be discussed in German, what sort of absolute could this be? A German absolute? In other words: a *contingent* absolute (i.e. contingent upon being expressed in German)? Clearly not. Philosophy, whatever language it is written in, and when and where ever it is written -if it is genuinely philosophical- is the presentation and discussion of statements and arguments concerning general truths about the world as a whole and human existence (i.e. 'human *being*') in particular. Therefore, if there is purported to be a philosophy which is comprehensible only in the language in which it was originally written, then it cannot at the same time be believed to address general truths about humanity , or, for that reason, be considered philosophy at all.

### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REMARKS

As I have already suggested, my main concern in the expository portion of this thesis is to make sense of what Hegel actually said and meant, rather than *why* he said it and what influenced him to do so. Therefore, I shall not attempt to provide an account of Hegel's historical context or the development of his thought in relation to and out of it; instead I defer in this matter of intellectual history to the comprehensive account provided by H.S. Harris' two volume *Hegel's Development (Toward the Sunlight and Night Thoughts)*. On a more modest scale, Harris provides a summary of this work in his essay 'Hegel's intellectual development to 1807'. The first two chapters of Charles Taylor's *Hegel: 'Aims of a New Epoch'* and '*Hegel's Itinerary*' are also commendable- displaying Taylor's impressive grasp of the spirit of the period. Other helpful overviews may be found in the introductions to Michael Inwood's *Hegel Selections* and Herbert Marcuse's classic *Reason and Revolution*. The first eight of Elie Kedourie's lectures in *Hegel and Marx* are extremely useful for their analyses of Hegel's responses to particular philosophical issues of the day (mainly concerning religion, society , and politics), and a lecture each on Hegel's otherwise rarely discussed relations to Lessing and Schiller. Finally, regarding philosophical background and context, I would especially like to praise Robert Solomon's *In the Spirit of Hegel* whose introduction and first four chapters provide an exceptionally insightful survey of the origins of German Idealism in the philosophies of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Descartes. Also valuable are his discussions of the critical project of Kant, and the inheritance and development of Kant's legacy not only by Fichte and Schelling, but also in the works of lesser-known figures such as Reinhold, Fries, Jacobi, Schleiermacher, Novalis, and the Schlegels.

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**NOTE:** It should also be noted that Hegel himself offers an excellent discussion of th intellectual context of his philosophy in the introduction to *hPhenomenology of Mind*

and also its famous preface 'On Scientific Cognition', as well as in his earlier essay: 'The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy'.

### CONCLUDING INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

It may perhaps be true to say that ultimately this is not a thesis 'about' Hegel or one which attempts to negotiate the body of Hegel scholarship and commentary which has expanded rapidly in recent years- both in English and especially German and eastern European philosophical traditions. Instead this is a study which uses his ideas- looking into them and into Hegel's way of thinking in order to draw out their implications. It does not, however , end up saying the same thing as Hegel. But it does not refute him either . I consider the same subject Hegel considers in his æsthetics, and, in large part, I consider it the same way. Where we differ , however, is in our conclusions- not because I conclude something altogether different from Hegel- just slightly more. Contrary to received opinion, Hegel's is a philosophy deeply rooted in history and closely tied to real phenomena; and contrary also to his own references to his philosophy as 'speculative reason', Hegel himself was no speculator . As I have suggested above, Hegel was not interested (philosophically) in the future, nor does it concern us here. But much which was future for Hegel, of course, is now past for us; and much of what we will be considering in the more 'constructive' part of this thesis is this future/past which Hegel neither knew nor speculated upon, but which is now the territory of our own reflection. Much has changed in the world and its cultural productions since Hegel's time, but his philosophy , as such, is not indifferent to these products, and indeed, as we shall see, it provides valuable insights into them. This, then, is our job- not simply to try to guess what Hegel would have said about Cubism or Francis Bacon, but to determine what they and other artistic phenomena mean in the light of his philosophy , and what -philosophically speaking- art itself is capable of achieving. It is my contention that we still have much to learn, and my hope is that this thesis may be considered a contribution to this continuing project.

## PART ONE

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HEGEL'S SYSTEM

•AND THE•

MEANING OF ART



# I.1. 'A CIRCLE OF CIRCLES'

## The Science and System of Hegel's Philosophy

### INTRODUCTION

When it was published in Edinburgh in 1865, J.H. Stirling's enormous two-volume *Secret of Hegel* was the first full-length study of the German philosopher in English. Shortly afterwards, a joke -which still circulates in Hegelian circles- arose to the effect that if Prof. Stirling indeed knew 'the secret of Hegel' for some reason he seems to have kept it to himself.

In conjunction with this witticism it is interesting to note that in a letter to his friend and colleague Friedrich Niethammer, Hegel himself says that '*the things one most easily keeps secret are those about which there is nothing at all to be known.*'<sup>1</sup> And while lecturing on fine art he remarked: '*[W]hat is supreme and most excellent is not, as might be supposed, the inexpressible.*'<sup>2</sup>

The point in juxtaposing the above joke and remarks from Hegel himself is not -like Stirling- to suggest that Hegel's philosophy in fact constitutes some sort of 'secret', nor is it to use Hegel's own words against him- suggesting that the secret of his philosophy has kept so long simply because there is nothing behind it to discover. Instead, the presupposition of the present study is not only that Hegel does have a genuine, significant (and, indeed, *valid*) philosophical position, but also that, as an educator as well as a highly original thinker, he was particularly concerned to make it comprehensible and thus accessible to others. In the preface to the *Phenomenology of Mind* he declares: '*the individual has a right to demand that science should at least provide him with the ladder to this standpoint*'<sup>3</sup> (that is, to science itself), and further that philosophy '*should show him this standpoint within himself.*'<sup>4</sup> Far from shutting itself up in an ivory tower, Hegel believes on the contrary, not that philosophy should lower itself, but that it should reach down from its heights to lift us up to genuine knowledge- as he says: '*to this ether*'.<sup>5</sup>

As we discussed in the Introduction, the subject of Hegel's philosophy is *spirit*- specifically the comprehension of its origins, history, and logical structure- the full understanding of which he calls 'absolute knowing'. As the *goal* of Hegel's philosophy as a whole, as we shall see, 'absolute knowing' is philosophical knowledge which reconciles the divisions of thought created by the mind on its path toward spirit (i.e. between thought itself and its object, self

and other, ideal and real, universal and particular, etc.).

Until quite recently (and especially in the 'analytic' tradition of philosophy), it has been an almost universal rule to presuppose the general untenability -if not outright absurdity- of Hegel's philosophy. In his influential and still popular *Hegel* of 1975, for example, Charles Taylor accepts as given the 'fact' that the Hegelian system is 'quite dead'- declaring that 'no one can believe Hegel's ontology- namely that the Universe is Spirit positing itself as a matter of rational necessity.'<sup>6</sup>

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**NOTE:** More colourfully we find Arthur Schopenhauer remarking in 1859 in *The World as Will and Representation* that

the greatest effrontery in serving up sheer nonsense, in scrabbling together senseless and maddening webs of words, such as had previously been heard only in madhouses, finally appeared in Hegel. It became the instrument of the most ponderous and general mystification that has ever existed, with a result that will seem incredible to posterity, and be a lasting monument of German stupidity.<sup>7</sup>

Even as late as 1984, Stephen Bungay was still aware enough of the persistence of this sort of attitude toward Hegel that he was able to open *Beauty and Truth* with the statement: 'Nobody really knows for sure what Hegel wanted to do, let alone whether he actually managed to do it or not.'<sup>8</sup>

In Hegel's own time there was clearly some confusion as to what he actually meant by 'absolute'- i.e. 'absolute idea', 'absolute mind', and, of course, 'absolute knowing' itself. In the second part of his *Encyclopædia* -the *Philosophy of Nature*- he alludes to an encounter he once had with the then-well-known Kantian philosopher Wilhelm Krug (Kant's successor as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in Königsberg). Hegel remarks in the *Philosophy of Nature*: '*Herr Krug once requested... that the philosophy of nature should perform the trick of deducing merely his writing pen.*'<sup>9</sup> Hegel's point is to demonstrate the error of Prof. Krug [and other critics (then and now)] in believing that the test of an 'absolute' philosophy is whether or not it can logically account for *absolutely everything*- i.e. from the concepts of thought to space and time and the world we live in right down to the very pen with which Herr Krug composed his criticisms. But this 'trick' is clearly not the aim of his (or anyone else's) philosophy rightly so-called.

A useful distinction which goes a long way towards clarifying the ambiguity of Hegel's claims about 'the absolute' is made by Martin Heidegger in his illuminating lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology*. In a sub-section of a discussion called 'Hegel's Conception of a System of Science' entitled 'Absolute and Relative Knowledge'<sup>10</sup>, Heidegger asks: 'What does "absolute knowledge" mean?' He answers himself: 'The term "absolute" means initially "not relative"...

Relative knowledge is that which does *not* know *everything* there is to know.' In other words: 'relative knowing' knows *this* thing and not that; it also knows *some* things and not others. To be 'absolute', then, in this 'initial' sense, Heidegger says, would 'be *quantitatively* absolute since it would mean *knowing everything there is to know.*' Heidegger's distinction, however, is, as he says, that 'for Hegel the concepts of relative and absolute, as characters of knowledge, are to be understood not quantitatively but *qualitatively.*' Thus, as Heidegger suggests, the way we should think of Hegel's 'absolute' is as a *way* of thinking, i.e. the way of thinking '*absolutely*', rather than *what* or *how much* we are thinking about.

To continue along the lines of Heidegger's discussion we can imagine a day when scientists will know enough about the micro-biology of cells to cure and eradicate cancer, or when meteorologists will understand the variables and interactions of the earth's temperature, humidity, and so on to such an extent that they will be able to say exactly what the weather will be in a month, a week (or even just tomorrow). But these and other 'physical' sciences constitute only *quantitative* forms of knowledge; they are mere 'fact-finding' missions, and, as such, can be concluded only when *all* of the relevant facts have been found. The '*philosophical*' science in which Hegel is engaged, however, represents an altogether different pursuit of knowledge. Hegel does not set out to know more and more about the world until he believes he knows everything. [That truly *would* be mad, (or the greatest 'trick' of all).] Instead, he sets out to know more and more about knowing itself- that is, to determine just what our relation to the world (and thinking itself) is- what we know and how we know it. It is in this way that Hegel hopes to get beyond an epistemological investigation to an ontological one- i.e. to provide a comprehensive (i.e. 'absolute') account of what *being* itself is, rather than precisely what (and how much) *is*.

This blurring of philosophy's traditional epistemological/ontological distinction (characterized by one commentator as Hegel's 'epistemological realism'<sup>11</sup>) arises from Hegel's reconsideration of questions about *being* as questions about the structures and forms of human experience (i.e. consciousness and the development of thought)- for it is through being conscious of (i.e. *knowing*) the world that we are conscious at all, and it is this consciousness (of the world and of ourselves knowing it) which defines our *being* itself.

If we take this and the above points about the 'absolute' and 'knowing', then what at first seems to be a 'secret' which Hegel is reluctant to divulge (or worse- the senseless 'scrabbling' of a lunatic) turns out to be only our own reluctance to take him at his word and consider his philosophy on its own terms-

that is, as a *system* of thought, as we shall begin to do now.

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A system is a collection of diverse elements bound together by a common purpose or unifying principle. To say that Hegel's philosophy is a system, however, signifies more than this, and, in fact, allies him with Kant, who, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, defines a system as 'the unity of manifold cognitions under an idea. This idea is the rational concept of the form of the whole in so far as the concept determines *a priori* both the scope of the whole and the place of the parts in relation to each other'<sup>12</sup>. The Hegelian philosophy can be said to be in general agreement with Kant's definition, aside from his stipulation that the scope and parts/whole relation be determined in advance *a priori*. As we shall see below, all Hegel presupposes in developing his philosophical system is the need to be systematic (i.e. rather than what this system will contain and how it will be organized). As such, Hegel's philosophy is no mere aggregate of externally related topics -like a collection of text-books on a shelf- but instead results from seeing all its parts as necessary components inhering in and constituting a single, universal (i.e. 'absolute') whole. ('*The true is the whole*'<sup>13</sup>, Hegel says.) In the *History of Philosophy* we read: '*the real meaning of "system" is totality, and only as such is a system true- a totality beginning from what is simplest and becoming ever more concrete as it develops.*'<sup>14</sup> It is because of this comprehensive 'absolute' systematicity that Hegel regards philosophy (particularly his own) as 'scientific' or 'science itself'. Reciprocally he says: '*Unless it is a system, philosophy is not a scientific production.*'<sup>15</sup> What makes philosophy science is the way it is pursued, and the employment of scientific method reveals philosophy to be a system.

It is Kant's critique of reason, Hegel says, which '*constitutes the base and the starting-point of recent German philosophy*'<sup>16</sup>, but, while a self-proclaimed admirer of Kant, Hegel clearly does not accept Kant's own high opinion of his critical philosophy- that is, that it

must remain confident of its irresistible propensity to satisfy the theoretical as well as the moral, practical purposes of reason- confident that no change of opinions, no touching up or reconstruction into some other form is in store for it; the system of the *Critique* rests on a fully secured foundation, established for ever; it will be indispensable, too, for the noblest ends of mankind in all future ages.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of his professed admiration and in view of the scope and magnitude of his own plans for philosophy, it is clear that Hegel believed Kant had over-

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estimated the invincibility of his critique of reason. The critical philosophy certainly established great advances in thought, but to Hegel, Kant had merely laid the ground-work -'the base and starting-point'- for what we shall see was to become his own 'reconstruction' of philosophy.

In this opening chapter, then, as a study of the basis and development of the 'totality' of Hegel's system, we shall see that philosophy's own immanent 'dialectic' unfolds itself into a system which takes the shape of a circle- the form, Hegel says, which the content of philosophy gives to itself. Along the path of this circle the individual parts of philosophy find their proper places and relations to each other and the system as a whole. Each is what Hegel calls its own 'circle'- encompassing even smaller, more particular circles, and is itself encompassed by the all-encompassing circle of the system as a whole- which, in this way -as a '*circle of circles*'<sup>18</sup>- may be regarded as a 'system of systems'.

In Part One below, then, we shall see from Hegel's insistence that it be systematic, precisely what he thinks philosophy is and how it should be produced and presented. We should note here that since Hegel does not regard philosophy as merely one area of enquiry amongst others, but rather, as we have already seen, as 'science itself', it cannot begin simply by making arbitrary assumptions about its subject-matter and the course its study will take. Philosophy, Hegel believes, is not an activity which conforms to the wishes of the philosopher, but is instead a process which develops according to its own immanent logic. To understand what this means we will first have to trace our way back to the origins of the 'philosophical point of view' out of which philosophy proper arises. Our first section, then, will be devoted to a detailed consideration of Hegel's first, and arguably most important work: *The Phenomenology of Mind*- which he explicitly intended to serve as the ground-work of his systematic philosophy. Accordingly, it is here that he first sets out to identify the problems of philosophy and the form his approach to their solution will take.

After having thus acquainted ourselves with Hegel's philosophical project and his first, phenomenological consideration of it, we will be prepared to make the transition to Part Two- in which we will see how he builds upon the results of the *Phenomenology*'s conclusion in the 'concept of philosophy' (i.e. 'absolute knowing'). Hegel develops this 'Concept' in his second major work: *The Science of Logic*.

At this transitional point logic's 'dialectic of thought' takes over from phenomenology's 'dialectic of consciousness'- leading us, as we shall see, not only away from logic's starting point -which represents the beginning of

philosophy as such- but also returning us back to this origin as philosophy's conclusion. This is possible only because, as we have already seen, the line along which Hegel's philosophy progresses is one which is reflected back upon itself and thus closes to form a circle. The details and significance of this process (as well as the meaning of the circle) will be discussed below in an analysis of the structure and development of Hegel's logic and his system in general, and their unique inter-relation of form and content.

## PART ONE

In October 1807, Göbhardt's bookstore in Bamberg issued an advance notice of the following item: 'G.W.F. Hegel's *System of Science*. Volume One, containing *The Phenomenology of Mind*'<sup>19</sup>. This book, the notice continues, will consider '*the becoming of knowledge*'<sup>20</sup> and thus constitutes what we could call a 'history' of consciousness. The premise of the *Phenomenology*, then, is that thinking itself has a history, and more than that- the object of thought as well, as we shall see.

What Hegel is alluding to in his characterization of the *Phenomenology* as the 'becoming of knowledge' is its goal- 'absolute knowing'. My own characterization of the *Phenomenology* as a 'history of consciousness' is meant to focus our attention on the *leading up* to this goal- that is, on the actual *process* of knowing's becoming. In this light it is instructive to focus upon the second half of Hegel's title- that which we are considering the phenomenology *of*, which is *mind*- thus suggesting that it is thinking -or more precisely thought's *own immanent development* which does the leading up to 'absolute knowing'. To tell the story of this development, then, is to recount the history of consciousness- which is what Hegel sets out to do.

The other half of the *Phenomenology*'s title -'phenomenology' itself- tells us *how* Hegel proposes to investigate this history- that is, how knowing *becomes*- which is through observation of the development of *experience*, or, we could say, the drama of the mind's encounter with *otherness*.

Simply as 'phenomenology' Hegel's project is not new; for throughout philosophical history philosophers have begun with internal experience and proceeded outwards to ask: 'What is there?' (i.e. the basic question of metaphysics). The problem, though, is that whenever we try to determine what *is* out there it seems as if we are limited in what we can know to only that which we can take *in*; that is, we can never know what the world is really like, but only what it is like *for us*- our *perception* of it. From Plato to Hume, all philosophy could do in its quest for knowledge was retreat from the world it sought to know- affirming its existence somewhere 'out there', and thus inaccessible to our

minds 'in here'. This classical problem of philosophy -touching both ontological and epistemological issues- is precisely what Hegel discusses in the opening lines of his *Introduction to the Phenomenology* where he says:

*It is a natural assumption that in philosophy, before we start to deal with its proper subject-matter- that is, the actual cognition of what truly is, one must first of all come to an understanding about cognition [itself]- which is regarded either as an instrument to get hold of the absolute, or as a medium through which one discovers it.*<sup>21</sup>

Hegel is here referring not only to Kant's critical idealism [that is, his critique of reason (and with it metaphysics)], but also to the standpoint of the empiricists (such as Locke and Hume) who disbelieved in the possibility of knowing anything with certainty apart from the sensory contents of experience. In his Preface to the *Science of Logic* Hegel says that according to this attitude '*we place our thoughts as a medium between ourselves and the objects, and that this "medium", instead of connecting us with the objects, rather cuts us off from them.*'<sup>22</sup> In a letter Hegel refers to this idea as the '*hypochondriacal German view that renders everything objective in vain, and then only savours itself in this vanity.*'<sup>23</sup> In the *Phenomenology* he calls this '*the fear of falling into error*'<sup>24</sup>, and says that it '*sets up a mistrust of science*'<sup>25</sup>. '*It is hard to see why we should not turn around and mistrust this very mistrust. Should we not be concerned as to whether this fear of error is not just the error itself?*'<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in the *History of Philosophy*, Hegel remarks:

*[I]t is said that we must know the faculty of knowing before we can know; for to investigate the faculties of knowledge means to know them. But how we are to know without knowing... to apprehend the truth before the truth, it is impossible to say. It is just the old story of the philosopher who would not go into the water until he could swim.*<sup>27</sup>

Hegel's point is that assuming cognition to be a mere instrument or medium somehow externally related to its objects takes a great deal for granted-namely, he says, '*that there is a difference between ourselves and this cognition. Above all, it presupposes that the absolute stands on one side and cognition on the other*'<sup>28</sup>, while Hegel's point is that the skeptical-empiricist approach which '*calls itself "fear of error", reveals itself rather as fear of the truth.*'<sup>29</sup> [In fact, at the opening of the *Phenomenology*'s Preface, Hegel says that such attempts to 'introduce' and qualify (i.e. hedge) philosophy are '*not only superfluous, but in view of the subject-matter, even inappropriate and misleading.*'<sup>30</sup>] The only way to learn to swim, in other words, is to enter the river. If we want to find the truth we must follow Hegel and leap directly into experience and thought- that is, into the *Phenomenology* itself.

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**NOTE:** We should note here that in Hegel's day the opposite (and cultishly popular) approach to the insatiable skepticism of empiricism was a school of thought called 'intuitionism'

which held that reality or 'the absolute' could simply be immediately and non-rationally 'intuited' or felt. This view stemmed from the combined influences of the early 17th century German mystic Jakob Böhme, the 'monism' of Spinoza (1632-77), and the 'romanticism' of Rousseau. Though much criticized and even lampooned by Hegel (especially in the *Phenomenology's* Preface), this 'unscientific' (and therefore, as far as Hegel was concerned, unphilosophical) style of philosophy lived on throughout his life and returned to prominence after his death in the teaching of his former friend Friedrich Schelling (who outlived him by 23 years)- and found its true heir ultimately in the 'existentialist' theology of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55).

To return to our main discussion and in particular to Kant: the presupposition of his philosophy is that the mind is a *medium*. He affirmed the empiricists' belief in the insurmountable gulf between thought and its object, and therefore the impossibility of genuine knowledge as well. His self-proclaimed 'revolutionary' response, however, was not to remain content with skepticism, but instead to shift the entire enterprise of enquiry away from trying to know the world outside us to scrutinizing the inner realm of reason itself.

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**NOTE:** Over a hundred years earlier, Descartes in *Meditations* of 1641, had attempted a similar project with his famous *cogito* argument- concluding that in his quest for certainty, although he could doubt the truth of all the experience and facts of his life, there remained one thing of which he could be genuinely certain- which, of course, was his doubt itself- that is, his own thinking. Hence Descartes' famous deduction: 'I think, therefore I am' ('Cogito ergo sum') -perhaps the best-known quotation in all of philosophy. The implications of this statement with the 'first-person twist' it puts on the classical problem of knowledge garnered for Descartes the popular title: 'father of modern philosophy'. Yet, as we shall see below, it remained for Kant to apotheosize this idea in his first *Critique* since Descartes himself was unable to re-emerge from his skeptical hermeneutic without dubiously positing a material body to go along with his theoretically non-spatial thinking mind, and even more dubiously- a benevolent deity to coordinate their inter-action.

Kant's 'critical' project -including his famous 'transcendental deduction' of the categories he believed to be necessary for us to experience or cognize anything- constitutes his 'Copernican Revolution'- named in reference to the Polish astronomer Nikolaj Kopernik who in the 16th century realized that the revolution we perceive of heavenly bodies around us is in reality an illusion produced by our own motion on a rotating earth (which itself revolves around the sun). Similarly to Copernicus Kant redirected the focus of philosophy from questions about the world to questions about our consciousness *of* it. From now on the major problem for philosophers was no longer 'What *is* there?', but instead: 'How do we *know* what is?' - a shift which constitutes the substance of Kant's 'critique of reason'. His point, however, is not that we cannot know anything -i.e. that metaphysics is futile- but that since -as he believes his transcendental deduction shows- our thought must have the particular structure it does in order for the world to appear the way it does, then that structure (of

our minds) must also be the structure of reality itself.

Two things should be apparent from this brief consideration of Kant's philosophy: its great advance and its great disappointment; for Kant says we *can* know the truth about the world, but unfortunately it is only the truth *for us*- that is, the world as it is mediated through the 'categories' of our thought, while the world as it is *in itself* remains forever beyond our comprehension. Thus arises Kant's famous 'thing-in-itself'- with which he comprehensively divided the world into two substances: phenomena and 'noumena'- i.e. the world for us and the world for (or in) itself. Hegel criticizes this position by saying that in the end '*Kant fell back again into the fixed opposition between subjective thinking and objective things.*'<sup>31</sup>

It was the untidy and understandably undesirable persistence of Kant's unknowable 'noumenal' realm -both out in the world and deep in the structure of our minds- which set the agenda for the next generation of philosophers -the '*absolute* (as opposed to 'transcendental') idealists': namely how to reconcile these seemingly disparate worlds.

Fichte, in his attempt to 'systematize' Kant's critical philosophy (as he proclaimed his goal to be), began not with something as ambiguous and unstable as the relation we characterized above as between 'inside' and 'outside' -that is, thought and being, self and other- but instead with what he regarded as fundamental, unchanging, and irrefutable: the relation of the self to itself- self-consciousness, or the famous '*I=I*' which is at the center of his philosophy and from which, he believed, all experience stems.

Hegel, however, regarded this grounding of everything in self-consciousness as unsatisfactory because the relation of the self to itself provides no more stable or fundamental a basis for philosophical enquiry than that of the self to its other. Fichte's point (like Descartes') is that in order to know what the world is really like, we must begin from a ground which is absolutely certain. What is absolutely certain for Fichte (again, similarly to Descartes) is that '*I=I*', or that our consciousness of anything else has our consciousness of ourselves as its origin. From this starting point -which he calls the 'Absolute Ego'- Fichte proceeds to argue that the rest of the world can be accounted for as what the self posits as the 'not-self'. In other words Fichte takes Kant's 'Copernican Revolution' to the extreme in that he argues that it is not just the mind which gives the world the structure it has; it is the mind which *produces* ('posits') that world (a notion often erroneously attributed to Hegel). Therefore, in response to the Kantian inscrutability of noumena, Fichte's self -in knowing itself- is able also to know the world since the world is its own creation. In other words: from the

simple intellectual intuition of oneself, all true knowledge logically and systematically proceeds; everything else that we know is simply a consequence of our original self-knowing and is to be 'deduced' from it and organized into a system of philosophy.

As we shall see shortly, Hegel's strategy was to follow Fichte's lead in recognizing both the need to go beyond Kant and the necessity for philosophy - in order to be genuinely 'absolute' or all-inclusive- to be *systematic*. Hegel's solution to these and other problems of idealism ultimately took the form of his mature tri-partite system- outlined in the three volumes of his *Encyclopædia of the Philosophical Sciences*.

Before proceeding to the main focus of this section -which is Hegel's phenomenology- we may summarize the material covered so far in three specific points:

- (1) Kant inaugurates his 'Copernican Revolution' with the *Critique of Pure Reason* and effectively redirects the focus of western philosophy from gazing out upon the world to gazing back upon ourselves and the workings of thought itself.
- (2) Fichte radicalizes this revolution by rejecting Kant's residual dualism of self and transcendent world mediated by 'categories' in favour of retaining the self alone as 'Absolute Ego'. He jettisons also the thing-in-itself and affirms only of the reality of the 'ego' and the world it projects.
- (3) Finally, Hegel inherits from Fichte his critical stance towards Kantianism and his recognition of the need for comprehensive systematicity.

What Hegel cannot accept, however, is how far Fichte feels obliged to venture in search of philosophical certainty and genuine knowledge- i.e. all the way into the deepest subjectivity of 'I=I'. It was this ego -as the identity of the self with itself in self-consciousness- which Fichte regarded as the soundest basis upon which to construct a philosophical system. To Hegel, this project was problematic in at least two ways- which once we have understood them will reveal the real issues which he explicitly set out to address in his own philosophical project, and which will thus also provide us with a spring-board into the *Phenomenology*- where he first and most ambitiously set out to solve them.

In short: the major philosophical problem of the day -explicitly left-over from Fichte and his response to Kant- was two-fold: first, his view of the self as independent and self-contained, and second, the implications of this independence for the real task of philosophy- which is not to *split* the self from its world (as Kant did), nor merely to *relate* it to itself (as in Fichte), but, instead, (as Schelling attempted again and again) to *unify* the self with its world in a concrete

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and determinate way by recognizing that, in fact, they are *not* distinct- or that they *are* distinct, but not separate or separable, i.e. that each is constitutive of the other.

The point of philosophy, then, as Hegel announces it in his first published essay in 1801 -'The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's Systems of Philosophy'- is not to demonstrate (or assume) that self and world are distinct entities (or 'substances') and then to argue that they are either related in some special way or are forever separate, but instead to show how self and world are actually united from the beginning- separated only by thought itself (the 'understanding', as we shall see). As Hegel later put this point in the *Encyclopædia*: '*It is thinking which both inflicts the wound and heals it again.*'<sup>32</sup> And in the 'Difference' essay he says: '*When the might of union vanishes from the life of men, and the antitheses lose their living connection and reciprocity and gain independence, the need for philosophy arises.*'<sup>33</sup>

What Hegel believes philosophy must do, then, is reunite thought and being, or rather to demonstrate their genuine -and *original*- unity (i.e. that it is not the search for an artificial 'synthesis' which motivates philosophy, but the necessity to demonstrate the true, concrete inter-relation of man and nature). The oppositions of subject and object, self and world, reason and sensibility, and so on must be overcome, and it is philosophy which must *reveal* (rather than force or fabricate) their intrinsic unity.

This unity, however, cannot be achieved through the proposition of a dogmatic metaphysic -such as Fichte's (or any of Schelling's) which merely asserts a unified relation of self and other. Rather, Hegel argues that one must show the common ground from which these oppositions proceed and in which alone they can subsist. It is the 'understanding', he says, which holds onto fixed determinations and oppositions while 'reason' grasps the totality and thus overcomes the artificial distinctions of thought. This simultaneous overcoming and reconciliation ('*Aufheben*') constitutes the project of the *Phenomenology of Mind*, and thus also provides us with a preview of Hegel's achievement in its conclusion with 'absolute knowing'.

As we have seen up to now, the intellectual context of Hegel's first book is both Kant's critical philosophy and more immediately the centrality of self-consciousness regarded as the basis of philosophical enquiry- i.e. as exemplified in the appropriation and/or modification of Kant's ideas by Fichte and Schelling. The problem with the primacy attributed to self-consciousness, however, as Hegel demonstrates in the *Phenomenology*, is that it is not as immediate and absolute as the post-Kantian idealists would have us believe. Fichte wants to

claim that the self's self-knowing in self-consciousness is immediate, irrefutable, and therefore classifiable as genuine knowledge, and then to proceed to establish the larger system of truths contingent upon this relation. What Hegel shows to the contrary is that, in beginning with self-consciousness Fichte is not making the pure, presuppositionless start he believes- for self-consciousness -as the *Phenomenology* demonstrates- is not simply given or present, but must be achieved; it is, in short, a *result*.

To state briefly Hegel's main point in the first part of the *Phenomenology*, then: one cannot be simply self-aware; one must first be aware of something else (*as* something else)- i.e. a world which appears distinct from one, and which reflects one's consciousness back upon oneself (i.e. as one becomes aware of his awareness). This is what self-consciousness is for Hegel and he does not merely assume or posit it, but, as we have said above, he *demonstrates* it. In a sense, contrary to taking self-consciousness as its starting point, the genuinely phenomenological part of the *Phenomenology* leads up to it as its conclusion, and the only way to get there is to work our way up from the beginning in what Hegel calls the '*endless labour of spirit*'<sup>34</sup>.

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Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* runs approximately five hundred pages in length. Robert Solomon's and Jean Hyppolite's studies of it, for example, both run over six hundred pages. It goes without saying, then, that it will not be possible even to scratch the immense surface of this truly epic work in this chapter.

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**NOTE:** For the details I must for obvious reasons defer the reader to the *Phenomenology* itself and its many commentaries: particularly Solomon's and Hyppolite's, or, on a more modest scale: Henry Harris and Richard Norman- both of whom have written useful books of around a hundred pages each. To the more adventurous I can recommend the lectures by Heidegger mentioned above, while Kenneth Westphal's 30-page summary of it in Chapter 10 of his *Hegel's Epistemological Realism* is exemplary for both its brevity and comprehensiveness. (John Findlay's paragraph by paragraph analysis on Hegel's text - included in Miller's translation- is also often a helpful aid.)

In contrast to the efforts of the above authors to tell us what Hegel says in the *Phenomenology*, I shall merely attempt below the difficult enough task of briefly summarizing the over-all structure of Hegel's argument and attempt to explain what, in general, he is trying to accomplish.

Hegel was obviously aware of the lack of precedent for a book such as the *Phenomenology* and of the potential for confusion and incomprehension this unfamiliarity could cause. Therefore after he completed the main body of the text and to supplement the modest Introduction he had already written he composed his famous (and much more substantial) Preface which he hoped

would prepare his readers for the new kind of philosophy they would encounter within. In this Preface he boldly claims: '*ours is a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era.*'<sup>35</sup> 'Spirit', he says, (clearly referring to the 'world-spirit')

*is indeed never at rest but always engaged in moving forward. But just as the first breath drawn by a child after its long, quiet nourishment breaks the gradualness of mere quantitative growth- there is a qualitative leap and the child is born- so likewise spirit in its formation matures slowly and quietly into its new shape- dissolving bit by bit the structure of its previous world- whose tottering state is only hinted at by isolated symptoms.*<sup>36</sup>

Outside his lectures on the history of philosophy Hegel rarely refers to anyone by name, but his remark here about 'isolated symptoms' revealing the 'tottering state' of philosophy clearly refers to the problems we examined above- such as Kant's 'thing-in-itself', Fichte's 'absolute ego', Schelling's 'absolute identity', and so on. These problems are what Hegel sees as '*the vague foreboding of something unknown.... the heralds of approaching change.*'<sup>37</sup> Most dramatically in this respect, he declares: '*The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which in one flash illuminates the features of the new world.*'<sup>38</sup> This 'sunburst', of course, is the Enlightenment (with its rationality, liberalism, natural science, etc.), while 'the features of the new world' which we glimpse in its glow are the materials Hegel takes up and unfolds in 'the new world' of the *Phenomenology* itself.

But if Hegel has something new to say, why does he not just come right out and say it? What truth could take 500 pages merely to *introduce* (since the *Phenomenology* is not even a presentation of Hegel's system, but only its prologue)? Hegel himself is clearly aware of these questions:

*Now, because the system of the experience of mind [i.e. Phenomenology itself] embraces only the appearance of mind, the advance from this [preliminary phenomenological] system to the science of the true in its true shape [i.e. the system of science as such] seems to be merely negative, and one might wish to be spared the negative... and demand to be led to the truth without more ado. Why bother with the false?*<sup>39</sup>

In short, Hegel's answer is that '*[the] truth is not a minted coin that can be given and pocketed ready-made*'<sup>40</sup>, '*[n]or is there such a thing as the false*'.<sup>41</sup> If there were a false -something not part of the true- it would then be something somehow *left-over*. When we realize the truth in the end, Hegel says,

*it is not truth as if the disparity had been thrown away like dross from pure metal, not even like a tool which remains separate from the finished vessel; disparity rather as the negative... is itself still directly present in the true as such. Yet we cannot therefore say that the false is a moment of the true, let alone a component part of it. To say that in every falsehood is a grain of truth is to treat the two like oil and water which cannot be mixed and are only externally combined.*<sup>42</sup>

What Hegel is doing is trying to prepare us for what is to come. His point is that if we really want to know the truth, we have to *get there*; it is the getting - as much as the 'there' itself- which is important. Once we attain the truth - 'absolute knowing'- we find that we cannot then simply forget about our journey, for it turns out that it is the journey itself which *is* the truth. This is what Hegel means by saying that the truth is not a shiny coin we find along the road; it is the road itself- the implication being that we cannot say much about 'absolute knowing' in advance, but must instead wait until we have traversed the path.

'The real issue', Hegel says,

*is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out; nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about. The aim by itself is a lifeless universal, just as the guiding tendency is a mere drive which as yet lacks an actual existence<sup>43</sup>.*

We shall come to this all-important 'guiding tendency' in due course, but first, returning to the image of the path, there are two important characteristics we should note: first, the path itself is what Hegel calls 'science', and second, as we have seen, that it takes the form of a circle. '[T]his pathway', he says, '*is the science of the experience which consciousness goes through*'<sup>44</sup>, and its '*movement is the circle which returns into itself- the circle which presupposes its beginning, and reaches it only at the end.*'<sup>45</sup>

Considering first the *Phenomenology*'s 'scientific' aspect (which, as we shall see, is directly related to its 'circularity') we should note initially that what we usually think of as being 'scientific' is *how* something is done- that is, the *way* it is carried out, and in this respect Hegel is no different, though his 'how' differs significantly from what we usually mean by 'scientific method' today.

When Hegel describes the phenomenology of mind as 'the science of the experience of consciousness', he means that '*we do not need to import criteria, or make use of our own bright ideas and thoughts during the course of the inquiry. It is precisely when we leave these aside that we succeed in contemplating the matter in hand as it is in and for itself.*'<sup>46</sup>

Since truth, Hegel says, is '*its own self-movement*'<sup>47</sup>, and '*since what consciousness examines [in its search for truth] is its own self, all that is left for us to do is simply to look on.*'<sup>48</sup> But, we may ask, how 'simple' is this 'science of experience'? '*In the case of all other sciences*', Hegel says,

*[as well as] arts, skills, and crafts, everyone is convinced that a complex and laborious programme of learning and practice is necessary for competence. Yet when it comes to philosophy there seems to be a currently prevailing prejudice to the effect that although not everyone who has eyes and fingers and is given leather and last is at once in a position to make shoes, everyone nevertheless immediately understands how to*

*philosophize... [as if] philosophical competence consisted precisely in absence of information and study*<sup>49</sup>.

**NOTE:** 'It is not a pleasant experience' Hegel adds, 'to see ignorance and a crudity without form... which cannot focus its thought on a single abstract proposition -still less on a connected chain of them- claiming at one moment to be freedom of thought... and the next to be even genius. Genius, as we all know, was once all the rage in poetry as it now is in philosophy.'<sup>50</sup>

Hegel's remedy to this state of affairs is the *Phenomenology of Mind* itself- which, in this way, can be seen to be a complete reconstruction of philosophy- i.e. Hegel's going back to the beginning and starting over. Thus Hegel's argument (which he regards as a *demonstration*) begins with 'natural consciousness' or 'ordinary' thinking. Hegel says: '*The element of immediate existence is... what distinguishes this part of science*'<sup>51</sup>. This is what makes the *Phenomenology* 'phenomenological'- its commencement with phenomena, i.e. immediate experience and common sense- with what is directly there in front of us and therefore most familiar. But, Hegel warns, '*the familiar -just because it is familiar- is not cognitively understood. The commonest way in which we deceive either ourselves or others about understanding is by assuming something as familiar and accepting it on that account*'<sup>52</sup>. Consequently, what we can expect from the *Phenomenology* is a rigorous examination of what we might at first take to be familiar consciousness and experience. Hegel says: '*The true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth. To help bring philosophy closer to the form of science -to the goal where it can lay aside the title " love of knowing" and be actual knowing- that is what I have set myself to do.*'<sup>53</sup>

Thus we have now heard that the *Phenomenology* is not only scientific and circular, but also 'systematic'. What this third term means, we shall see, is that Hegel's scientific approach itself results in the production of a system of philosophy (rather than in some cut and dried truth)- a system which has the form of a circle, and which is itself an expression of 'the absolute'. As such, Hegel says, this philosophy '*can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself*'<sup>54</sup>. Unfortunately, however, as we already know, this system fills the three volumes of the *Encyclopædia* (which itself is merely an outline). (Hegel himself, when asked for a brief summary of his philosophy, is said to have responded: 'Such things are not easily summarized!')

In any event, in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel does attempt to provide us with as straight-forward a statement as possible of what his philosophy is all about. He says: '*In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the true not only as substance, but equally as subject.*'<sup>55</sup>

What this is supposed to mean (aside from the demand that we engage with the book as a whole and not expect to find its meaning condensed into a preface) is that what really *is* -the truth of being or 'the absolute'- is not merely substance, but substance which is subject. (Hegel speaks of the *Phenomenology* itself as '*opening up the fast-locked nature of substance and raising this to self-consciousness*'<sup>56</sup>.)

'Substance', it should be noted, means much the same for Hegel as it does for any other philosopher (from Parmenides to Schelling)- that is: substance is simply that which *is*. (In his lectures on the philosophy of world history, Hegel defines substance as: '*that through which and in which all reality has its being and subsistence*'<sup>57</sup>.) In modern philosophy the answer to the question of what *is* has usually been answered by saying that everything in the universe is subsumable under either one or two categories; in other words: the universe is made up of either one or two 'substances'- generally distinguishable as 'mind' and 'matter'. One may thus either be a 'monist' or a 'dualist'- from which the possibility of three metaphysical positions emerges: (1) and (2) that the universe is composed of a *single* substance- mind (as in Berkeley's 'idealism') *or* matter (as in Hobbes' 'materialism'), or (3) that the two substances mind *and* matter make up the universe together (as in the 'mind-body dualism' of Descartes).

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**NOTE:** Other marginal responses to this question have included 'neutral monism'- which claims there is only one substance, but it is neither mental nor physical, and 'pluralism'- which states that the universe cannot simply be reduced to the existence of just one or two kinds of thing, but is constituted by a plurality of substances.

What Hegel effectively does in saying that we must conceive of substance as *subject* is to reject not only the standard monist accounts of the world as constituted either by our own thought or as something independent which is the *object* of our thought [that is, both 'subjectivism' and 'objectivism' (whether idealist or materialist)], but also the so-called 'identity philosophy' propounded especially by Schelling. Schelling did, in fact, attempt to argue for the unity of substance and subject -of being and thought- but he succeeded only in postulating an immediate, and therefore empty, absolute- that is, he postulated thought itself -or 'intuition'- *as* substance so that there is no distinction between them, and therefore no genuine account of the actual being of either. (Hegel refers to this sort of philosophizing as '*the rapturous enthusiasm which, like the shot from a pistol begins straightforwardly with absolute knowledge, and makes short work of other standpoints by declaring it takes no notice of them.*'<sup>58</sup>) Hegel famously characterizes Schelling's simple undifferentiated absolute where 'all is one'<sup>59</sup> and

subject and object are 'identical' as '*the night in which... all cows are black*'<sup>60</sup>. In other words, he says, '*this is cognition naively reduced to vacuity.*'<sup>61</sup>

To return to the point of Hegel's linking of substance and subjectivity, we read further that

*the living substance is being which is in truth subject... This substance, as subject, is pure simple negativity, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity... Only this self-restoring sameness... not an original or immediate unity as such [as in Schelling] is the true. It is the process of its own becoming- the circle that presupposes its end as its goal- having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end is it actual.*<sup>62</sup>

What is clear from this statement is that for Hegel neither subject nor object, nor their undifferentiated unity (i.e. 'identity') is 'absolute' since an absolute which stands on one side -whether that of subject or object, thought or being- is no absolute at all; for the other side would then be 'left over' and the absolute would have to be supposed to exist *in relation* to the non-absolute-suggesting, improbably enough, that the absolute itself is not absolute but *relative* (i.e. relative to what is *not* absolute).

*The true is the whole; and the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only in the end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature- that is to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.*<sup>63</sup>

The true, as we have seen, is not a result in the sense of a single, simple answer -e.g. 'all is one'- but instead is constituted by the process of truth-seeking itself; the result *is* the process- the *becoming* of the absolute. This truth cannot simply be stated, but must be demonstrated or exemplified in the development of the system of philosophy. This is what Hegel means when he says:

*Just as little as a building is finished when its foundation has been laid, so little is the achieved Concept of the whole the whole itself. When we wish to see an oak with its massive trunk and spreading branches and foliage we are not content to be shown an acorn instead. So too science -the crown of a world of spirit- is not complete in its beginnings.*<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately, Hegel says, it is just this living process of philosophy which is '*rejected with horror*'<sup>65</sup>. The absolute is the whole- the whole tree including its growth and development; but in reaching out to the tree -for something solid and stable- philosophers grasp only the acorn and are satisfied-not realizing the acorn must be planted and that they will not know the truth until it has grown into an oak itself and, we could say, returned to the beginning of the process in its generation of new acorns. (What we shall see below is that the *Phenomenology* is an oak whose growth we watch. The acorn it yields is what Hegel calls 'the Concept', and, when planted what grows is the ensuing

encyclopaedic system of Hegel's philosophy. In other words, in relation to Hegel's system, the whole *Phenomenology* is, as we noted above, merely prologue.)

Before turning to that system itself in Part Two, we must make some attempt -however crude- to say what is in the *Phenomenology* itself- what experiences consciousness goes through and what Hegel makes of this journey.

The whole text can be said to be a story of relations- fourteen in all, which Hegel calls 'forms' of consciousness or 'stations' of the mind along its path toward 'absolute knowing' [like the Christian 'Stations of the Cross' (which also number fourteen)]. The *Phenomenology*'s stations represent the relations of consciousness to its object- i.e. between self and other, with two exceptions; the first station -'sense-certainty'- does entail a relation of consciousness to an object, but, as we shall see, since only the other is present to the self (and not the self itself) the relation is known only to us as phenomenological observers- we who 'look on', in Hegel's phrase.

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**NOTE:** David Parry has written an entire book on the philosopher's role as observer in the *Phenomenology* called *Hegel's Phenomenology of the "We"*. (See Bibliography.)

The last form of consciousness -'absolute knowing'- is also a relation, but -to allude to Hegel's conclusion in advance- the self's other in this case is the self itself. This knowing, we can finally say -if still only provisionally- is what 'spirit' is- spirit is absolute knowing's coming-to-be. Spirit is the self's discovery of itself, and therefore its return to itself in and through its other. Spirit is the self's unification with itself in what at first it took to be foreign to itself. In spirit, then, self and world, thought and being, subject and object, and so on, are reconciled with each other and known in their truth.

The journey to this point, however, is neither quick nor easy. In fact Hegel says it may be regarded as '*the pathway of doubt, or more precisely, as the way of despair.*'<sup>66</sup> This is not only because the reasoning behind consciousness' transitions from one form to another (which Hegel refers to as its '*successive awakenings*'<sup>67</sup>) are often complex, but also because of the length of time needed to complete the journey- which is the entirety of human history (dramatically described by Hegel in the *Philosophy of History* as the '*altar upon which the happiness of nations, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals are slaughtered*'<sup>68</sup>). Viewed as a whole, Hegel says, the *Phenomenology* '*presents a slow-moving succession of spirits- a gallery of images each of which, endowed with all the riches of the mind, moves thus slowly just because the self has to penetrate and digest this entire*

*wealth of its substance.*<sup>69</sup>

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If Hegel's *Phenomenology* shows one thing it is that one cannot simply jump straight into philosophy as such. If we seek comprehensiveness we must start over from the beginning of thought itself- demonstrating the path consciousness takes in its development from ordinary, everyday experience all the way up to the genuinely philosophical vantage point of 'absolute knowing'- an odyssey we shall now consider in itself.

In the strictly phenomenological part of its exegesis (the part which leads up to 'spirit' itself), the *Phenomenology of Mind* is divided into three sections: 'consciousness', 'self-consciousness', and 'reason'.

Turning first to 'consciousness' we find that it too is divided into three sub-sections: 'sense-certainty', 'perception', and 'understanding'. We may remark in advance that this 'circle' of phenomenology represents the progression from ordinary experience to knowledge of what Hegel calls 'the Concept'- which, it turns out, is really nothing other than a comprehensive understanding of ordinary experience itself- of our relation as knowers to what we know. (In the *Science of Logic*, Hegel calls this the '*unveiling of substance*'<sup>70</sup> and thus '*the genesis of the Concept*'<sup>71</sup>.)

The first section 'sense-certainty' itself has three aspects: first, what 'sense-certainty' is certain of- *the object*; second, that which is certain- *the 'I' or subject*; and finally, the 'truth of sense-certainty'- which is seen to be neither the one nor the other on its own, but the two taken together as a unity- that is, one -the object- as *perceived by* the other- the subject. Thus 'perception' -or the second form of consciousness- is the 'truth of sense-certainty'.

In 'perception' consciousness is conscious of its awareness of something else- that is, of itself as a subject perceiving an object. What the subject perceives, however, is no longer what is simply *there* in experience (as in 'sense-certainty'), but now what Hegel calls '*the thing with many properties*'<sup>72</sup>. Perception breaks experience down and does so in two ways: first into perceiver and perceived (subject and object); then it breaks up the object as well. What consciousness perceives is not simply a singular *object*, but a thing with *multiple* attributes. Hegel uses the example of salt: his point (perhaps surprising at first) is that salt, as such, cannot be perceived; 'salt' is *not* an object of perception; what *is* perceived is salt's white colour, its salty taste, the cubical shape of its crystals, and so on. What holds these properties together is not simply *another* property - i.e. 'saltiness'- but an *idea*. In other words: Hegel's point is that what salt *is* -as the

unity of diverse properties- is really a *concept*- and, as such, it cannot be perceived, but must be *understood*. Realizing this 'truth of perception', then, brings us to the third form of consciousness: 'understanding'.

What 'understanding' understands (i.e. *conceives* as opposed to *perceives*) is that underlying 'perception' there are concepts- universal ideas such as unity, multiplicity, cause, effect, etc.- without which perceptual knowledge would be impossible. The immediate difficulty of this 'realization', however, is that it suggests the existence of some transcendental realm of things (referred to by Hegel as 'forces') to which these concepts apply- as if what we really perceive is the mere *appearance* of a realm of *essences* (i.e. 'things-in-themselves'). If this were true then the essence of things would remain unknowable and genuine (i.e. 'absolute') knowledge impossible (as in Kant).

Hegel's solution to this dilemma -the legacy of Kant's 'Copernican Revolution'- we could say, is to mount his own epistemological counter-revolution in that his strategy is to reject Kant's idea that the 'thing-in-itself' is the essence (or 'substance') behind the 'curtain of appearance'- thereby denying that the scope of our knowledge is limited to the structure of our own thought. The way Hegel does this is by showing that the understanding realizes that its concepts -whether Kantian-style categories, or 'forces', laws of nature, etc.- do not really *explain* anything, but only *redescribe* phenomena in other terms- from which it follows that the understanding has not really discovered anything new at all, but instead has merely stumbled upon its own activity of describing. Behind appearances, then, is not some unknowable substance, thing-in-itself, or any other transcendental 'essence', but only our own self giving structure to experience. Objects, in other words, get their objectivity from subjects (just as subjects are 'subjective' only in relation to objects). The world is only real -that is, it is the way (and therefore *what*) it is- because of the comprehending power of consciousness. (Consciousness discovers that it itself 'stands behind' its objects, and thus can be seen to constitute the 'objectivity' of the world.) As Hegel puts it: '*there is nothing to be seen [behind the curtain] unless we [lift it and] go behind it ourselves- as much in order that we may see as that there may be something there to be seen.*'<sup>73</sup> Thus stepping behind the curtain of appearance to 'essence' (or 'substance') itself, we pass from 'consciousness' to its 'truth' as 'self-consciousness'.

'But', Hegel says,

*at the same time, it is evident that we cannot without more ado go straightaway behind appearance. For this knowledge of what is the truth of appearance as ordinarily conceived, and of its inner being is itself only a result of a complex movement- whereby the modes of consciousness... sense-certainty, perceiving, and understanding vanish; and it will be equally evident that the cognition of what consciousness knows in*

*knowing itself requires a still more complex movement<sup>74</sup>*

Needless to say, we cannot follow the *Phenomenology* as it bursts forth into history and traces this 'more complex movement' though time and its successive ages and civilizations, but we may say here that Hegel's 'counter-revolution' is now transformed into the 'permanent revolution' of thought -i.e. consciousness (now *self-conscious*)- to realize itself in the objective world- that is, in reality itself. 'Self-consciousness', in Hegel's phrase, must make the world its 'free realization'. The process of knowledge becomes the progression of history as Hegel links the epistemological evolution of consciousness from 'sense-certainty' to 'self-consciousness' with the historical development of man from bondage to freedom- from the primitive 'state of nature' to the liberty embodied in modern constitutional states. The subjective forms of consciousness we have seen up to now are demonstrated by objective historical realities in an epic narrative of struggle, labour, and cultural and philosophical production which culminates in 'absolute knowing'.

What we shall do now (admittedly against Hegel's advice) is step behind the 'curtain of reality' in order to examine 'the truth of appearance' itself- its 'inner being' independent of its outer modes of consciousness. Behind the curtain, then, is what Hegel calls 'logic'- and in contrast to the experiential progression of the preceding phenomenological study it is now the purely logical unfolding of 'the Concept' which shall concern us. Thus we must consider briefly the *Phenomenology*'s final 'station'.

In a phrase, Hegel describes the *Phenomenology of Mind* as the '*coming-to-be of science as such*'<sup>75</sup>. This pure knowledge is the content of 'absolute knowing', and Hegel calls it 'the Concept'. *The Concept* for Hegel, as opposed to ordinary concepts, is, as we have seen, the notion that thought and reality are not opposed, but inherently unified. This idea is the result of Hegel's phenomenological investigation- and, as such, forms the subject-matter of his next work: the *Science of Logic*. In this study Hegel says the Concept

*displays its existence and movement in this ether of its life and iscience [as such]. In this, the moments of its movement no longer exhibit themselves as specifications of consciousness, but -since consciousness' difference [between itself and its other] has returned into the self- specific concepts and as their organic self-grounded movement.<sup>76</sup>*

The *Science of Logic*, then, exhibits '*the structure [of the Phenomenology] set forth in its pure essentiality*'<sup>77</sup>. 'Absolute knowing' is knowledge of the Concept, and therefore knowledge that the disparity between self and other is an inadequacy in the self itself- i.e. the self's inability to understand 'the other' for what it truly is. When the self *does* understand objectivity, and both (objectivity

and subjectivity) are seen for what they are -that is, as the two moments of 'substance'- then the subject-object relation disappears in the Concept, and phenomenology yields to logic (i.e. the Concept's own immanent development). This realization is what Hegel calls: '*the true in the form of the true, and their difference [i.e. between subject and object] is only the difference of content. Their movement, which organizes itself in this element into a whole, is logic or speculative philosophy.*'<sup>78</sup>

As a final recapitulation of the *Phenomenology* as the 'science of experience', Hegel says:

*[E]xperience is just this, that the content -which is spirit [i.e. knowledge of the true relation of self to other]-in itself substance; and therefore object of consciousness. But this substance which is spirit is the process in which spirit becomes what it is in itself; and it is only as this process of reflecting itself into itself that it is in itself truly spirit. It is in itself the movement which is cognition- the transformation of that which is in itself into that which is for itself, of substance into subject, of the object of consciousness into an object of self-consciousness, i.e.... into the Concept. The movement is the circle which returns into itself...<sup>79</sup>*

All throughout the 'labour' of the *Phenomenology* this 'movement' has been taking place 'for us' -the phenomenological observers who 'look on', and therefore, as Hegel describes it, '*behind the back of consciousness*'<sup>80</sup>. In proceeding to logic, then, we are ('without more ado') 'looking behind' experience to the structure and development of thought itself.

## PART Two

The *Phenomenology of Mind* is often described as a book with no precedents. Hegel's second work -the *Science of Logic*- on the other hand, is a work whose subject-matter can be said to be as old as philosophy itself (and to have existed in a mature form at least since Aristotle). But this long and distinguished provenance may not, Hegel suggests, have served logic well. In the first sentence of the Preface to the *Science of Logic* Hegel speaks of the '*complete transformation*' which philosophy has undergone in recent years- but also, unfortunately, how these changes have had '*but little influence as yet on the structure of logic.*'<sup>81</sup> Since Aristotle, he says, logic '*has not lost any ground, but neither has it gained any- the latter because to all appearances it seems to be finished and complete.*'<sup>82</sup> From the 800 or so pages which follow this remark, we may confidently assume that Hegel himself is far from accepting that logic is something 'finished and complete'. Indeed, he argues that

*if logic has not undergone any change since Aristotle -and, in fact, judging by modern compendia... the changes frequently consist mainly in omissions- then surely the conclusion which should be drawn is that it is all the more in need of a total reconstruction; for spirit -after its labours over 2000 years- must have attained a higher*

*consciousness about its thinking and about its own pure, essential nature.*<sup>83</sup>

No doubt one of (if not *the*) most significant examples of spirit's 'higher consciousness' -that is, of philosophy's 'complete transformation' in recent times (in Hegel's mind, at any rate)- is Hegel's own *Phenomenology of Mind*. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that Hegel proposes to base his 'total reconstruction' of logic on the outcome of the *Phenomenology*- that is, the Concept attained at the level of 'absolute knowing'. In the Introduction to the *Science of Logic*, he says:

*In the Phenomenology of Mind I have exhibited consciousness in its movement onwards from the first immediate opposition of itself and its object [i.e. 'sense-certainty'] to absolute knowing. The path of this movement goes through every form of the relation of consciousness to its object and has the Concept of science for its result. This Concept cannot be justified in any other way than by this emergence in consciousness- all the forms of which are resolved into this Concept as into their truth.*<sup>84</sup>

The subject-matter of logic, then, is what Hegel calls the 'immanent development' of this Concept. Therefore, it is now thought itself -pure thinking (rather than the experience of consciousness)- which develops- unfolding the logical structure of the conceptual relations implicit in 'absolute knowing' and 'resolved' into the Concept itself ('as into their truth').

What we shall be considering here first of all, then, is the overall structure of Hegel's logic and its three individual parts: 'Being', 'Essence', and 'Concept'. As we shall see, the relation of these 'doctrines' constitutes logic's over-all structure- which Hegel describes as 'dialectical'; and to get a better understanding of the workings of dialectic we shall consider its first and best known example: the 'being-nothing-becoming' triad. Then we will see how Hegel distinguishes this sort of thinking -which he describes as the product of 'speculative reason'- from the ordinary, 'one-sided' analysis of the understanding, and also how 'speculative reason' opens up the possibility of 'infinite' knowledge.

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In his introductory lecture on the history of philosophy, Hegel declares: '*Thought is not something empty and abstract, but is determining- indeed self-determining; in other words, thought is essentially concrete. This concrete thought is what we call "the Concept".*'<sup>85</sup> Any thought, of course -just as a thought- Hegel admits, is a concept; but *the Concept*, he explains, is 'different'.

*The Concept is genuine knowledge, not thought qua purely universal; on the contrary, the Concept is thought determining itself- thought in its vivacity and activity, or thought giving its content to itself. In other words: the Concept is the universal which particularizes itself... The Concept is thought become active- able to determine itself,*

*create and generate itself; thus it is not merely a form for some content; it forms itself, gives itself a content, and makes itself the form.*<sup>86</sup>

Later, when we come to the end of logic, we shall see that the fully 'self-determined' or 'realized' Concept is what Hegel calls 'the Idea' (and further, that the full realization of the Idea as the unity of the Concept and reality is the '*absolute idea*'). But before we set off down this road to logic's apotheosis we should first acquaint ourselves with the work which will be our guide. The *Science of Logic* is, as Hegel himself referred to it, the 'sequel' to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, and was published in two separate volumes in 1812 and 1816- each containing half of logic's division into 'objective' and 'subjective' 'moments'. These volumes break down further into the individual 'doctrines' of 'Being' and 'Essence' in 'objective' logic, and the 'doctrine of the Concept' in 'subjective' logic. (We shall see below that 'the Concept' itself has its own subjective and objective moments.) To elaborate further we could say that 'objective' logic's doctrines of 'Being' and 'Essence' cover what we would ordinarily think of as ontology or metaphysics, and that 'subjective' logic is concerned -at least in part- with epistemological issues or more 'formal' logic as such.

'Subjective' logic -the 'doctrine of the Concept'- is where the Concept itself explicitly comes under consideration. But, Hegel says, '*the Concept is to be regarded not merely as a subjective proposition [i.e. as any concept], but as the absolute foundation; yet it can be so only in so far as it has made itself the foundation.*'<sup>87</sup> This statement, which at first may seem paradoxical -i.e. that the Concept in its ultimate sense must be its own 'absolute foundation' and therefore would seem necessarily to have to precede itself- is meant to demonstrate what Hegel calls the 'speculative' relation between the two (i.e. concepts generally and *the Concept*). What Hegel means -which, as we saw in the *Phenomenology*, can really emerge only from the exposition of the entire system of logic itself- is that, like the foundation of a building, the Concept is not simply found ready-made, but must be planned and, to some extent, worked-out in advance. The science of logic, then, can be seen as the designing of the structure which will be built upon the foundation of the Concept- and, as such, a return to the Concept itself; for, to extend our analogy, in an architectural design, the foundation cannot be worked out in detail first, but instead, must simply be assumed in an abstract way at the start, and then returned to in the end to be worked out concretely in order to support the building which has been designed to rest upon it. (As has been noted above, we cannot expect to understand this point fully until we have reached the end ourselves.)

*Thought is an expression which attributes the determination contained therein primarily to consciousness. But inasmuch as it is said that... reason is in the objective world -that mind and nature have universal laws to which their life and development conform- then it is conceded that the determinations of thought equally have objective value and existence.*<sup>88</sup>

The project of Hegel's logic is to determine the shape of this 'life and development' of thought. In order to do so, he says, '*it has been necessary to make a completely fresh start with this science.*'<sup>89</sup> Again as we saw in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel regards philosophy as being '*in need of a total reconstruction*'<sup>90</sup>; the *Science of Logic* -as '*the mind's consciousness of its own pure essence*'<sup>91</sup>- provides that reconstruction. Logic, Hegel says, is

*the science of pure thought- the principle of which is pure knowing- the unity which is not abstract, but a living, concrete unity in virtue of the fact that in it the opposition in consciousness between a self-determined entity -a subject- and a second such entity -an object- is known to be overcome; being is known to be the pure Concept in its own self, and the pure Concept to be true being. These, then, are the two moments contained in logic.*<sup>92</sup>

It is important to note Hegel's stress on the 'momentary' nature of subjectivity and objectivity as such- that is, their '*opposition in consciousness*'; for through being 'worked out' and thus reconciled in the 'objective' and 'subjective' moments of logic, this opposition, Hegel says,

*has vanished... [while] unity remains the element, and the distinctions of the division and of the development no longer originate outside that element. Consequently, the earlier determinations (those used on the pathway to truth [i.e. the development of logic itself]) such as subjectivity and objectivity, or even thought and being, or concept and reality have lost their independent and purely affirmative character, and are now in their truth -that is, in their unity- reduced to [mere] forms.*<sup>93</sup>

Later we shall see that this 'unity' -which Hegel calls the 'truth' of the Concept and reality- is 'the Idea'. But knowing already that the Idea is a *result*, we cannot expect to happen upon it (or its ultimate form: the 'absolute idea') at the beginning, but must gradually make our way there- following the development of thought itself. Thus, Hegel says:

*what is to be considered is the whole Concept- firstly as the Concept the form of [immediate] being [and] secondly, as the Concept [as such]; in the first case, the Concept is only in itself- the concept of reality or being; in the second case, it is the Concept as such- the Concept existing for itself... Accordingly, logic should be divided primarily into the logic of the Concept as Being, and of the Concept as Concept- or, by employing the usual terms (although these -being the least definite- are most ambiguous) into 'objective' and 'subjective' logic.*<sup>94</sup>

'Objective' logic, then, treats the Concept as the concept of something else- that is, as *Being*, or what objectively *is*, while 'subjective' logic is concerned with the Concept itself as what truly *is*. In other words: reality, what *is* -in order objectively to *be*- requires the subjectivity of the Concept itself. Hegel explains

that

*in accordance with the fundamental element of the immanent unity of [both the 'objective' and 'subjective' moments of] the Concept, and hence with the inseparability of its determinations, these latter -when distinguished from each other in the positing of the Concept in its difference- must at least also stand in relation to each other. There results [then] a sphere of mediation: the Concept as a system reflected determinations- that is, of being in process of transition into the... inwardness of the Concept [itself]. In this way, the Concept is not yet posited as such for itself, but is still fettered by the externality of immediate being. This is the doctrine of Essence which stands midway between the doctrine of Being and that of the Concept.<sup>95</sup>*

Here, then -in a particularly dense statement- is Hegel's outline of the structure and meaning (which we know are closely linked) of his entire logic. First of all we should note that Hegel takes as given (i.e., as demonstrated by the *Phenomenology*) the dual nature of the Concept- that is, its subjective and objective aspects- its subjectivity in terms of being thought, and its objectivity in being the thought of something- namely of the relation between the thinker and that of which he is thinking. It is this distinction of the Concept's objective and subjective moments which constitutes what Hegel refers to as 'the positing of the Concept in its difference'. This difference sets up a logical 'dialectic' in which these aspects 'stand in relation to each other', and thus entails the 'sphere of mediation' which constitutes the doctrine of Essence.

In short: in logic's first doctrine, the Concept is posited as *Being*- i.e. the objective Being of beings, or of what *is*. But this being proves to be inadequate as an expression of what *really is*- which is subsequently thought to lie *behind* existent beings as their *Essence* (logic's second doctrine). Finally, the Concept itself (as the Idea) is realized to constitute the absolute (that is: the unity of being and thought- of reality and the Concept)- thus concluding logic with the 'absolute idea'.

To return specifically to Hegel's project to reconstruct logic, we find that he discerns the need for this enterprise in the recognition that

*[t]he activity of thought which is at work in all our ideas, purposes, interests and actions is... unconsciously busy (natural logic); what we attend to is the contents, the objects of our ideas- that in which we are interested. On this basis the determinations of thought have the significance of forms which are only attached to the content but are not the content itself.<sup>96</sup>*

What Hegel is suggesting is that thinking itself is not an empty form like a meaningless, arbitrary code whose message can be extracted and considered independently. Instead thought has its own immanent meaning and significance- that is, its own content- which the study of logic reveals.

Logic is the study of concepts, or *the Concept*- which Hegel calls the '*immanent universal*'.<sup>97</sup> In all our thinking, he says, '[t]he indispensable foundation,

*the Concept, the universal which is thought itself, insofar as one can abstract from the general idea expressed by the word "thought" cannot be regarded as only an indifferent form attached to a content.*<sup>98</sup> Concepts, and especially the Concept, are 'the very heart of things'<sup>99</sup>. 'To focus attention on this logical nature which animates the mind-moves and works in it- this is the task.'<sup>100</sup> This is what the *Science of Logic* sets out to do- the need for which Hegel accounts for by saying:

*when the content of an interest in which one is absorbed is drawn out of its immediate unity with oneself and becomes an independent object of one's thinking, it is then that the mind begins to be free, whereas when thinking is an instinctive activity the mind is enmeshed in the bonds of its categories and is broken up into an infinitely varied material.*<sup>101</sup>

The 'lofty business' of logic, Hegel says, is 'to clarify these categories, and [then] in them to raise the mind to freedom and truth.'<sup>102</sup>

*The most important thing for the nature of the mind is not only the relation of what it is in itself to what it is inactuality, but the relation of what it knows itself to be to what it actually is; because the mind is essentially consciousness, this self-knowing is a fundamental determination of its actuality.*<sup>103</sup>

What Hegel suggests here about 'truth' -'the declared object and aim of logic'<sup>104</sup>- is that, since consciousness and thought underlie everything we experience and know, it turns out to be thinking itself rather than what is being thought about which must occupy the central position in our search for truth (and freedom). This is what Hegel means when he says that the 'subjective act' must be 'grasped as an essential moment of objective truth, and this brings with it the need to unite the method with the content- the form with the principle'.<sup>105</sup> 'The inadequacy of the [conventional] way of regarding thought -which leaves truth on one side', Hegel says,

*can only be made good by including in our conception of thought not only that which is usually reckoned as belonging to the external form, but the content as well. It is soon evident that what to ordinary reflection is at first [a] content as divorced from form, cannot in fact be formless- cannot be devoid of inner determination*<sup>106</sup>.

On the contrary, he continues,

*the content in its own self possesses form, [and] in fact it is through form alone that it has soul and meaning, and... it is form itself which is transformed only into the semblance of a content- hence into the semblance of something external to this semblance. With this introduction of the content into the logical treatment the subject matter is not things but their import- the concept of them.*<sup>107</sup>

The Concept, then 'is not sensuously intuited or represented; it is solely an object, a product and content of thinking'.<sup>108</sup>

*Hitherto the concept of logic has rested on the separation -presupposed once and for all in the ordinary consciousness- of the content of cognition and its form, or of truth and certainty. First it is assumed that the material of knowing is present on its own account as a ready-made world apart from thought- that thinking on its own is empty*

*and comes as an external form to the said material, fills itself with it, and only thus acquires a content and so becomes 'real' knowing.<sup>109</sup>*

According to this 'common-sense' view of knowledge, Hegel says, form and content -regarded as two externally related 'constituents' of knowledge- are appraised as follows:

*[T]he object is regarded as something complete and finished on its own account- something which can entirely dispense with thought for its actuality, while thought on the other hand is regarded as defective because it has to complete itself with a material, and moreover -as a pliable indeterminate form- has to adapt to its material. Truth is the agreement of thought with the object, and in order to bring about this agreement -for it does not exist on its own account- thinking is supposed to adapt and accommodate itself to the object.<sup>110</sup>*

The consequence of 'common-sense' for thought and its object is simply, as we saw above in the *Phenomenology*, that '*each is regarded as a sphere divorced from the other.*'<sup>111</sup> Thinking, in this account, Hegel says, '*does not go out of itself to its object; this, as a "thing-in-itself", remains a sheer beyond of thought.*'<sup>112</sup> This view of the relation of subject and object expresses what Hegel calls: '*the determinations which constitute the nature of our ordinary, phenomenal consciousness*'<sup>113</sup> which, as such, are generally sufficient for the purposes of ordinary life and conversation. But, Hegel continues,

*when these prejudices are carried out into the sphere of reason as if the same relation obtained there -as if this relation were something true in its own self- then they are errors the refutation of which, throughout every part of the spiritual and natural universe, is philosophy<sup>114</sup>.*

Philosophy, then, is for Hegel both a demonstration of the truth and a refutation of the false- or, at least, a leading of false or 'one-sided' (i.e. partially true) points of view to the truth. The reason this is possible, as we have seen, is that thought itself has its own content, and this content shapes itself into its own form- which is why Hegel remarks: '*It will always stand as a marvel how the Kantian philosophy recognized the relation of thought to sensuous reality -beyond which it did not advance- as only a relative relation of mere appearance*'<sup>115</sup>. In saying this, Hegel praises Kant for realizing that the reality we directly experience is not reality in its truth. (For Kant, of course, the world of experience is merely the phenomenal show of the 'noumenal' realm which constitutes what is ultimately real- which is why Hegel goes on to accuse him of having '*stopped short at this relative relation and the assertion that the Concept is and remains utterly separate from reality*'<sup>116</sup>.)

This 'common-sense' belief in the separation of mind and world leads on to the claim that since thought and its object are distinct, then thinking has no direct access to what it is thinking about- that is, no knowledge of its object as it

is in itself, but only as it is manifested to thinking. There is thus a distinction not only between subject and object but also between appearance and essence- what a thing really is and how it appears. While clearly an unsatisfying result for knowledge (which is thus sharply curtailed), Hegel characterizes this realization as a '*great negative step towards the true concept of reason.*'<sup>117</sup> This step is significant because it takes thought beyond common-sense, and 'negative' because, as Hegel puts it, '*[it] is like attributing to someone a correct perception with the rider that nevertheless he is incapable of perceiving what is true but only what is false.*'<sup>118</sup>

Having acknowledged this step, the focus of our consideration can now center on the overall shape and development of Hegel's logic itself. To understand his articulation of this progression -that is, of logic's 'reconstruction'- it is essential to remember -as Hegel continuously reminds us- that '*what is involved is an altogether new concept of scientific procedure.*'<sup>119</sup> '*To exhibit the realm of thought philosophically*', he says, '*that is, in its own immanent activity, or what is the same, in its necessary developments, has therefore to be a fresh undertaking- one which has to be started right from the beginning*'<sup>120</sup>. This 'fresh start' is necessary, Hegel believes, because the traditional material of logic and philosophy generally offers, '*only here and there a meagre shred or a disordered heap of dead bones.*'<sup>121</sup> In order to bring this skeleton back to life, he says, '*it can only be the nature of the content itself which spontaneously develops itself in a scientific method of knowing*'<sup>122</sup>. What Hegel is alluding to in this statement is what is generally regarded as his most original and significant contribution to philosophy- namely 'dialectic'.

Dialectic is a philosophical practice stretching back almost as far as philosophy itself- appearing first in Zeno's famous paradoxes, and then later more concretely in the dialogues of Plato. It was, however, a particular instance of dialectic in Kant's critical philosophy which most influenced Hegel (as it did Fichte and Schelling). The dialectic in question occurs in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in Kant's derivation of the four cosmological antimonies of reason- that is, the equally logical, yet contradictory propositions which arise in response to metaphysical questions [such as whether or not time extends infinitely into the past and future (the paradoxical answer being both that it necessarily does and does not)]. Kant regarded these demonstrations of the contradiction inherent in thought itself as proof of reason's inability to negotiate metaphysical issues, and dismissed them as what he called the 'logic of illusion'. Hegel, however, regarded Kant's discovery as '*among his greatest merits*'<sup>123</sup>- in that he '*exhibited it [i.e. contradiction] as a necessary function of reason.*'<sup>124</sup> Thus what Kant regarded as a negligible by-product of thought's vain attempts to enquire too far, is taken up by Hegel and made a central part of his philosophy. The Kantian antimonies,

'more than anything else', Hegel says, 'brought about the downfall of the previous metaphysics and may be regarded as a major transition into more recent philosophy'<sup>125</sup>. 'True', Hegel says, 'Kant's expositions in the antimonies... do not indeed deserve great praise, but the general idea on which he based his expositions and which he vindicated is the objectivity of the illusion and the necessity of the contradiction which belongs to the nature of the determinations of thought'<sup>126</sup>. The 'result' which Hegel says he takes from this point -'grasped in its positive aspect'- is

*nothing else but the inner negativity of [thought] determinations in their self-moving soul- the principle of all natural and spiritual life. But if [as in the case of Kant] no advance is made beyond the abstract, negative side of dialectic, the result is the familiar one that reason is incapable of knowing what is infinite [i.e. the 'absolute']<sup>127</sup>.*

The 'abstract negative side' is as far as Kant gets with dialectic- regarding its contradictions as 'illusion' and therefore 'proof' of the finitude of knowledge- which is thus unable to answer or even to make sense of metaphysical or 'transcendental' questions. Hegel's project is to go beyond this dead-end- declaring that it is in '*the grasping of opposites in their unity -or of the positive in the negative- that speculative thought consists.*'<sup>128</sup> 'Speculative thought' is Hegel's term for the positive 'reconstructive' project which he builds upon Kant's critical foundations.

In the title of the brief essay which introduces the *Science of Logic*, Hegel asks: 'With what must the science begin?'. In no other science, he says,

*is the need to begin with the subject-matter itself without preliminary reflections felt more strongly than in the science of logic. In every other science, the subject-matter and the scientific method are distinguished from each other; also the content does not make an absolute beginning but is dependent on other concepts and is connected on all sides with other material. These other sciences are therefore permitted to speak of their ground and its context and also of their method only as premises taken for granted which as forms of definitions and such-like presupposed as familiar and accepted are to be applied straight-away, and also to employ the usual kind of reasoning for the establishment of their general concepts and fundamental determinations.<sup>129</sup>*

And at the opening of the *Encyclopædia*, he remarks:

*It may seem as if philosophy, in order to start on its course, had, like the rest of the sciences, to begin with a subjective presupposition. The sciences postulate their respective objects, such as space, number, or whatever it may be, and it might be supposed that philosophy had also to postulate the existence of thought. But the two cases are not exactly parallel. It is by the free act of thought [itself] that it occupies a point of view in which it is for its own self and thus [it] gives itself an object of its own production.<sup>130</sup>*

Hegel's point in these passages is that unlike other sciences philosophy does not find its subject-matter ready-made awaiting analysis and codification. The astronomer, for example, does not begin by justifying his study with arguments for the existence of heavenly bodies, but instead advances straight-

away to the observation of their movements, the deduction of laws, etc. The furniture of the universe is the astronomer's presupposition- it is taken as given, and his study proceeds from there.

The object of the philosopher's study, on the other hand, is not something we encounter out in the world. (In the *Phenomenology* it was our encounter *with* the world, while now in logic it is the immanent and underlying conceptual structure of that experience.)

*What we are dealing with in logic is not a thinkable something which exists independently as a base for our thought and apart from it, nor forms which are supposed to provide mere signs or distinguishing marks of truth. On the contrary, the necessary forms and self-determinations of thought are the content and the ultimate truth itself.<sup>131</sup>*

Since it is with thought itself that the philosopher is concerned, he finds his object there before him as soon as he begins to think. Thus philosophy requires no telescope but only the philosopher's own mind to proceed. Logic is '*the science of thinking*'<sup>132</sup>, and, as such, to engage in it is to produce it. As Hegel says: '*the way to science is itself already science*'<sup>133</sup>.

Now that we are in a position to start doing philosophy we must ask ourselves the question with which Hegel opens the *Science of Logic*: 'With what must the science begin?'. '*The beginning is logical*'<sup>134</sup>, he says; it '*is to be made in the element of thought that is free and for itself, in pure knowing*'<sup>135</sup>. He continues:

*Now starting from this determination of pure knowledge, all that is needed to ensure that the beginning remains immanent in its scientific development is to consider -or rather, ridding oneself of all other reflections and opinions whatever- simply to take up what is there before us [And] what is present is simple immediacy... [which], in its true expression is pure being... [I]f no presupposition is to be made and the beginning itself is taken immediately then its only determination is that it is to be the beginning of logic- of thought as such. All that is present is simply the resolve - which may also be regarded as arbitrary- that we propose to consider thought as such. Thus the beginning must be absolute, or what is synonymous here, abstract beginning, and so it may not presuppose anything must not be mediated by anything, nor have a ground; rather, it is itself to be the ground of the entire science. Consequently, it must be purely and simply immediacy, or rather, merely immediacy itself. The beginning, therefore, is pure being.<sup>136</sup>*

This is Hegel's preliminary explanation of the first concept or category of logic: 'being'. Pure being, Hegel claims, is the logically first thought; it is what is 'there before us' when we begin to think. It is the beginning of the system of philosophy; and, since, as we have seen, that system forms a circle, being is also its end. Being is both the presupposition from which we start and also the goal to which we return. This point of view, Hegel says,

*which originally is taken on its own evidence only, must in the course of the science [of logic] be converted to a result- the ultimate result in which philosophy returns into itself and reaches the point with which it began. In this manner, philosophy exhibits the appearance of a circle which closes with itself and has no beginning in the way other sciences do.<sup>137</sup>*

What this means is that even though Hegel spends many pages in both versions of logic explaining why, as he says, '*it lies in the very nature of a beginning that it must be being and nothing else*'<sup>138</sup>, it does not really matter if we believe or even understand him, because philosophy, in advancing from this point, at the same time returns to and 'grounds' it. This is why Hegel says:

*the advance is [at the same time] a retreat into the ground to what is primary and true, on which depends and, in fact, from which originates that with which the beginning is made. Thus consciousness, on its onward path from the immediacy with which it began is led back to absolute knowledge as its inner-most truth. This last -the ground- is then also that from which the first proceeds, that which, at first, appeared as an immediacy... The essential requirement for the science of logic is not so much that the beginning be a pure immediacy, but rather that the whole of the science be within itself a circle in which the first is also the last and the last is also the first.*<sup>139</sup>

In other words: since logic, if it is to be truly 'scientific', cannot be grounded in something external to itself, it must, instead, *ground itself*- that is, demonstrate itself to be self-supporting. This is why the form of Hegel's system is every bit as important as its content. Philosophy progresses, as we have seen, not only by advancing from the fixed starting-point of pure being, but also, in the same motion, by returning to and grounding it- i.e. tracing the path of a circle.

*Thus the beginning of philosophy is the foundation which is present and preserved throughout its entire subsequent development- remaining completely immanent in its further determinations.*

*Through this process, then, the beginning loses the one-sidedness which attaches to it as something simply immediate and abstract. It becomes something mediated, and hence the line of the scientific advance becomes a circle. It also follows that because that which forms the beginning is still undeveloped [and] devoid of content, it is not truly known in the beginning. It is the science of logic in its whole compass which first constitutes the completed knowledge of it with its developed content, and first truly grounds that knowledge.*<sup>140</sup>

'Dialectic', we may now say, is the name for the 'scientific advance' which constitutes Hegel's 'way' of doing philosophy. To name the method of philosophy 'dialectic', then, is not to distinguish it from its content. Indeed, Hegel says, the method '*is not something distinct from its object and content; for it is the inwardness of the content -the dialectic which it possesses within itself- which is the mainspring of its advance.*'<sup>141</sup> Dialectic is the '*simple rhythm*'<sup>142</sup> which guarantees the systematic nature of science and the scientific nature of the system. It is the '*the soul of the structure*'<sup>143</sup>, the '*self-construing method*'<sup>144</sup>, and ultimately '*the course of the subject matter itself*'.<sup>145</sup>

How, then, we must ask, does dialectic work? The best and perhaps only satisfactory way to answer this question is to observe it in action. As an example, we shall turn to the beginning of logic and examine the first and best-known of Hegel's logical presentations. Here, as we have already seen, the first concept is

said to be 'being'. Now thought, as Hegel has explained, is supposed to produce itself, to proceed on its own- and similarly to the opening of the *Phenomenology*, we find the statement: '*When I think, I give up my subjective particularity, sink myself in the matter, let thought follow its own course; and I think badly whenever I add something of my own.*'<sup>146</sup> Philosophy, Hegel says, '*has to complete itself in a purely continuous course in which nothing extraneous is introduced.*'<sup>147</sup> And in the *Philosophy of Right*, he says specifically of dialectic that it

*is not an external activity of subjective thought, but the very soul of the content which puts forth its branches and fruits organically. This development of the Idea as the activity of its own rationality is something which thought -since it is subjective- merely observes without, for its part, adding anything extra*<sup>148</sup>.

Having considered these preliminary remarks we must now return to logic's beginning for Hegel and ask how the mere concept of 'being' can be capable of development on its own. How can a single concept be shown to contain the potential for movement *in itself*? Hegel's famous demonstration (described as 'breath-taking' by at least one commentator<sup>149</sup>) proceeds thus: If we consider '*Being, pure being, without any further determination*', we find that it is '*pure indeterminateness and emptiness.*'<sup>150</sup> Being, since it is the logically first category and therefore the most general and abstract, can be predicated of everything which can be said to be. Being is the one concept which applies to everything. What this means, however, is not that 'being' -as all-embracing- is the richest category, but rather the poorest. '*[I]nstead of absolute plenitude,*' Hegel says, '*we have absolute emptiness.*'<sup>151</sup> Being's absolute generality makes it impossible to distinguish the being of one thing from that of another, for to employ a concept which is equally applicable to everything is to say something which is at the same time *nothing*. For this reason Hegel concludes: '*Being- the indeterminate immediate- is, in fact, nothing*'<sup>152</sup>.

Thus we have arrived at the second category of logic. '*Nothing, pure nothing*', Hegel says, is '*complete emptiness, absence of all determination and content- undifferentiatedness in itself.*'<sup>153</sup> To speak thus of 'nothing', however, suggests that in addition to being opposed to 'being', it is at the same time *identical*. '*Nothing is therefore the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and thus altogether the same as pure being.*'<sup>154</sup>

We now have before us two concepts- being and nothing- which are said to be simultaneously opposed *and* equivalent to each other. In this unstable situation, being and nothing fluctuate and dissolve; each contradicts the other, while at the same time transforming into it- or rather *not* transforming into it [as many commentators erroneously suggest<sup>155</sup> even though Hegel himself expressly

states: '*being does not pass over, but has [already] passed over into nothing*'<sup>156</sup>. (See also NOTE below.)]

*What is the truth is neither being nor nothing, but that being... has passed over into nothing, and nothing into being. It is equally true, however... that they are absolutely distinct and yet that they are unseparated and inseparable and that each immediately vanishes in its opposite. Their truth, therefore, is this movement of the immediate vanishing of the one in the obliterating, a movement in which both are distinguished, but by a difference which has equally immediately resolved itself.*<sup>157</sup>

**NOTE:** As alluded to in the Introduction, it is an un-Hegelian distortion and therefore a mistake to discuss the above process in terms of 'synthesis'- as in the treacherously well-known formula 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis'- which seems universally to be supposed to epitomize the essence of Hegelian philosophy- even though never employed by Hegel himself. To the contrary, in fact, in *Science of Logic* Hegel remarks: '[B]ecause "synthesis" suggests more than anything else the sense of an external bringing together of mutually external things already there, the name synthesis -[and any notion of] "synthetic unity"- has rightly been dropped.'<sup>158</sup>

The idea behind logic's third category is that to become is, at the same time, to be and not to be. To say that something becomes is to say that it is something which *is*, but simultaneously *is not*, because it is becoming something else. '*The truth of being and nothing is accordingly the unity of the two: and this unity is becoming.*'<sup>159</sup> Becoming, then, represents the *truth* of both being and nothing taken together; for, when each is considered on its own- in its 'one-sidedness'- (as we saw above) this truth is absent (or at least does not constitute an embodiment of the whole truth). As being 'vanishes' into nothing, and nothing into being, so both of them vanish with what Hegel calls their 'sublation' (*Aufheben*) into becoming- which, Hegel says, is '*the vanishing of the vanishing itself*'<sup>160</sup>; it is their '*vanishedness*'<sup>161</sup>.

Hegel explicitly says that it is not 'being' but *having been* which is to be grasped as 'becoming'. What has already *been* is -as having been- a *becoming*; it must become what it already always was and what it is; and when it *has* become, it is no longer characterized by the immediacy of pure being with which we began, but is now determinate being, or simply *a* being. In this way we have completed the first of the system's circles; for we have started out from being and returned to it again at a higher, i.e. more determinate and concrete level.

On their own, being and nothing negate each other in a relationship of contradiction; in becoming, this situation can be seen to be reconciled. This is what Hegel means when he says that '*philosophy does not stop at the merely negative result of dialectic... When dialectic has the negative as its result, then - precisely as a result- this negative is at the same time positive, for it contains what it resulted from reconciled within itself, and cannot be without it.*'<sup>162</sup> (This, we will remember, is what Hegel regards as his advance on Kant.) In more detail, we

read:

*All that is necessary to achieve scientific progress... is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its particular content- in other words, that such a negation is... the negation of a specific subject-matter which resolves itself and consequently is specific negation and therefore the outcome essentially contains that from which it results... Because the result -the negation- is a specific negation it has a content. It is a fresh notion, but higher and richer by the negation... of the latter, [and it] therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite. It is in this way that the system of notions as such has to be formed<sup>163</sup>.*

Dialectic, then -being the discovery and reconciliation of contradiction within thought itself- is the *method* of Hegel's philosophy; but it is not a method in the ordinary sense of being merely a set of instructions externally applied to the subject-matter of one's choice. Dialectic, Hegel says, '*constitutes the moving soul of scientific progression and it is the principle through which alone immanent coherence and necessity enter into the content of science*'<sup>164</sup>. Since it is '*the course of the subject-matter itself*'<sup>165</sup> (rather than what we have seen Hegel call '*our own bright idea*'), dialectic does not result in anything which could be regarded as Hegel's own personal philosophical preference, but instead- in philosophy *as such*.

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**NOTE:** On this point, Hegel clearly opposes Fichte's idea [expressed in his *Science of Knowledge* (1794)] that 'what sort of philosophy one chooses depends... on what sort of man one is; for a philosophical system is not a dead piece of furniture which we can reject or accept as we wish; it is rather a thing animated by the soul of the person who holds it.'<sup>166</sup>

So dialectic cannot simply be regarded as philosophy's method; for, as we shall now see, it is not only the way to do philosophy [or, we could say (as Hegel himself does)<sup>167</sup>, the way philosophy does *itself*], but also the source of both philosophy's form and content.

*In the other sciences form and content fall apart, but in philosophy thought is itself its own object. Thinking here is preoccupied with itself and is self-determining; it realizes itself by determining itself out of its own resources, and its vocation is to produce itself and exist in that production. It is an inherent process; it is active and alive, has a variety of relations within itself, and is self-differentiating. Thought is simply the thinking which moves itself onwards.*<sup>168</sup>

If we return now to the being-nothing-becoming triad, we will recall that Hegel's claim is that thought, merely by thinking, provides philosophy with its beginning, i.e. the first thought. (Hegel goes to great lengths to show that this self-determination is in fact what occurs- that it is *thought itself*, rather than Hegel thinking which produces logic's starting-point.) Next, our reflection on 'being' activates dialectic- thus generating being's opposite: *nothing*, which also turns

out, as we saw, to be identical to it. The flux and tension of this unstable coupling is then relieved by logic's third category: *becoming*. Next arise determinate being (the becoming which '*has become*'<sup>169</sup>), quality ('determinateness which *is*'<sup>170</sup>), and so on.

*In the absolute method, the Concept maintains itself in its otherness -the universal in its particularization- in judgement and reality; at each stage of its further determination it raises the entire mass of its preceding content, and by its dialectical advance it not only does not lose anything or leave anything behind, but carries along with it all it has gained, and inwardly enriches and consolidates itself.<sup>171</sup>*

What we witness here, as we have seen, is not a mere linear progression, but instead a circular return. Simply put: the circle is the form which the content gives to itself through the operation of dialectic; and dialectic, Hegel says, is nothing more than '*the consciousness of the form of the inner self-movement of the content*'<sup>172</sup>.

In this self-determining circularity lies the key to 'absolute knowing', i.e. the 'infinity' of Hegel's philosophy. By 'infinite', however, Hegel does not mean 'the opposite of finitude' (i.e. the non- or 'un-finite')- which goes on forever without end, but instead infinity as a self-contained whole- not opposed to the finite, but holding the totality of finitude within itself. Hegel would say that the ordinary conception of infinity is really that of the un-finite: what is finite is limited- it exists up to a certain point, while infinity is unlimited and goes on forever. This un-finite, however, is not the 'true' infinite, but instead: false or 'bad' infinity, because, to Hegel it is not *infinite* at all. The un-finite is merely an endless process of continuously adding finite elements to each other. But in this way, finitude is never transcended and infinity achieved. The un-finite may thus be thought of as the straight line which extends forever in one direction- while the truly infinite line, as we have seen, is the one which returns to itself and forms a circle; it has neither beginning nor end, but is, at the same time, finite.

To call infinity 'finite' in this way means, on Hegel's terms, that it has a limit- which may, at first, seem paradoxical. But the contradiction vanishes when we realize that infinity's limit is only that which it gives to itself. Hegel explains:

*[F]inite' means whatever comes to an end, what is, but ceases to be where it connects with its other, and is thus restricted by it. Hence, the finite subsists in relation to its other- which is its negation, and presents itself as its limit. But thinking is at home with itself, it relates itself to itself, and is its own object. Insofar as my object is a thought, I am at home with myself. Thus the 'I' or thinking, is infinite because it is related in thinking to an object which is itself. An object as such is an other, something negative which confronts me. But if thinking thinks itself then it has an object which is at the same time not an object, i.e. an object which is reconciled with it, [or] 'ideal'. Thus thinking as such -thinking in its purity- does not have any restriction within itself.*

*Thinking is only finite insofar as it stays within restricted determinations which it holds to be ultimate. Infinite or 'speculative' thinking, on the contrary, makes determinations likewise, but, in determining -in limiting- it overcomes this defect again.<sup>173</sup>*

As we have seen, Hegel's philosophy forms a circle and, as such, constitutes 'infinite' or 'absolute' knowing. Hegel would claim that along the path of this circle we should find every determination of thought, nature, and mind- each in its proper place and relation to the others and the whole. Being a circle, it is both finite *and* infinite- it is limited and self-contained, but its limit is its own self. Hegel's system, then, is a finite body of thought, but as its scope encompass both thought and nature, nothing remains 'left over' to limit it from outside.

We have now seen how philosophy is genuinely 'scientific' in beginning without presuppositions and advancing in accordance with its own immanent dialectic. We have also seen how the path of this advance takes the shape of a circle and returns to itself as its own ground. And finally, we saw how this circular structure enables the philosopher to achieve an infinite point of view and thus accommodate the infinity of his proper subject-matter- the absolute. What remains now to do is to consider briefly precisely how dialectic functions, and the consequences of this upon knowing itself.

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The motor behind dialectic is, in a word, contradiction. The contradiction in things is revealed to us when we set out to comprehend the world through the cognitive faculty of 'the understanding'. Hegel says: '*In ordinary consciousness, we see nothing wrong with the finite determinations of thought; they are held to be valid without further question. But all our illusions arise from thinking and acting according to finite determinations.*'<sup>174</sup> Hegel's point is that the understanding is 'analytic', and, as such, goes about its business through the application of abstract, finite thought-determinations or 'categories' to the objects of the world. In this mode of cognition, he says, we take the categories '*to be valid on their own account, and capable of being predicates of what is true*'<sup>175</sup>, when they are, in fact, only '*restricted determinations of the understanding which express only a restriction.*'<sup>176</sup> For this reason, the result of the understanding's activity is merely what Hegel calls '*external reflection*'.<sup>177</sup>

The presupposition of the understanding's activity, Hegel says, is '*that of naive belief generally, namely, that thinking grasps what things are in-themselves, that things only are what they genuinely are when they are [captured] in thought.*'<sup>178</sup> The idea is that the understanding thinks it can know the truth of things simply

through determining them with its categories. But, Hegel warns, if '*we proceed by way of predication, the mind gets the feeling that the predicates cannot exhaust what they are attached to.*'<sup>179</sup>

*The understanding, in its pigeon-holing process, keeps the necessity and notion of the content to itself- all that constitutes the concreteness, the actuality, the living movement of the reality which it arranges. Or rather it does not keep this to itself since it does not recognize it; for if it had this insight it would surely give some sign of it. It does not even recognize the need for it, else it would drop schematizing, or at least realize that it can never hope to learn more in this fashion than one learns from a [mere] table of contents. A table of contents is all that it offers [while] the content itself it does not offer at all.*<sup>180</sup>

If, on the other hand, Hegel argues, we are to have '*[g]enuine cognition of an object,*'<sup>181</sup> we must '*allow the object to determine itself freely from within*'<sup>182</sup>. This cognitive attitude brings us back to '*speculative reason*'- Hegel's '*altogether new concept of scientific procedure*'<sup>183</sup>; for in determining itself, thinking is not limited by the '*products of the lifeless understanding and external cognition*'<sup>184</sup> '*whose restrictions count... as something fixed, that would not be negated again*':<sup>185</sup> '*In the case of finite things,*' Hegel says, '*it is certainly true that they must be determined by means of finite predicates, and here the understanding with its activity has its proper place. Being itself finite [however], the understanding is cognizant only of the nature of the finite.*'<sup>186</sup> But '*[t]he objects of reason cannot be determined through such finite predicates*'.<sup>187</sup>

Reason -or '*speculation*'- is *self-determining*, and thus -in transcending the finitude of the understanding- is truly infinite.

*When we are discussing thinking, we must distinguish finite thinking -the thinking of the mere understanding- from the infinite thinking of reason. Taken in isolation, just as they are immediately given, thought-determinations are finite determinations. But what is true is what is infinite within itself; it cannot be expressed and brought to consciousness through what is finite.*<sup>188</sup>

Hegel's problem with the understanding, then, is simply its finitude. Since '*what is true is what is infinite within itself*' -and therefore cannot be cognized through finite thinking- thought must rise to the occasion- that is, it must *itself* become infinite.

Hegel is aware, however, as he says, that '*the expression "infinite thinking" may appear quite astonishing. But, in fact, thinking is*', he claims, '*inwardly and essentially infinite*'.<sup>189</sup> - as we have already seen him explain- i.e. in terms of thought '*thinking (and therefore determining) itself*'.

What we have now seen is Hegel's explanation of why and how thought passes on from the finite realm of the understanding to the infinity of reason. But even though the understanding is unable to comprehend the absolute, it is, nonetheless, Hegel admits, '*indispensable*' and '*must unquestionably be conceded its right and merit*'.<sup>190</sup> '*[I]t scarcely requires special mention*', he continues, '*that*

*philosophy cannot do without the understanding. Philosophising requires, above all that each thought should be grasped in its full precision, and that nothing should remain vague and indeterminate.*<sup>191</sup>

[I]n theory, knowledge begins [with the understanding] by apprehending existing objects in their specific differences... Thought is here acting in its 'analytic' capacity, where its canon is identity, a simple reference of each attribute to itself... But... the understanding must not go too far... [it] cannot have the last word. On the contrary, it is finite- and more precisely it is such that when it is pushed to an extreme, it overturns into its opposite. It is the way of youth to toss about in abstractions, whereas the man of experience does not get caught up in the abstract either-or, but holds onto the concrete.<sup>192</sup>

This 'concrete' is provided by speculative reason. Speculation is, as Hegel says, the recognition that '*everything actual contains opposed determinations within it, and in consequence, the cognition and, more exactly, the comprehension of an object amounts precisely to our becoming conscious of it as a concrete unity of opposed determinations.*'<sup>193</sup> Thus, what speculative thinking reveals is 'dialectic' itself- which Hegel calls

*the principle of all motion, of all life, and of all activation in the actual world. Equally, dialectic is the soul of all genuinely scientific cognition. In our ordinary consciousness, not stopping at the abstract determinations of the understanding appears as simple fairness, in accordance with the proverb 'live and let live', so that one thing holds and the other does also. But a closer look shows that the finite is not restricted merely from the outside; rather, it overcomes itself by virtue of its own nature, and passes over, of itself, into its opposite.*<sup>194</sup>

Earlier, we saw that finitude was characterized by external negation- that is, to be finite entailed being 'negated' or opposed by something other. But here we see Hegel taking a further step: the finite is now seen to limit *itself* and 'pass over into its opposite'. This occurs, Hegel explains, because dialectic 'is concerned precisely with considering things [as they are] in and for themselves, so that the finitude of the one-sided determinations of the understanding becomes evident.'<sup>195</sup>

Hegel's point is that the rigidity of the understanding provides the starting point for thought's dialectical developments- while the second, negative, stage, that of the dialectic itself- the 'dialectical moment'- is achieved when reflection reveals that the understanding's categories, because fixed, finite, and 'one-sided', entail contradictions. In other words: in 'passing into their opposites', thought-determinations dialectically generate their own negations which seem now to stand separate and opposed to them. Of this process, Hegel says:

*Dialectic is usually considered as an external art, which arbitrarily produces a confusion and a mere semblance of contradictions in determinate concepts... According to its proper determinacy, however, dialectic is the genuine nature that properly belongs to the determinations of the understanding, to things, and to the finite in general... [It] is the immanent transcending, in which the one-sidedness and restrictedness of the determinations of the understanding displays itself as what it is, i.e., as their negation.*

*That is what everything finite is: its own sublation. Hence dialectic constitutes the moving soul of scientific progression, and it is the principle through which alone immanent coherence and necessity enter into the content of science, just as all genuine, non-external elevation above the finite is to be found in this principle.<sup>196</sup>*

If knowledge of the absolute is to be had, then, it cannot arise through the understanding. To attempt to characterize the infinite in terms of the fixed categories of the understanding is not to cognize it, but, instead, as we have seen, merely to impose a limit upon it. As Hegel says: indeed, ‘infinity is sharply contrasted with finitude, yet it is easy to see that if the two are set against one another, then infinity, which is nevertheless supposed to be the whole, appears as one side only, and is limited by the finite. But a limited infinity is [of course] itself only something finite.’<sup>197</sup> In this way, thought’s dialectic machinery is activated, and contradiction produced.

The result of dialectic’s ‘scientific progression’ and ‘elevation above the finite’ is, Hegel explains, the achievement of a third positive and therefore higher category: that of the ‘speculation’.

*The speculative or positively rational apprehends the unity of determinations in their opposition- the affirmative that is contained in their dissolution and in their transition.*

(1) *The dialectic has a positive result because it has determinate content, or because its result is truly not empty, abstract nothing but the negation of certain determinations which are contained in the result precisely because it is not an immediate nothing but a result.*

(2) *Hence this rational [result] -although it is something thought and something abstract- is at the same time something concrete, because it is not simple, formal unity, but a unity of distinct determinations. For this reason, philosophy does not deal with mere abstractions or formal thoughts at all, but only with concrete thoughts.<sup>198</sup>*

Thus, speculation not only reconciles the contradiction present at the level of dialectic, but also, in doing so, preserves the one-sided ‘half-truths’ which its components presented. Speculation, Hegel says, ‘contains the very antitheses at which the understanding stops short... resolved within itself; and precisely for this reason it proves to be concrete and a totality... [which] cannot be expressed in a one-sided proposition.’<sup>199</sup>

Hegel’s system of logic is the explicit demonstration of speculative philosophy- that is, of the overcoming of fixed thought determinations, and therefore the way to infinite knowledge. (This differs from the ‘absolute knowing’ of the *Phenomenology* in being the development of pure thought rather than that of the experience of consciousness.) Just as logic’s first triad -being-nothing-becoming- exemplifies the dialectic of speculation, as it were, in a nutshell, so does the overall structure of logic as a whole (only this time in a much larger nutshell): Being-Essence-Concept. This comprehensive triad, like its primary model, begins with Being (which itself begins with the pure being of the

first triad), and returns to it as well in the form of the absolute idea- a process which we shall briefly consider here before moving on to Chapter Two.

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As we have heard already, the first of logic's two 'books' -the 'objective' logic- is comprised of the doctrines of Being and Essence- the significance of which we have already encountered in a slightly different form in our consideration of the *Phenomenology*. Being represents thought's attempt to grasp the objective structure of what *is*- discovering within its thought of 'being' a multiplicity of inter-dependent *beings*: quality, quantity, measure, etc. Thought's ultimate discovery in this doctrine is that these individual beings and their relations in fact constitute the *essence* of Being, and thus, Hegel says, thought realizes that '*[t]he truth of Being is Essence.*'<sup>200</sup>

*Since knowing has for its goal knowledge of the true... it does not stop at the immediate and its determinations, but penetrates it on the supposition that at the back of this Being there is something else- something other than Being itself, that this background constitutes the truth of Being. This knowledge is a mediated knowing- for it is not found immediately with and in Essence, but starts from an other -from Being- and has a preliminary path to tread- that of going beyond Being, or rather penetrating into it. Not until knowing inwardizes, recollects itself out of immediate being does it, through this mediation, find Essence.*<sup>201</sup>

In this way, '*Being inwardizes itself through its own nature, and through this movement into itself, becomes Essence.*'<sup>202</sup> 'If, therefore, the absolute was at first defined as *Being*, now it is defined as *Essence*.'<sup>203</sup> Knowing now knows the absolute as 'Essence' because it realizes that the Being with which it began ' presupposes', Hegel says, '*an internalization, a recollection and movement which has purified immediate, determinant being to pure being. Being is accordingly determined as Essence- as a being in which everything determinate and finite is negated.*'<sup>204</sup> 'Essence', then, conceptually speaking, may be seen, Hegel says, as: '*a product- an artefact*'<sup>205</sup> because it is realized or created by the mind. It is also, Hegel says, that which '*stands between Being and the Concept; it constitutes their mean, and its movement is the transition from Being into the Concept.*'<sup>206</sup>

Hegel calls the 'doctrine of the Concept' the 'System of Subjective Logic'<sup>207</sup>- thereby alluding to its content- which in many ways conforms more to what we might expect to find in a logic text-book. Thus we find sub-sections concerning: induction, judgement, syllogism, and other standard logical forms. These, however, all occur under the heading: 'Subjectivity'; while under 'Objectivity', we find such unexpected terms as: 'chemism', 'teleology', 'life', and 'the absolute idea'. Of ordinary logic, Hegel remarks that '*a completely ready-made and solidified -one may say ossified- material is already to hand, and the problem is to render this*

*material fluid and to re-kindle the spontaneity of the Concept in such dead matter.'*<sup>208</sup>

*[T]he Concept is to be regarded in the first instance simply as the third Being and Essence - to them immediate and to reflection. Being and Essence are so far the moments of its becoming; but it is their foundation and truth as the identity in which they are submerged and contained. They are contained in it because it is their result<sup>209</sup>.*

Thus, Being and Essence, Hegel says, as 'objective' logic, constitute '*the genetic exposition of [the 'subjective' logic of] the Concept'*<sup>210</sup>. But the Concept, 'in its formal abstraction', Hegel continues,

*reveals itself as incomplete, and through its own immanent dialectic passes over into reality; but it does not fall back again onto a ready-made reality confronting it and take refuge in something which has shown itself to be the unessential element of appearance because, having looked around for something better, it has failed to find it; on the contrary, it produces the reality from its own resources.*<sup>211</sup>

Through 'Essence' we have already seen that the world as it appears to immediate consciousness is not reality as such, but merely appearance. Therefore, thought cannot simply 'take refuge' in what it takes to be *apparent reality* -which, with the first category of Essence, Hegel calls: 'illusory being'- but instead must find for itself what is true and 'absolute'. Thus, the doctrine of Essence can be seen as thought's elevation of itself both out of the 'one-sided' immediacy of Being (since what is true is not simply what is there), and also out of the equally one-sided view of Essence that what is true is what is *not* there -that is, what 'stands behind' appearances and constitutes their essence. Essence, then, is the *becoming* of the Concept- which, in turn, Hegel says, is

*the unity of Being and Essence. Essence is *first negation* of being- which has thereby become illusory being; the Concept is *the second negation*, or the negation of this negation, and is therefore being once more- but being that has been restored as the infinite mediation and negativity of being within itself.*<sup>212</sup>

Being and Essence, however are no longer to be thought of as Being and Essence; nor, Hegel says, 'are they merely in a [simple] unity'<sup>213</sup>; for now, he continues, '*the Concept does not differentiate itself into these determinations*'<sup>214</sup>. '*[T]he different moments of the Concept are themselves the whole Concept*'<sup>215</sup>. '*This, now, is the very concept of the Concept*'<sup>216</sup>, Hegel says, adding, however, that this 'concept of the Concept' 'is as yet *only* its concept; or this concept is itself *only* the Concept [itself].'<sup>217</sup> What Hegel is trying to prepare us for is the Concept not as a mere concept, but as 'the Idea'. The Concept as such, he says '*is not yet complete, but must rise to the Idea which alone is the unity of the Concept and reality.*'<sup>218</sup>

So at first the Concept -still as Concept and not yet Idea- is, as Hegel says, '*only in itself or implicitly the truth... it is only something inner*'<sup>219</sup>. For this reason, the Concept is merely '*something posited or subjective*'<sup>220</sup> - which reminds us that -like logic itself as a whole- the doctrine of the Concept has two parts: subjective

and objective. The contents of the 'subjective' part of 'subjective logic', then, conform to our ordinary expectations of logic, and fall under the three headings of: 'Concept', 'Judgement', and 'Syllogism'. Constituting the structure of thought, the '*inner or subjective essence*' of these forms, Hegel says, '*sets them dialectically in movement- with the result that their separateness vanishes, and with it, the separation of the Concept from the object; and there emerges as their truth the totality which is the objective Concept.*'<sup>221</sup> '*Through its necessary, progressive determination, the formal Concept [now "objective"] makes itself its subject-matter, and in this way is rid of the relation of subjectivity and externality to the object [and is thus free].*'<sup>222</sup>

*But this freedom is still only an immediate -[that is] not yet a negative- freedom. As one with the object, the Concept is submerged in it; its distinct moments are objective existences in which it is itself again only thinner. As the soul of objective reality, it must give itself the form of subjectivity which, as formal ['subjective'] Concept, belonged to it immediately; thusn the form of the free Concept -a form which, in objectivity it still lacked- it opposes itself to that objectivity, and, in so doing, makes the identity with it which, as objective Concept, it possesses... as a posited identity.*<sup>223</sup>

In other words, the Concept must now show itself to be related to something else- that is, to the 'formal', 'subjective' Concept it was originally- as subject to object now 'posited' as an identity. In this 'consummation', as Hegel calls it,

*in which it [i.e. the Concept] has the form of freedom, even in its objectivity- the adequate Concept is the Idea. Reason, which is the sphere of the Idea, is the self-revealed truth in which the Concept possesses the realization that is wholly adequate to it, and is free inasmuch as it cognizes this its objective world in its subjectivity, and its subjectivity in its objective world.*<sup>224</sup>

This is what Hegel means when he says that '*the Idea is the unity of the Concept and objectivity*'<sup>225</sup>. He now adds to this, however, that the Idea '*must not be regarded merely as a goal to which we have to approximate, but which [at the same time] itself always remains a kind of beyond; on the contrary, we must recognize that everything actual is only in so far as it possesses the Idea and expresses it.*'<sup>226</sup>

*Now the Idea has shown itself to be the Concept liberated again into its subjectivity from the immediacy in which it is submerged in the object; to be the Concept which distinguishes itself from its objectivity- which, however, is no less determined by it and possesses its substantiality only in that Concept.*<sup>227</sup>

This final sphere of logic -'The Idea'- has three chapters: 'Life', 'The Idea of Cognition', and 'The Absolute Idea'. 'Life', Hegel admits, '*is concerned with a subject-matter so concrete and, if you will, so real, that with it we may seem to have over-stepped the domain of logic*'<sup>228</sup>; but, he explains, it is certainly no dead, nor even merely organic object in which the Concept can *know* itself to be the Concept, and thereby constitute the Idea; first there must be life: '*the immediate Idea*'<sup>229</sup>, and

since, as Hegel says, '*the truth as such exists essentially in cognition*'<sup>230</sup>, that life must not only be conscious, but also capable of thought- bringing us to the second chapter on cognition. '*Thinking, mind, self-consciousness- [these] are [the] determinations of the Idea where it has itself for [its] object*'<sup>231</sup> '*The Concept, when it has developed into a concrete existence that is itself free, is none other than the I or pure self-consciousness.*'<sup>232</sup> In other words: the 'I' is that which unifies thought and being- it is the thought which *is* being, and the being which is thought.

Logic, as we know,

*exhibits itself as a circle returning upon itself- the end being wound back into the beginning -the simple ground- by the mediation; this circle is moreover a circle of circles- for each individual member, as ensouled by the method, is reflected into itself so that in returning into the beginning it is, at the same time, the beginning of a new member.*<sup>233</sup>

Logic ends with the absolute idea, or the Idea which knows itself- which, as we have seen, is the self itself. What the self knows is what is there confronting it, or the world- which is the subject of the next sphere, the philosophy of nature- with which the self is 'reconciled' through the historical development of self-consciousness in the third part of Hegel's system: the philosophy of mind. Thus, Hegel says, logic,

*in the absolute idea, has withdrawn into that same simple unity which its beginning is; the pure immediacy of being in which, at first, every determination appears to be extinguished or removed by abstraction is the Idea that has reached through mediation - that is, through the sublation of mediation- a likeness correspondent to itself.*<sup>234</sup>

At the end of logic in the *Encyclopædia*, Hegel says:

*When one speaks of the absolute idea, one can assume that here the truth finally comes out, and that everything is brought forth. One can make all sorts of empty declarations about the absolute idea, [but] its true content, however, is none other than the entire system whose development we have observed up to this point.*<sup>235</sup>

So now at the end we may say that in the absolute idea we have preserved all of logic as it has developed and unfolded itself up to this final comprehensive point. We have also seen how this result is at the same time a return to its beginning in pure being (though now fully comprehended). What remains to indicate here is how in addition, the absolute idea, '*as the final result, becomes also the beginning of another sphere and science .*'<sup>236</sup> This is where the Idea, Hegel says, '*resolves to let the moment of its particularity... as its reflected image, go forth freely as nature.*'<sup>237</sup> At this point, we have left the pure thought of logic behind for the externality of space and time.

*The Idea, namely, in positing itself as the absoluteness of the pure Concept and its reality, and thus contracting itself into the immediacy being [i.e. returning to that with which logic began], is the totality in this form-nature. But this determination has not issued from a process of becoming nor is it transition, as when the*

*subjective Concept, in its totality, becomes objectivity*<sup>238</sup>.

In this passage we can see (as we saw above with 'becoming' and 'synthesis') that another of the greatest problems with Hegel's philosophy - logic's 'transition' into nature- is in reality a problem only for those who (for whatever reason) are more interested in criticizing Hegel than taking the time to read him. Following what Hegel actually says we can see clearly that it is anything *but* a 'transition' of thought into nature which occurs at the end of logic. '*The passage [of thought into nature] is to be understood here rather in this manner: that the Idea freely releases itself in its absolute self assurance and inner poise.*'<sup>239</sup> (The Idea, we will remember, is, Hegel says, '*none other than the I or pure self-consciousness*'- meaning that it is not some disembodied thought or mind which somehow becomes or turns into nature, but instead, it is our *own* thought which turns outward to consider philosophically the structure of the world we live in and interact with. The 'shift', in other words, is in our thinking- that is, from the thinking about thought which is the subject of logic, to thinking about nature.) In this '*resolve of the pure Idea to determine itself as external Idea*', Hegel says,

*it thereby only posits for itself the mediation [which is nature itself] of which the Concept ascends as a free existence that has withdrawn into itself from externality, that completes its self-liberation in the science of mind and which finds the supreme concept of itself in the science of logic as the self-comprehending pure Concept.*<sup>240</sup>

In this brief statement, Hegel has expressed the complete meaning of his system as a 'circle of circles'- that is, how nature mediates the logical development of pure thought and historical unfolding of spirit- to which we now turn as it manifests itself in art and its history.

# I.2. 'BEAUTY BORN OF THE SPIRIT'

## The Significance of Hegel's Aesthetics

### INTRODUCTION

At the opening of his lectures on æsthetics -in a section headed: 'The Idea of Artistic Beauty'- Hegel remarks that art is '*a specific way of expressing and representing the true, and therefore stands open throughout in every respect to conceptual thinking- so long as that thinking is actually equipped with the power of the Concept*'<sup>1</sup>. In this remark we have a statement of both the core of Hegel's æsthetics and its most unique aspect- which is Hegel's interest in art not merely as a source of pleasure, but instead as a bearer of ideas. It is, of course, not novel to consider art as 'expressive' -i.e. of moral, religious, historical, and other subject-matters- but what is thus expressed remains quite independent of the sensuous and imaginative materials of art themselves. Art's relation to ideas has, in other words, been traditionally conceived of as a *container* rather than as genuinely constitutive of them. Hegel's advance is to look philosophically (i.e. in terms of the Concept) at the meaning of art *itself*- that is, both in conceptual terms of the needs it fulfils in man individually, and how specifically it achieves these practically in history. In part one, then, we shall consider the conditions of human experience which lead to the creation of art as a social and cultural practice. In a brief part two our subject is art's 'ideality' and freedom, and part three considers the free production of art in action.

### PART ONE

In his introductory lecture to æsthetics Hegel speaks of a contradiction inherent in human being itself which he calls '*the fixed opposition between the will in its spiritual universality and the will in its sensuous natural particularity*'<sup>2</sup>. This is Hegel's characterization of the conflict between, on the one hand, law and duty, and on the other, what he calls: '*the sensuous impulses, selfish interests, passions, and everything grouped together under the names of feeling and emotion*'<sup>3</sup>. These dual aspects of our being are engaged in what Hegel calls '*a reciprocal battle against one another*'<sup>4</sup>; they constitute '*the opposition of universal and particular*'<sup>5</sup> which '*emerges in a thorough-going cleavage and opposition between what is absolute and what is external reality and existence*'.<sup>6</sup>

In the mind, Hegel explains, this opposition

*appears as a contrast between the sensuous and the spiritual in man, as the battle of spirit against flesh... of the cold command against particular interest, warmth of heart, sensuous inclinations and impulses... as the harsh opposition between inner freedom and the necessity of external nature, [and] further as the contradiction between the dead, inherently empty Concept and the full concreteness of life, between theory or subjective thinking and objective existence and experience.<sup>4</sup>*

These dramatic oppositions, Hegel says, 'have not at all been invented by the subtlety of reflection or the pedantry of philosophy... [but] have always preoccupied and troubled human consciousness '<sup>5</sup>. ('[I]t is modern culture', he adds, 'which has first worked them out most sharply and driven them up to the peak of harshest contradiction.'<sup>6</sup>) 'Spiritual culture- the modern intellect,' he says, ' produces this opposition in man which makes him into an amphibious creature because now he has to live in two worlds which contradict each other .' Zoologically speaking, 'amphibiousness' refers to creatures which are at home both on land and in the water, while etymologically it means: 'leading a double life'. It is this second sense of the word which seems to capture Hegel's meaning when we consider his further remarks that

*consciousness wanders about in this [amphibious] contradiction and, driven from one side to the other, cannot find satisfaction for itself in either the one or the other; for on the one side we see man imprisoned in the common world of reality and earthly temporality, borne down by need and poverty, hard pressed by nature, enmeshed in matter, sensuous ends and their enjoyment, mastered and carried away by natural impulses and passions. On the other side he lifts himself to eternal ideas, to a world of thought and freedom, gives to himself -as will- universal laws and prescriptions, strips the world of its enlivened flowering reality and dissolves it into abstractions since the mind now upholds its right and dignity only by mishandling nature and denying its right, and so retaliates on nature the distress and violence which it has suffered from it itself.<sup>8</sup>*

In brief, Hegel's point is that as 'amphibious' -that is, existing both as a spiritual being and a sensuous creature in the world- man is simultaneously 'enmeshed in matter' and floating in a 'world of thought and freedom'. In the first he is in a wholly 'natural' state and, as such, completely unfree, i.e. determined by natural laws, forces, desires, and so on; while in the second he is 'radically free' (and to that extent 'un-natural'). On his thinking side man 'does violence' to his other- to nature which he thus 'mishandles'- stripping it with his thoughts and analyses of its 'enlivened flowering reality' (i.e. as we saw in the thinking of the understanding in chapter one).

What Hegel calls 'modern culture' not only recognizes this situation as a 'discordance in life and consciousness '<sup>9</sup>, but also demands that such a contradiction be resolved. To enact this resolution, Hegel says,

*the intellect cannot [simply] cut itself free from the rigidity of these oppositions... If general culture has run into such a contradiction it becomes the task of philosophy to supersede the oppositions, i.e. to show that neither the one alternative in its abstraction, nor the other in like one-sidedness possesses truth, but that they are both self-dissolving- that truth lies only in the reconciliation and mediation of both... Philosophy... shows*

*how truth is just the dissolving of opposition and, at that, not as may be supposed that the opposition and its two sides do not exist at all, but that they exist reconciled.<sup>10</sup>*

We have encountered this idea of the reconciling action of philosophy in chapter one, but what interests us now is art's role in this project of emancipation. Art, in fact, turns out to be for Hegel '*one of the means which dissolve and reduce to unity the above-mentioned opposition and contradiction between the abstractly self-concentrated mind and nature- both the nature of external phenomena and that of inner subjective feeling and emotion.*'<sup>11</sup> Art's role, however, is not, Hegel stresses, one of utility- in which case '*the work of art would have validity only as a useful tool for realizing this end which is independently valid on its own account outside the sphere of art.*'<sup>12</sup> Against this utilitarian idea Hegel says: '*we must maintain that art's vocation is to unveil the truth in the form of sensuous artistic configuration, to set forth the reconciled opposition just mentioned, and thus to have its end and aim in itself [alone] in this very setting forth and unveiling.*'<sup>13</sup>

As we commence our philosophical investigation of this æsthetic 'unveiling of truth' we should keep in mind Hegel's statement that '*only now, when philosophy has thoroughly comprehended how to overcome this opposition has it grasped its own essence and therefore, at the same time, the essence of nature and art.*'<sup>14</sup> What he is alluding to here is a point we made in the Introduction- namely that it is only from the comprehensive viewpoint of philosophy -'absolute knowing'- that we are able to reflect comprehensively upon art (i.e. in a way in which art, he believes, cannot reflect upon philosophy). The recent '*reawakening of philosophy*', Hegel says (presumably referring to his own advances in phenomenology and logic), has also been '*the reawakening of the science of art; indeed it is this reawakening alone which æsthetics proper as a science really has to thank for its genuine origin, and art [itself] for its higher [i.e. philosophical] estimation.*'<sup>15</sup> It is philosophy, in other words, or philosophical consideration (in the form of a 'science of art') which is able to reveal (i.e. 'unveil') art's true meaning and significance; and it is this science which shall be our subject here.

The first thing Hegel says about æsthetics is how hard it is to say what æsthetics really is. The word 'æsthetics' itself, he points out, is misleading since its etymology suggests a study of mere feeling or sensation (from the Greek *aisthánethai*: to feel). The word 'kallistics' (from *kalos*: good or beautiful), he says, is perhaps more to the point, but remains inadequate because of its application to beauty in general rather than specifically to art. Hegel's conclusion is that the best strategy is simply to name our study 'the philosophy of fine art' and set out philosophically to narrow in on a definition of what art itself is.

Art exists within what Hegel calls '*the spacious realm of the beautiful*'<sup>16</sup>- a

domain, however, which, for the purposes of the present study, must be strictly limited. By saying that we are not concerned simply with beauty in general but specifically with 'the beauty of art', Hegel says, '*we at once exclude the beauty of nature*'<sup>17</sup>. This distinction is necessary because, he continues, '*the beauty of art is higher than nature. The beauty of art is beauty born of the spirit and born again, and the higher the spirit and its productions stand above nature and its phenomena, the higher too is the beauty of art above that of nature.*'<sup>18</sup> Hegel's point is that while we may see art and nature as similarly beautiful, we clearly cannot regard nature as coming into existence as a product of the human spirit and expressive of the truths thereof.

To say that art is 'higher', however, Hegel admits,

*is a quite vague expression which describes natural and artistic beauty as still standing side by side in the space of imagination and differing only quantitatively, and therefore externally; but what is higher about the spirit and its artistic beauty is not something merely relative in comparison with nature; on the contrary, spirit alone is truly comprehending everything in itself so that everything beautiful is truly beautiful only as sharing in this higher sphere and generated by it.*<sup>19</sup>

In other words: Hegel does not mean to say that art and nature are equally beautiful with the proviso that art is somehow *more* beautiful; art is instead beautiful in an altogether *different* way. Art's beauty arises from its having not only an external appearance -as nature does- but also an interior meaning which is expressed through this shape- which nature does not have . In short, art *expresses* something of 'spirit'; it is a representation of the inner and historical being of man himself. In fact, Hegel says, far from being a mere '*luxury of the spirit*'<sup>20</sup> or '*purely subjective pleasure*'<sup>21</sup>, the production of art constitutes a profoundly serious and significant business in which the highest values and aspirations of mankind are expressed and preserved. This is why Hegel says:

*art fulfils its supreme task only when it has placed itself in the same sphere as religion and philosophy, and when it is simply a[nother] way of bringing to our minds and expressing the divine- the deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of spirit. In their works of art the nations have deposited their richest inner intuitions and ideas... Art shares this vocation with religion and philosophy, but in a special way- namely by displaying even the highest [reality] sensuously- bringing it thereby nearer to the senses, to feeling, and to nature's mode of appearance.*<sup>22</sup>

In logical terms we have seen how the Idea begins life as the Concept which gradually sheds its one-sidedness and abstraction through the dialectical course of logic in order, in the end, to reveal itself in the concrete and self-conscious form the absolute idea. Historically speaking, art's specific and unique role in this drama comes just as it starts to unfold. Its contribution, however, is not, of course, conceptual as we saw with logic in chapter one, but *aesthetic*- that is, at the direct level of sense and experience. '*What is thus displayed*', Hegel says,

*is the depth of a supra-sensuous world which thought pierces and sets up at first as a beyond [as we saw in the Phenomenology] in contrast with immediate consciousness and present feeling; it is the freedom of intellectual reflection which rescues itself from the here and now- called sensuous reality and finitude. But this breach, to which the mind proceeds, it is also able to heal. It generates out of itself works of fine art as the first reconciling middle term between pure thought and what is merely external, sensuous, and transient- between nature and finite reality, and the infinite freedom of conceptual thinking.<sup>23</sup>*

What Hegel is saying is that when art engages in the same activity as religion and philosophy -i.e. in attempting to embody an adequate picture of what is ultimately true or 'absolute'- what it portrays is a 'beyond' or something 'behind' the reality of our ordinary experience, from which we are thus cut off. In other words, not only do we regard nature as *our* other -as something foreign and opposed to us- but we also think of nature itself as having its *own* other as something foreign and opposed to *it*. When personified -i.e. represented in the image of human agency- this conception of sustaining transcendental otherness represents the origin of the gods- whose creation and elaboration constitute art's business. As such an enterprise art is thus the first reconciling 'middle term' between the extremes of the opposition between ourselves and the appearance of otherness- demonstrating how, as he says, it is the mind itself which both opens this rift and is able to close it again. To both these worlds -the external world of nature and the inner world of sense, Hegel says,

*we are accustomed to ascribe the value and name of actuality, reality, and truth. But it is precisely this whole sphere of the empirical inner and outer world which is not the world of genuine actuality; on the contrary, we must call it... a pure appearance and a harsher deception.<sup>24</sup>*

Hegel's novel point is that it is not art which is deceptive, as many people (perhaps most famously Plato) claim, but instead human experience itself. The world appears as an other- as separate and beyond, and the absolute -as the actual truth or ground of that world- appears removed even further. Art's task, as revealed in Hegel's aesthetics, is to mediate these seemingly disparate realms and bring them closer together, and ultimately to unity.

*Art liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad transitory world and gives them a higher actuality born of the spirit. Thus, far from being mere pure appearance, a higher reality and truer existence is to be ascribed to the phenomena of art in comparison with ordinary reality.<sup>25</sup>*

Art, of course, is based on appearance, but it has an advantage over the 'pure appearance' of our ordinary experience in that art, at least, is present to us as an appearance, while reality -in its appearance as other and immutable- is 'bad and transitory'. In its presentation of reality as an image art begins to reveal reality's 'true content' and therefore our true relation to it. This is why Hegel

says that

*art on its sensuous side deliberately produces only a shadow-world of shapes, sounds, and sights... [which] appear in art not merely for the sake of themselves... but with the aim... of affording satisfaction to higher spiritual interests since they have the power to call forth from all the depths of consciousness a sound and an echo in the mind. In this way, the sensuous aspect of art spiritualized since spirit appears in art as made sensuous.*<sup>26</sup>

Hegel elaborates this point further, saying:

*[T]he pure appearance of art has the advantage that it points through and beyond itself and itself hints at something spiritual of which it is to give us an idea, whereas immediate appearance does not present itself as deceptive, but rather as the real and the true, although the truth is in fact contaminated and concealed by the immediacy of sense. The hard shell of nature and the ordinary world make it more difficult for the mind to penetrate through them to the Idea than works of art do.*<sup>27</sup>

Art, then, leads us in this unveiling and disclosure closer to the truth about the world and ourselves and the relation between the two. This truth, however -as the Idea- is, as we know, the proper content of philosophy rather than art or religion; but man as such cannot remain unreflectively sunk in nature, for then he is not truly man (i.e. a being *distinct* from nature). In the *Philosophy of Religion* Hegel says: '*Human beings are truly human through consciousness- by virtue of the fact that they think*'<sup>28</sup>. In the philosophy of art he says further:

*The mind cannot, in the finitude of existence and its restrictedness and external necessity, find over again the immediate vision and enjoyment of its true freedom, and it is compelled to satisfy the need for this freedom, therefore, on other and higher ground. This ground is art, and art's actuality is the ideal.*<sup>29</sup>

'The ideal' we shall consider in more detail in part two below, but what is significant here is Hegel's talk of the 'need' for art- i.e. his rejection of the conventional idea of art as a luxury and superfluity. '*[I]t is from the deficiencies of immediate reality*', he says, '*that the necessity of the beauty of art is derived.*'<sup>30</sup> When art is successful, he continues, it is because '*it has won an external appearance through which the poverty of nature and prose no longer peeps; it has won an existence worthy of the truth- an existence which... stands there in free independence since it has its vocation in itself*'<sup>31</sup>. In these remarks we have an indication of art's genuine significance for Hegel- that is, of the reason for man's *need* of art and its relation to truth. Hegel's point is that art *plays a part* in the development and presentation of truth itself- that '*the work of art -in which thought expresses itself- belongs to the sphere of conceptual thinking, and the mind -by subjecting it to philosophic treatment- is thereby merely satisfying the need of spirit's inmost nature.*'<sup>32</sup> In short, Hegel says, art's '*true task is to bring the highest interests of spirit to our minds.*'<sup>33</sup>

*The universal and absolute need from which art... springs has its origin in the fact that*

*man is a thinking consciousness, i.e. that man draws out of himself and puts before himself what he is and whatever else is. Things in nature are ~~only~~ immediate and single, while man, as spirit, duplicates himself, in that (i) he is as things in nature are, but (ii) he is just as much for himself; he sees himself, represents himself to himself, thinks, and only on the strength of this active placing of himself before himself is he spirit.*<sup>34</sup>

Hegel's point is that art has something to do with man's existence as such- i.e. that art arises out of human *being* itself. As he says, part of what man is -as a thinking consciousness- is to 'put before himself'- to 'represent' what he and his environment are. This recognition and expression by man of his relation to the world is what lifts him above nature to mind and spirit, and, indeed, makes him *human*. Hegel says man attains this consciousness in a two-fold way:

*first, theoretically, in so far as he must inwardly bring himself into his own consciousness... and in general he must see himself, represent himself to himself, fix before himself what thinking finds as his essence, and recognize himself alone alike in what is summoned out of himself and in what is accepted from without. Secondly, man brings himself before himself by practical activity, since he has the impulse, in whatever is directly given to him, in what is present to him externally, to produce himself, and therein equally to recognize himself. This aim he achieves by altering external things whereon he impresses the seal of his inner being, and in which he now finds again his own characteristics. Man does this in order, as a free agent, to strip the world of its inflexible foreignness and to enjoy in the shape of things only an external realization of himself.*<sup>35</sup>

As a spiritual creature, then, man does not simply *exist* in the world, but *lives* in it and must *express* this life- both to himself and to others, and both theoretically and practically, internally and externally- i.e. in both thought and action. '*The mind does not stop at the mere apprehension of the external world by sight and hearing; it makes it into an object for its inner being which then is itself driven once again in the form of sensuousness to realize itself in things*'<sup>36</sup>. This is the need which Hegel recognizes as present in all human activity and especially in art. The art-product, he says, '*is a purely human work- made by human hands according to human insight.*'<sup>37</sup> The absolute, '*as it discloses itself in the work of art,*' he continues, '*has been generated out of the mind, and thus has won a suitable thoroughfare for its existence [in art], whereas just being there in the unconscious sensuousness of nature is not a mode of appearance appropriate to the divine.*'<sup>38</sup>

As we discussed in chapter one, it is through our encounter and interaction with nature that our thought is reflected back upon ourselves- thought whose first object is nature, but which then gradually rises to consciousness of itself and its true relation to this other. In order to accomplish this goal, as Hegel says in the *Philosophy of Nature*, thought must '*break the rind of externality*'<sup>39</sup>; it has '*to destroy itself and break through this husk of immediate sensuous existence*'<sup>40</sup>. Thinking (above mere existing and sensing) is man's true vocation; it is what makes humanity human, and, as we shall see, it is that with which man

liberates himself from his unfree existence in nature. '*[M]an appears on the scene as the antithesis of nature*', Hegel says. '*He is the being who raises himself up into a second world. The general consciousness of man includes two distinct provinces: that of nature and that of mind. The province of mind is created by man himself*'<sup>41</sup>.

Early in human history, Hegel says, '*nature stands over against mind... as a restricting otherness. The mind, as subjective... remains related to this otherness as to an object merely found and it can form only the opposite of nature.*'<sup>42</sup> Hegel's point is that the un- or pre-philosophical mind is not aware of nature's (and therefore its own) truth- the truth, as we saw in chapter one, that self and other are not externally related or opposed, but inherently linked.

In an interesting (almost psycho-analytic) moment, Hegel characterize this early stage of (false) consciousness (i.e. the idea that thought and nature are opposed) as a 'restriction in knowing'. He says

*We get the confusing spectacle of skills, passions, aims, views, and talents [all] running after and flying away from one another- working for and against one another... while their willing and striving, their opining and thinking are advanced or deranged by an intermixture of the greatest diversity of sorts and chance. This is the standpoint of the mind which is purely finite, temporal, contradictory, and therefore transient, unsatisfied, and unblessed; for the satisfactions afforded in this sphere are themselves -in their finite shape- always still restricted and curtailed, relative and isolated'*<sup>43</sup>

It is due to the experience of this finitude and transitoriness of both thought and action, Hegel says, that '*discernment, consciousness, willing, and thinking lift themselves above them and seek and find their true universality, unity, and satisfaction elsewhere- in the infinite and the true.*'<sup>44</sup> This process (which we considered phenomenologically and conceptually in chapter one) is what Hegel here characterizes as: '*the true unveiling of what the world of appearance is in its essential nature*'<sup>45</sup>- with the result that '*the mind apprehends finitude itself as its own negative and thereby wins its infinity. This truth of finite mind is absolute mind.*'<sup>46</sup> The peculiarly Hegelian significance of these statements is that when human consciousness realizes the truth of finite otherness -i.e. that it is not just *an* other, but its *own* other to which it is related and linked with- the mind thus becomes 'infinite' (which does not mean 'limitless', of course, but instead 'un-limited'- that is, not limited by anything external to itself.) This is what Hegel calls '*the truth of the finite mind*'- which is absolute knowing itself.

Before this unity becomes explicit, however, that is, known philosophically and thus 'actualized' as 'absolute mind', the absolute must first become the object of thought. Hegel makes this point by saying that '*the mind reaches the stage of consciousness and distinguishes itself within itself as knowing and, over against this... the object of knowledge.*'<sup>47</sup> From this standpoint at which Hegel says the mind '*knows of the absolute as an infinite object standing over*

*against it - the mind is therefore characterized as finite*<sup>48</sup>. '[L]ooked at in a higher, speculative way', he continues, 'it is absolute mind itself which, in order explicitly to have knowledge of itself, makes distinctions within itself and thereby establishes the finitude of the mind'<sup>49</sup>. This point -at which the mind explicitly identifies itself as something transient and distinct from what it takes to be infinite and absolute is, Hegel says, '*the point at which we have to begin in the philosophy of art- for the beauty of art is neither the Idea as conceived in logic (i.e. absolute thought as it is developed in the pure element of thinking), nor yet, on the other hand [is it] the Idea as it appears in nature; on the contrary, it belongs to the sphere of mind... The realm of fine art is the realm of absolute mind.*'<sup>50</sup> Art is an aspect of 'absolute mind' because it is an activity in which human thought explicitly takes what is absolute as its object. This is why Hegel speaks of how the Idea as mind (that is, individual, human minds) must '*free itself from the finitude of mind again to become mind in its eternity and truth*'<sup>51</sup>- i.e. 'spirit'. (He says 'again' because, as we have seen, just for man to be a finite mind, thought itself has had to divide itself into self and other, and is therefore largely determined by that other.) This 'absolute' content is the reason Hegel speaks of '*art in its highest and true dignity*' as belonging to '*the same province as religion and philosophy*'.<sup>52</sup>

*In all spheres of absolute mind the [finite] mind liberates itself from the cramping barriers of its existence in externality by opening for itself a way out of the contingent affairs of its worldly existence and the finite content of its aims and interests there into the consideration and completion of its being in and for itself.*<sup>53</sup>

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NOTE: In considering the 'need for art' and its appearance amongst religion and philosophy in the domain of absolute spirit, Hegel says a 'question is raised about the inner necessity of such a need in connection with the other realms of life and the world. Why should there be 'an interest in beauty and a spiritual satisfaction in artistic creations'<sup>55</sup>?

*Initially we find these spheres simply present as such, but, according to the demands of science [i.e. philosophy] the matter at issue is insight into their essential inner connection and their reciprocal necessity; for they do not stand only, as might be supposed, in a relation of mere utility to one another [e.g. as in cases where art is used to illustrate religious narratives and ideas]; on the contrary, they compliment one another because in one sphere there are higher modes of activity than there are in an other. Consequently the subordinate one presses on above itself and now, by the deeper satisfaction of wider-ranging interests, what in an earlier province can find no termination is supplemented. This alone provides the necessity of an inner connection.*<sup>56</sup>

We shall return to this idea of hierarchy -especially the notion of philosophy's superiority over art- in Part Three, leaving the issue to rest here with the remark that art and philosophy are both 'absolute', only philosophy is more so- which does not make logical sense, but means that although art and philosophy have the same content -the absolute-art is not, according to Hegel, as good at expressing it.

What we have seen up to this point is Hegel's thoughts on the importance -indeed the necessity- of art. Our task now is to investigate how art reaches this significant standing in the world of human history.

We may begin this project by noting that man, in his spiritual capacity,

Hegel says, '*negates the externality of nature, assimilates nature, and so idealizes it.*'<sup>57</sup> Here, with nature's negation, and especially its 'idealization', we find the practical origins of art; for nature -as the opposite or other of the self- must be 'negated' as other. This 'absolute negativity' or 'infinite negation', as Hegel calls it, is not a 'natural' process, but artificial (or, more specifically, 'artifactual'); it is the idealization of nature through artifice, and thus constitutes the true origin of 'spirit' in the world.

The mind, Hegel says, '*does not stop at the mere apprehension of the external world by sight and hearing; it makes it into an object for its inner being which then is itself driven -once again in the form of sensuousness- to realize itself in things*'<sup>58</sup>. These things are artifacts, or, more to the point- works of art. Art, Hegel explains, '*while remaining within the sensuous sphere, at the same time liberates man from the power of sensuousness.*'<sup>59</sup> An artwork exists in the world like a natural object, but with the difference that, unlike nature it embodies a spiritual content which it actually *makes present* to the senses. As a result, our encounter with art -while grounded in the sensuous- is, at the same time, an elevation above sensuousness itself- i.e. from nature to spirit. In this way, Hegel says, '*the mind liberates itself from the cramping barriers of its existence in externality by opening for itself a way out of the contingent affairs of its worldly existence*'<sup>60</sup>. Art, then, is a 'way out' of man's 'unspiritual' natural life- a way out which man creates for himself in the form of a new spiritual world.

Through 'human activity and skillfulness', Hegel explains,

*man converts external things to his own use and puts himself in correspondence with them as a result of the satisfaction which he has thus acquired... This sphere of need and satisfaction is one of absolutely infinite variety, but natural things are still infinitely more many-sided and acquire a greater simplicity only because man introduces into them his spiritual characteristics and impregnates the external world with his will. Thereby he humanizes his environment by showing how it is capable of satisfying him and how it cannot preserve any power of independence against him. Only by means of this effectual activity is he no longer merely in general but also in particular and in detail actually aware of himself and at home in his environment.*

*Now the fundamental conception to be stressed in relation to art for this whole sphere lies briefly in the following: man, on the particular and finite side of his needs, wishes, and aims stands primarily not only in general relation to external nature, but, more precisely, in a relation of dependence. This relativity and lack of freedom is repugnant to the ideal, and man can become an object for art only if he is first freed from this labour and distress, and has cast off this dependence.*<sup>61</sup>

Hegel's point, in short, is that man finds himself living in and dependent upon a world which is external and foreign to himself- an environment whose strangeness he feels can and must be eradicated through appropriation on his own terms.

'[M]an has needs and wishes', Hegel says,

*which nature is in no position to satisfy directly. In these cases he must work out his necessary satisfaction by his own activity; he must take possession of things in nature,*

*arrange them, form them, strip off every hindrance by his own self-won skillfulness and in such a way that the external world is changed into a means whereby he can realize himself in accordance with all his aims.<sup>62</sup>*

What this means is that man is able to relate himself to his world- that is, put himself in correspondence with it by introducing his own characteristics into it. In this way nature is 'humanized'- which is to say that the world is made 'spiritual'- i.e. a reflection of the mind; for what takes place is the objectification of man's aims and interests in the world.

This objectification and its project of overcoming dependency on nature is man's means of lifting himself out of the finite world of contingency and chance and into the free and infinite realm of spirit. In gaining this spiritual independence from nature man thus also gains the freedom to fulfil his new-found higher (i.e. non-natural) needs. This spiritual business, Hegel says, '*consists not only in man's being in general lifted above the grim seriousness of dependence on... external circumstances, but in his standing in the midst of a superfluity which permits him to play freely and cheerfully with the means put at his disposal by nature.*'<sup>63</sup> In this way, then, man himself transforms the 'inflexible foreignness' of nature into something useful and under his control- i.e. which he may manipulate *freely*.

Hegel defines freedom in this context by saying that

*on its purely formal side it consists in this- that in what confronts the subject there is nothing alien and it is not a limitation or a barrier; on the contrary, the subject finds himself in it... [A]ll distress and every misfortune has vanished; the subject is reconciled with the world, satisfied in it, and every opposition and contradiction is resolved... But since freedom is at first only subjective and not effectively achieved, the subject is confronted by the unfree, by the purely objective as the necessity of nature, and at once there arises the demand that this opposition be reconciled.*<sup>64</sup>

Hegel also discusses what he calls man's 'impulses'- which challenge and limit his freedom. These are the '*feelings, inclinations, passions, and everything comprised in the finite heart of man as an individual*'<sup>65</sup>. The opposition between freedom and these feelings, he says,

*goes on to a battle, a contradiction, and in this strife there then arise all longings, the deepest grief, torment, and the loss of satisfaction altogether... [I]n the spiritual nature of man, duality and inner conflict bureon, and in their contradiction he is tossed about- for in the inner as such, in pure thought, in the world of laws and their universality, man cannot hold out; he needs also sensuous existence*<sup>66</sup>.

He *needs* sensuous existence: this phrase expresses what can be seen as the major point of Hegel's general aesthetic theory, and also its strongest- for it argues not from the point of view of the pleasure we may take from art or any edifying or uplifting effects derivable from it, but instead from the immutable and non-transcendable ground of human being (i.e embodied consciousness)

itself.

To make sure we understand Hegel's point here we should recall from chapter one that it is philosophy which is able explicitly to negotiate the opposition between the subjective and objective i.e. from its '*thoroughgoing universality*'<sup>67</sup> or 'absolute' point of view; but philosophy, thus also proceeds to this resolution, as Hegel says, '*in a similarly universal way*'<sup>68</sup>. Man, however, at the stage we are currently discussing -in '*the immediacy of life*'<sup>69</sup>- seeks out '*immediate satisfaction*'<sup>70</sup> in what Hegel calls '*the system of sensuous needs*'<sup>71</sup>- i.e. hunger, thirst, weariness, and so on. Hegel characterizes these needs as examples of contradiction and resolution- by which he means that subjectivity itself (that is, simply being a subject) entails 'contradictions'. In other words: as human creatures there is no 'steady state' for us; we become hungry and thirsty, and therefore, in order to sustain our existence, we must seek out nourishment in the world- which thus functions as a sort of 'resolution'. In the 'natural sphere' of this economy, Hegel says, '*the content of its satisfactions is of a finite and restricted kind- for the satisfaction is not absolute so that a new want arises continually and restlessly, and eating, satiety, and sleeping are no help as hunger and weariness arise again on the morrow.*'<sup>72</sup>

The important point Hegel is making is that the steps we take to satisfy our 'natural needs' are necessarily finite and therefore provide no genuine -that is lasting or 'absolute'- satisfaction (just as we saw in chapter one how the endless addition of finite units in Hegel's characterization of 'bad infinity' never transcends finitude itself to become truly infinite). As a consequence, Hegel says, '*man strives further in the realm of the mind to obtain satisfaction and freedom in knowing and willing*'.<sup>73</sup>

In an 'existentialist' moment Hegel declares: '*The ignorant man is not free because what confronts him is an alien world- something outside him and... on which he depends, without his having made this foreign world for himself, and therefore without his being at home in it by himself as in something his own.*'<sup>74</sup> The 'ignorant man', presumably, is the unphilosophical man- the man who spends his life trying to keep his needs satisfied as they arise. The result, of course, as one need leads to another and hunger and weariness return in the wake of satiety, is that man is *never* satisfied, but instead, only further alienated from the external and foreign world to which, far from feeling 'at home', he is related only instrumentally.

Now since no natural course of action is *comprehensively* (that is 'absolutely') satisfying; the 'ignorant man', Hegel argues, is driven onwards to address other needs (i.e. the 'needs of the spirit') and *their* satisfaction. '*The impulse of curiosity, the pressure for knowledge from the lowest level up to the highest*

*rung of philosophical insight arises only from the struggle to cancel this situation of unfreedom and to make this world one's own in one's ideas and thought.* <sup>75</sup> Hegel's argument is that man's quest for learning and knowledge (i.e. his 'spiritual' life) arises from the inherent lack of lasting satisfaction provided by the pursuit of natural needs and impulses.

Caprice, Hegel notes, is often called 'freedom', but it is, he says, '*only non-rational freedom- choice and self-determination issuing not from the rationality of the will, but from fortuitous impulses and their dependence on sense and the external world.*'<sup>76</sup> In other words, to be 'care-free' and to do this or that as one pleases - which is often regarded as a model of freedom- turns out to be really a 'freedom' which is determined from without- by 'this or that' rather than oneself, i.e. a contradiction.

*Now man's physical needs, as well as his knowing and willing do indeed get a satisfaction in the world and do resolve in a free way the antithesis of subjective and objective, of inner freedom and externally existent necessity; but nevertheless the content of this freedom and satisfaction remains restricted, and thus this freedom and self-satisfaction as well retain an aspect of finitude.*<sup>77</sup>

The problem here, of course, is, as Hegel says, that '*where there is finitude opposition and contradiction always break out again anew, and satisfaction cannot get beyond being [merely] relative.*'<sup>78</sup> What man seeks in this situation -'*enslaved here as he is in finitude on every side* ', as Hegel says, is '*the region of a higher, more substantial truth in which all the oppositions and contradictions of the finite can find their final resolution, and freedom its full satisfaction.*'<sup>79</sup> It is important to note precisely where Hegel locates the 'full satisfaction' of freedom- i.e. in '*a higher, more substantial truth*'- that is, what he calls: '*the region of absolute, not finite truth*'.<sup>80</sup>

*The highest truth -truth as such- is the resolution of the highest opposition and contradiction. In it validity and power are swept away from the opposition between freedom and necessity, between the mind and nature, between knowledge and its object, between law and impulse- from opposition and contradiction as such whatever forms they may take. Their validity and power as opposition and contradiction are gone [in the presence of the highest truth].*<sup>81</sup>

Similarly to arguments we saw in chapter one, Hegel continues by saying:

*In finite reality the determinate characteristics of truth [i.e. subjectivity, objectivity, and their inter-relation] appear as outside one another- as a separation of what is in truth inseparable... Now, of course, the Concept contains these two sides- but as reconciled, whereas finite existence drives them asunder and is therefore a reality inadequate to the Concept and [therefore] to truth [itself as such].*<sup>82</sup>

This is Hegel's explicit statement in logical terms of what he means by the search for 'higher, more substantial truth'. '*The only actuality of this supreme unity [of the subjective and objective]*', he says, '*is the region of truth, freedom, and*

*satisfaction*<sup>83</sup>- which Hegel further describes as:

*the universal sphere in which the one concrete totality comes home to the consciousness of man as his own essence and [also] as the essence of nature; and this one genuine actuality alone evinces itself to him as the supreme power over the particular and the finite whereby everything otherwise separated and opposed is brought back to a higher and absolute unity.*<sup>84</sup>

The relevance of returning to these arguments here is revealed in Hegel's statement that ' owing to its preoccupation with truth as the absolute object of consciousness, art... belongs to the absolute sphere of spirit '<sup>85</sup>. The point, then, is that what makes art special -i.e. something above the mundane finitude of ordinary existence- is that it is concerned precisely to express what is *not* mundane and finite, but instead the infinite and absolute truth itself. It is art, Hegel says,

*which sets the truth before our minds in the mode of sensuous configuration... which in... its appearance itself has a loftier, deeper sense and meaning, yet without having the aim of making the Concept as such in its universality comprehensible by way of its sensuous medium; for it is precisely *unity* of the concept with the individual appearance which is the essence of the beautiful and its production by art.*<sup>86</sup>

In other words, art *does* present the truth to us, but not in its *true* form- which, of course, is not a 'form' at all, i.e. a sensible shape, but thought itself- which is the Concept as expressed in philosophy (or more specifically: as unfolded in the self-determining course of logic). Art, then, cannot show us the Concept itself, but, Hegel says, it does give the Concept an 'individual appearance'. In fact, this unification of Concept and appearance is what Hegel defines as the essence of art: art in its highest achievements, he says, '*unites metaphysical universality with the precision of real particularity. Only as such is it grasped in its truth*'<sup>87</sup>.

In the most significant statement of his general philosophical position in all his lectures on æsthetics, Hegel says:

*Spirit in its truth is absolute. Thus it is not an essence lying in abstraction beyond the objective world; on the contrary, it is present within objectivity in the finite mind's... inwardization of the essence of all things- that is, the finite apprehends itself in its own essence and so itself becomes 'essential' and absolute.*<sup>88</sup>

What Hegel is saying (similarly to the remark in the *Phenomenology* that there is nothing behind the curtain of appearance besides we who step behind it) is that the absolute itself is no 'essence' beyond the objective world, but instead is present and knowable *within* objectivity itself- i.e. through subjectivity. It is our own mind which, in its search for the essence behind things, encounters its own self-realizing that it is its own subjective relation to objectivity which constitutes the absolute in truth. '*The first form of this apprehension*', Hegel says, '*is an immediate and therefore sensuous knowing- a knowing in the form and shape of*

*sensuousness and objectivity itself in which the absolute is presented to contemplation and feeling.'*<sup>89</sup> As we shall see below, it is as the object of this 'sensuous knowing' that truth is *beauty*.

## PART Two

Hegel says: '*The beautiful itself must be grasped as the Idea... in a determinate form, i.e. as ideal. Now the ideal as such is nothing but the Concept, the real existence of the Concept [i.e. "reality"], and the unity of the two- for the Concept itself is not yet the Idea'*<sup>90</sup>. We will recall this Concept-Reality-Idea progression from our consideration of the *Science of Logic* in chapter one, but in the present context of aesthetics Hegel's emphasis falls upon the Concept's process of *getting* to the Idea in the world and its history. We have just seen Hegel's simple statement of how this occurs- i.e through its real presence in a '*determinate form*'- that is, through beauty or 'the ideal'.

The Idea, Hegel reminds us, is '*completely concrete in itself- a totality of characteristics'*<sup>91</sup>, and it is 'beautiful', he says, '*only as immediately one with the objectivity adequate to itself.*'<sup>92</sup> In other words: the Idea may be regarded as beautiful only insofar as it is embodied in a shape which adequately expresses it; or alternatively: a sensuous phenomenon is 'ideal' if it makes an adequate presentation of the Idea.

Logically speaking, Hegel says,

*the Idea should realize itself externally and win a specific and present existence as the objectivity of the mind and nature... Now when truth in this its external existence is present to consciousness immediately, and when the Concept remains immediately in unity with its external appearance, the Idea is not only true, but beautiful. Therefore the beautiful is characterized as the pure appearance of the Idea to sense; for the sensuous and the objective as such preserve in beauty no independence in themselves, but instead sacrifice the immediacy of their being... [which] is posited [only] as a reality which presents the Concept as in unity with its objectivity, and thus also presents the Idea itself in this objective existent- which has worth [therefore] only as a pure appearance of the Concept.*<sup>93</sup>

The significant point in all this is, as we have seen above, that the Idea, in order to emerge into consciousness, must, as Hegel says here, 'win some existence for itself'. Its first existence in sensuousness is the most direct, and in it the Idea remains 'immediately in unity' with its objective presence. Where this occurs the result is what Hegel calls 'beauty': '*the pure appearance of the Idea to sense*' in which the sensuous no longer exists for itself, but instead exclusively as a vision of the truth (i.e. the absolute). In this way the Concept in its universality is unified with the sensuous present in its individual particularity.

Because of this union of universal and particular, Hegel says,

*it is impossible for the understanding to comprehend beauty because, instead of*

*penetrating to this unity [of Concept and reality] the understanding clings fast to the differences exclusively in their independent separation by regarding reality as something quite different from ideality, the sensuous as quite different from the Concept, the objective as quite different from the subjective, and thinks that such oppositions cannot be [reconciled and] unified. Thus the understanding remains in the field of the finite, the one-sided, and the untrue.<sup>94</sup>*

This, of course, is a similar point we saw Hegel make about the limitations of the understanding in chapter one, but here it is presented in relation to art-with the implication that since genuine beauty is not properly appreciated by the understanding, it has something to do with reason, that beauty is, in fact, inherently rational. In continuation of this argument, Hegel says:

*The beautiful... is in itself infinite and free- for even if there can be a question... of a particular [i.e. limited] content... still this content must appear in its existence as a totality- infinite in itself and freedom because the beautiful throughout is the Concept, and the Concept does not set itself against its objectivity by opposing to it a one-sided finitude and abstraction. On the contrary, it closes together with what confronts it and on the strength of this unity and perfection is infinite in itself... [T]he Concept ensouls the real existence which embodies it, and therefore is free and at home with itself in this objectivity- for the Concept does not allow external existence in the sphere of beauty to follow its own laws independently; on the contrary, it settles out of itself its phenomenal articulation and shape, and this -as the correspondence of the Concept with itself in its outward existence- is precisely what constitutes the essence of beauty. But the bond and the power which keeps this correspondence in being is subjectivity, unity<sup>95</sup>.*

When Hegel says beauty is 'subjective' he does not mean it is determined simply by what *we* think is beautiful, nor does he intend the sense in which we ourselves are subjects in relation to an objective world, but instead that true beauty has something to do with *truth itself*- that is, that beauty is a 'unity', an objective existence showing forth some inner ('subjective') meaning or 'soul'. This, of course, is the meaning of Hegel's philosophy of the Concept- i.e that the Concept unifies subject and object, self and other, thought and world, and so on. Hegel's conclusion from all of this 'speculative' talk is that '*in relation to the subjective mind,' beauty 'is not present either to the unfree intelligence which persists in its finitude [i.e. the understanding], or to the finitude of the will.*'<sup>96</sup>

Hegel's mention of the will here is significant since it implies that just as finite intelligence (understanding) is incapable of recognizing beauty, the finite will -just because it *is* finite- cannot produce beauty or make any use of it. '*As finite intelligences,'* he explains,

*we sense inner and outer objects, we observe them... become aware of them through our senses... have them brought before our contemplation and ideas, and indeed before the abstractions of our thinking understanding which confers upon them the abstract form of universality. The finitude and unfreedom of this attitude lie in presupposing things to be independent... [but w]ith this one-sided freedom of objects there is immediately posited the unfreedom of subjective comprehension- for... the content is [merely] given, and instead of subjective self-determination there enters the mere acceptance and adoption of what is there- objectively present just as it is. Truth in this case is to be gained only by the subjugation of subjectivity.<sup>97</sup>*

Hegel's point is that the ordinary conception of 'freedom of thought' produces a contradiction, i.e. 'unfreedom'. Simply to accept things as they appear to us in experience is not to think (or act) freely, but instead to be determined by them. This is what Hegel means by saying that 'truth' (that is, the un-truth of the understanding) is gained only through a 'subjugation of subjectivity', i.e. rather than genuine freedom of thought.

The same is true of 'finite willing', Hegel says, in which the

*interests, aims, and intentions lie in the subject who wills to assert them in face of the being and properties of things, for he can only carry out his decisions by annihilating objects or at least altering them, moulding them, forming them, cancelling their qualities, or making them work upon one another- e.g. water on fire, fire on iron, iron on wood, and so on. Thus it is nouthings which are deprived of their independence since the subject brings them into his service and treats and handles them ~~useful~~, i.e. as objects with their essential nature and end not in themselves but in the subject so that what constitutes their proper essence is their relation (i.e. their service) to the aims of the subject. Subject and object have exchanged their roles; the objects have become unfree, the subjects free.<sup>98</sup>*

In discussing both of these relations -that is, of thought and action to their objects- Hegel means to demonstrate that both are '*finite and one-sided, and their freedom is purely a supitious freedom.*'<sup>99</sup> In the field of theory, he says,

*the subject is finite and unfree because the independence of things is presupposed; and the same is true in the field of practice owing to the one-sidedness, struggle, and inner contradiction between aims and the impulses and passions aroused from outside, and owing also to the never wholly eliminated resistance of the objects- for the separation and opposition of the two sides -object and subject- is the presupposition in this matter and is regarded as its true essence.<sup>100</sup>*

In other words: what is presumed to be the freedom of both thought and action entails contradictions within itself and thus ceases to be free. Hegel's use of the phrase 'resistance of the objects' is telling since it suggests that as long as we regard objects as 'objective' they will continue to 'stand over against us' and resist our attempts to make ourselves truly 'at home' amongst them.

To see the relation of this discussion of freedom to beauty we need only note Hegel's statement that '*the consideration and the existence of objects as beautiful is the unification of both [theoretical and practical] points of view since it cancels the one-sidedness of both in respect of the subject and its object alike, and therefore their finitude and unfreedom.*'<sup>101</sup> Hegel elaborates this significant point as follows:

*[I]n its theoretical relation the [beautiful] object now is not just taken as being merely an existent individual thing which therefore has its subjective concept outside its objectivity and in its particular reality scatters and disperses into external relations in many ways in the most varied directions; on the contrary, the beautiful thing in its existence makes its own concept appear as realized and displays in itself subjective unity and life. In this way the object has bent its outward tendency back into itself, has suppressed dependence on something else, and... has exchanged its unfree finitude for*

*free infinity.*<sup>102</sup>

In short: the beautiful object is free because -as beautiful- it holds what Hegel calls its 'concept' within itself and outwardly expresses (i.e. is determined in its appearance by) only this inner meaning. This is what he means by saying that beautiful objects exchange 'unfree finitude for free infinity'. Our relation to them '*ceases to be the abstraction of both noticing, sensuously perceiving, and observing and also of dissolving individual perceptions and observations into abstract thoughts.*'<sup>103</sup>

What must appear in the beautiful object in accordance with '*the essence of beauty*', Hegel says, is

*the Concept with its soul and end, as well as its external determinacy, many-sidedness, and, in general, its reality created by itself and not by something else since... the [beautiful] object has truth only as the immanent unity and correspondence of the specific existent and its genuine essence and concept.*<sup>104</sup>

Art, then, must express only the Concept in such a way that its external form does not remain separate from the external material , nor, Hegel says, should it appear to be merely '*stamped on it mechanically for some other purposes; it appears as the form immanent in the reality and corresponding with the nature of that reality- the form giving itself an outward shape.*'<sup>105</sup> In the beautiful object, he continues, there must be both ' (i) *necessity- established by the Concept, in the coherence of its particular aspects, and (ii) the appearance of their freedom*'<sup>106</sup>. Hegel defines necessity in this context as: '*the relations of aspects so essentially inter-linked with one another that if one is there, the other is immediately there also.*'<sup>107</sup> In accordance with the concept of beauty such necessity must appear in art, but not, of course, in the form of necessity itself; on the contrary, Hegel says, necessity '*must be hidden behind an appearance of undesigned contingency.*'<sup>108</sup> The reason he gives for this is intriguing- for he suggests that if the phenomenal appearance of a beautiful object itself seemed to have been created in order to express a particular meaning, it would appear to be serving some external purpose and therefore not to be totally free. Hegel's mandate of the '*appearance of undesigned contingency*'- i.e. that art appear freely determined from within rather than artificially constructed from without- brings us to the producer of art: the artist.

### PART THREE

Nature, as we have seen Hegel characterize it, is an 'inadequate' existence of the idea of beauty, while the 'ideal' is '*the adequate actuality of the beautiful*'<sup>109</sup>. The ideal, however, does not exist ready-made for us to encounter in the world, but

instead is a *product* and must therefore be *produced*. This producer, of course, is the artist. '*[S]ince the work of art springs from the mind it needs a subjective productive activity as its cause, and as a product thereof it is there for others- i.e. for the contemplation and feeling of the public. This activity is the imagination of the artist.*'<sup>110</sup>

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**NOTE:** These remarks illuminate the significance of the present chapter's title- suggesting that art exists first in the artist's mind -i.e. 'born of the spirit'- and then in actuality in the artwork itself- that is, 'born again'.

Hegel argues that in producing art the artist must '*enter reality itself... for the artist has to create out of the abundance of life and not out of the abundance of abstract generalities*'<sup>111</sup>. In this statement Hegel clearly distinguishes the roles he sees on the one hand for art -the realm of the particular- and philosophy on the other -the realm of the universal (though, as we have seen, they both have the same content).

Further to the point about 'entering reality itself', Hegel says what is most important is the artist's '*acquaintance with the way in which the inner life of the mind expresses itself in the real world and shines through the externality thereof.*'<sup>112</sup> It is this 'shining through' which is art's defining feature- for a work of art is an object whose job is to embody and sensuously exhibit some deeper significance which we have seen Hegel refer to as its 'concept'- i.e. its meaning or content.

Hegel explores this point further by remarking that the artist's imagination

*does not stop at the mere assimilation of external and internal reality because what the ideal work of art properly provides is not only the appearance of the inner mind in the reality of external forms; on the contrary, it is the absolute truth and rationality of the actual world which should attain external appearance.*<sup>113</sup>

Here Hegel makes the distinction we first examined in chapter one between the 'real' and the 'actual'. He continues, however, that

*this is not to say that the artist must grasp in philosophical form the true essence of all things- which is the general foundation in religion as well as in philosophy and art. For him philosophy is not necessary, and if he thinks in a philosophical manner he is working at an enterprise which, so far as the form of knowing is concerned, is the opposite of art.*<sup>114</sup>

Hegel is not saying here that philosophy and art are incompatible, as it may seem, but instead that they are very closely linked- that in fact, that they have precisely the same content. Their difference, of course, is in form- where philosophy has the universal form of thought and art the particular form of individual objects. This is why he goes on to say of the artist that '*the task of imagination consists solely in giving us a consciousness of that inner rationality not in*

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*the [philosophical] form of general propositions and ideas, but in concrete [artistic] configuration and individual reality.* <sup>115</sup> Hegel calls this the artist's '*interpenetration of rational content and external shape*'<sup>116</sup>.

*Just as beauty itself is the Idea made real in the sensuous and actual world and the work of art takes what is spiritual and sets it out into the immediacy of existence for apprehension by eye and ear, so too the artist must fashion his work not in the exclusively spiritual form of thought but within the sphere of intuition and feeling and more precisely in connection with sensuous material and in a sensuous medium.*<sup>117</sup>

An artist does not merely possess this 'gift for formation', Hegel says, '*as theoretical idea, imagination, and feeling, but also immediately as practical feeling-i.e. as a gift for actual execution. Both are bound together in the genuine artist.*'<sup>118</sup> '*Both sides -the inner production and its external realization- go hand in hand in accordance with the essential nature of art.*'<sup>119</sup>

It is the relation of these two sides of form and content which the artist fashions together which determines the structure of Hegel's lectures on æsthetics. In chapter three -'A World of Beauty'- we shall investigate this structure and the three forms of art which constitute the divisions of art's practical and historical manifestation in the world.

PART TWO

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•THE•

RISE & FALL

•OF•

ART



## II.3. 'A WORLD OF ACTUALIZED BEAUTY' The System of the Arts in Hegel's Aesthetics

### INTRODUCTION

Our subject in this chapter shall be an overview of the structure and unfolding of Hegel's philosophy of art, which -characteristically- he pursues in a triadic presentation of what he identifies as the three particular artforms: 'Symbolic', 'Classical', and 'Romantic'- which are derived from the concept of art itself (or 'the ideal'). In the three ensuing parts of this chapter, then, we shall investigate in turn the overall progression of art's historical unfolding in Hegel's aesthetics from its earliest 'symbolic' precursors, through 'classical' perfection, to what Hegel diagnoses as its 'dissolution' in 'romantic' or 'modern' times- a theme we shall pick up and consider in detail in a chapter four.

### SYMBOLISM

#### 'THE THRESHOLD OF ART'

In an allusion to Aristotle Hegel declares that '*the artistic intuition as such, like the religious, or rather both together... have begun in wonder.*'<sup>1</sup> Wonder, he says,

*only occurs when man, torn free from his most immediate first connection with nature and from his most elementary, purely practical, relation to it -[i.e] that of desire- stands back spiritually from nature and his own singularity and now seeks and sees in things a universal, implicit, and permanent element. In that case, for the first time natural objects strike him; they are an 'other' which yet is meant to be for his apprehension and in which he strives to find himself over again... Here the consciousness of externality and the inkling of something are still unseparated; and yet, at the same time there is present contradiction between natural things and the mind- a contradiction in which objects prove themselves to be just as attractive as repulsive. The sense of this contradiction along with the urge to overcome it is precisely what generates wonder.<sup>2</sup>*

Art is a product of this wonder and grows out of what Hegel describes as man's *urge* to overcome the 'contradiction' between himself and his surroundings. What Hegel proposes, then, is that early in human history (perhaps, we could say, the moment at which human history begins as such) man senses the disparity between his subjective self and the object world. He regards this external environment -nature- as *other*. It is, in fact, *the other* or *otherness* itself. Externality, as we have seen, is that against which and through interaction with which man becomes aware of his own inner self- that is, of himself as an *individual being*- distinct from, yet intrinsically bound up with otherness. At this moment of 'wonder', then, we have simultaneously the origin

and recognition of *duality*. This is what Hegel has just called the 'contradiction between natural things and the mind'. The first product of this situation, he continues,

*consists in the fact that man sets nature and objectivity in general over against himself on the one hand as cause and he reverences it as power; but even so, on the other hand he satisfies his need to make external to himself the subjective feeling of something higher, essential, and universal, and to contemplate it as objective. In this unification there is immediately present the fact that single natural objects... are not accepted just as they are in their separation, but -lifted into the realm of our ideas- [they] acquire... the form of universal and absolute existence.<sup>3</sup>*

Perhaps the first thing to notice here is that between this quotation and the last (which in Hegel's lectures appear as sequential paragraphs) man's 'urge' to confront otherness as such in order to make some sense of or reconciliation with it has now become a 'need'. Hegel offers no further argument here for the *necessity* of art, but, as we have seen above, he suggests that these practices are fundamentally linked to human consciousness, or more precisely , with *human being itself*.

Once the world begins to enter our consciousness as otherness -that is, cognized as other and objective in thought- Hegel says, '*these ideas in their universality and essential implicit character art concentrates again into a picture for contemplation by direct consciousness and sets them out for the mind in the objective form of a picture.*'<sup>4</sup> This, he says, is '*the beginning of art.*'<sup>5</sup> In other words: similarly to the phrase which heads chapter two in which Hegel speaks of art as '*beauty born of the spirit and born again* ', he says here that art begins when our environment elicits in us thoughts and feelings which, as subjective states of mind (i.e. 'born of the spirit') we must make external to ourselves and thus present to our contemplation as objective ('born again').

What we have see so far , then, is how art -as an 'existential' need- arises out of man's wonder- which he makes present (and lasting) to himself (and others) through artifice. In freeing himself from the 'natural' life of struggle and dependence, man is thus able to step back contemplatively -that is, 'spiritually'- not only from nature, but also, Hegel says, even '*his own singularity*'<sup>6</sup> so that he '*now seeks and sees in things a universal, implicit, and permanent element.*'<sup>7</sup>

The first 'revelation' of this 'absoluteness' -i.e. the 'universal element' in the world and our experience of it- Hegel says, is '*natural phenomena*'. '*[I]n their existence,*' he explains,

*man divines what is absolute and therefore makes it perceptible to himself... In this endeavour art finds its basic origin; yet... it has not come on the scene when man merely perceives the absolute directly in the objects actually present [to him] and is satisfied with that mode of divine reality, but only when the mind produces from its own resources both the apprehension of its absolute in the form of what is external in itself and also the objectivity of this more or less adequate connection [of nature*

*and the absolute]; for art appropriates a substantial content grasped through the mind- a content which does not appear externally, but in an externality which is not only present immediately, but is first produced by the mind as an existent comprising that content in itself and expressing it.<sup>8</sup>*

What Hegel is doing here is to try to locate the precise point at which we can identify the appearance of genuine artistic activity . First, he says, man comes to ascribe absoluteness to nature itself and natural phenomena- a practice which only lays the foundations of art; calling some mountain or river 'holy', for example, is, of course, not yet to produce art. Art instead arises when the mind has gone beyond this mere 'apprehension' of the absolute to a more 'spiritual' conception and objective expression of the absoluteness intuited in nature. This objectivity, then, is not the same 'foreignness' and externality of nature, but now originates from man's own thought- that is, his subjectivity . As a 'spiritual' production, then, man's work exists in the world and embodies his ideas; and it is this activity which constitutes the beginning of art.

Hegel thus calls art the first 'interpreter ' of absolute ideas; it ' brings them nearer to us by giving them shape'<sup>9</sup>. This 'first knowledge of truth', he says,

*proves to be a middle position between the purely spiritless immersion in nature and the spirituality altogether freed therefrom [i.e. philosophy]. This middle position in which the mind sets its ideas before our eyes in the shape of natural things... is, in general, the standpoint of... art in distinction from that of the prosaic intellect.<sup>10</sup>*

In other words: art -as conjoiner of universal thoughts and individual objects- works somehow akin to reason, as we encountered it in chapter one, while the prosaic intellect (i.e. the understanding) holds fast to things only as they appear externally and objectively, i.e. rather than 'absolutely'.

To review, then: man at first, in his self-won freedom from nature, views his objective environment as 'pure externality', or , we could say , as simply 'out there'. The goal of his struggle to liberate himself from nature, however, has not been attained when man has merely thus 'freed' himself. In fact, the true result of this liberation has only been to make explicit the contradiction which has existed implicitly all along between himself ( as a self) and the world. In short: man's 'freedom' imprisons him all the more. It is the resolution of this new and much more profound dilemma which now becomes the project and motor of human history.

Man's first vehicle on this odyssey -his 'first knowledge of truth', Hegel says- arises in the form of art. Through art, man occupies what Hegel describes as the 'middle position' between his first emergence out of nature and the full self-consciousness of 'absolute knowing' in philosophy. This mid-point between the prosaic and the spiritual, Hegel says, is defined by the realm of art.

As such a vehicle in such a historic process, then, art itself necessarily has a

history- the first stage of which Hegel defines as 'symbolic' since art ' just struggles toward true meanings and their corresponding mode of configuration '<sup>11</sup>. Symbolism is in general, Hegel explains,

*a battle between the content which still resists true art, and the form which is not homogeneous with that content either For both sides [form and content] -although bound into an identity- still coincide neither with one another nor with the true nature of art, and therefore they struggle... to escape from this defective unification. In this respect, the whole of symbolic art may be understood as a continuing struggle for the compatibility of meaning and shape, and the different levels of this struggle are not so much different kinds of symbolic art as stages and modes of one and the same contradiction [between form and content].<sup>12</sup>*

Symbolism, then, is characterized by the inherent imbalance or discrepancy between meaning and expression which Hegel describes as a 'contradiction'- meaning that the form and content of symbolic art are not only incompatible, but also *antagonistic*. The historical unfolding of this first form of art, then, constitutes the development of the various manifestations of this 'defective unification'.

There are, of course, three stages- determined by the three possible 'symbolic' relations of form to content. The first relation is one of *identity*- which Hegel calls 'unconscious symbolism'- in which the meaning is not recognized as distinct from its shape. In Hegel's words: '*the incompatibility between the two sides... has not yet become something confronting the artistic consciousness itself because this consciousness cannot understand the universal nature of the meaning which it grasps*'<sup>13</sup>. The result is what Hegel describes as '*an enigmatic unity still undivided and fermenting in this contrary linkage*'<sup>14</sup>.

At the other extreme -'the disappearance and dissolution of the symbolic'- Hegel says: '*the hitherto implicit battle [between form and content] has now come into the artistic consciousness; and symbolizing therefore becomes a conscious severance of the explicitly clear meaning from its associated sensuous picture*'<sup>15</sup>. In other words : form and content are completely divorced and linked only externally.

In between we find what Hegel calls 'the symbolism of the sublime'. Here again the meaning -as 'explicit spiritual universality'- is separated from its concrete expression, but not this time because of the externality of one to the other, but because of the negative relation of the limited (finite) form to the absolute (infinite) content to which the form alludes. The meaning, Hegel says, '*makes that existent [shape] known as its negative- external to it, and [therefore] its servant.*'<sup>16</sup>

In his consideration of symbolism Hegel does not discuss three forms of symbolic *art*, but instead three symbolic formations: 'unconscious symbolism',

'symbolism proper', and finally symbolic art itself- each of which is determined by its particular unification of meaning and shape.

As the first stage, Hegel says, 'unconscious' symbolism '*is itself neither to be called symbolic proper, nor properly to be ranked as art. It only builds the road to both.*'<sup>17</sup> What he means is that an 'unconscious' symbol is not genuinely a symbol at all because its meaning is identified with its shape- as demonstrated in the ancient religion of Zarathustra- which, Hegel says, '*takes light as it exists in nature... to be the absolute without explicitly separating this divinity from light... The divine -the meaning- is not severed from its existence- from light [itself] .*'<sup>18</sup> What happens specifically, Hegel explains, is that '*the divine -as inherently pure light and as its opposite, darkness and impurity- is personified and called Ormuzd and Armenia [respectively]*'<sup>19</sup>. What this identification signifies, however , is that, as the Absolute, Ormuzd

*remains unseparated from his sensuous existence as light... He is only the universal in all particular existents in which light, and therefore the divine and the pure, is actual; he is in them without abstractly withdrawing out of everything present into himself as the universal spirit independent of these existents.*<sup>20</sup>

In short, Hegel explains, there is at this early stage '*no difference between the phenomena of nature and those of spirit*'<sup>21</sup>. It is because of this '*undivided unity of meaning and shape*'<sup>22</sup> that we have not yet encountered genuine symbolism. The '*differentiation of this unity*', he says, '*has nothing to do with the difference between meaning as meaning and its manifestation, but only with the differentiation of existent objects*'<sup>23</sup>. In other words: although the absolute is conceived of as *related* to the world, this relation is not yet one of reference- in which nature is seen to *reflect* the absolute, but is merely one of identity- where natural phenomena (light and dark) are simply regarded *as* the absolute. Any distinction, then, which does arise between nature and the absolute cannot be seen as a differentiation between meaning and shape, but instead simply between one shape and another. Hegel characterizes this '*unconsciousness*' as: '*the immediate substantial unity of the absolute as spiritual meaning with its unseparated sensuous existence in a natural shape*'<sup>24</sup>- a unity, that is, which is '*not produced by art but found without art in actual natural objects*'<sup>25</sup>. The problem of unconscious symbolism, then, is simply that man's conception of the the '*divine*' has not yet distinguished what is absolute and universal from finitude and contingency , but maintains them instead in identity.

This defect, Hegel says, is overcome in the transition to 'symbolism proper'- effected through what he describes as the '*battle between meaning and shape*'<sup>26</sup> waged in 'fantastic' symbolism. What confronts us here, Hegel says, '*is the cleavage between the hitherto united aspects [of form and content]... which*

*immediately provokes the attempt to heal the breach again by building the separated parts together in a fanciful way.<sup>27</sup> 'It is with this attempt alone', he continues,*

*that there arises the proper need for art; for if the content of ideas is established independently -freed now from its existence and no longer only intuited directly in present reality- then thereby the task is set before the mind of giving for contemplation and perception -in a renewed mode produced by the mind [itself]- a richly fanciful shape to universal ideas, and, in this activity, creating artistic productions.<sup>28</sup>*

What we encounter in 'fantastic' symbolism, then, is the first distinction between form and content- which, in Hegel's analysis, constitutes an antagonistic coupling. It is the attempt to reconcile this imbalance which results in what Hegel identifies as: 'the need for art'. His point is that once the absolute is seen as distinct from its sensuous manifestations, there immediately arises a need to join them together again *in a symbolic way*.

As an example of fantastic symbolism, Hegel shifts his attention from Zarathustra in Persia to India and the '*extravagance of its productions*'<sup>29</sup>, i.e. the images of its gods.

*In order for these sensuous figures themselves to reach universality, the individual bodies are wildly tugged apart from one another into the colossal and the grotesque. For the individual figure which is to express not itself and the meaning appropriate to it as a particular phenomenon, but as a universal meaning lying outside itself, does not satisfy contemplation until it is torn out of itself into monstrosity without aim or measure. For here above all there is the most extravagant exaggeration of size, alike in the spatial figure and in temporal immeasurability, as well as the multiplication of one and the same characteristic- the many heads, the mass of arms, etc., whereby attainment of the breadth and universality of meaning is pursued.<sup>30</sup>*

Hegel's point about fantastic symbols is that at some time in human history man recognizes the contradiction between mundane natural phenomena (such as light, darkness, forces of nature, animals, and so on) and the absolute he has believed them to be manifesting, in other words: the contradiction between contingency and universality- which he then undertakes to eradicate. This new project of raising the mundane form up into accordance with the absolute content leads to the 'distortion' and 'exaggeration' Hegel speaks of above.

As a result, however , the link between form and content in fantastic symbolism is not a genuine unity , but instead one imposed from outside; for what man is really doing, Hegel argues, is not producing proper symbols which *represent* (i.e. 'symbolize') the absolute, but instead, he is still appropriating natural shapes which, as such, he recognizes to be inadequate and, therefore, in need of modification. The result is a manipulation of the form -the human body , for example- which, through distortion and multiplication changes colours, sprouts new members, exotic accoutrements, blazing mandorlas, and so on. This 'art of distortions', Hegel says,

*drives particular shapes beyond their firmly limited particular character, stretches them, alters them into indefiniteness, and intensifies them beyond all bounds; it tears them apart from one another and therefore, in this struggle towards accord, brings to light only the very opposite in its lack of reconciliation.<sup>31</sup>*

In order to overcome what Hegel detects as this contradiction (now in art itself) -i.e. the attempt to 'supercharge' natural phenomena in order to suggest an affinity with the absolute which results, in the end, only in expressing their incompatibility- a transition must occur to genuine symbolism. In symbolic art properly so-called, Hegel says,

*it is essential that the meaning to which it undertakes to give shape shall... become explicitly free from the immediate sensuous shape. This liberation can only take place in so far as the sensuous and natural is apprehended and envisaged in itself as negative- as what is to be, and [what] has been superseded.<sup>32</sup>*

What must happen, Hegel is saying, is a liberation of art's meaning -its absolute content- from its immediate existence in a sensuous form. In order for this to occur , human consciousness must undergo a fundamental shift in thinking- one in which nature and its objects come to be seen as *negative* in significance- that is, as not important in themselves, but instead as referring to or being *about* something else.

This occurs, Hegel says, in Egypt- where death comes to play a significant role in art. In order for the absolute to experience death, Hegel says,

*death must come into being and have a determinate existence, while on the other hand, it [the absolute] does not stop at annihilation in death, but out of it is restored to a positive unity in itself in an exalted way. Here, therefore, dying is not taken at all as the whole meaning, but only as one aspect of it; the absolute is indeed apprehended as a transcendence of its immediate existence, as a passing and a passing away of that existence, but also, conversely, through this process of the negative, as a return into itself, as a resurrection to a life inherently eternal and divine.<sup>33</sup>*

Hegel thus identifies what he calls death's 'double meaning': it is, he says, '*precisely the immediate passing away of the natural*'<sup>34</sup>- that is, of natural things, but with them also, '*it is the death of the purely natural [i.e. nature as such] and, therefore, the birth of something higher- namely the spiritual realm*'<sup>35</sup>. As a result, Hegel says,

*the natural shape in its immediacy and sensuous existence can no longer be interpreted as coinciding with the meaning glimpsed in it, because the meaning of the external itself just consists in its dying in its real existence and transcending itself. In like manner, the mere battle between meaning and shape dies away<sup>36</sup>.*

Art thus exists now as explicitly symbolic since it no longer identifies itself with the absolute (as in unconscious symbolism) or tries to 'puff itself up' to the absolute's level (as in fantastic symbolism), but now is able simply to point beyond its own existence to the absolute itself. '*[T]he identity of the meaning with*

*its real existence', Hegel says, 'is no longer an immediate unification, but one re-established out of difference and therefore not just met with, but produced by spirit.'*<sup>37</sup>

The first properly symbolic form of art Hegel considers is what he terms 'symbolism of the sublime'- the discussion of which he begins with the statement that the aim of symbolic art in general is the '*unenigmatic clarity of spirit which shapes itself out of its own resources in a way adequate to itself*'.<sup>38</sup> But, Hegel continues, this '*can only be reached if, in the first place, the meaning comes into consciousness on its own account, separated from the entire world of appearance.*'<sup>39</sup> This is because, as we saw in the case of Zarathustra, the immediately intuited unity of meaning and shape left no room for art. In India the contradiction between the separation of form from content and their imaginative linkage in artistic productions generated fantastic symbolism. And in Egypt, though great advances continued to be made, '*knowledge of the inner life and the absolute meaning was still not free- still not released from the world of appearance*'<sup>40</sup>. The result, Hegel says, is that Egypt remains '*the country of symbols*'<sup>41</sup> and home of the Sphinx- '*the symbol of the symbolic itself*'<sup>42</sup>.

Now, he says,

*the first decisive purification of the absolute [meaning] and its express separation from the sensuous present -i.e. from the empirical individuality of external things- is to be sought in the sublime. Sublimity lifts the absolute above every immediate existent and therefore brings about the liberation which, though abstract at first, is at least the foundation of [a genuine understanding of] spirit; ,~~for~~ although the meaning thus elevated is not yet apprehended as concrete spirit, it is nevertheless regarded as the inner life self-existent and reposing on itself which by its very nature is incapable of finding its true expression in finite phenomena.*<sup>43</sup>

What art's content needs now, Hegel is saying, is to be 'liberated' from its captivity in the natural world- a world which -as natural- is inappropriate to its proper (i.e. 'spiritual') expression. Thus arises 'sublime' art in which the absolute is raised above its former immediate existence in particular objects to a higher level from which those objects can be seen for what they are- which is representations of a meaning (the absolute) which itself remains 'sublime'.

Hegel begins his examination of the sublime with an approving reference to Kant's treatment of the subject in the *Critique of Judgement* - accepting his characterization of it, he paraphrases, as '*not contained in anything in nature, but only in our minds, in so far as we become conscious of our superiority to the nature within us and therefore to nature without.*'<sup>44</sup> He then goes on to quote §23 of Kant's *Critique* to the effect that

*the sublime, in the strict sense of the word, cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but concerns only ideas of reason which, although no adequate representation of them is possible, may be aroused and called to our mind precisely by this inadequacy which does admit of sensuous representation*<sup>45</sup>.

Hegel summarizes Kant's argument by saying that the sublime represents '*the attempt to express the infinite without finding in the sphere of phenomena an object which proves adequate for this representation*'.<sup>46</sup> The infinite, then, thus set apart from the world as '*explicitly an invisible meaning devoid of shape*'<sup>47</sup>, therefore remains, he says, '*in accordance with its infinity, unutterable and sublime above any expression through the finite.*'<sup>48</sup>

In place of his usual trifurcation of the subject, Hegel treats sublime art in just two categories: positive and negative. As an example of the first affirmative mode of apprehending the absolute Hegel cites the pantheistic poetry of Hinduism in which the divine is envisaged as immanent in all aspects of the world. '*In every single thing,*' he says, '*it is only the one and the divine which is to be imaged and exalted.*'<sup>49</sup> The imagination, therefore, does not restrict the absolute to any specific existent, Hegel says, but '*advances over each determinacy- abandoning it in order to proceed to another , and thus the individual existent becomes, for its part, something accidental, away and above which the one [divine] substance rises and therefore is sublime.*'<sup>50</sup>

The result of affirming the absolute's presence in everything is thus a negative mode of sublimity in which the divine now 'shrinks' from reality as an essence or substance behind appearance and, therefore, cut off from the world. Now, Hegel says, '*the entire mundane sphere, despite the fullness, force, and splendour of its phenomena, is expressly established in relation to the [divine] substance as only inherently negative- created by God, subject to his power , and [thus] his servant.*'<sup>51</sup> In this sublimity strictly so-called, Hegel explains,

*external existence, in which [divine] substance is brought before contemplation, is degraded in comparison with substance [itself] since this degradation and servitude is the one and only way whereby the one God can be illustrated in art. This is because the one God is without shape and is incapable of expression in his positive essence in anything finite and mundane. Sublimity presupposes the meaning in an independence in comparison with which the external world must appear as merely subordinate because the inner does not appear in it, but so transcends it that nothing comes into the representation except as this transcendence and superiority.*<sup>52</sup>

What is significant to note here is Hegel's implication that what happens in sublime art is not, as one might expect, an elevation of the material from which it is constructed, but instead- a degradation; for the world is taken up as a subject for art only in order to be put down again- with the result that nature is actively negated in exaltation of the absolute. Since the absolute -as God- is in this case already conceived in advance to be independent of the world (which is created by and subordinate to him), art can have nothing to do with God himself, but can only take as its subject matter this very transcendence of the divine- as it does, Hegel suggests, in Hebrew poetry.

Here we see that the implicit meaning of symbolic art as such -i.e. as a place-holder for an indeterminate and mysterious absolute meaning- has now -in the sublime art-work- become the explicit content. For in sublimity the contradiction between the symbol's form and content is now declared to be what God really is- i.e. that which transcends the natural world- manifested not *in* it, but rather- in *opposition* to it. '*What in symbolism proper was still bound into one*', Hegel says, '*thus falls apart into the two sides: the abstract independence of God and the concrete existence of the world.*'<sup>53</sup>

What has emerged from sublimity as distinct from 'unconscious' symbolism, then, Hegel says, consists,

*on the one hand, in the separation between meaning -explicitly known in its inwardness- and the concrete appearance divided therefrom; on the other hand, in the directly or indirectly emphasized-correspondence of the two, wherein the meaning, as the universal, towers above individual reality and its particularity.*<sup>54</sup>

Up until now, the proper content of art -i.e. the absolute as 'universal substance'- could not become explicitly visualized without, Hegel says, '*being related to created existence*'<sup>55</sup>. Thus the relation between meaning and shape has remained essential and necessary- the two sides having yet to be recognized in their externality to one another . It is this externality which emerges as the determinate characteristic of the final 'conscious' form of symbolic art.

By conscious symbolism Hegel says '*we are to understand that the meaning is not only explicitly known, but is expressly posited as different from the external way in which it is represented*'<sup>56</sup>. Further, he explains that the relation between meaning and shape is no longer grounded purely in the meaning itself: '*on the contrary, it becomes a more or less accidental concatenation produced by the subjective activity of the poet*'<sup>57</sup>- who may begin either from something perceived for which he imagines a cognate spiritual meaning, or from an actual inner idea which he wishes to represent in an image. The difference, then, between 'conscious' and 'unconscious' symbolism, Hegel says, is that

*now the subject knows both the inner essence of the meanings he has adopted as the content of his work, and also the nature of the external phenomena which he uses in a comparative way for their better illustration, and he puts the two togetherconsciously and intentionally on account of their discovered similarity.*<sup>58</sup>

Thus the separation of meaning from shape and their subsequent juxtaposition is expressly emphasized in the work of art itself with the result that sublimity altogether disappears. For, Hegel continues, '*what is taken as content is no longer the absolute itself [as substance], but only some determinate and restricted meaning*'<sup>59</sup>. This, he says, is because

*if the meaning is [now] to find its like image and similitude in what is restricted in*

*itself and finite, then it must itself be of a restricted kind- all the more so as... the image (of course external to its content and chosen by the poet only arbitrarily) is regarded precisely as relatively adequate on account of its similarities to the content.<sup>60</sup>*

For this reason, an artwork's shape consists only in what Hegel calls: '*the description of an immediate perceptible existent or occurrence from which the meaning is to be expressly distinguished*'.<sup>61</sup> Art's components of inner meaning and sensuous shape are thus now distinct and able to assume different relations to each other. These relations define the final phase of symbolism in which Hegel discusses 'comparisons originating in the external object'- such as fables and parables where natural and human events are taken as significant of universal meaning, and 'comparisons which start with the meaning'- such as allegory and simile in which an image or narrative is constructed around some independently predetermined content.

Artistic productions which arise out of this sort of *comparative* relation of form and content, however, do not demonstrate within themselves the relation of absolute necessity which in the previous chapter we saw true art requires. Their internal connection is instead what Hegel calls '*something manufactured subjectively*'<sup>62</sup>, while the '*absolute shape*', he says, '*has the connection of content and form... as concrete ensoulment- as the unification of both, grounded absolutely in... the content as in the form.*'<sup>63</sup>

Since an artwork has only two components -form and content- in comparative symbolism one of them must emerge first in order to be 'compared' or related to the second. Thus there clearly can be no third comparative possibility- which leads Hegel to conclude his discussion of symbolic art with an examination of the 'disappearance' of symbolism altogether.

In the last elements of comparative symbolism, Hegel characterizes the relation of form and content as 'subjective' and 'capricious', yet this bearing of the one upon the other, he says, is

*hidden behind the kinship between the meaning and the image used [to express it]. Since caprice embarks upon comparison precisely on the basis of the similarity of both [things compared] the chief aspect of the comparison is not the external thing but precisely the relation brought about by subjective activity between inner feelings, intuitions, ideas, and their cognate configurations. & if it is not the concept of the thing itself, but only caprice which brings together the meaning and the artistic shape, then both are to be posited as wholly external to one another so that their association is an unrelated attachment to one another and a mere adornment of one side by the other.<sup>64</sup>*

Therefore, in this final section Hegel considers ' those subordinate forms of art which proceed from such a complete diremption of the factors belonging to genuine art, and, in this absence of relation, expose the self-destruction of the symbolic [itself] .'<sup>65</sup> At this stage, then, on the one side, we have the meaning 'cut and dried, explicitly defined, but not given outward shape'<sup>66</sup> so that there is nothing left for the symbolic

artist to do but 'to add to it a purely external and capricious adornment '<sup>67</sup>. On the other side, Hegel says, 'externality as such, which, instead of being mediated into identity with its essential inner meaning, can be construed and described only as it becomes independent in contrast with this inner element and therefore only in the pure externality of its appearance.'<sup>68</sup>

The essence of art for Hegel, however , lies, of course, 'not in the dissociation, but in the identification of meaning and shape'<sup>69</sup>; yet all that we have seen in comparative symbolism has presupposed precisely the opposite- namely the separation of form and content which are compared and thus externally united by artefice. All through symbolism we have seen the different relations man has constructed in his attempt to reconcile the separation of these two sides. Now that we have reached the end of comparative symbolism (and, therefore of symbolism as such), we find that 'the unity holding them together is only the invisible subjective activity which is making the comparison'<sup>70</sup>. The demand springing from this deficiency, Hegel says, is simply this:

*that the external appearance and its meaning, the thing itself and its spiritual interpretation, must not, as was the case just now altogether separated from one another; neither should there remain as their unification a linkage which is symbolic or sublime and comparative. The genuine representation is to be sought, therefore, only where the thing itself -through and in its external appearance- affords the interpretation of its spiritual content, since the spiritual unfolds itself completely in its reality, and the corporeal and external is therefore nothing but the adequate explication of the spiritual and the inward itself.<sup>71</sup>*

This perfection cannot, however , be achieved in symbolic art since, as Hegel concludes this chapter of his study: 'the character of the symbolic consists precisely in the ever purely imperfect unification of the soul of the meaning with its corporeal shape.'<sup>72</sup>

## CLASSICAL ART 'SPIRIT BECOMES VISIBLE'

What we may gather from symbolic art's conclusion is that the significance of the classical artform in Hegel's aesthetics will be the perfect coalescence of form and content in the constitution of true beauty in its philosophical sense, or what we have seen Hegel call 'the ideal'. In his introduction to classical art Hegel says: 'The center of art is a unification, self-enclosed so as to be a free totality- a unification of the content with its entirely adequate shape .'<sup>73</sup> This 'ideal' is what Hegel says 'provides the content and form of classical art- which in this adequate mode of configuration achieves what true art is in its essential nature.'<sup>74</sup>

It is because of this 'ideality' that classical art may be regarded as the simplest of the artforms; for unlike symbolic and romantic art, there exists in

classicism no discrepancy between form and content or sliding scale of correspondence and inadequacy, but only the purest of accords. The classical work of art, Hegel says, '*expresses and means itself alone*'<sup>75</sup>; and this meaning must '*produce its shape out of itself and have the principle of its externality in itself.*'<sup>76</sup> This '*identity of meaning and corporeality*'<sup>77</sup> -their '*completely accomplished unity*'<sup>78</sup>- is what Hegel describes as the '*essential nature*' of classical art.

Art's appearance, Hegel says, '*must [thus] have its meaning already in itself, and, more precisely- the meaning of spirit.*'<sup>79</sup> But what appearance, we must ask, has this spiritual meaning '*already in itself*'? What, in short, does classical art look like? Its shape, of course, must come from nature, but not as we saw in symbolic art in such a way that what art is supposed to mean is simply identified or compared with natural phenomena. In this case, art's meaning is determined externally and independently of its shape. Classical art does indeed '*revert to the natural*'<sup>80</sup>, Hegel says, but only '*as dominant over the external*'<sup>81</sup>- which thus '*exists no longer as purely natural objectivity, but... is only the expression of spirit.*'<sup>82</sup> In this '*interpenetration*', Hegel says,

*the natural shape... -transformed by spirit- directly acquires its meaning in itself and points no longer to the meaning as if that were something separated and different from the corporeal appearance. This is that identification of the spiritual and the natural which is adequate to spirit [itself] and which does not rest in the neutralization of the two opposed sides, but [instead] lifts the spiritual to the higher totality where it maintains itself in and on the natural.*<sup>83</sup>

What Hegel is saying is that the natural shapes of classical art -in being '*transformed by spirit*', i.e. appropriated and, as we shall see, '*idealized*' in art- are fashioned and presented so as to contain their spiritual (i.e. absolute) meaning in themselves and to display it outwardly , rather than pointing to something else (as in symbolism).

*[S]ince the objective and external [shape] in which spirit becomes visible is... determinate and particularized throughout... it follows that the free spirit which art causes to appear in a reality adequate to it, can -in its shape in nature- be only spiritual individuality equally determinate and inherently independent.*<sup>84</sup>

Hegel comes very close here to describing the actual appearance of classical art. The problem, of course, is how to express an absolute -i.e. *universal*- meaning in a '*determinate and particular*' form. How, in other words, can art provide an objective reality suited to the embodiment of the '*freedom of spirit*' to which determinacy and particularity seem inherently opposed? The goal of classical art, then, as Hegel characterizes it, is somehow to achieve a determinate yet independent '*spiritual individuality*'. The shape which does this, he reveals, '*is essentially the human form because the external human form is alone capable of revealing the spiritual in a sensuous way.*'<sup>85</sup> '*[W]ithin this corporeality itself*',

he continues,

*the human exterior is not only living and natural... but is the bodily presence which in itself mirrors spirit... If, therefore, the bodily presence belongs to spirits as existence, [then] spirit belongs to the body as the body's inner being and is not an inwardness foreign to the external shape, so that the material aspect neither has in itself, nor hints at some other meaning.<sup>86</sup>*

Hegel's point is to establish a philosophical grounding of the preeminence of the human form in classical art. '*[H]umanity constitutes the center and content of true beauty and art*'<sup>87</sup>, he says, because '*in its whole demeanour [man's body] evinces itself as the dwelling-place of spirit- and indeed as the sole possible existence of spirit in nature.*'<sup>88</sup> We could say that Hegel has here 'deduced' from the concept of art itself the subject (or, more specifically- the shape) of classical art: i.e. the human form. The argument behind this 'deduction' would run as follows: if spirit is to become visible -to manifest itself- then it must, of course, manifest itself in the world, i.e. in what is, in Hegel's words, 'objective and external', or simply 'out there'; and if spirit is going to show itself 'out there' it must do so in some *form*, i.e. some particularized individual thing, and, more than that: a *spiritual* individual. In this world, Hegel's argument concludes, the only spiritually individual thing is man himself; therefore, his body -as 'spiritual' or subjective object, we could say- is the only form suited to giving shape to true art and genuine beauty. Through the 'ideal' human figure, then, classical art is able to achieve artistic perfection because, Hegel says, it '*comprehends free spirituality as determinate individuality, and envisages it directly in its bodily appearance*'<sup>89</sup>.

The key to the ideal, and thus to classical art in general is this *spiritual individuality*- individuality, Hegel says, which '*animates the universality of the forms [of the human body] by particularizing them, and, at the same time, makes their sensuous reality throughout a perfect expression of animation by spirit*'<sup>90</sup>. This 'perfection', however, was not achieved once and for all.

In classical art, Hegel says, it was

*objective, substantial, and human individuality that was central, and the human shape as such was given such a lofty position that it was maintained abstractly as pure beauty of form and reserved for representing the divine. But for this reason the man who enters the portrayal here as both its form and content [i.e. the Greek god] is not the full and wholly concrete man. The anthropomorphism of art [thus] remains incomplete*<sup>91</sup>.

In short, what classical art lacks, then, is *humanity*: '*the factor of subjective individuality, human weakness, particular and contingent character, caprice, passion, natural needs, etc.*'<sup>92</sup> Classicism as a whole does not show us what Hegel describes as: '*the principle of the depth and infinity of subjective consciousness- of the inner reconciliation of the mind with the absolute, and [thus] the ideal unification of man and*

*mankind [as a whole] with God.<sup>93</sup>* And, indeed, the classical gods themselves, Hegel says,

*mourn, as it were, over their blessedness or their bodily form. We read in their faces the fate which awaits them, and its development -as the actual emergence of that contradiction between loftiness and particularity, between spirituality and sensuous existence- drags classical art itself to its ruin.<sup>94</sup>*

Thus, as with everything in Hegel's philosophy, even the 'timeless' ideal of classical art is itself subject to historical development and change. The nature of classical art, Hegel says, '*implies not only the growth of that art's beauty out of its own resources, but, on the other hand, its dissolution too- which will conduct us on to a further sphere: i.e. to the romantic form of art.*'<sup>95</sup> Hegel refers to this progression as a 'series of stages'<sup>96</sup>. At one end we have the emergence of the ideal which, Hegel says, thus

*inclines still to the loftiness and severity which does not begrudge the individual his living... movement, but keeps him still firmly under the domination of the universal, while at the other end the universal is gradually more and more lost in the individual with the result that it is deprived of its depth. This loss can be repaired only by substituting the development of the individual and sensuous aspect of the object, so that the ideal [now] passes over from loftiness to what is pleasing and delicate- to cheerfulness and an inviting gracefulness.<sup>97</sup>*

Hegel thus detects the cause of the dissolution of ideal art in the productions of the Roman world- in which, he says, '*[t]he poetry of spiritual animation -the inner breath and nobility of a representation perfect in itself- these excellences peculiar to Greek plastic art, disappear and give place, on the whole, to a preference for something more like a portrait*'<sup>98</sup>- that is, artworks which represent something other than themselves in portraying particular people or simply types (i.e youth, beauty, wisdom, etc.). What is developed through this 'agreeable' art, Hegel argues,

*is not the substantial at all, [i.e.] the meaning of the gods and their universal element; on the contrary it is the finite aspect -sensuous existence and the subjective inner life- which are to arouse interest and give satisfaction. Therefore, the more the charm of the thing portrayed preponderates in beauty, so much the more does the thing's gracefulness entice us away from the universal and alienate us from the [true] content through which alone could satisfaction be given to the deeper immersion [of the soul in itself].<sup>99</sup>*

As a result, Hegel says,

*The seriousness of the gods becomes a gracefulness which does not agitate a man or lift him above his particular character but lets him remain at peace in it and claims only to please him. If, in general, imagination seizes upon religious ideas and shapes them freely with beauty as its aim, it begins to make the seriousness of devotion disappear<sup>100</sup>.*

This is the 'ruin' of classical art and the cause of our 'transition to another sphere'. In short, as Hegel puts it, '*[t]he opposition [between the natural and the spiritual which is momentarily reconciled] -grounded in the absolute- classical art has*

*not probed to its depths and reconciled .*<sup>101</sup> This will come with Christianity (i.e. the 'higher' sphere of religion); and with Christianity will come the end of classical art (and even, in many ways, art itself as spirit 'passes on' to religion and ultimately to philosophy).

In this conclusion of classical art, then, we now find separated the components of meaning and shape which were fused so harmoniously in the genuine beauty of the ideal.

*The inner then stands by itself on one side, the external existent separated therefrom on the other and subjectivity -withdrawn into itself because in its previous shapes it can no longer find its adequate reality- has to be filled with the content of a new spiritual world of absolute freedom and infinity and look around for new forms of expression for this deeper content.*<sup>102</sup>

## ROMANTICISM

### 'THE FORM OF FEELING'

Hegel's treatment of romantic art constitutes the third and, thus, final element in what he describes as the ' *philosophical garland*'<sup>103</sup> of beauty and art which he weaves through his lectures on æsthetics. Judging from where we saw classical art leaves off it is clear that Hegel intends much more than is usually suggested by the term 'romantic' today- i.e. from late antiquity all the way up to the present day. Surprisingly, however, much of Hegel's lectures on romantic art do not concern art at all, but instead -in accord with our move from Greco-Roman polytheism to Christianity, in spiritual terms- focus on the theological significance of Jesus' life, death, and teachings and the implication of these for 'religious love', 'the spirit of the community', and chivalry. At first the relevance of these topics to æsthetics may not be obvious since it is not specifically as artistic subjects that Hegel discusses them, but as cultural and societal factors relating to human individuality and self-consciousness, and, therefore, what we could call the new æsthetic needs of spirit arising from Christianity as a religion of 'inner subjectivity'.

In the romantic period, Hegel says, '*the absolute content of truth comes into consciousness in the shape of a new vision of the world and a new artistic form.*'<sup>104</sup> What he means is that there is

*something higher than the beautiful appearance of spirit in its immediate sensuous shape [i.e. the ideal]... For this unification, which... makes sensuous reality into an appropriate existence [of spirit] nevertheless is once more opposed to the true essence of spirit- with the result that the mind is pushed back into itself out of its reconciliation in the corporeal into a reconciliation of itself within itself.*<sup>105</sup>

In short Hegel says: '*The simple solid totality of the ideal is dissolved*'<sup>106</sup>. Hegel describes what is left after this dissolution as a '*double totality*'<sup>107</sup>: objective external

appearance and '*subjective being in itself*'<sup>108</sup>- which have arisen '*in order to enable the mind to reach through this cleavage a deeper reconciliation in its own element of inwardness.*'<sup>109</sup> This is because rather than in art, the mind '*can find its correspondent existence only in its own native spiritual world of feeling, the heart, and the inner life in general. Thereby, the mind comes to the consciousness of having its opposite, i.e. its existence, on and in itself as mind, and therewith alone enjoying its infinity and freedom.*'<sup>110</sup> What Hegel is describing is the mind's transition from the æsthetic world of art to the inner spiritual realm of religion. In its early history , as we have seen, art is centered around striving to find an adequate shape in which to embody its absolute content; but no sooner than this 'symbolic' striving is fulfilled and art's two sides finally coalesced in the classical ideal, they fall apart again. This disintegration, however , carries with it the positive significance that in art's dissolution spirit comes to see itself not as *identified* with sensuousness, but rather as *opposed* to it. In other words: although spirit is not yet conscious of itself *as spirit* (a realization which comes, of course, in philosophy), it at least begins to know itself as *spiritual* (i.e. as the inner content of religion).

Rather than fading away in light of this usurpation of its subject-matter , however, art instead now takes on a different relation to its content- one which, as we saw in the case of symbolism, is again characterized by a discrepancy between meaning and shape. At this point in art's history , Hegel says, beauty '*is no longer the ultimate thing; for ... spirit knows that its truth does not consist in its immersion in corporeality; on the contrary, it only becomes sure of its truth by withdrawing from the external into its own intimacy with itself and positing external reality as an existence inadequate to itself.*'<sup>111</sup> Art now takes on what Hegel calls: '*the spiritual beauty of the absolute inner life as inherently infinite spiritual subjectivity.*'<sup>112</sup> In other words: in romantic art the spiritual must be brought into representation as '*the willing and self-knowing subject*'<sup>113</sup>.

As an expression of this new 'spiritual beauty', the gods of classical antiquity are no longer adequate, but art does retain their anthropomorphism; for '*human [i.e. rather than divine] being -as actual subjectivity- must be made the principle [of art]- and thereby alone... does the anthropomorphic reach its consummation.*'<sup>114</sup>

Of the new subjective filling for this human shape, Hegel declares:

*This inherently infinite and absolutely universal content is the absolute negation of everything particular- the simple unity with itself which has dissipated all external relations, all processes of nature and their periodicity of birth, passing away, and rebirth, all the restrictedness in spiritual existence, and dissolved all particular gods into a pure and infinite self-identity. In this Pantheon, all the gods are dethroned, the flame of subjectivity has destroyed them, and instead of plastic polytheism art knows now only one God*<sup>115</sup>.

The most important thing to note about this 'flame of subjectivity' is that it is a *result*, and moreover its *own* result, i.e. the result of its *own* activity. In other words: the absolute, as 'infinite negativity', 'proceed[s] into external existence and then withdraw[s] out of this reality into itself again'.<sup>116</sup> In this way, Hegel says, 'the true absolute reveals itself and thereby gains an aspect in virtue of which it can be apprehended and represented by art'.<sup>117</sup> This 'revelation' comes about because 'the determinate being of God is not the natural and sensuous as such, but the sensuous elevated to non-sensuousness- to spiritual subjectivity'.<sup>118</sup> Thus, the important thing in art's religious domain is not spirituality *per se*, but the sensuous *made* spiritual. God, Hegel says, 'puts himself into the very heart of the finitude and external contingency of existence'<sup>119</sup> and thus 'art now wins for the first time the higher right of turning the human form... into an expression of the absolute... not the immersion of the inner in external corporeality [as was the case with classical art], but conversely- the withdrawal of the inner into itself'.<sup>120</sup>

Art, then, no longer concentrates upon the externality of nature and its forces, nor does it represent a multitude of beautiful gods; on the contrary, it is now 'the actual individual person in his inner life who acquires infinite worth since in him alone do the eternal moments of absolute truth -which is actual only as spirit-unfold into existence and collect together again'.<sup>121</sup>

This content becomes the subject of romantic art at the precise moment when God is seen, as we have noted already, to put 'himself into the very heart of the finitude and external contingency of existence'- that is, in the person of Jesus. Since the theological significance of Jesus' life -in Hegelian terms- is the reconciliation of the human with the divine or of finitude with infinity, it turns out to be his death and the actual *experience* of death which are especially important to romantic art; for, as Hegel says, this reconciliation of man with God -this 'identification', as he calls it,

*is brought about only by the elevation of spirit out of its immediate existence into its truth... Therefore, the spiritual reconciliation is only to be apprehended and represented as an activity, a movement of spirit, as a process in the course of which a struggle and a battle arises and grief, death, the mournful sense of nullity, the torment of mind and body enter as an essential feature.*<sup>122</sup>

Thus there is in romantic art what Hegel calls a 'real necessity'<sup>123</sup> for the new (and potentially *unbeautiful*) themes of sacrifice, suffering, and 'infinite grief' which were generally excluded from the beautiful representations of classical art. This new subject-matter arises, Hegel argues, because of man's new view of death in the post-classical period. The ancient Greeks, he says, cannot be regarded as having interpreted death in its essential meaning; death was for them merely an 'abstract passing'<sup>124</sup>- a 'ceasing [to be] without any further

*immeasurable consequences*<sup>125</sup>. In romantic art, death takes on an 'affirmative meaning'<sup>126</sup>- it is the

*perishing of the natural soul and finite subjectivity- a perishing (relating negatively only to the inherently negative) which cancels nullity and thereby is the means of liberating spirit from its finitude and disunion, as well as spiritually reconciling the individual person with the absolute.*<sup>127</sup>

Thus, in the romantic outlook, Hegel says, death retains 'the significance of negativity'<sup>128</sup>, but this significance is not of *mere* negation, but instead 'the negation of the negative'<sup>129</sup> which therefore 'changes all the same into the affirmative as the resurrection of spirit out of its mere natural embodiment and the finitude which is inadequate to it.'<sup>130</sup> For this reason, Hegel concludes that '[t]he grief and death of the dying individual reverses into a return to self- into satisfaction, blessedness, and that reconciled affirmative existence which spirit can attain only through the killing of its negative existence in which it is barred from its proper truth and life.'<sup>131</sup>

It is, of course, not only suffering and death which are the proper subjects of romantic art- for, as we have seen, the raw material of art's content is now , as Hegel says, 'compressed into one point, i.e. into the subjective heart... the scope of the subject-matter is therefore also infinitely extended again. It opens out into a multiplicity without bounds.'<sup>132</sup> Thus the romantic artist 'can draw into himself the whole breath of nature as the surroundings and locality of spirit and devote it to the one great end'<sup>133</sup>- that is, to the expression of inner (or absolute) subjectivity . In short: 'the whole of mankind and its entire development is... art's inexhaustible material.'<sup>134</sup> For this reason we feel 'at home' with romantic art- in which we find again our own thoughts and feelings and details of the external world which is our own environment.

This is a significant point since not all post-classical art is concerned with religion, and after the Renaissance most art can be seen to have little if anything to do with theological themes. For this reason Hegel's transition from explicitly Christian art to more secular subjects is important in its bringing us into what we recognize as the 'modern' world.

In Hegelian terms it emerges that Christianity itself *as religion* is problematic in the one-sidedness of its singularly inner spirituality- which means, of course, that as such it must be overcome, or , in more Hegelian terms, must overcome *itself*. What is missed out in Christianity's spiritualism -its other side, as it were- is mundane reality; for out of man's serene reconciliation and unity with God, he must, of course, return to his ordinary everyday life *as man* and all the contingency and external relations which that entails. Religion -or 'romantic mysticism'<sup>135</sup>, as Hegel calls it, 'is restricted to the achievement of bliss in the absolute- it remains an abstract depth of feeling because, instead of permeating the mundane [in

*which it must dwell] and accepting it affirmatively, this feeling contrasts itself with it and spurns it.<sup>136</sup> In this abstraction, then, Hegel says 'faith is separated from life and removed from the concrete reality of human existence '<sup>137</sup>. Religious subject-matter, he says, 'does assume the form of reality, but still it remains in the inwardness of ideas... and is far from satisfying in life itself'<sup>138</sup>.*

In order to satisfy himself, then, man turns from the inner significance of his relation to God to his outer life and his world. Thus, Hegel says, 'there enters here again in art on account of the subject-matter itself all the aspects of the contingency and particularity of external finite existence from which beauty had been purified at the height of the classical ideal.'<sup>139</sup>

*[W]hen the kingdom of God has won a place in the world and is active in penetrating worldly aims and interests, and therefore in transfiguring them... then the worldly realm, too, for its part, begins to claim and assert its right to validity... [T]he emotion which at first is exclusively religious [i.e. 'depth of feeling', 'inwardness of the heart', etc.], loses its negative attitude to human affairs as such; spirit is spread abroad- is on the lookout for itself in its present world<sup>140</sup>.*

Hegel thus declares that we have now reached a ' new stage'<sup>141</sup> of human consciousness in which ' romantic art now gains a position from which it can create independently from its own resources and become, as it were, a freer beauty .'<sup>142</sup> What he means is that since art -through its new interest in terrestrial human affairs and relations- now separates itself from religion, and the beauty which it creates may be described as 'freer' since it is no longer bound totally to expressing an external subject-matter already complete and fully-formed in itself. For this reason, Hegel says: art ' stands here freely midway between the absolute content of explicitly fixed religious ideas and the varied particularity and restrictedness of finitude and the world.'<sup>143</sup> The world of the particular 'becomes explicitly free, and, because it does not appear permeated by religion... [it] stands on its own feet and [now] treads independently in its own domain.'<sup>144</sup>

*[T]he thing which gives new satisfaction is the thirst for this present and this reality itself- the delight of the self in what is there, contentment with self- with the finitude of man, and, generally, with the finite [and] the particular In his present world, man wants to see the present itself as it is- even at the cost of sacrificing beauty and ideality of content and appearances- as a live presence recreated by art- as his own human and spiritual work.<sup>145</sup>*

In the productions of romantic art, then, Hegel says, ' everything has a place- every sphere of life, all phenomena: the greatest and the least, the supreme and the trivial '<sup>146</sup>. In the next chapter we shall consider the fruits of this new-found liberality and their consequences for art- both practically and theoretically.

## II.4. 'BOWING THE KNEE NO LONGER'

### Hegel's Aesthetics and the 'End of Art'

#### INTRODUCTION

Romantic art, as we left it at the end of the last chapter, was in the happy position of having become unfettered from its servitude to religion, and thus had gained the freedom to pursue its own course- not only in decisions of subject-matter, but also in the artist's choice of style; in other words: freedom in both form and content. As we shall see below, however, this radical new freedom has unexpected and apocalyptic consequences for the seriousness of art- i.e. for the dignity and authority -indeed, the *sacredness*- it has traditionally held for man, and whose loss is well-expressed by Hegel in his memorable remark that in the presence of art '*we bow the knee no longer.*'<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in Part One below we shall consider what it means for art to be free of religious, civic, and other duties and how it develops this freedom to the point which Hegel dramatically describes as its 'self-destruction'. Then in Part Two we shall prepare the way for Section Three's critical engagement with Hegel's final arguments in æsthetics by examining them here in detail as he presents them himself under the heading of 'The Dissolution of the Romantic Form of Art'.

#### PART ONE

Up to now we have seen how art began in what Hegel calls man's '*striving out of nature into spirit*'.<sup>2</sup> In art's first symbolic phase, however, this striving remains '*only a quest of the spirit*'.<sup>3</sup> as abstract meaning finds only some external shape appended to it. In this 'symbolic' relation of form and content art could never be genuinely beautiful- a deficiency overcome in the classical ideal which holds the honour in Hegel's æsthetics of constituting what he calls '*the consummation of the realm of the beautiful.*'<sup>4</sup> Passing on from this classical perfection returns us to the discrepancy of form and content in romantic art- which, as it were, concedes spiritual superiority to religion- from whose service it eventually frees itself in order to explore, as we saw at the end of the last chapter, '*every sphere of life [and] all phenomena*'.<sup>5</sup>

In this new-found freedom, Hegel says, romantic art takes up on the one side

*the presentation of common reality as such... [i.e.] the depiction of objects as they exist in*

*their contingent individuality with its particular characteristics so that it now has the interest of transforming this existence into a show by means of artistic skill. On the other hand it turns vice versa into a mode of conception and portrayal completely contingent on the artist, i.e. *ironmour* as the perversion and derangement of everything objective and real by means of wit and the play of a subjective outlook, and it ends with the artist's personal productive mastery over every content and form.<sup>5</sup>*

It is significant that Hegel here introduces his idea of 'humour' which shall occupy much of the discussion below, but before that it is important to note how in this passage Hegel identifies the two paths now open to artists in the period of what we could call 'post-Christian' art. One may pursue the representation of objects and scenes simply as they appear in the world, and thus as what Hegel describes as a show of skill (i.e. 'truth to nature' and other phrases); or one may instead use art to show off one's own wit and inventiveness- i.e. shift attention away from art itself to the artist as creative personality.

We will recall the significance of the spiritual life and 'subjectivity' in romantic art, and how at the end of the last chapter we saw that in addition and contrast to this inner world there is also, of course, an 'outer side': i.e. what Hegel describes as: '*the particular [external] circumstances and situations which stir the character... the collisions in which it is involved, and also... the whole form which the inner life assumes within concrete reality .*'<sup>6</sup> This outer world, then, is starkly contrasted with the chief characteristic of romanticism up until this time- i.e. spirituality: the mind reflected back into itself, constituting an inner totality and thus, Hegel says, '*related to externality not as to its own reality permeated by itself, but as to something purely external [and] separated from it*'<sup>7</sup>. The contrast, then, with this self-enclosed spiritual existence, Hegel says, arises when the world takes on for us the significance of '*a scene of complications and the rough and tumble of an endlessly flowing, mutable, and confusing contingency .*'<sup>8</sup> Hegel identifies art's thematization of this contingent and external world as '*the point at which romanticism -already implicitly the principle of the dissolution of the classical ideal-now makes this dissolution appear clearly, in fact, as dissolution.*'<sup>9</sup> From its very beginning, in fact, romantic art, Hegel says, has been

*afflicted with the opposition that the inherently infinite subjective personality [i.e. the Christian God] is in itself irreconcilable with external material, and remains unreconciled. This independent confrontation of the two sides and the withdrawal of the inner into itself is what constitutes the subject-matter of romantic art. Developing themselves inwardly, these sides separate ever again anew until, in the end, they fall apart from one another altogether and therefore show that they have to seek their absolute unification in a field other than art [that is, ultimately in philosophy].*<sup>10</sup>

In our brief considerations of the dissolutions of the symbolic and classical artforms in the last chapter we saw two examples of art coming to a conclusion

similar to the one Hegel describes here; but what is different in the present case is that while the demise of the earlier artforms entailed transitions to new forms of art, the 'falling apart' of romantic art signals for Hegel the theoretical dissolution of art altogether. '*[T]he progress and end of romantic art*', Hegel says, '*is the inner dissolution of the artistic material itself which falls asunder into its elements*'<sup>11</sup>. Thus the problem here lies not with artists or their subject-matter, but instead with art itself- whose dual aspects of form and content, as Hegel says, '*become free*'<sup>12</sup>. In this sundering, he continues, '*subjective skill and the art of portrayal are enhanced, and the more the substantial element is discarded all the more are these perfected*'<sup>13</sup>. Hegel's point is that at the end of the romantic period -i.e. in modern times- art's content (its 'substance') is 'discarded', so that its inner meaning loses its particularly *aesthetic* significance the more adequately it is expressed in the higher spiritual spheres of religion and philosophy- thus leaving artists free, as we have seen, to develop and perfect art's form -their 'subjective skill and portrayal'- for its own sake (rather than in the service of the 'absolute').

Hegel's first reference to this 'end' of art comes only nine pages into his first lecture on *aesthetics* with his statement that

*neither in content nor in form is art the highest and absolute mode of bringing to our minds the true interests of spirit; for precisely on account of its form art is limited to a specific content. Only one sphere and stage of truth is capable of being represented in the element of art. In order to be a genuine content for art such truth must in virtue of its own specific character be able to go forth into [the sphere of] sense and remain adequate to itself there.*<sup>14</sup>

This adequacy, of course, we find in classical art; but, Hegel says, there is, however, '*a deeper comprehension of truth which is no longer so akin and friendly to sense as to be capable of appropriate adoption and expression in this medium*'<sup>15</sup>- i.e. that provided first in religion and then, of course, in philosophy. This development of our reason, he continues, appears as '*beyond the stage at which art is the supreme mode of our knowledge of the absolute. The particular nature of artistic production and of works of art no longer fills our highest need.*'<sup>16</sup> In short: '*Thought and reflection have spread their wings above fine art.*'<sup>17</sup>

In the break-down of romanticism, Hegel says, '*we see the severance of the sides whose complete identity affords the proper essence of art, and therefore the decay and dissolution of art itself.*'<sup>18</sup> Above Hegel suggested that the cause of this decay was, in a word, *contingency*, and this contingency is manifested in two ways: first, '*where inwardness withdraws itself into itself the entire material of the external world acquires freedom to go its own way and maintain itself according to its own special and particular character.*'<sup>19</sup> Conversely, if instead of the external world it is now man's subjective inwardness which becomes the essential feature, Hegel says '*the*

*question of which specific material of external reality and the spiritual world is to be [taken as] an embodiment of the heart is equally a matter of accident .*<sup>20</sup> Whatever art portrays, then, appears merely as the superfluous externality of some inherently significant subject-matter, or simply on its own and thus signifying only itself.

Within the contingency of this state of affairs we find the basis of what Hegel describes as '*the collapse of romantic art*'<sup>21</sup>. '*[A]rt annuls itself*', he says, '*and brings home to our minds that we must acquire higher forms for the apprehension of truth than those which art is in a position to supply*'<sup>22</sup> (i.e. religion and philosophy).

As a result of this non-necessity of artistic production itself -i.e. the fact that art as such has lost its supreme significance in human affairs- we witness its emphasis now either on the real world in all its '*prosaic objectivity*'<sup>23</sup>, or, Hegel says, on

*the subjectivity of the artist- which, with its feeling and insight -with the right and power of its wit- can rise to mastery of the whole of reality. It leaves nothing in its usual context and in the validity which it has for our usual way of looking at things, and it is satisfied only because everything drawn into this sphere proves to be inherently dissoluble owing to the shape and standing given to it by its subjective opinion, mood, and originality; and for contemplation and feeling it is dissolved.*<sup>24</sup>

As we have seen so far, then, in the romantic sphere, once art leaves behind the subjects of the religious world, its topics are multiplied indefinitely because, as Hegel says, '*art takes for its subject-matter not the inherently necessary - the province of which is complete in itself- but contingent reality in its boundless modification of shapes and relationships... the incalculable mutability of the external objective world.*'<sup>25</sup>

Instead of the rigid determinations of the classical ideal, romantic art now finds itself free to explore and appropriate any and all of the phenomena of experience to suit its own ends. A consequence of this new-found freedom, however, is the loss of the necessity inherent in ideal art in favour of romanticism's contingency and mutability. Thus romantic art always falls short of genuine beauty and æsthetic perfection. At the same time, however, it also gains a new focus- which, in a word, we could call 'style', and which Hegel describes as '*the artist's subjective conception and execution of the work of art- the aspect of individual talent which... can make significant even that which in itself lacks significance*'<sup>26</sup>.

This new significance results from two factors in the artist himself: his '*marvellous skill*'<sup>27</sup> and '*subjective vivacity*'<sup>28</sup>. These traits of technical accomplishment and creative invention combine to constitute an artist's style- with which, Hegel says, he '*breathes life entirely into... [artistic] topics according to their whole inner and outer shape and appearance, and presents them to our vision in*

*this animation.'*<sup>29</sup> Style is thus an artist's individual way both of attending to and re-presenting his chosen subject-matter.

Speaking of painting, Hegel says:

*[I]t is not at all the painter's business, as may be supposed, to give us through his work of art an idea of the subject which he brings before us. Of grapes, flowers... the finery and decoration of the furnishings of daily life... domestic scenes of the most varied kind- of all these we have the most complete vision in advance... What should enchant us [in art] is not the subject of the painting and its life-likeness, but the appearance which is wholly without the interest which the subject has [on its own].*<sup>30</sup>

By the romantic period, as we have seen, art is no longer the bearer of absolute truth; a '*deeper sense arising from an inherently true subject-matter*', Hegel says, '*cannot be satisfied by [mundane] subjects like these; but if the heart and thought remain [thereby] dissatisfied, closer inspection reconciles us to them. For the art of painting and of the painter [himself] is what we should be delighted and carried away by.*'<sup>31</sup> In other words, it is finally art itself -i.e. *how* an artist makes use of his art rather than what he makes use of it to show us- which is the main thing. Individual style becomes what Hegel describes as '*an end in itself- so that the artist's subjective skill and his application of the means of artistic production are raised to the status of an objective matter in works of art* .'<sup>32</sup> In fact, it is just the '*pure appearance*' which he creates, Hegel says, which '*provides the true subject of the picture*'.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the art-work no longer exists merely as a representation of some independent meaning or content, but instead becomes the bearer of an individual style: an objectification of subjective experience.

In this shift in significance from the meaning of art to how it *presents* this content, Hegel says, it is '*the stark subjectivity of the artist himself which intends to display itself, and to which what matters is not the forming of a finished and self-subsistent work, but a production in which the productive artist himself lets us see himself alone.*'<sup>34</sup> The danger for art in this process of inversion arises, Hegel says, when '*this subjectivity of the artist no longer infects only the external means of representation, but [spreads to] the subject matter itself*'<sup>35</sup>. The apocalyptic result of this spreading subjectivity is that art -in the transition to its final (and dissolatory) phase- is reduced to nothing more than an '*art of caprice and humour*'.<sup>36</sup> . Thus the section which accounts for the final transition to the dissolution of romantic art is entitled: 'Subjective Humour'.

In humour, as Hegel defines it, '*it is the person of the artist which comes on the scene... so that what is at issue there is essentially the spiritual worth of his personality*'<sup>37</sup>- that is, his style and temperament rather than the purported content of his work (and therefore also in contrast to the pursuit of comedy or joking, as 'humour' suggests today). Humour thus does not develop and shape its topic in a way appropriate to its essential nature, but on the contrary, Hegel says,

*it is the artist himself who enters the material [through humour]- with the result that his chief activity, by the power of subjective notions, flashes of thought, striking modes of interpretation, consists in destroying and dissolving everything that proposes to make itself objective and win a firm shape for itself in reality... Therefore every independence of an objective content along with the inherently fixed connection of form... is annihilated in itself- and the presentation is only a sporting with the topics, a derangement and perversion of the material, and a rambling to and fro- a criss-cross movement of subjective expressions, views, and attitudes- whereby the author sacrifices himself and his topics alike.<sup>38</sup>*

*'In thus drawing together and concatenating material raked up from the four corners of the earth and every sphere of reality, humour turns back, as it were, to symbolism- where meaning and shape likewise lie apart from one another '<sup>39</sup>. It is with this new 'symbolism', Hegel declares, that we have arrived at*

*the end of romantic art- at the standpoint of most recent times- the peculiarity of which we may find in the fact that the artist's subjective skill surmounts his material and its production because he is no longer dominated by the given conditions of a range of content and form already inherently determined in advance, but retains entirely within his own power and choice both the subject-matter and the way of presenting it.<sup>40</sup>*

Art's basis in theoretical terms, as we know, is the unification of meaning and shape ('the ideal'), while practically speaking it is the unity of the artist's subjective activity with his subject-matter and objective representation of it in art. At the beginning of art, as we saw in our examination of symbolism, spirit was not free; it did not know itself or have a shape of its own, and therefore, Hegel says, it '*sought its absolute in nature*'<sup>41</sup>- with the result that nature was regarded in itself as divine, and therefore as a *symbol* of the absolute. The vision of classical art rejected nature in general, yet retained the human form- affirming the presence of spirit therein as absolute. In contrast to this 'positive' ideal, the romantic period finally saw the negation of nature altogether in its Christian renunciation of the flesh and the world in general- with the result that that world -now wholly divorced from spirit and the spiritual- at last wins validity for itself again in a positive way through artistic representations.

In the art of today, Hegel says, '*[i]t is the inmost faith which we lack*'<sup>42</sup>; with Greek gods and the Virgin Mary, he says, '*we are not seriously in earnest*'<sup>43</sup>. For true art, Hegel continues, the requirement is only this:

*that for the artist, the content shall constitute the substance -the inmost truth- of his consciousness and make his chosen mode of presentation necessary. For the artist in his production is, at the same time, a creature of nature- his skill is a natural talent; his work is not the pure activity of comprehension which confronts its material entirely and unites itself with it in free thoughts- in pure thinking [i.e. philosophically]; on the contrary, the artist -not yet released from his natural side- is united directly with the subject-matter- believes in it, and is identical with it in accordance with his very own self. The result, then, is that the artist is entirely absorbed in the object. The work of art [thus] proceeds entirely out of the undivided inwardness and force of genius; the production is firm and unwavering, and in it the full intensity [of creation] is preserved. This is the fundamental condition of art's being present in its integrity.<sup>44</sup>*

By Hegel's time, however, as he writes, '*the whole situation has altered*'.<sup>45</sup> This change, he says,

*we must not regard as a mere accidental misfortune suffered by art from without owing to the stress of the times... lack of interest, etc.; on the contrary, it is the effect and the progress of art itself- which -by bringing before our vision as an object its own indwelling material- at every step along this road makes its own contribution to freeing art from the content represented. What through art... we have before our... eye as an object has lost all absolute interest for us if it has been put before us so completely that the content is exhausted, that everything is revealed, and nothing obscure and inward is left over any more. For interest is to be found only in the case of lively activity [of mind]. The mind only occupies itself with objects so long as there is something secret - not revealed- in them.*<sup>46</sup>

In terms of content, then, there are two dangers for art: inappropriateness (e.g. Poseidon, Mary, etc.) and exhaustion (complete portrayal in which nothing remains left-over, unexpressed). If, Hegel says, '*the essential world-views implicit in the concept of art... are, in every respect, revealed by art, then art has gotten rid of this content*'<sup>47</sup>. In contrast:

*with the time in which the artist -owing to his nationality and his [historic] period- stands with the substance of his being within a specific world-view... we find an altogether opposed view... in most recent times In our day criticism, the cultivation of reflection, and... 'freedom of thought' have mastered the artists, too [presumably in addition to theologians and philosophers], and have made them, so to speak, ~~tabula rasa~~ in respect of the material and the form of the productions after the necessary particular stages of the romantic art-form have been traversed.*<sup>48</sup>

What Hegel is saying is that what we could call the Hegelian post-historicity of the present finds its expression in art when art, too, has become post-historical- that is, when art itself has completed the practical and theoretical course of its development and thus come to a sort of 'end'. Bondage to any particular subject-matter and correspondingly predetermined mode of portrayal are for artists today, as we shall see Hegel say, '*something past*'. What is significant then is that artists are now free to choose both whatever subject and mode of representation they wish. As we have seen, this is because they no longer deal in absolute truths; they no longer have to sculpt the figure of Aphrodite or paint the image of Jesus- or, if they do, it is because they have chosen to and not because these subjects present themselves to him as visions of the truly divine and infinite.

The artist, Hegel says,

*thus stands above specific consecrated forms and configuration and moves freely on his own account independent of the subject-matter and mode of conception... No content, no form is any longer immediately identical with the... substantial nature of the artist; every material may be indifferent to him so long as it does not contradict the formal law of being simply beautiful and amenable to artistic treatment. Today there is no material which stands in and for itself above this relativity, and even if one matter be raised above it, still there is at least no absolute need for its representation by art.*<sup>49</sup>

Thus in place of the vigour and inflexibility of past historic periods in the

subjects and portrayals of their art, we find a new *relativity* of such things- with the old necessity to show forth (in a particular way) the absolute now replaced by a new æsthetic of personal preferences and 'individual expression'. As a result, instead of participating in a unified universal artistic pursuit, the artist now needs, Hegel says, a large '*supply of pictures, modes of configuration, [and] earlier forms of art which, taken in themselves, are indifferent to him and only become important if they seem to him to be... suitable for precisely this or that material.*'<sup>50</sup> Every form and every material is, Hegel says, '*now at the service and command of the artist whose talent and genius are explicitly freed from the earlier limitation to one specific art-form [and its particular shapes and meanings]*'<sup>51</sup>.

Thus in romantic art -as in earlier art-forms- the divine remains '*the absolute subject-matter*'<sup>52</sup>, but more recently, Hegel says, the divine has had to '*objectify itself, determine itself, and therefore proceed out of itself into the secular content of subjective personality.*'<sup>53</sup> At first the focus of individual personality lay in chivalry, and then later in '*particular individuality- in the specific character which coalesced with the particular content of human existence*'<sup>54</sup>- in other words: art about this or that (positively or negatively) exemplary figure (e.g. Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust, etc.). Finally, this cohesion '*was cancelled by humour- which could make every determinacy waver and dissolve, and therefore made it possible for art to transcend itself.*'<sup>55</sup> '*[I]n this self-transcendence, art is nevertheless a withdrawal of man into himself- a descent into his own breast whereby art strips away from itself all fixed restriction to a specific range of content and treatment, and makes humanity its new holy of holies*'<sup>56</sup>.

*[T]he artist acquires his subject-matter in himself, and is the human spirit actually self-determining and considering, mediating, and expressing the infinity of its feelings and situations: nothing that can be living in the human breast is alien to that spirit any more. This is a subject-matter which does not remain determined artistically in itself and on its own account; on the contrary, the specific character of the topic and its outward formation is left to capricious invention- yet no interest is excluded- for art no longer needs to represent only what is absolutely at home at one of its specific stages, but everything in which man as such is capable of being at home.*<sup>57</sup>

'In face of this breadth and variety of material, we must above all make the demand today', Hegel says, '*that the actual presence of the [artist's] spirit shall be displayed at the same time throughout the mode of treating this material [i.e. in addition to his choice of subject].*'<sup>58</sup> Hegel's point is that since art's range of subject-matter today is so vast and the choice of one over another becomes more or less arbitrary (i.e. based on preference), it is now not the subject of art but *how* the artist himself presents it- that is, what we have called above: *style*.

We have already seen how in order to be able to undertake his work the modern artist requires a supply of earlier artifacts from which to pick and choose

his styles and subjects; now, Hegel notes, this admiration for the past may lead to emulation, and though he says there is some merit in 'associating' oneself with, say, Homer or Bach or mediæval icon painters, '*the universal validity, depth, and special idiom of some material is one thing, its mode of treatment another*'.<sup>59</sup> In other words: some artistic themes -say, love, citizenship, death, etc.- are valid everywhere and at all times, but artistic styles are not. To try to produce a Byzantine-style icon or a 'classical' statue cannot be a legitimate pursuit of art-for these things are truly past, and whatever universal truths may remain inherent in their subjects, these antiquated artistic formats can no longer speak to us. Hegel says: '*No Homer, Sophocles, etc.- no Dante, Aristo, or Shakespeare can appear in our day: what was so magnificently sung -what so freely expressed- has been expressed*'<sup>60</sup>. The works of these artists often addressed common themes, but in very different (and historically specific) ways- and thus remain for modern artists what Hegel calls: 'materials', i.e. '*ways of looking at and treating them [i.e. subjects] which [as such] have been sung once and for all. Only the present is fresh- the rest is paler and paler.*'<sup>61</sup>

Art thus, in Hegel's phrase, '*falls to pieces*'<sup>62</sup>: on the one hand, he says, into '*the imitation of external objectivity in all its contingent shapes*'<sup>63</sup>, and on the other into '*the liberation of subjectivity in accordance with its inner contingency in humour*'<sup>64</sup>. Previously we saw how both symbolic and classical art ended when their form and content were separated and could not be restored to unity. The final productions of these periods were thus explicit attempts to link the meaning with its shape in an external way. In symbolism, this was done, as we saw, through 'comparison'- in which the artist -through his own subjective activity- attempted to supersede the cleavage between form and content.

Romantic art, however, has entailed from its beginning what Hegel calls a '*deeper disunion*'<sup>65</sup> between the inwardness of the subjective human spirit which finds satisfaction in itself, and the external objective shape which art tries to impose upon its expression of this satisfaction. This opposition develops along the course of romantic art up to the point at which, Hegel says, '*we had to arrive at an exclusive interest in either contingent externality [i.e. objectivity] or equally contingent subjectivity.*'<sup>66</sup>

## PART Two

Since our problem in the rest of this thesis explicitly concerns the structure and consistency of the final argument of Hegel's æsthetic theory, we will have first to examine in detail both its formal (i.e. 'dialectical') rigour and also the philosophical and historical plausibility of its content.

The first thing to note in this project is Hegel's presentation of the subject, which, of course, falls under three headings: 'The Subjective Artistic Imitation of the Existence Present', 'Subjective Humour', and 'The End of Romantic Art', each of which we shall consider in turn.

'Subjective Imitation' is the name Hegel gives to the phenomenon of art's rejection of any '*inherently necessary*'<sup>67</sup> subject-matter in favour of portraying only '*the incalculable mutability of the external objective world*'<sup>68</sup>. In this shift, he says, romantic art '*completely dissolves into... the contingency of immediate existence*'<sup>69</sup>. The type of content which art requires, Hegel believes, cannot be provided by the mere 'imitation of nature' because nature, he says, '*taken by itself, is unbeautiful and prosaic*'<sup>70</sup>- in other words: not true in itself and, as such, inappropriate to genuine art.

Though problematic, Hegel says, there is in romantic art another feature which prevents this mere 'imitation of nature' from falling outside the limits of legitimate artistic production. This is what he refers to as the artist's '*marvellous skill*'<sup>71</sup> and '*subjective vivacity*'<sup>72</sup>, or simply his individual *style* (i.e. 'the subjective artistic imitation of the existent present'). Through the expression of his own style in art, Hegel says, '*the artist with his mind and heart breathes life entirely into the existence of... [mundane] topics*'<sup>73</sup>. Unfortunately, however, as Hegel rightly points out, an artist can easily fall into the trap of pursuing -in place of genuine beauty- his own style itself- that is to take his personal style beyond the artistic 'animation' of his chosen subject to the extreme of what art historians call 'mannerism'- or the pursuit of style (i.e. one's 'manner') for its own sake. While Hegel admits manner is not directly opposed to what he calls 'true artistic representation', it is nonetheless, he says, '*confined... to the external aspects of the work of art.*'<sup>74</sup>

*[M]anner concerns the particular and therefore accidental idiosyncrasies of the artist, and these, instead of the topic itself and its ideal representation, come out and assert themselves in the production of the work of art... [M]anner is a conception appropriate only to this personality and the accidental idiosyncrasy of his accomplishment, and this may go so far as to contradict the true nature of the ideal. Looked at in this way, manner is the worst thing to which the artist can submit because in it he indulges simply in his own individual whims; but art as such cancels the mere accidentality of the topic as well as of its external appearance and therefore demands of the artist that he shall extinguish in himself the accidental particular characteristics of his own subjective idiosyncrasy.*<sup>75</sup>

Like 'bad infinity' which we discussed in chapter one, Hegel speaks of '*bad mannerism*'<sup>76</sup> in which, he says, '*the artist [himself] is conspicuous as the chief thing*'<sup>77</sup> and his '*subjective caprice... gives free play to his own whims [alone]*'<sup>78</sup> in work after work- on and on throughout his career without really producing anything original or significant. For these reasons Hegel describes manner as '*the art of*

*caprice and humour*'<sup>79</sup>- and thus introduces his second sub-division: 'Subjective Humour'.

Under this heading we find Hegel's consideration of the effect on romanticism wrought by mannerism's shift of emphasis from art and its content as such to the artist himself. The defining characteristic of romantic art at this stage is the explicit and extreme separation of, on the one side, its objective and contingent subject-matter and, on the other, the equally contingent mannerisms of the artist's 'treatment' of this subject-matter. In fact, in 'subjective humour' we encounter an unexpected sort of reunion of art's form and content in that Hegel describes the artist's own style coming so prominently to the fore and being pursued and developed so singularly, that it can be seen as *taking the place* of content in its traditional sense. In subjective humour, Hegel says, '*every independence of an objective content along with the inherently fixed connection of the form (given, as that is, by the subject-matter [itself]) is annihilated in itself, and the presentation [in art] is only a sporting with the topics*'<sup>80</sup>. Subjective humour uses every subject-matter, Hegel says, '*only to emphasize the subjective wit of the artist [himself]*'<sup>81</sup>- leading him to conclude that

*we have arrived at the end of romantic art- at the standpoint of most recent times- the peculiarity of which we may find in the fact that the artist's subjective skill surmounts his material and its production because he is no longer dominated by the given conditions of a range of content and form already inherently determined in advance, but retains entirely within his own power and choice both the subject-matter and his way of presenting it.*<sup>82</sup>

This ironic situation (i.e. artists leaving art behind) brings us to Hegel's final section: 'the end of romantic art'. Hegel puts his whole idea of art's dissolution in a nutshell for us when he says simply that art, in recent times, '*has lost all absolute interest for us*'<sup>83</sup>- not that *we* have lost interest *in art*, but that *art itself* has lost the *absolute* interest it once had. In other words, as we saw above, the absoluteness -or necessity- which used to define art and its creation has dissolved in a play of contingencies- contingency of form, content, medium, period, expression, style, etc. '*Today*', Hegel says, '*there is no material which stands in and for itself above this relativity*'<sup>84</sup>, and art has thus

*become a free instrument which the artist can wield in proportion to his subjective skill in relation to any material of whatever kind. The artist thus stands above specific consecrated forms and configurations and moves freely on his own account- independent of the subject-matter and mode of conception in which the holy and eternal was previously made visible to human apprehension.*<sup>85</sup>

This freedom, however, which goes a long way towards characterizing the unique significance of modern art (in the broadest sense), does not -for Hegel, at least- represent a positive advance in artistic terms -e.g. in its release from

religious or civic responsibilities- but instead: freedom from art itself. In superseding its traditional forms, Hegel says, '*art has [also] got rid of its content*'<sup>86</sup>- thus leaving us its empty form as nothing more than an unnecessary -if pleasant- superfluity.

This progression of art's own independent freedom in the 'romantic' period, however, does not appear as a sudden change, but a historical process of development from Roman times and early Christian art to what Hegel has identified as art's conceptual self-destruction in 'subjective humour'. As we have seen, like the symbolic and classical artforms before it, romantic art starts out with the absolute as its subject-matter, but this absolute, in religious terms, is the 'divinity of spirit'- that is, an absolute which does not appear, and therefore can only be represented in art negatively- as what can *not* be seen (and so in direct opposition to classical art in which the gods' natural human form is affirmed). In time, though, the necessary and inescapably sensuous element of romantic art gains what Hegel describes as: '*validity for itself again in a more and more positive way.*'<sup>87</sup> In other words: '*the divine had to objectify itself, determine itself, and therefore proceed out of itself into the secular content of subjective personality .*'<sup>88</sup> Once art has achieved this transition from the sacred to the secular, it is only a matter of time before its new-found individual subjectivity develops from a still-unified relation between itself and its artistic expression to the logical extreme of 'subjective humour'- which, Hegel says '*could make every determinacy waver and dissolve, and therefore made it possible for art to transcend itself*'<sup>89</sup>. By Hegel's account, then, subjective humour is a genuine historical and theoretical development within art itself, but unfortunately it is one which takes art too far- to 'self-transcendence'- that is, where it can no longer properly be considered art at all. At this stage, Hegel says, '*art points beyond itself*'<sup>90</sup>; it has '*a limit within itself and therefore passes over into higher forms of consciousness*'<sup>91</sup>. These higher forms -namely religion and philosophy- are what art -through its limitations and deficiency- 'points' to. Art thus becomes in Hegel's phrase: '*a thing of the past*'<sup>92</sup>, and no matter how wonderful and excellent it may be, he says, '*it is no help; we bow the knee [before it] no longer.*'<sup>93</sup> Instead of '*an address to the responsive breast- a call to the mind and spirit*'<sup>94</sup>, what art now elicits from us is merely contemplation and judgement (i.e. rather than genuine reverence and awe). Thus Hegel says:

*The philosophy of art is therefore a greater need in our day than it was in days when art by itself as art yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration- and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but [instead] for knowing philosophically what art is.*<sup>95</sup>

When we ask this question at the stage art has reached in subjective humour, we find ourselves having to agree with Hegel that art -as we have considered it

hitherto- has indeed reached its limit. Just what philosophy has to say about this limit and what may lie beyond it for art constitute the issues to which we now turn in chapter five: 'Philosophy Paints its Grey on Grey'.

# PART THREE

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ART

*after the end*

•OF•

ART



## III.5. 'PHILOSOPHY PAINTS ITS GREY ON GREY' *The Possibility of Art After the 'End of Art'*

### INTRODUCTION

As we have now seen, the final pages of Hegel's general lectures on æsthetics - those concerning the concept and forms of art itself- consider the practical, theoretical, and historical limits of art as such. In these lectures as a whole 'Romantic Art' constitutes the third and final section. It is the structure and significance of the three-part division of 'The Dissolution of the Romantic Form of Art' -the third and final subsection of the third and final chapter of 'Romantic Art'- which shall be the focus of our study in the present chapter . What is most significant is how close scrutiny reveals this most Hegelian of formats to be problematic in the form in which Hegel himself presents it, or in other words: the way it is structured in Hegel's own presentation, it is not as ordered and explanatory as it could be since, as we shall see, its three components do not constitute a genuine 'triad' in the sense hitherto considered. In Part One below , then, we shall return to this important and controversial area of Hegel's philosophy in order to consider the form of his arguments in detail. Then, having grasped and begun to critique the logical rigour of Hegel's idea of 'the end of art', we shall -in Part Two- consider a sympathetic and thus what is hoped will be recognized as a *Hegelian* reconstruction of this aspect of Hegel's æsthetics. As stated in the Introduction to this thesis, my aim is not to try to refute Hegel or seize upon some idea of his- the magnification of which would make him seem ridiculous. On the contrary, I have singled out 'the end of art' not only because this is where the story of art in his philosophy gets a little muddy and confused, but also because this is where I believe just a little digging will reveal the greatest treasure- one which benefits Hegel's philosophy of art and larger philosophy as a whole, rather than threatening to bring it all crashing down. My aim, then, in this chapter is to affirm the greatness of Hegel's æsthetics and praise its author for his insights into all of art history -its beginning, middle *and* end- while, at the same time, forgiving him for failing to develop fully the implications inherent in this insight- a project we shall initiate below.

### PART ONE

A brief review of the course of events we saw unfold in the previous chapter

reveals the following salient points:

1. After the dissolution of classical art and the rise of the Christian world-view romantic art could no longer be seen as answering the 'highest needs of spirit' and -thus reduced in status- maintained its significance only through serving the interests of religion.
2. As more and more of the 'real world' makes its way into religious artworks, art itself takes on more of a life of its own until it is widely pursued independently of religion as an end in itself.
3. If in this new-found freedom art is to hold any interest above that of its ostensible subject-matter -that is, *as art*- then it must be through the development and exploration of art's means of presenting this material- i.e. *style*.
4. The unfortunate consequence of this pursuit of artistic style for its own sake, however, leads to art's loss of focus and meaning and, therefore, loss of *necessity*. This is the 'end of art'- the point of which, then, is not that art ceases to be, but instead that in its chronic 'mannerism' it has nothing new to show us and therefore no longer serves any 'absolute' purpose.

The more encouraging premise of the present chapter , however, is that nothing simply 'fizzles out' in a genuinely Hegelian view of things. This, as we saw in 'A Circle of Circles', is the meaning of *Aufheben* in Hegel's philosophy- i.e. that when higher forms of truth arise and supersede those preceding them, that which went before is not thus negated and discarded- as we saw Hegel say , '*like dross from pure metal*', nor even '*like a tool which remains separate from the finished vessel*'. [See Chapter One, Part One.] Thus even if art is, in Hegel's phrase, 'a thing of the past', it nonetheless remains an *absolute* thing; it arises from a 'rational need'- one which cannot be transcended since it is grounded in our embodied existence itself and our relation to other such beings and our shared physical and social world. It is for these reasons that we shall consider the possibility that the 'bad infinity' of 'bad mannerism' -while undeniably the 'end of art' in Hegel's aesthetics- need not be regarded as the end of art once and for all, but instead perhaps even the possibility of a new beginning: not only in art, but also in philosophy and human experience itself.

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To begin this enquiry let us review the three divisions under which Hegel presents his account of 'The Dissolution of the Romantic Form of Art'. They are: 'The Subjective Artistic Imitation of the Existent Present', 'Subjective Humour ', and 'The End of Romantic Art'. The first thing to note from our discussion in the

last chapter about ‘subjective imitation’ as a sub-section of the ‘Dissolution of Romantic Art’ is that all it actually does is introduce what Hegel really wants to discuss- which, as we saw, is ‘subjective humour’. Subjective humour, in turn, is where Hegel argues art ends- which he states officially in the third and final sub-section: ‘the end of romantic art’.

The significant point to grasp here, as should now be obvious, is that as we have just outlined it the tripartite structure of this final section of the closing argument of Hegel’s aesthetics does not, at least explicitly as Hegel presents it, constitute a proper triad in accordance with the structure established in the *Phenomenology* and *Science of Logic* and exhibited throughout Hegel’s works (including his philosophy of art itself). Unlike being-nothing-becoming or art-religion-philosophy, ‘subjective imitation’, ‘subjective humour’, and ‘the end of art’ do not embody relations of opposition, flux, tension, reconciliation, and so on, but instead all seem to refer to more or less the same thing, i.e. the end of art itself.

In chapter one we saw that at its most rigorously philosophical Hegel’s thought does *not* unfold by positing one thing and then another and then drawing some conclusion from their external relation to each other. Instead, as we saw, Hegel’s philosophy is meant to be *dialectical*- which means that it unfolds according to its own immanent logic, that its form and development arise out of its content itself. Hegel’s claim is that his job as a philosopher is simply to reveal this self-movement and present it in the comprehensive explanatory narrative which is philosophy or ‘science’ itself.

In the third part of the philosophy of mind, for example, the tripartite structure of ‘absolute mind’ -art-religion-philosophy- is not merely a historical succession, nor is it a simple logical hierarchy in which, cognitively speaking, lower forms are superseded by higher ones. As we have seen, art and religion have the same ‘absolute’ content -they try to express the same thing- yet their modes of presentation differ , and, in fact, may even be regarded as opposed. Art, Hegel says, ‘*presents truth -spirit- as an object in a sensuous mode*’<sup>1</sup>- i.e. an artwork. In religion, he says, this art-object is ‘*consumed and digested*’<sup>2</sup> as the objectivity of art as such reflects the mind of the religious worshipper back into itself- into the inner subjective ‘depth of the heart’ where the absolute content, he says, ‘*now stripped of its objectivity, has become a possession of mind and feeling*’<sup>3</sup>.

As a dialectical process absolute mind finds the reconciliation of its first two modes of consciousness accomplished in a third term: art and religion, Hegel says, ‘*are united in philosophy: the objectivity of art... and the subjectivity of religion*’<sup>4</sup> . This result arises, Hegel says, because what religion ‘reveals’ is the fact that

*'the manifestation of truth in a sensuous form is not truly adequate to spirit'*<sup>5</sup>, while, conversely, philosophy is able to reflect upon both art and religion (in a way in which they cannot reflect upon themselves or each other)- revealing that neither of them embodies a totally (i.e. 'absolutely') adequate representation of the truth -as philosophy itself does- while, at the same time, also preserving the ('one-sided') truth of each. This last point is demonstrated in Hegel's claim that '*art... far removed... from being the highest form of spirit, acquires its real ratification only in philosophy.'*<sup>6</sup>

Returning to the end of Hegel's philosophy of art we find the familiar three-part exegical structure in place, but, as we saw above, undeveloped in terms of its logical/dialectical significance.

## PART Two

What should be clear by now is that the problem we are faced with in Hegel's aesthetics is not subjective humour itself, but instead Hegel's lack of consistency in its presentation. Our motivation in this chapter (and the rest of this thesis) is the belief that addressing and correcting this particular flaw has the potential to generate insights not only into art's dissolution, i.e. its 'end' in conceptual terms, but also into the possibilities for its future- both practically and theoretically . In order to reveal this possibility , then, we must begin now by preparing the way for our logical reconstruction.

Having said this, the first thing to note about this proposed 'critique and reconstruction' is that it is one thing to criticize some aspect of a philosopher 's work -Kant's 'thing-in-itself ', for example- but, as we acknowledged in the Introduction, attempting to challenge Hegel is another matter entirely . As we stressed in chapter one, this fact is a consequence of Hegel's philosophy being not only uniquely systematic, but also a genuine *system*. What this means, as we have seen, is that every part of it -down to the smallest details- is related to every other part- so that to criticize Hegel's aesthetics is necessarily to find fault with his system as a whole. This, as I have already stated, is not to be my approach here. It is easy enough -as is often done- to criticize particular points of Hegel's logic or philosophy of history or indeed his aesthetics, but this traditional 'analytic' attempt at refutation is nothing more than an insignificant tinkering about here and there (by those who clearly 'enjoy the deflating of large balloons', as one commentator puts it <sup>7</sup>), and therefore cannot go very far towards the comprehensive criticism of Hegel's general philosophical position to which it aspires. The main reason for this failure, as we examined in the Introduction, is that the analytic critique of Hegel fails to engage with him at his own level- in his

own terms, and consequently , is unable to understand either his arguments themselves or even the problems to which they are addressed.

Contrary to this purported 'critique' of Hegel, as I outlined in the Introduction and chapter one, what I acknowledge as valid in Hegel's philosophy is its logically and historically progressive account of the phenomenology of human consciousness and its continual striving towards freedom in the world. Thus I also accept Hegel's aesthetics and its account of art as man's first attempt to articulate and express his relation to otherness and free himself from what we could call his 'unfreedom' in it and thus make himself 'at home' in the world.

This brief preamble is meant to account for what I believe still has the potential to be characterized as my 'controversial' decision not to concern myself with merely tinkering around in the Hegelian 'super-structure' in favour of the more modest -yet I hope more productive- enterprise of critical engagement with Hegel's aesthetics rather than what in Hegel's phrase (which we encountered in the last chapter 's discussion of 'humour ') is '*only a sporting with the topics, [and thus] a derangement and perversion of the material*'<sup>8</sup>.

Our problem, as we saw above, is with Hegel's moments of 'subjective imitation' and 'subjective humour', and thus 'the end of romantic art' as such. In short: 'subjective imitation' and 'subjective humour ' do not relate to each other as properly dialectical elements- that is, they do not oppose or even stand in any distinctive relation to each other . Hegel starts out talking about 'subjective imitation' as '*the principle of those numerous works of art whose mode of portraying common life and external reality approaches what we are accustomed to call the imitation of nature*'<sup>9</sup>. At the logical extreme of this 'imitation', Hegel says, '*the question soon arises whether such productions in general are still to be called works of art.*'<sup>10</sup> His response is that it is the artist himself through the *subjectivity* of his imitation which saves art from descending into mere re-presentation or copying. The remainder of this section thus concerns the artist's individual point of view , his use of materials, and so on- in short: all the constituents of style.

A shift in this discussion occurs when Hegel determines that style has progressed from its initial 'livening up' of art's subject-matter to the point where it becomes art's subject-matter itself. This, of course, is what Hegel refers to as 'subjective humour'- where the subjectivity of the artist over-takes the subject-matter of art itself. As in 'subjective imitation', the logical extreme at this end - the pure contingency of art's form and content- does not represent a legitimate possibility for genuine artistic creation, and hence leads on to what Hegel thus concludes constitutes the end of art: 'the dissolution of romantic art'.

In order to reveal the difficulties of Hegel's presentation of this argument

and thus also to establish what we have to work with in our reconstruction below, it is important to note that once art in general no longer serves religious purposes, two logical poles define the parameters of artistic production- neither of which in itself may properly be defined as art. Above we have seen Hegel allude to them both. The extreme of 'subjective humour' is one. 'Subjective imitation', however, simply as 'subjective humour' in the making, cannot, logically speaking, be other. What must constitute the opposite of 'subjective humour's' sheer subjectivity is suggested by Hegel's hesitating allusion to the 'imitation of nature', i.e. sheer *objectivity*.

We are fortunate that Hegel himself suggests the possibility of such a moment in his 'End of Romantic Art' discussion (i.e. the last of his general aesthetics). There he retrospectively refers to 'subjective imitation' as '*a sort of objective humour*'<sup>11</sup>; and if we return to the 'subjective imitation' section, we find that Hegel suggests this linkage there himself. He describes art as becoming '*portrait-like*'<sup>12</sup> in its reproduction of '*the incalculable mutability of the external objective world*'<sup>13</sup>. Thus what is important to us in our reconstruction is not the subjectivity of 'subjective imitation', but the *imitation*- i.e. the *objectivity* of art.

When Hegel himself uses the term 'objective humour', he says: '*in its subjective interest [man's] imagination here removes the object altogether from the scope of practical desire; it has an interest only in this imaginative occupation- which is [thus] satisfied in the freest way*'<sup>14</sup>. In objective humour, then, we have before us what Hegel calls:

*a pure delight... an inexhaustible self-yielding of imagination, a harmless play... a depth of feeling and a cheerfulness of the inwardly self-moving heart which through the serenity of the outward shape lift the soul high above all painful entanglement in the restrictions of the real world.*<sup>15</sup>

Thus contrarily to the focus we have seen in subjective humour upon the artist himself at the expense of his subject-matter, objective humour instead represents the artist's abandonment of himself *in* his subject-matter. The result, Hegel says is that '*subjective portrayal is intensified into the heart's deeper immersion in the object*'<sup>16</sup>, and '*we acquire thereby a growing intimacy with the object: a sort of objective humour*'<sup>17</sup>. This is what Hegel means in the phrase we saw above to the effect that the object of art (i.e. nature or some aspect of the world) is removed from practical desire, and that we ourselves, then, in the experience of 'objective' art are thus also lifted above our 'painful entanglement' in the world. '*[W]hat we may regard as necessary here*', Hegel says, is the '*sensitive abandonment of the heart in the object which is indeed unfolded but remains a subjective spirited movement of imagination and the heart- a fugitive notion... an inner movement of the mind [alone]*'<sup>18</sup>.

If we are to make sense of 'objective humour' we must recognize in it the idea of man's recuperation of the environment in which he lives. At first, in the romantic period, religion demystifies, renounces, and rejects the world in favour of the spiritual inwardness of the faithful heart and its communion with God; but the spiritual individual -no matter how blissful in his unity with the divine- still must always return to the external world which is the realm of his existence. As a means of making this environment more of a home, art appropriates to itself all the world's fleeting phenomena and contingencies and fashions them into an æsthetic object to which man may now relate himself in a free and 'cheerful' way. In this way art's objective humour returns nature to man, and man to his world- at last as realized *spiritual* consciousness- that is, as fully reconciled with himself and his world.

The problem with objective humour is that even though it reunites us with the world in a free and even 'intimate' way , it does so at the expense of truth; for if art is genuinely to be an embodiment of truth -i.e. mediate and articulate our relation with objectivity, and therefore be a bearer of the absolute- it must have as its meaning the truth which we saw in 'A Circle of Circles' that substance is subject. The subjectivity of objective humour , however , is constituted by the 'inner movement of the mind', i.e. that of the subject himself (rather than art), so that like subjective humour, objective humour, too, remains inadequate to the true purpose of art.

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What we have set out above is an analysis, critique, and partial reconstruction of Hegel's arguments concerning 'the dissolution of romantic art' at the end of his lectures on æsthetics. We accomplished this through clarifying the meaning of Hegel's moments of 'subjective imitation' and 'subjective humour ' and reconstituting them as 'objective' and 'subjective humour ' - i.e. the logical extremes of pure objectivity and subjectivity in artistic practice.

The region between these poles is the domain of *style*- too much of which, as we have noted above, constitutes 'mannerism', and too little, as art historians term it: *academicism* (i.e. the cold, calculated technique of the academy). Style, then, seems to be Hegel's golden mean between what we have recharacterized as objective and subjective humour; and also, since he does not conceive of art ever ceasing in practical terms, it is presumably the measure and quality of art's style which he believes will constitute the value of art in perpetuity- hence his characterization of it as the 'end' of art, i.e. its final stage.

If our interpretation is correct, however , 'style' does not do the work Hegel wishes it to do- for rather than offering some stability or even reconciliation between subjective and objective humour , it can only attempt to keep art from falling into either one exclusively and thus disappearing altogether. It therefore seems to be this very precariousness itself which leads Hegel to the conclusion that art itself is conceptually finished and thus can only continue in imitation of its own previous forms and styles, while its true task -of expressing the absolute- long ago passed from its reach.

What I am proposing in this chapter and this thesis as a whole is to continue Hegel's project in his aesthetics and to do so according to his own precedent and procedure. But how will this be possible? How can art legitimately go on -i.e. develop further- after its 'end'?

The first thing to note is that Hegel seems to have believed that subjective humour -i.e. mannerism- constituted a fair and accurate representation of the state of art in his day- in which case, according to his own policy, he could say no more. For, as he famously remarks:

*Philosophy [in this case: of art] always comes on the scene too late to give instruction as to what the world ought to be. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there -cut and dried- after its process of formation has been completed. When philosophy paints its grey on grey, then a shape of life has grown old. It cannot be rejuvenated by philosophy's grey on grey; it can only be understood. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.*

Thus Hegel clearly feels barred -as a philosopher- from speculating on the future of art- that is, on what will happen after what he believes is its logical and historical conclusion. He also says: '*The philosophy of art has no concern with prescriptions for artists; on the contrary, it has to determine what the beautiful is as such and how it is displayed in reality, in works of art- without wishing to provide rules for their production.*'<sup>19</sup>

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* , however , may prove instructive in determining how we might proceed. In considering the significance of the 'new world', Hegel refers to the United States as '*the world of the future*'<sup>20</sup>, and says: '*its world-historical importance has yet to be revealed in the ages which lie ahead*'<sup>21</sup>. He even goes so far as to suggest that this future history may take the form of '*a conflict between North and South America*'<sup>22</sup>. Prophecy, however, he remarks

*is not the business of the philosopher. In history, we are concerned with what has been and what is; in philosophy, however, we are concerned not with what belongs exclusively to the past or to the future, but with that which is, both now and eternally- in short, with reason; and that is quite enough to occupy our attention.*<sup>23</sup>

Thus, even if -as far as Hegel's aesthetics is concerned- art's development has concluded, this does not mean that any future history is necessarily ruled out

on Hegel's terms. Even Hegel himself says: '*We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection*'<sup>24</sup>. (Presumably this activity will continue in what at one point during his lectures Hegel provocatively refers to as: '*the "after" of art*'<sup>25</sup>.)

My proposal, then, is that, purely logically speaking, there is implied within our reconstructed conclusion to Hegel's aesthetics the theoretical possibility of a positive artistic alternative to 'the end of romantic art' with which we have seen Hegel himself conclude. In keeping with the model provided in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* I suggest here that the grouping of subjective humour and objective humour may constructively be completed through the addition of a third term: '*absolute humour*'.

At this point, then, I am merely proposing the logical possibility of dialectically reconciling objective and subjective humour through the 'deduction' of a third term- i.e. a new '*absolute*' form of art which somehow resolves the instabilities of objective and subjective humour without 'dissolving' art altogether.

In the rest of this chapter we shall be concerned to determine just what an '*absolute*' art could be and thus how the institution of art as such may legitimately continue to generate the possibility of creative artifice and new (and meaningful) experience.

What we have seen Hegel diagnose as the cause of art's 'dissolution' is its '*bad infinity*'- its eternal entrapment (as far as he could tell) in subjective humour, i.e. displaying more or less of the artist's individual style, yet without expressing any *necessary* content. To resolve this problem in art, as we have suggested above, we must find an '*absolute*' art- one which is infinite in itself, and thus utterly inconceivable to Hegel himself (who, of course, saw the possibility of true infinity solely within the province of philosophy- that is, in thought alone).

What '*Absolute humour*' must do, then, is generate the possibility of genuine infinity in art- that is the possibility of art which is truly original and therefore *free*- free from the deadening reproduction of its past, and free also, therefore, to be an expression -rather than mere account- of the absolute itself through the creation of original artefacts. But again, we must ask ourselves how it might be possible to determine the precise nature of '*absolute humour*' in art. Hegel himself provides a clue in part two of his *Encyclopædia*.

Hegel concludes the *Philosophy of Nature* with an account of the 'transition' from nature to the next 'circle' of philosophy- which is mind. '*The goal of nature*', he says, '*is to destroy itself and to break through its husk of immediate, sensuous existence- to consume itself like the Phœnix in order to come forth from this externality*

*rejuvenated as mind.*<sup>26</sup> This goal, he says, is realized the *Philosophy of Nature*'s final paragraphs through what he describes as 'the negation of the animal organism'- the highest (most developed) form of the natural world. This occurs because of what Hegel calls the ' *unresolved contradiction*'<sup>27</sup> inherent in the animal- i,e, between itself and its environment which, without reason, it cannot overcome. Hegel calls this contradiction animals' ' *original disease and the inborn germ of death*'<sup>28</sup>. '*The absence of opposition to which the organism progresses*', Hegel says, '*is the repose of the dead*'<sup>29</sup>. '*Above this death of nature, from this dead husk, proceeds a more beautiful nature- mind.*'<sup>30</sup>

My suggestion, then, is that we think of the 'end of art' the way Hegel presents the end of nature; in other words: consider art -the objective form of absolute mind- as Hegel considers objectivity (nature) itself. In this part of the Hegelian story, as we have seen, when man 'arrives on the scene' and nature, we could say, thus becomes cognizant, the natural world transcends itself and is no longer nature in its finitude, but now , through man's thought and reason, becomes potentially infinite. The suggestion here is that if art could somehow achieve this potential for infinity within itself *as art*, we could recognize its transcendence of its finite self and therefore the potential for new works of true beauty (and perhaps even a new ideal).

So, instead of simply 'fizzling out' as it does in Hegel's presentation, art may really be seen to 'self-destruct' as nature does in the death of the animal organism; perhaps -in reaching the limits Hegel identifies- art really does *die*, and in this death becomes *other* to itself (as mind to nature), and confronts itself- its practical, theoretical, and experiential limitations, and thus out of this confrontation rises to a higher -more 'spiritual' (i.e. more comprehensive)- mode of existence.

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**NOTE:** Hegel's explicit view of course, is that religion picks up where art leaves off, though this pertains to the dissolution of the classical ideal and not to the problems we face now at the end of Hegel's aesthetics. This is because in its Christian form religion ceases to be an attempt to reconcile man with his world, and seeks instead to reconcile him with God; and for this reason, as we saw in the Introduction, Hegel himself affirms its obsolescence.

In trying to determine what this higher mode of art could be it is significant to note the cause of art's self-destruction as it had existed hitherto- which, of course, was its sundering of form and content, or , more precisely, the *necessity* it lacked in terms of meaning and shape. We have seen this sundering before- especially in what Hegel called the 'disappearance' of symbolic art. What was required then, as now, was a higher form of art in which form and content

could be genuinely united rather than one being merely 'symbolized' (externally) by the other. This higher form, of course, was classical art, which, as we saw, itself dissolved- and with it the very ideal of art. This ideal is truly gone for good, and has been for over 2000 years. Our project here, therefore, cannot entail a nostalgia for the days when art 'really meant something', but instead must consider the possibility we have suggested above of a *new* ideal- that is of a new form and a new content for art. This, in effect, is what absolute humour must be; it must be art's self-transcendence of its own finitude.

What I am proposing, then, is that -like the animal organism in nature- art 'self-destructs', as we have seen, and that above this death of art, from this dead husk, proceeds a more beautiful -that is, *truer*- 'absolute' art. The implication here is that just as the spirit which rises out of nature is no longer nature, 'absolute humour' as 'absolute' art will no longer be art. But, as we have seen, neither will it be religion or philosophy; thus it will have to be, in Hegel's terms, a new form of absolute mind.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion to this chapter and in preparation for the next, let us review the logical determinations and consequences of what Hegel says about the 'end of art' and our logical restructuring of these points.

In Hegel's aesthetics, as we have seen, the symbolic, classical, and romantic forms of art are determined from within by 'the concept of art' itself. Another name for this concept is 'the ideal' or, in Hegel's phrase: '*the Idea made real in the sensuous and actual world*'<sup>31</sup>. The artforms, he says, '*are nothing but the different relations of meaning and shape- relations which proceed from the Idea itself*'<sup>32</sup>; in other words: they '*find their origin in the different ways of grasping the Idea as content*'<sup>33</sup>. In Hegel's account, of course, there are, as he says, '*three relations of the Idea to its configuration*'<sup>34</sup>: one of correspondence (i.e. the ideal) and two of incompatibility: ambiguity (as in symbolism) and over-determinacy [as in romantic art where the Idea has become too determinate in thought (either religious or philosophical) to find adequate expression in an art-work]. The incompatibility of form and content in symbolic art is what drives it on to seek correspondence in the Ideal of classical art, while romantic art is never able to reunite them after the dissolution of classicism- a discrepancy which instead leads art to its logical conclusion in the extremes of the sheer banality of objective humour and the absolute contingency of subjective humour- from which, as far as Hegel is concerned, there is no possible means of advancing, but instead only the open-ended and therefore 'badly' infinite possibility of 'the eternal recurrence of the same' (to borrow a

phrase of Nietzsche's)- that is, the theoretical and therefore practical impossibility of original (and thus genuine) art.

In the present chapter we have scrutinized Hegel's closing arguments in the philosophy of art and reformulated them in a way which it is hoped can be seen to be consistent both with his general philosophical method and position and his æsthetic theory itself. If this project has been successful, it is also hoped that its result will be seen to embody the potential to open up the possibility of a significant critical development which is in accordance with Hegel's thought rather than irrelevant to or, worse, at odds with him.

My argument, in short, has been that Hegel's presentation of what he calls: 'The Dissolution of the Romantic Form of Art' may be reconstructed in a form more consistent with his general model of dialectical philosophy- that is, in the form of a triad whose first two moments -subjective and objective humour- represent the practical extremes of artistic production at what thus represents art's logical conclusion. Hegel therefore sees no choice but to leave art hanging here, on the one hand, on the verge of disappearance in subjective caprice and objective contingency, and on the other , with the seemingly futile declaration: '*We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection*'<sup>35</sup>.

But *How?*, we must ask. What future can Hegel hope for art when he acknowledges that it is trapped between subjective and objective humour and no longer has any genuine content? '*Absolute humour*' is proposed here as a continuation of Hegel's dialectic, and therefore as an answer to this question. It is a response to Hegel's disappointing, yet seemingly well-founded apocalyptic assessment of art's recent history and potential future. The possibility of '*absolute humour*' is based not only on Hegel's farewell good wishes that art somehow '*rise higher and come to perfection*', but more significantly on his philosophical account of art's beginning in a '*universal need*'- that is, as we have seen: '*man's rational need to lift the... world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes again his own self*'<sup>36</sup>. In chapter two, we discussed art's mediational role -i.e. its standing as what Hegel calls: '*the middle term between purely objective indigent existence and purely inner ideas*'<sup>37</sup>- and identified this as the core of Hegel's æsthetic theory. Art mediates the external world of experience and the inner world of ideas; it is the bridge between the objectivity of nature and the subjectivity of thought; it expresses philosophical truths (i.e. general truths about our existence)- but not at the conceptual level of philosophical discourse, but instead at the *æsthetic* level of sensuous experience itself. This is what Hegel means when he says that art '*unites metaphysical universality with the precision of real particularity. Only so is it grasped absolutely in its truth.*'<sup>38</sup> It is in this

way that art '*liberates the true content of phenomena from the pure appearance and deception of this bad, transitory world*'<sup>39</sup>- which means that as long as there is a world and transitoriness -i.e. sensuous, temporal existence such as our own- there will be a need for art; for the world is as 'bad and transitory' today as ever, if not even more complex and alienating (i.e. as 'ultra modern hyper-world')- thus our need for mediation and reconciliation does not go away any more than the world or we ourselves do. This mandate remains the province and thus duty of art alone since only art -as *amphibious*- lives in both worlds. Thus art can never be something accomplished and thus over and done with forever . As Hegel says: it will always be '*an address to the responsive breast, a call to the mind and the spirit*'<sup>40</sup>; but as we shall see in our next and final chapter -'The Æsthetic Dimension'- it is only absolute humour -as a genuinely new and 'absolute' form of art- which can put the colour back in philosophy's 'grey on grey'.

## III.6. THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION

### *The End of the 'End of Art' and Other Phases*

In the summer of 1943 Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Adolph Gottlieb (then unknown dabblers in Surrealism, but soon-to-be world-famous 'Abstract Expressionists') issued a joint declaration of five principles for contemporary art. This document concludes with the following statement:

It is a commonly accepted notion among painters that it does not matter what one paints as long as it is well painted. This is the essence of academicism. There is no such thing as a good painting about nothing. We assert that the subject is crucial and only that subject-matter is valid which is tragic and timeless.<sup>1</sup>

In this study we have considered Hegel's general philosophical position, his philosophy of art, and his view of art's history and 'dissolution' in modern times. Art 'about nothing' is what we have seen Hegel identify as the cause of this dissolution. Art 'about nothing' in Hegel's aesthetics is art which has lost three things: its beauty (its unity of form and content), its meaning (to religion and philosophy), and thus also its seriousness (that is, its significance and even *necessity* in our lives). Instead, Hegel says, we find an art of empty academicism, as mentioned by the artists above, and the equally empty mannerism we discussed in chapters four and five which we characterized as a dialectic of objective and subjective humour, i.e. the abstract poles between which artistic creation is possible in modern times.

One would not have been able to guess it from our presentation here, but a 'debate' rages over the precise meaning of this so-called 'end of art thesis'. Similarly to problematics we encountered in the Introduction, the controversy is likely to have arisen simply from the phrase 'end of art' itself- which, we should not be surprised to learn, Hegel himself never employs. Like the distorted and fallacious 'thesis-antithesis-synthesis' interpretation of Hegel's philosophy in general, it seems that for many commentators the 'end', or, more dramatically, the '*death* of art' line has come to epitomize what is significant in Hegel's aesthetics.

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**NOTE:** As Curtis Carter notes in his essay 'A Re-Examination of the "Death of Art" Interpretation of Hegel's Aesthetics', this erroneous state of affairs was certainly not helped by the appearance in 1916 of the first full translation of Hegel's lectures into English, wherein F.P.B. Osmaston rendered Hegel's statement that art 'transcends itself' (i.e. '*Kunst selbst sich aufhebt*') as 'Art commits an act of suicide'<sup>2</sup>. In the Preface to his own translation of Hegel's lectures, Malcolm Knox also notes what

he refers to as certain 'oddities' in Osmaston. '[W]hen Hegel mentions mediæval portraits', he says, 'we do not expect them to be described as 'portraits of middle-aged men'<sup>2</sup>.

Art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto claimed in 1987 in his book *The State of the Art* that it is 'altogether Hegelian', as he says, to 'read the history of art as the progressive coming to consciousness of the nature of art... a process which may have come to an end'<sup>3</sup>. He calls this 'Hegel's prediction'<sup>4</sup>- meaning, that is, that since Hegel 'deduced' the conceptual 'end of art' in the 1820's, the implication of his aesthetics is that it is only a matter of time before art also comes to an end in a practical sense (which to Danto means it 'turns into philosophy'- a phenomenon he believes may be detected in recent times). In support of this view Danto alludes to what he describes as 'a curious and rather touching passage' in the autobiography of John Stuart Mill- who, he says,

responds with considerable melancholy to the thought that sooner rather than later music will all be used up. There are, Mill reflected, only a finite number of combinations of a finite number of tones, so before too long all the melodies possible will have been discovered and there will be nothing left to compose.<sup>5</sup>

In *The Artist's Journey into the Interior*, Erich Heller goes beyond this 'slow fizz' theory to say that Hegel's philosophy in fact entails 'the negation of the very idea of art', so that in it art is 'sentenced to death'<sup>6</sup>. This apocalyptic view is perhaps most famously and theatrically presented by the Italian philosopher and historian Benedetto Croce- who, in his *Estetica*, describes Hegel's lectures as art's 'funeral oration'<sup>7</sup>: 'He passes in review the successive forms of art, shows the progressive steps of internal consumption and lays the whole in its grave, leaving philosophy to write its epitaph.'<sup>8</sup> In this way, Croce says, 'the German... proclaimed the mortality, nay the very death of art.'<sup>9</sup>

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**NOTE:** William Fowkes notes in his book *A Hegelian Account of Contemporary Art* If Hegel's aesthetics is a "funeral oration" it is a strange one, delivered so long after art's death<sup>10</sup> (in other words: nearly 2,000 years after the dissolution of the ideal in antiquity).

Elsewhere, in *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel* , Croce claims that for Hegel 'art must disappear because it is superfluous; art must die and indeed is already quite dead... The history of art which Hegel traces is directed to showing the gradual dissolution of the artistic form which has no place in our modern times'<sup>11</sup>.

The counter-claim in this debate is the view presented in this thesis, and - as should be clear from chapters four and five where we considered it- it is the one actually supported by what Hegel actually says, i.e. that art has, in fact, come

to an end in terms of reaching a theoretical (that is, logical) limit, but that this does not suggest (indeed *cannot* suggest, in Hegel's terms) that art is something over and done with. This end is 'logical', as we have seen, not because there is a limit to the number of artworks which can be produced (as suggested in Danto's allusion to Mill), but that, theoretically speaking, there is a limit within the concept of art itself- i.e. to the number of configurations of art's necessary (but not sufficient) components of meaning and shape. It is perhaps with what constitutes 'sufficiency' in art that the ambiguity (and thus the 'debate') arises over the true meaning of art's dissolution in Hegel's aesthetics; for not only must art have both meaning and shape (whether symbolically, classically, or romantically related), but their configuration must, in addition, be *original*, i.e. both form and content and their union in artifice must be significant and meaningful. Originality, Hegel says, consists in the artist's '*subjective inspiration which instead of succumbing to a mere mannerism grasps an absolutely rational material, and from within... gives it external form both in the essence and conception of a definite species of art and also appropriately to the general nature of the ideal [i.e. true beauty].*'<sup>12</sup> As we have seen Hegel say very firmly: '*originality is above all to be entirely distinguished from the caprice of mere fancies.*'<sup>13</sup> It is this '*spurious originality*' which Hegel says produces subjective humour- where

*the artist starts from his own subjective life and continually comes back to it so that the proper topic of his production is treated only as an external occasion for giving free play to... the extravagances of his most subjective moods; but since this is so, the topic and this subjective side fall apart from one another, and the material is treated capriciously throughout so that the idiosyncrasy, yes the idiosyncrasy, of the artist is conspicuous as the chief thing.*<sup>14</sup>

Hegel, of course, does not consider this empty subjectivity to be a good situation for art, but neither does he suggest the sort of apocalyptic results we have seen attributed to him above. What is clear is Hegel's focus on the idea of *romantic* art's 'dissolution'- i.e. what in *Beauty and Truth* Stephen Bungay sums up as a 'diagnosis' of art's

loss of center: the links between the work of art and the ideal are disrupted, art and society enter into a new and problematic relationship, beauty has a contingent relationship to truth... [and] art also moves away from its position as the "middle" between the mind and the senses- becoming increasingly reflective and theoretical on the one hand and losing all spiritual significance on the other.<sup>15</sup>

If one were to invent a motto to cover this 'loss of center', Bungay says, it would have to be 'reflective subjectivity'<sup>16</sup>. 'The subjectivity which arose with the onset of the romantic artform', he explains, 'has, at its close, become self-aware, self-oriented, and lacking in any allegiance to universally accepted ethical principles. The role of the artist in society has become problematic, for it is not

clear what need art fulfils.'<sup>17</sup>

It is difficult to see why this fair and sober analysis (on Hegel's as well as Bungay's part) -simply because it is not bubbling over with optimism- should be regarded by some as representing Hegel's 'death sentence' and 'funeral oration'-in-one for art. In fact, when we consider what Hegel actually says about art ('romantic' art in particular), as we have done here, the whole either/or 'debate' (i.e. whether art is either 'dead' or just barely still alive) turns out to be so trivial that it may be seen to constitute just one more example of how superficially commentators engage with the real issues not only of Hegel's aesthetics, but also, as we have seen again and again, with his philosophy as a whole.

In contrast to this depressing state of interpretative affairs, a much more interesting and profitable line of enquiry has been suggested by the translator of Hegel's aesthetics: Malcom Knox. In a paper delivered during the Hegel Society of America's symposium 'Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy', Knox relates how in the course of translating Hegel's lectures he read them in their entirety (over 1200 pages) seven times- during which he became increasingly aware of what he describes as 'the puzzle of Hegel's aesthetics'. This 'puzzle' arises from the conjunction of two claims clearly and consistently expressed by Hegel at various points during his lecturing (both of which we have discussed in this study). In Knox' words: Hegel 'says quite specifically that art for us is a thing of the past, [i.e.] that it reached its zenith in Greece'<sup>18</sup>; but he also declares that 'the wide Pantheon of art is rising and that to complete it will take thousands of years. "*We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection*"'.<sup>19</sup> The puzzle, of course, consists in trying to reconcile the discrepancy between the claim that art is something over and done with, yet at the same time something still 'rising', even 'coming to perfection'.

Knox' compelling (and kabbalistic) solution again considers two claims found in Hegel's lectures: the first, as we have seen, is Hegel's consistent assertion that art 'no longer fulfils our *highest* spiritual needs'- keeping in mind, of course, that this does not mean that art no longer fulfils *any* needs.

For his second exhibit Knox returns to Hegel's view of classical art. He says:

Hegel's laudatory account of Greek art is expressed firmly and repeatedly; in Greece [he says] '*art has reached its own essential nature*. The Greeks '*produced art in its supreme vitality*. [*T*]he perfection of art reached its peak here precisely because the spiritual was completely drawn through its external appearance... Therefore classical art became a conceptually adequate representation of the ideal- the consummation of the realm of beauty. Nothing can be or become more beautiful.'<sup>20</sup>

Knox singles out the last sentence as particularly significant because Hegel

says: 'nothing can be *more* beautiful' than classical Greek art, rather than *as* beautiful. What Hegel is doing here does *not* constitute an empirical point about art being finished or 'used up', but instead the *logical* point that art cannot be better constituted than in the ideal (which is possible in ancient Greece, of course, because this is when and where man's conception of the absolute corresponds with a sensuous particularity perfectly amenable to artistic expression, i.e. in the Pantheon of individual gods). The important point is that Hegel does not here or anywhere else in any way rule out (or make any other claim) about the future of art, nor, therefore, either its 'death' or possible avenues of development. (We clearly saw the impossibility of this sort of prophetic enterprise for Hegel in 'Philosophy Paints its Grey in Grey'.)

If in a legalistic way we consider the 'evidence' present in Hegel's lectures, there are only two claims we can justifiably make in regard to 'the end of art':

1. The third form of art -Romanticism- has come to an end.
2. Art itself, nonetheless, will continue, i.e. 'rise higher...' and other phrases.

From these statements and in consideration Hegel's remark to the effect that previous artforms '*have been sung once and for all. Only the present is fresh- the rest is paler and paler*'<sup>21</sup>, I believe we can say without controversy that there is within Hegel's aesthetics (as presented by Hegel himself) what we could describe as 'logical space' for a new form of art, and indeed a string of new artforms stretching off into the future. Like Hegel before us, however, it is not our place in this philosophical context to speculate about the future of art, but instead, to consider only what has already occurred and reflect upon its significance.

In short, our inspiration in this project can be seen to come from a combination of the legalistic points above and the philosophical argument provided in chapter five concerning the strength of Hegel's aesthetic theory- i.e. that it reveals art to be so significant, and indeed necessary, that it can neither 'self-destruct' nor -less dramatically- simply fade away. Instead, art persists and *must* persist, and it is Hegel himself who demonstrates this as early as the eighth page of his lectures on aesthetics where he describes art as the '*reconciling middle term between pure thought and what is merely external, sensuous, and transient-between nature and finite reality and the infinite freedom of conceptual thinking.*' As a universal and rational need, art is *always* a need- *logically* and *non-transcendably* bound up with our very being- that is, with embodied existence itself.

# EPILOGUE

## 'OBSESSED WITH ORIGINALITY' *Entering the Transcendental Dimension*

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### PRELUDE

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The last 25 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will go down in history as unique in one respect: *these "postmodern" years are symptomatic of a total lack of originality.* Our scanty resources of invention are all parasitically confined to **reproduction**. Everything apparently "new"... is feeding on the originality of the past- on a data-bank not simply of information, but of **already experienced reality**.

• • •

-*Postmodernism for Beginners*-

(1995)

It may or may not be merely coincidental that the passage quoted above appeared in the popular 'BEGINNERS' series of Icon Books in the United Kingdom just as the Slovenian artist and philosopher Mojca Oblak completed the central matrix of an on-going artistic and philosophical project which she calls the System of Transcendental Mannerism. Oblak herself would not deny the dreary view of culture expressed in *Postmodernism for Beginners*, and, in fact, it is a similar attitude which has motivated her and many other artists and thinkers to pursue the development of concrete strategies to facilitate the creation of original thought and experience. In this project, however , Oblak became increasingly aware -as we have seen Hegel first articulated early in the nineteenth century-

that the real problem lay not with artists or any limitation of their creative abilities (in fact, far from it- since artists have become progressively freer in their choice of subject-matter, use of materials, personal expression, and so on), but instead with limitations inherent in both art and human consciousness themselves.

We may more or less uncontroversially state that in the twentieth century, artists from the schools of 'Post-Impressionism' to 'postmodernity' have taken art to its limits; but rarely, if ever, have they managed to disengage art itself from the deadening effects of the empty pursuit of novelty for its own sake, the economics of supply and demand, and, ultimately , the very disposability of art itself- all imposed by both the art market and the demands of art history and criticism. Only 'installation' and perhaps 'performance' art have explicitly addressed these dilemmas and achieved some success.

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**NOTE:** 'Conceptualism' -which ostensibly set out to resolve these same problems- merely succeeded in extending them- i.e. through its 'documentation' of concepts, events, etc. in marketable formats- thus generating new forms of commodification and attempts at art history making. The result of 'conceptualism', however was to take art so far that no art-work remained at all- and therefore no real link with any previous stage of art history or art's projects and goals.

The art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto can thus, in some sense, be seen to have been correct in his own post-modern 'end-of-art' thesis. Danto claims in *The State of the Art* : 'It is possible to read the history of art as the progressive coming to consciousness of the nature of art... a process which may have come to an end'<sup>1</sup>. His idea is that art achieves a sort of Hegelian-style self-consciousness in 1964 in Andy Warhol's 'sculpture' *Brillo*. ('Sculpture' appears in quotation marks because the work in question is more adequately described as an 'installation'- i.e. of mock commercial 'Brillo' cartons piled up in a New York art gallery.) Of this work Danto states:

[W]ith Warhol art was taken up into philosophy since the question it raised and the form in which it was raised was as far as art could go in that direction - the answer had to come from philosophy And in [thus] turning into philosophy one might say that art had come to a certain natural end.<sup>2</sup>

In his most recent work *After the End of Art* (1997), Danto says: 'The end of art consists in the coming to awareness of the philosophical nature of art. The thought is altogether Hegelian.'<sup>3</sup> The problem with this claim, however , is Danto's confusion of æsthetic (or worse: art market) ideology for philosophy since the suggestion that mock *Brillo* boxes can be art at all is hardly a philosophical proposition (much less argument), but instead an empty

ideological assumption of so-called 'institutional' theories of art in which, to quote Danto's version, 'an art work can consist of any object whatsoever that is enfranchised as art'<sup>4</sup>. In other words: whatever 'artists' do is art (as if whatever mathematicians did was mathematics- including brushing their teeth, walking down the street, and so on).

In any event, Danto welcomes the coming of Warhol's *Brillo* boxes as a liberating creative epiphany , i.e. after which 'anything goes' in art. He even approvingly invokes Hegel's name- even though we have seen Hegel himself clearly does not regard this situation as 'freedom' at all, but instead as 'caprice' and thus *limitation*. Unfortunately , then, what really occurs in the events discussed by Danto is nothing more than the negative process of art's self-destruction from within at a conceptual level, and, therefore, also externally at the level of artifice and æsthetic experience themselves (leading ultimately to the 'Conceptualism -embraced as 'philosophy' by Danto- of the late 1960's and early '70's).

Leaving aside Danto's 'self-consciousness' theory of modern art history , we may -following the logical distinctions we outlined in the previous chapter- identify the major characteristic of modernist art as the extreme development of both its practical and theoretical aspects- culminating in practice with total abstraction (e.g. 'pure' painting), and in theory with 'Conceptualism' (i.e. pure theory). In this sense, then, the overwhelming motivation for artists in the twentieth century has been to try to develop the media and parameters of art for there own sake (i.e. practically and/or theoretically), perhaps with the hope in addition that their results might be found 'interesting' [as Edgar Wind discusses in his *Art and Anarchy* (1963)], if not even æsthetically pleasing or 'significant' ( à la Clive Bell in *Art*). Mojca Oblak's Transcendental Mannerism, on the contrary , constitutes what we shall see is a conscious and genuine project to develop not art for its own sake, but human experience itself *through* art.

Prior to Transcendental Mannerism the only appreciable precedent for a project of this scale and significance is Surrealism (*la Révolution Surréaliste*)- which historians of twentieth century art have always found difficult to understand and compartmentalize due to its unprecedentedness and lack of relation to other 'movements' both before and after its appearance. Surrealism is no doubt a 'difficult' cultural phenomenon for this very reason- i.e. that it was actually engaged in a much more sophisticated and profound project than art history alone is used to negotiating. As we shall see, however , in comparison with Transcendental Mannerism, even Surrealism's grand, internationalist, multi-media, socio-political project fell far short of its ambitious goals.

What modernism achieves in its quest for originality at all costs and its conclusion in a 'conceptual' farce is unfortunately little or nothing more than what Hegel refers to as art's being '*greedy for novelty*'<sup>5</sup>, and '*spurious*'<sup>6</sup> or '*perverse originality*'<sup>7</sup>, and Kant, more famously in the *Critique of Judgement* as '*original nonsense*'. In other words: instead of genuine (i.e. original and creative) art, we end up with a series of (more or less sophisticated) artistic jokes: e.g. Warhol's *Brillo* (mock commercial packaging), Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* (porcelain urinal 'sculpture'), Piero Manzoni's *Merda d'Artista* (tinned excrement indexed to the price of gold), Jeff Koons' *Rabbit* (inflatable child's toy cast in gleaming stainless steel), etc.

We have seen that Hegel himself was familiar with similar types of art in his own day in the form we have seen him call 'subjective humour' - a situation he believed to entail the inescapable trivialization and dissolution of art as such. Oblak herself would not disagree with this analysis, except for its bleak implication of no conceivable creative future for art- in other words: no future at all. Perhaps it has taken longer than Hegel expected for art to come to a realization (*à la* Danto) of its inherent limitations (not to mention what has often been the absurdity of many of its projects and methods); but the fact remains that on the whole Hegel seems to have been correct: we indeed '*bend the knee no longer*'<sup>8</sup> in the presence of art [though there may be times when we find it ridiculous (e.g. Carl André's bricks) or even revolting (Damien Hirst's dismembered and decomposing animal 'sculptures')].

As a sophisticated thinker and innovative artist, Oblak herself is well aware of art's limits in both practical and theoretical terms- which explains why instead of participating in what we might call modern art's 'originality rat-race' - i.e. the senseless pursuit of novelty for its own sake- she decided instead, as we suggested above, to attempt to extend the scope and possibilities of human experience through the pursuit of originality *for originality's sake*.

We saw in chapter four how Hegel diagnosed the source of art's ailment as *contingency*- the fact that nothing in art remains genuinely meaningful, important, or necessary (at least not in any 'absolute' sense); also we conceded that Hegel could not imagine any reasonable way in which art might ever regain its absoluteness. This is the same problem which led Oblak to make what we may call her own 'Transcendental Deduction'. What she realized was that if there was any hope of making an advance in art now -i.e. her own significant and creative contribution- she would have to suspend the idea of 'art' itself altogether and concentrate instead upon what can be seen to be the central problem of Hegel's aesthetics- i.e. between contingency and necessity (its central issue being

the relation of art's meaning and shape). As we shall see, Oblak's project not only addresses contingency , but accommodates and thrives upon it- transforming it into necessity as it unfolds and develops within her system.

As Oblak explains, the basis of this project is explicitly Kantian (specifically the concepts of 'transcendental freedom' and the sublime from Kant's second and third *Critiques*). Her results, however , as I have already suggested, are utterly Hegelian- both in form and content- that is, both in taking the shape of a system and in addressing the practical problems of art production as defined by the abstract logical extremes of subjective and objective humour. In this process, as shall become clear, Oblak succeeds in creating what we may call a genuinely 'absolute' artform, or what we have called: 'absolute humour'.

What I am suggesting, then, is that the 'missing link' in Hegel's aesthetics may be found in Mojca Oblak's System of T ranscendental Mannerism, and therefore also that it may thus provide the key to the further logical development and scope of Hegel's philosophy of art and his own system in general.

## INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century there has been no shortage of artists purporting to be involved in one 'philosophical' enterprise or another , but these have almost always been limited to some (often silly) ideological programme such as psycho-analysis, Theosophy, 'universal dynamism', crystallography, the 'semaphores of Suprematism', and so on. As a result, these philosophical 'supplements' to art (in Jacques Derrida's characterization) are usually best jettisoned in favour of the artifacts themselves- that is, if they retain any æsthetic interest on their own. If they *are* salvageable on anything other than a purely æsthetic level, it is only through a process of discovering their genuine (i.e. universal) significance as cultural productions which, as such, tell us -much more importantly than, say , psycho-analytic or theosophical models- about man's reciprocity with his world, thought, other individuals, history, and so on.

This sort of enquiry -' *conceptual* history', we could call it- was formally inaugurated by the art historian Erwin Panofsky in his collection of essays *Studies in Iconology* of 1939. What Panofsky announces as the goal of his work is the production of an art historical method which will enable what he calls: 'interpretation in a deeper sense' '- that is, the revelation of art's 'intrinsic meaning or content'<sup>10</sup>. One of Panofsky's main postulates is that this 'intrinsic' meaning is ' *unconsciously* qualified by the artist and condensed into a single work'<sup>11</sup> (my emphasis); in other words Panofsky believes that no artist is in a

position to recognize the 'deeper meaning' of his or her own creative productions. It is thus significant to note that due to what we shall see is its high level of 'self-consciousness', Oblak's project can be seen to incorporate its *own* iconology. (In fact, borrowing a phrase from contemporary 'chaos theory', she refers to her system as 'its own fastest computer '<sup>12</sup>.) The reason for this, as we shall see, is that Oblak's formulation of Transcendental Mannerism was neither based upon nor puts forth any limited ideological programme (such as those mentioned above), but instead came into being as what we could call an æsthetic hermeneutic for addressing the super-ideology of cultural productions and their consumption.

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**NOTE:** As we shall see below, in addition to its iconology Transcendental Mannerism may also be seen to provide its own iconography in that it generates its subject-matter out of itself rather than seeking it elsewhere, i.e. in mythology, historical events, or even the artist's own 'feeling' or 'inspiration'.

Consequently, Transcendental Mannerism also functions as a response to - rather than extension of- modernist and, more recently , 'post-modernist' trends in art production, criticism, and history . In contrast to other 'movements' and individual efforts Oblak's genuinely and rigorously philosophical project is limited neither by a specific ideological programme nor even, as we shall see, by any particular artistic medium or visual style. Being thus unpredetermined in both form and content, Transcendental Mannerism cannot not itself be regarded as a 'manner', but instead as an exploration of the very possibility of creativity and hence of freedom itself- an exploration which it exemplifies both practically and theoretically- that is, in art *and* philosophy at the same time.

Transcendental Mannerism, then, is not so much a novel method for making art as it is a radically new approach to and way of thinking about traditional art production and consumption. Specifically it represents the conception and thematization of creativity , originality , beauty , individual expression, æsthetic experience, and so on. As a result, in addition to not constituting a recognizable visual style or conventional ideological programme, Transcendental Mannerism also reveals itself to be a genuine system encompassing a wide spectrum of philosophical and artistic elements- a system whose genesis, development, and 'crystallization' we shall now examine in detail.

## PART ONE

As we saw in chapter five, in several places throughout his lectures on æsthetics Hegel discusses the possibility of what he describes as art's 'dissolution'. What

he is suggesting, of course, is not that art has ceased to be as a cultural production, nor that it ever will, but instead that our ability to make *genuine* art - art which 'answers the highest needs of spirit' - is no longer possible. His diagnosis of this problem, we saw, is a lack of 'necessity'. We can paint Apollo in his chariot or Jesus on the cross or Liberty on the barricade, in short: anything we like- for our choice of both subject-matter and style in art are totally free; but, as Hegel says, '*it is no help*'<sup>13</sup>; in absolute terms, in fact, it is this very freedom which is art's greatest deficiency. It no longer has any genuine or true content, but only the capacity to indulge our whims and perhaps offer us a little entertainment. This non-necessity -or absolute contingency- is Hegel's 'subjective humour' - the defining characteristic of 'the end of romantic art', i.e. where the subjectivity of the artist -expressed either in his style of presentation or choice of subject, or , more commonly, a combination of both- becomes the real subject of art.

Hegel spoke of this condition and its theoretical dissolution of art well over 150 years ago, so we may ask here: What, in Hegelian terms, has been happening in the artworld since then? We may begin a brief enquiry into this subject with the oft-quoted remark that the Spanish painter (and contemporary of Hegel) Francisco de Goya (1746-1828) was 'the last of the old masters and the first of the moderns'. What this statement suggests is the general recognition that art *was*, in fact, drawing to a sort of close in one sense (i.e. that of the 'old master' tradition), but was also, at the same time, just beginning in many other respects, i.e. that it was coming into what we regard as its 'modern' period.

That we are able to regard artifacts as historically distinct as Goya's *Executions of the Third of May* and Pablo Picasso's *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) as in some sense 'modern' suggests that there is common to them both something which we recognize as sympathetic with ourselves, i.e. that striving for individuality and personal recognition which characterizes our time. In art this quest for individual style and originality is Hegel's 'subjective humour' - which we could thus say constitutes the 'modern' approach to artistic practice from Goya to Picasso and all the way through 'Modernism' itself and beyond.

If we consider for a moment the history of art before Goya, particularly in its visual forms, art itself as an institution -i.e. of established of traditions, methods, and models for making art- was fully consolidated at an early date- specifically around 1500. It is no exaggeration to claim that the brief period of the 'High Renaissance' in Italy marked the perfection and hence completion of all the projects whose initiation and pursuit had defined the course of art history up until that time. The accomplishment of anatomical and perspectival rendering,

the 'difficulty' and variety of poses and composition of figures, the subtlety of emotional expression, and so on -as exemplified in such works as Leonardo's *Last Supper*, Raphael's *School of Athens*, and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling- all leave no doubt that an unsurpassed and indeed unsurpassable perfection had been achieved- and, also, therefore, that no potential remained for further innovation in these areas. It was this creative 'dead-end' which produced the period known in art history as 'Mannerism'- during which genuine innovation was replaced, of necessity, by the pursuit of stylistic novelty for its own sake- as exemplified in the proportionally and chromatically distorted works of El Greco, Tintoretto, Parmigianino, and other so-called 'Mannerists'.

If we think of some of the greatest and the most famous artists between the High Renaissance and Romanticism -i.e. between Leonardo and Goya- it is not individual images which come to mind (such as Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* or the Leonardo's *Last Supper*); instead it is *style*: the intense colours and dramatic lighting of Caravaggio, the miraculous brush-work and living presence conjured up by Velásquez, Rembrandt's deep shadows, glowing tone, and thick *impasto*, etc. The history of this art is *stylistic change* alone: sometimes the subject is myth, other times portraiture, or landscape, history , the Bible, etc. The interest, however, is almost exclusively in *form*. It is not until Goya and the rise of 'Romanticism' in general (in its contemporary usage), and particularly in France that innovation returned to art- this time not only in terms of style, but more importantly in content as well. With Goya we sense the artist's self -his individual subjectivity- beginning to appear as *part* of the content of art rather than simply as a determination of its style; and this is a, if not *the* defining characteristic in subsequent art history- as evidenced perhaps most notably in the works of Turner (b. 1775), Delacroix (b. 1798), Courbet (b. 1819), Cézanne (b. 1839)- all the way through to Gauguin, Matisse, and Picasso in the early twentieth century.

Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, and especially Cubism mark the beginning of what is considered today to be 'Modernism' in art, and it is from these periods and/or movements that we can see art as progressing (*á la* Prof. Danto) through all of Modernism's isms (except, of course, Dada and Surrealism as we shall see) up until 'Pop', 'Conceptualism', and 'Post-Modernity' itself- which we may thus posit as the logical conclusion of subjective humour (rather than the end of art altogether, as Danto believes).

The pursuit and development of individual style which characterizes subjective humour has, of course, always been a central concern in art history (it is, in fact, *the* central concern of traditional formalist approaches as they continue

to be practised today), but before our convenient -and hopefully not totally arbitrary- reference point of Goya, art can be seen almost always to be linked more or less to some moral, religious, nationalistic, or other predetermined external programme. The rise of the modern 'cult of style' and novelty can readily be linked with several factors: including the increased commodification of the artwork, the development of international art markets, the establishment of museums, public and private galleries, national collections, dealers, curators, collectors, etc., the rise of the arts press and the critic, the consolidation of art history 'itself' with its schools, 'movements', famous groups and personalities, *avant garde*, etc., and, perhaps most importantly , the general competition between artists created by all of the above- a competitive situation which has intensified drastically in the 'hyper-aesthetics' and 'ultra-modernism' of the twentieth century.

In addressing these challenges artists have long faced the singular task of producing *original* work- i.e. not only new, but also *creative*. (The rest is only 'bad mannerism' and 'original nonsense'.) A prime example of what we could call 'originality in action' is the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917). The vast discrepancy between the strict, impersonal academicism of the ' *Salon*' tradition from which Rodin emerged and the amazing vigour and creativity he managed to achieve in his own work immediately reveal Rodin as an unrelenting (and successful) pursuer of originality in traditional sculptural forms. The key to his innovation was his subjective touch- his individualistic and undisguised handling of clay which he developed in response to the cold finish of the *Salon*'s mannered 'perfection'.

Ironically, however, Rodin's own style in turn quickly established itself as a new and inevitably irresistible mannerism of its own- such that any sculptors who wanted to distinguish themselves from the academic multitudes and thus express a little 'individuality' experienced the unfortunate consequence of having Rodin's signature -the rigorously 'hand-made' look of his figures- all over their work. This strange dilemma was ultimately overcome by a true genius of 20<sup>th</sup> century art (and one-time student of Rodin's) the Romanian sculptor (and very embodiment of the ' *avant garde* ') Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957)- whose revolutionary approach to the traditional themes, forms, techniques, and materials of art changed forever the way sculpture is produced, displayed, and appreciated.

The same is also true in painting of Cézanne- whose *anti-academic* work generated a response which prompted the most famous critic of the day Louis Vauxcelles to remark of later *Salons* that they could have born as a banner the

title: '*Homage à Cézanne*' - whose style had thus become another new 'revolutionary mannerism' in need of another counter-revolution (in this case: 'modernism' itself led by Matisse, Braque, and Picasso).

The post-modern phenomenon in recent art history can perhaps best be seen as a necessary response to or, at least, questioning of the methods, results, and indeed the whole 'progressive' project of modernism altogether. The major limitation of postmodernism, however, has turned out to be its unproductivity, i.e. its contentedness to remain mainly a negative critique of modernity without then proceeding to any positive or even reconstructive project of its own. Modernism may have been too 'subjective' in its 'non-objective' works and movements, its seemingly endless succession of ideologies, manifestoes, and 'isms', but Postmodernism turns out to be just as subjective (if not more so considering its self-proclaimed 'critical' standpoint) in its irony , cultural appropriations, and total disdain for traditional methodology , 'discourse', and the very positivity of the projects they address.

In response to this 'new subjectivity' it is significant to note that just as we described Hegel's philosophy in chapter one, Transcendental Mannerism may be regarded as postmodernity's counter-revolution- for, as we shall see, it extends the positive and progressive outlook of modernism, while at the same time never losing its critical postmodernist standpoint (i.e. against ideology and bad philosophy).

Perhaps, then, Oblak may be seen as a new Rodin, or maybe she is the postmodern Brancusi- for it was he (another East-European) who had to make his own 'Transcendental Deduction' of radically new sculptural forms, materials, and surfaces in order to escape the by-then mannered 'anti-mannerist' straight-jacket of Rodin's own creativity. ('Nothing ever grows in the shade of a tall tree', Brancusi famously stated.) So far the most famous 'postmoderns' have simply been the most *in-famous-* as exemplified by the 'original [and often shocking] nonsense' of Jeff Koons, Damien Hirst, and company. Oblak's work -like theirs- is new, unexpected, and even 'surprizing' (as she says herself), but unlike so many contemporary productions, it does not set out to shock. Shock, of course, is a powerful instrument and vehicle of ideas, but it nonetheless functions at the same level as ordinary experience- specifically 'too much' -i.e. an over-load- of it. Transcendental Mannerism itself may be seen as 'too much'; indeed, Oblak herself admits to setting out to go 'too far'. But the wonders of her system are not of the same mundane order. They are, in a word, truly *sublime*.

## TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM

## THE SYSTEM

Transcendental Mannerism may be described as an equally artistic and philosophical system rather than one which is purely aesthetic or logical, and in the opening lines of its text she wastes no time in declaring that -unlike philosophical and scientific systems- Transcendental Mannerism is 'an arbitrary construction, i.e. it is a system for its own sake.'<sup>14</sup> Its main function, she says, is 'to introduce the idea of freedom and autonomy (in the Kantian sense) on an *aesthetic* level'<sup>15</sup>- that is, ostensibly to explore what is, in effect, a philosophical concept (i.e. of freedom) in the realm of imagination and artifice.

This statement constitutes the introduction to what Oblak refers to as the 'practical' part of her work. The other aspect -its explicitly 'theoretical' part- is the text we have just quoted itself. This philosophical work, Oblak says, 'developed as a necessary element in my attempt to make conscious and present (to myself) numerous problems raised by the question of freedom in relation to the practical [i.e. 'aesthetic'] part of my project.'<sup>16</sup>

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**NOTE:** It is significant to note the Hegelian fashion in which Oblak states ~~that~~ that developed the *Transcendental Mannerism* text, but that instead the system has somehow generated itself- an idea we shall return to below.

This text itself is divided into two parts: the philosophical basis of the system, and an explanation of its structure and practical development. Oblak begins with an account of the origins of Transcendental Mannerism- which grew, she explains, out of her strong dissatisfaction with contemporary methods, views, and uses of art. She declares herself in agreement with philosopher Theodor Adorno's argument that art, 'through being completely assimilated within the exchange and communications systems as a commodity'<sup>17</sup> has lost both its 'uselessness' and 'inaccessibility' (i.e. its genuinely *aesthetic* being and the difficulty inherent in all manifestations of true originality)- and, thereby , also its rational and existential value. The aim of Oblak's system, then, thus emerges as the on-going project of their recuperation and development.

What Oblak wants to expose, she says, is 'the *necessity* of art's present position in the structure of society and thought'<sup>18</sup>- i.e. that it is not just 'by chance' that it finds itself in the state it is in, but that it, in fact, deserves its superfluity and 'luxury' status. What this situation involves, she says, is 'developing the consequences of art's having been brought to its more or less final limits'<sup>19</sup>- suggesting that she starts out from the position we explored in the last chapter that art has, in some theoretical sense, already come to an end.

Rather than lamenting this situation, however , or , like other

contemporary artists whose attitude seems to be: 'Art may be dead but I still feel I have something to say', Oblak suggests we consider the possibility that these circumstances are, in fact, no less significant than those which held at a time when art was a much more potent force in society . Thus in response, she proposes to 'radicalize- to go "too far"'<sup>20</sup>- and not only in art, but in thought and experience as well (hence our reference above to the sublime). Oblak's thesis, then, is that if art as such really has lost its power (in society , over us, in the service of truth, etc.) and has thus become a merely 'interesting' curiosity or entertainment, then, she says, 'maybe the problem can be turned upside down in an attempt to try to develop something self-determined (on an æsthetic level)' <sup>21</sup>- i.e. an artform, we could say, which sets its own agenda, which determines itself in a *philosophical* (i.e. 'absolute') way rather than catering to transitory fashions and individual interests external to art as such.

Oblak says her strategy in this endeavour involves a hermeneutic of what she describes as 'momentarily suspending art'<sup>22</sup> and thus eventually returning to its genuine significance on a 'more universal level' <sup>23</sup>- that is as art as such rather than individual artforms or artifacts. Oblak found her inspiration, she explains, 'in the very idea of system' <sup>24</sup>; but since this was a systematic conception grounded in æsthetic considerations (rather than a logical or scientific context), Oblak encountered a deep philosophical problem which, she says, has resulted both theoretically *and* practically in a high level of complexity and sophistication- so that the System as a whole, she says, can be 'accessed' only through sustained 'intellectual exertion'<sup>25</sup>. Transcendental Mannerism can be seen to be *explicitly* difficult- that is, its difficulty constitutes an integral part of its significance- and, therefore, also functions as a response to what we have seen she regards as art's 'easy accessibility'.

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**NOTE:** In terms of this inaccessibility then, Oblak has more in common with Mondrian who declared that 'humanity is not served by making art comprehensible to everybody' than Matisse who believed art should be a 'comfortable chair' in which one might relax for hours.

The problems Oblak addressed in developing T ranscendental Mannerism have also been encountered in many other quarters of the art-world. 'Conceptual' art in particular may be seen as a direct response to many of the same existential, social, and rational issues raised by Oblak's system, but, as we have already seen, Conceptualism's project is doomed to failure because it attempts to solve art's problems on a purely theoretical level- therefore alienating it from practical (i.e. genuinely æsthetic) concerns. This sort of

speculation, then, is necessarily limited and thus flawed- resulting in what Oblak (and many others) regard as: 'a shallow and "ready-made" unmediated, and, as such, merely ideological or fashionable appropriation of theoretical and philosophical ideas'<sup>27</sup>.

A phenomenon with more history (though perhaps not much more success) than Conceptualism is the artist who -in addition to producing artifacts of one type or another- also writes, as if thereby to act as a sort of ambassador between his art and audience. An unfortunate and perhaps unexpected consequence of this well-intentioned diplomacy is that in attempting to 'explain' his work, the artist succeeds only in neutralizing its most significant -that is, its *aesthetic*- aspects by , in effect, reducing them to the status of mere illustration- thus limiting our engagement with them to a sort of game in which we search for this 'hidden' meaning.

In her reflection upon these problems, Oblak realized, as she says, that 'the only way forward in art's rational dimension is to take it to its limits on an experiential level'<sup>28</sup> -i.e. the 'radicalization' we alluded to above. This approach enables her not only to address the problems confronting any thoughtful and creative artificer, but also to do so without abandoning or denuding artifice itself in the process (as the above examples demonstrate). Oblak thus states: 'In *Transcendental Mannerism* self-awareness of the existential, social, and rational aspects of art is not only mediated through art, but *is made its subject-matter as well as its form*.'<sup>29</sup> It is in this way -and *only* this way, Oblak argues- that art and philosophy can be made reciprocally enhancing rather than merely externally related. The difficulty in trying to achieve this genuine reciprocity between art and philosophy demands what Oblak calls 'a deep involvement in both fields on the basis of their distinctive individual structures, rather than merely some "interdisciplinary" *mélange*'<sup>30</sup>. Her background in both fine art and philosophy is what has enabled her to recognize and articulate their interpenetration- for , as we have seen, in Hegel's terms they are both forms of knowledge and thus fundamentally addressed to the same problems, though their modes of cognition and representation are distinct.

The analytic-sounding nature of this approach to making and 'explaining' art may itself seem in danger of denuding art's materiality , but, Oblak declares, 'this is the only way , nowadays, to regain it- [i.e.] through retrieving the awareness of its rational and consequently its existential meaningfulness.'<sup>31</sup>

This, then, is how Oblak introduces her approach to what in previous chapters we have see Hegel identify as the 'dissolution' of art- i.e. the unravelling of form and content which concludes in the logical extremes of 'objective' and

'subjective humour'. Below we shall see how in the systematic construction and unfolding of Transcendental Mannerism Oblak proposes to reunite them.

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**NOTE:** The divisions we shall make in our exegesis below largely follow those employed by Oblak herself in her text *Transcendental Mannerism*.

## I. 'TRANSCENDENTAL'

### THE SUBLIME

Oblak reveals that she discovered the key to her ambitious project in the critical philosophy of Kant, although, as we shall see, her results -as well as her systematic approach and immanently logical methodology- can be seen to be entirely Hegelian. Oblak's desire -in her words- to 'radicalize' art -to take it 'too far'- led her to what we have described as a sublime æsthetic production: the System of Transcendental Mannerism itself. It initially comes as a surprise, then, to learn that it was not Kant's 'Analytic of the Sublime' in the *Critique of Judgement* which provided Oblak's original inspiration, but instead his formulation of the concept of autonomy and freedom outlined in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Having said this, Kant's 'analytic of the sublime' is instructive here. 'Sublime', Kant says, 'is the name given to what is *absolutely great*'<sup>32</sup> and therefore 'beyond all comparison'<sup>33</sup>. The experience of this greatness, he explains, arises from the capacity of certain phenomena -classified as either 'dynamic' (i.e. of extraordinary power) or 'mathematical' (of vast complexity)- to overwhelm us both perceptually and imaginatively and thus to evoke in us feelings of finitude and mortality. Fortunately, however, being rational *as well as* sensuous beings, the inadequacy of our faculties in the face of such overwhelming phenomena nevertheless acts as a stimulus to *cognize* them at the level of thought- in other words: to comprehend the phenomenal totality of vast objects or immense destructiveness as an *idea*. It is this *rational* response which evokes an awareness of and distinct *pleasure* in what Kant calls our 'supersensible self'- i.e. our rationality as such. In the end, then, we see that it is not external phenomena themselves which are properly regarded as 'sublime', but instead the inner ratiocinative processes they engender within us, and which serve to make vivid the scope of our cognitive capacities and creative powers of thought.

In Kant's discussion these phenomena are constituted exclusively by natural forces- i.e. lightening, volcanism, the stormy sea, precipitous cliffs, and so on- suggesting that art itself is excluded from the realm of sublime possibility. As a human production, art (in its traditional forms, at least) is readily

comprehensible both perceptually and rationally, and is therefore not capable of genuinely overwhelming us in terms of its vastness or destructive power- which means it is difficult to conceive of a creative project of human artifice which could be truly sublime in these terms. It is for this reason that Oblak turned from Kant's third *Critique* to his second- that is, to 'practical reason'.

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**NOTE:** We should note that there is in art history a tradition known as 'sublime' art because of its representation of sublime subjects- that is, vast or destructive themes such as the adoration of the name of God (a popular subject for baroque church ceilings), the eruption of Vesuvius (as in John Martin's *Last Days of Pompeii*), perilous weather (such as Turner's *Steamer in a Snowstorm*), etc. In philosophical terms, however this art cannot be regarded as genuinely sublime since it has the ability only *allude* to sublimity through the portrayal of scenes and events which could themselves be considered sublime.

The Transcendental Mannerist system, Oblak says, originates in the idea that 'true sublime art can only be based on the pure rational self-sufficiency of a [systematically] developing and self-determined totality'.<sup>34</sup> Her argument runs as follows: if, in Kant's terms, our delight in the sublime is a self-conscious enjoyment of our reason becoming aware of itself -that is, our realizing the scope of our capacity to conceptualize a situation in thought which overwhelms us at the level of the sense and experience- then it follows, she argues, that 'the authentically sublime artform would be the one which exemplifies both art's *intrinsic rationality* and *self-awareness* of this rationality'.<sup>35</sup> In other words: sublime art would have not only to develop and exhibit the rationality inherent in all art as such, but also somehow present itself as *aware* of this cognitive element. In such an artform, then, this self-awareness *itself* would have to be the subject-matter -rather than a mere by-product- and thus would need to be used consciously, thoroughly, and in a sustained manner (i.e. *systematically*). In Transcendental Mannerism this 'self-conscious' expression is manifested specifically in the system's text which we are now considering- a work which thus turns out not merely to be Oblak's personal journal or record of the practical and theoretical activities which constituted the development of Transcendental Mannerism, but instead her -and therefore her work's- explicit consciousness of these processes- which instead of going on 'behind the back' of art are now brought to the fore and thematized in the process of creation itself (thus constituting an integral part of the Transcendental Mannerist system itself and therefore also avoiding the 'interdisciplinary *mélange*' present in so much modernist art, as we discussed above).

Thus prepared with the background and mandate of Oblak's project, we may now turn to consider its realization- which, as we have seen, proceeds in

accordance with Kant's notion of freedom.

#### FREEDOM

For Kant (as well as Hegel), all truly 'free' actions are caused by reason- which he thus terms: 'practical'- that is, providing *rules* and also, therefore, *motives* for acting. This motivation, in turn, is bound up, Kant says, with 'respect' or 'awe'. At the end of the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant famously declares: 'Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe the oftener and more steadily we reflect upon them: *the starry heavens above and the moral law within.*'<sup>36</sup> By extension, this awe at the power and scope of reason extends to others in our recognition of rationality as a universal aspect of humanity.

The arguments behind these claims constitute the basis of Kant's unique moral philosophical position which grounds morality in reason itself (rather than theological, utilitarian, or other concerns). Thus it is a person's own reason -his *will*- which is the source of the moral law and the authority it holds over him. The will, as its own 'supreme law-giver' (i.e. in giving laws to itself) is thus *autonomous*. To act, then, man does not look, for example, to the moral commandments of religion or to a hedonic calculus of 'happiness production', but instead, only to the powers of his own reason.

The result of this moral grounding in rational autonomy is our freedom from mechanical determination and natural causality- which are replaced by the ability to act in accordance with our own concept of law derived from reason. Thus freed from external determinism and causation our moral obligations are grounded upon personal responsibility in the most universal and absolute terms. It is for this autonomy of reason alone -i.e. the mind's power to give laws to itself- that Kant reserves the phrase: 'beyond all comparison great'<sup>37</sup>. In other words: it is this experience of freedom alone which is for Kant truly 'sublime'.

In contrast with the phenomena of the natural world in which we live - whose greatness can be measured only in the comparison with one another- our free rational being raises us above nature and is thus 'supersensible' and measurable only against itself. We should thus understand by the term 'sublime': that feeling which arises in our experience of freedom which *transcends* nature in the objectification of its rational autonomy and authority.

In establishing the basis of her system in creative/aesthetic activity as 'pure rational self-sufficiency', Oblak argues it thus exemplifies the *transcendental* as such. The 'Transcendental' in Transcendental Mannerism, she says, 'signifies the ultimate authority of our rational over our sensible being.'<sup>38</sup> This is what we have referred to as Oblak's 'transcendental deduction' in that it is

here that she declares the grounding of her project in what she calls: 'the transcendental dimension'<sup>39</sup>- i.e. the realm of freedom as a 'transcendental idea' or super-sensuous power. This realm entails two components: the capacity to reason and follow rules, as we discussed above, and also what Kant calls 'spontaneity', as we shall now consider.

#### SPONTANEITY

Kant's theory of the practicality of pure reason- that is, that reason can lead to action, defines the space of activity which is not wholly determined by natural laws or mechanistic chains of cause and effect, but is instead motivated by its own free causality, i.e. the transcendental causality of reason. In the case of such action, reason can be seen as directly exercising its free autonomous power and ability to effect changes in the world. Reason's independence in this sense entails the Kantian notion of 'spontaneity'; for rather than reflecting or reproducing the pre-given order of the world, reason -in its exercise of freedom- projects an order of its own which is at the same time universal. Oblak quotes the *Critique of Pure Reason* where Kant states: 'Reason does not... follow the order of things as they present themselves in appearance, but forms for itself with perfect spontaneity an order of its own.'<sup>40</sup>

In order, then, for Transcendental Mannerism to be genuinely free and original -and to assert and 'know' itself as such- it must initiate a new -that is, spontaneous- causal series, i.e. one which is unrelated to and undetermined by any already existing practices, methods, works, etc. As 'spontaneous', then, it must inaugurate its own beginning; while as *free* it must sustain itself in accordance with its own self-contained and self-perpetuating structure and the determinations inherent therein.

The issue to consider now , of course, is how such a spontaneous 'pure' beginning could be possible in art. The answer, in fact, is that such spontaneity is *not* possible in art- which explains what we have seen is Oblak's need to 'suspend' the very *idea* of art itself in her endeavour.

#### TRANSCENDENTAL IDEA

'The idea of spontaneity as "pure creation" *ex nihilo*', Oblak states, 'is a *transcendental* idea (i.e. neither derivable from nor referable to anything simply given in direct experience)'<sup>41</sup>; thus it embodies freedom in its 'transcendental sense'. It is this notion -i.e. the transcendental idea of spontaneity as a *regulative* concept- which Oblak says can be used to 'determine the ordinary (i.e. *practical*) notion of freedom and its essential non-empirical quality'.<sup>42</sup> The point to stress here is the value Oblak attributes to the idea of spontaneity as simply *that*- that is,

spontaneity *as an idea* -a *transcendental* idea- to which the status and implications of its reality or non-reality, possibility or impossibility, etc. are irrelevant. As an idea all that matters is the *possibility* of spontaneity's conceptualization- which thus defines its usefulness as a regulative concept. In other words, Oblak's interest in and use of 'the idea of spontaneity as pure creation' centers around what Kant calls its '*as-if*' function- that is, the mere conceivability of transcendental freedom which Oblak employs in a regulative fashion as a theoretical model for the practical initiation of her project.

#### TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM AS AN IDEA

As in the case of the idea of free spontaneity with which Transcendental Mannerism begins, Oblak suggests we also consider the entire system itself -or better, its form -i.e. its *systematicity*- as an idea, or , as she calls it, 'a schema... of the regulative principle of systematic unity' <sup>43</sup>. In doing so we are thus to understand Transcendental Mannerism *as-if*, she says, it were 'spontaneously generated and incapable being explained in terms of more general further principles'<sup>44</sup>- that is, *as-if* it were itself a transcendental idea. As an idea, then, the systematicity of Transcendental Mannerism can be seen to *exemplify* freedom and self-determination, and can therefore serve as a regulative model for the free employment of reason in its practical activity in a concrete way.

This concrete development of free practical reason through the use of transcendental ideas results in a corresponding extension of the realm of experience itself. It is the possibility of this experiential increase which constitutes Oblak's main impetus for articulating Transcendental Mannerism. Her thesis, she says, is that

only on the basis of a system, i.e. on the sustained and effective employment of reason and its capacity for spontaneity, can we resist the restrictions of 'natural', 'habitual', 'institutional', and 'predisposed' patterns (of thinking and imagination) and thus create the possibility *of* original breaks The System - constantly (and only) relating to itself, i.e. to its own inner consistency- protects our thinking and imagination from passive reproduction and mirroring of the mundane.<sup>45</sup>

#### TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM AS A SYSTEM ON AN AESTHETIC LEVEL

The significance of Transcendental Mannerism's systematicity, then, if it is both to generate the possibility of new experience and, at the same time, to 'protect' us, lies in Oblak's appropriation of the idea of rational systematicity on aesthetic grounds- that is, in an 'irrational' -or better , *non-rational*- way. In other words, Transcendental Mannerism has to function as -has, in fact, *to be-* a real system; it must unfold itself and develop in a genuinely systematic way (i.e. rather than *as-if* it were a system); in short: its systematicity itself is not a transcendental idea.

However, since Transcendental Mannerism is not a scientific, logical, or other kind of system whose contents and logic are determined externally , but instead exemplifies systematicity as such, Oblak is able to explore its origins, development, and consequences on an *aesthetic* level- that is, for their own sake and in a non-rational rather than strictly rational (or irrational) terms, as we shall see below. Thus Transcendental Mannerism must be regarded as a *real* system, but one which embodies a *different kind* of rationality and systematicity from other systems- one which Oblak says 'deeply connect[s] reason with our power of imaginative realization'<sup>46</sup>.

## II. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

It was Kant -in the *Critique of Judgement* - who first identified and isolated the *aesthetic* as a unique domain of experience. *Aesthetic* experience, he realized, is not only inherently rational, but is also a *distinctive* mode of rationality; for in it - although it is 'free' (that is, in Kant's phrase: 'apart from any concept')- it is still structured *as-if* it were guided by concepts. In other words: what is important in an *aesthetic* judgement is not the use of particular concepts, but instead the possibility of a manifold's conceptualizability as such. In confronting an *aesthetic* form our concepts interact in loose, explorative, and experimental ways- thereby enabling a similar flexibility in the way our imagination 'takes hold' of its object and represents it to itself. For this reason Oblak suggests that imagination -in helping to create conditions of unity in *aesthetic* experience- may be seen as 'a kind of experiential counterpart to the idea of spontaneity' <sup>47</sup>. Her point is that like spontaneity where reason -rather than merely reflecting pre-given conditions- projects a rational order of its own, *aesthetic* experience -in not relating to any predetermined concept in its judgement of beauty- may also be understood in terms of 'creation *ex nihilo*'.

These two ideas -spontaneity and *aesthetic* experience- relate respectively to Oblak's creation of the system and to our engagement with it. Having seen already how Oblak initiated the system *as-if* it were a 'spontaneous' creation, it remains for us now to consider its relation to *aesthetic* experience in general.

Transcendental Mannerism's unified structure -its systematicity- is, as we have seen, arbitrary, non-rational, and therefore purely *aesthetic* in significance; in other words: it is unified, self-related, self-perpetuating structure pursued for its own sake. Yet the system's *aesthetic* unity is not that of a true artwork; for in order to experience and appreciate art properly we must at the very least consider it in relation to the concept of art itself (not to mention more specific contexts such as painting, sculpture, landscape, portrait, and so on).

Transcendental Mannerism, however, regarded *as-if* it were a spontaneously generated, self-subsisting unity, Oblak says, '*suspends*' art 'for the sake of free will and [the implementation of] self-imposed laws'<sup>48</sup>- i.e. *systematicity* as such. As a system, then, related only to itself and its own processes of inner consistency and development, Transcendental Mannerism constitutes and continuously extends its own world- a domain wholly independent of the environment we know and inhabit- an '*aesthetic dimension*' which is autonomous, and hence protects us from the rigidity and stagnation of conventional patterns of thought and '*creativity*' (esp. the sort of subjective humour and '*rat-race originality*' we have discussed above).

Any work of art must, by definition, be original- but this originality is contingent upon both the concept of art and the history of the particular medium in question. The self-sufficient systematic form of Oblak's project, however, enables her to bring out originality in what she calls 'a deeper and more sustained way'<sup>49</sup> than usually encountered in art. It does this, as we have seen, through by-passing '*art*' altogether- both the idea of art's objectivity (or objectness) and the concept of art as such.

'If it is incorrect', Oblak argues, 'to think that someone can create something *literally* free in itself, then the only strategy for achieving freedom is a regulative method of an *as-if* kind.'<sup>50</sup> What she means is that in one's pursuit of free and original creation, since we cannot simply forget or escape the world we live in, the only solution is the hermeneutic of a transcendental idea- that is, to proceed *as-if* one were totally free and not limited by anything- including the concept of art itself. Paradoxically, then, Transcendental Mannerism is an artform which, as we have seen, originates in the *suspension* of art- thus enabling Oblak to initiate a radically free, concept-less beginning. This '*transcendental*' '*as-if*' dimension of the system's origin needs, Oblak explains, to be imagined as much as understood; for 'it dislocates the ordinary coordinates of experience by opening new paths in the understanding and imagining of *what an object or relation is or could be*'<sup>51</sup>.

#### CONTINGENCY

The *aesthetic* unity of a sensuous manifold results, as we have seen, from the interplay between phenomenal form and the different possible avenues of cognitive exploration which we bring to it. Thus there is in the unity of *aesthetic* experience an element of randomness in judgement. In contrast, then, to the objectivity of natural and artificial forms, there is in our experience of them *as aesthetic* a certain arbitrariness of possible intuitions. The imagination, in the

freedom of its exploration of such forms, is not bound in æsthetic exploration to the employment of specific concepts, but instead is able to function at the level of its genuine being- that is, as the productive capacity to create the very possibility of unity in the manifold objects of experience.

The major difference which Oblak cites between what she calls 'æsthetic reason' and philosophical logic lies in this dimension of arbitrariness and contingency. The contingent, of course, encompasses many different and divergent meanings- which leads Oblak to develop what she characterizes as '*a rational rather than irrational understanding of contingency*'<sup>52</sup>. Such an understanding, she says, constitutes 'the System's basic methodological strategy'<sup>53</sup>.

Anything characterized by uncertainty , unexpectedness, indifference to logic and scientific explanation, etc. -in a word: contingency as such- is generally defined as 'irrational'. This definition is unfortunate, however , because it sets up an unwarranted disjunction between the contingent character of æsthetic experience and rationality itself- thus unjustly masking art's inherently rational element and leading us away from what Oblak calls: 'the real consequences of æsthetic rationality'<sup>54</sup>. Her significant point is that the usual emphasis on imagination and free creativity in art tends to stress its 'irrational' side (i.e fantasy, caprice, and so on) at the expense its rationality , and in so doing, thus denudes art's status as a form of knowledge and embodiment of ideas.

What, then, is Oblak's interest in 'contingency'? It is possible, she says, to interpret what she calls art's 'æsthetic existential complexity'<sup>55</sup> in terms of all of the external -and to a greater or lesser degree *contingent*- influences which are brought together in an individual artwork. (This, in fact, is the mandate of contemporary academic art history as codified and consolidated by Panofsky .) As far as Transcendental Mannerism is concerned, however , this 'external contingency' is irrelevant; for Oblak actively employs contingency as an 'æsthetic strategy' similarly to the Surrealist notion of 'objective chance' as developed by André Breton.

For Breton, 'objective chance' is not merely *blind* chance, but chance in which he believed one may discover deeper patterns of necessity . Oblak quotes Breton whose motive for exploring the 'objectivity' of chance, he explains, was 'to oppose by all possible means the invasion of the world of the senses by things which mankind makes use of more from habit than necessity... [W]ith this new form... the same object -however complete it may seem- reverts to an infinite series of latent possibilities.'<sup>56</sup> Breton's proposition, then, like Oblak's herself, is to preserve, or , more actively, to *generate* the possibility of genuinely

novel and *free* experience- both for its own sake and for the sake of creative activity in art. His preferred technique was to take ordinary everyday things which we interact with and use all the time 'from habit' -and therefore without any real awareness or consideration- and to establish among them 'chance' relations and associations which had the power to produce, in his phrase, 'an infinite series of latent possibilities'. (A famous example is provided in the French poet Lautréamont's image of a 'chance encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissection table'.)

What Oblak rejects (along with Breton) is the idea of contingency as mere irrationality and arbitrariness- that is, practically speaking, as choices and decisions based upon already existing elements and relations in the world. Now while Oblak admits Breton made significant advances in the extension of creative and experiential freedom with his '*Révolution Surréaliste*', she also acknowledges limitations arising from the fixation upon what are, in the end, only techniques, i.e. 'objective chance' itself, psycho-analysis, dream interpretation, free association, etc. Thus surrealism falls short of its goal of true freedom and originality since its methods are used merely to provide novel subject-matter for art (as, for example, when incongruous word associations are used in a poem or a strange dream is made into a picture); experience and art itself, however, remain unchanged.

The problem, we could say, then, is stopping too soon- seeking freedom in contingency, but remaining content, we could say, with contingency itself, and moreover with contingency which is itself contingent upon external, predetermined factors rather than being genuinely free. This, after all, is what the 'objective' in 'Objective Chance' signifies, i.e. the cultivation of chance thoughts, encounters, associations, etc. which are discovered and cultivated in *objective* situations in the world.

Oblak's motivation, on the other hand, is not what we could call this contingent sort of contingency, but instead a transcendental idea of contingency- a contingency conceived of *as-if* it were not contingent upon anything else for its being. 'Latent possibility', then, signifies to Oblak what can be discovered not in the world or dreams or chance associations, but instead, she says, 'as a conceptually *empty* ground which can exemplify the possibility of new patterns of unity and necessity.'<sup>57</sup> What is latent here, then, is the idea of originality itself (rather than any originality latent in things)- originality which is 'latent with possibilities only in relation to our imaginative reason itself.'<sup>58</sup>

The ground is now prepared for Oblak to develop the implications of her 'transcendental deduction'. 'Contingency', she says, must be redefined as: ' *the*

first consequence or “appearance” of pure aesthetic rationality<sup>59</sup>. She argues that to see something as contingent should be to recognize it as an ‘initiation of freedom’<sup>60</sup>. Contingency, as a transcendental idea, she says, ‘constitute[s] the spontaneous, *ex nihilo* beginning which -from the viewpoint of art- is difficult, if not impossible, to conceptualize’<sup>61</sup>. Her point is that in order for imaginative reason to engage in (transcendentally) free creative activity , it has to begin somewhere. Breton’s suggestion was to start with the ‘chance’ we find all around us; but this method, as we have seen, is unfree in two significant respects: first- in seeking the possibilities latent within the elements of the ‘Objective Chance’ scenario, the artist is, to that extent, *determined* by those objects (i.e. not absolutely free), and secondly- by setting out in the first place to create a poem or painting or whatever, the Surrealist is limited by the concept of art itself (i.e. in terms of history, public expectation, tradition, philosophy, etc.).

Oblak’s desire to be absolutely free of any and all limits and external determination in her project is what led her , as we have seen, to Transcendental Mannerism’s ‘transcendental deduction’- that is, the suspension of all predetermined methodology and the idea of art itself (and all the baggage that comes with it). Thus it was this problem of how to begin totally free of established procedures and concepts which led her to the point we have now reached- i.e. the free, spontaneous, *ex nihilo* commencement of the Transcendental Mannerist system in the transcendental idea of non-contingent contingency, i.e. the conceptualization of the very idea of contingency which is not contingent upon anything but itself.

Originality, as we shall discuss below , is *the* fundamental existential value of æsthetic experience, and in its origin and development, Oblak says, Transcendental Mannerism ‘plays a kind of originality obsessed existential game. In this way, it can be seen to be constantly in search of the contingent as such.’<sup>62</sup>

### III. COHERENCE AS THE SELF-REGULATION OF FORM

The fact that Transcendental Mannerism -as a system- is more than a mere association or assemblage of assorted elements -i.e. that it constitutes a self-generating, self-determining whole- entails, Oblak says, that it is ‘riven with insecurity’<sup>63</sup>. The system, she continues, ‘is developed as the result of collapsing all the traditional foundations of art [including, as we have seen, the concept of ‘art’ itself]. The system cannot presuppose anything which could define and direct forms- either in their formal (i.e. visual) or conceptual sense.’<sup>64</sup> The system and what we shall see are its progressive stages originate, Oblak says, in ‘complete ignorance- as a formal and conceptual experiment’<sup>65</sup>. This is because as

exemplars of transcendental freedom they do not refer or conform to any pre-given models or concepts, and so cannot be imagined in their final articulation. Therefore, Oblak explains, '[t]he process which follows from the "wild", [absolutely] contingent beginning entails a search for unity on the basis of the system's own inner consistency . This process (punctuated with mistakes and failures) is what I call the "self-regulation of form".'<sup>66</sup>

What Oblak aims at in this process is the 'agreement' or correspondence of form and concept. When this identity is achieved, she says, 'form ceases to be a mere illustration of the initial conceptual intention, and the concept ceases to be merely an external abstraction grafted onto the form. The concept should *constitute* the form which exemplifies it rather than simply qualify it.'<sup>67</sup> Generally speaking, the practice of art-making involves only a one-way regulative process: the form which is to be created is brought into line with a concept (or content) given in advance. In Transcendental Mannerism, however , as we have seen, neither form nor concept is predetermined, and thus each must be developed in accordance with the other . This is what Oblak means by referring to the system's development as 'self-regulative' and describing its goal as ' *imaginative rational consistency*'<sup>68</sup>; in other words, Transcendental Mannerism's goal is its own systematicity itself.

Thus, self-regulation of form turns out to be not only the system's internal methodology and constitution, but also the nexus (rather than ' *mélange*') of theory and practice. What this means is that Transcendental Mannerism, in its final articulation, manifests the self-regulated unification of philosophy and art in which contingency has been transformed -through the system's own systematization- into necessity. The system, then, culminates in what Oblak calls 'self-reflection'- not only in that she herself is fully aware of Transcendental Mannerism's practical and theoretical foundations and significance (as exemplified in her text), but also that the system can be seen to be too, since it is sustained and determined by this conceptual framework in its unfolding and development (i.e. through its self-regulation of form).

#### IV. ORIGINALITY

Transcendental Mannerism can be defined, Oblak says, as 'an obsession with originality.'<sup>69</sup> Every work of art which deserves the name, of course, must be original to some degree, but this sense of originality is necessarily determined in relation to the concept of art- while Transcendental Mannerism, Oblak states, 'has the power to act in accordance with the very *conception* of originality itself '<sup>70</sup>. This conception, Oblak adds, does not mean simply producing something

different, but 'something aesthetically significant in connecting existential and rational questions'<sup>71</sup>.

Oblak approvingly quotes the playwright and theorist Antonin Artaud who declares: 'What has already been said no longer needs saying'<sup>72</sup>. Her own thesis, she says, is that everything which is 'taken for granted' -that is, everything which we simply accept as it is or in terms of pre-given concepts-lacks 'the rational and existential insight of that "seeing" of necessary truth which is evoked by confrontation with something radically new'<sup>73</sup>. She states further her belief that 'self-consciousness grows in originality'<sup>74</sup>- by which she means that the pursuit of originality not only generates the potential for new experience, but also, therefore, the possibility of thematizing that consciousness so that originality may be seen as generating the reciprocity between subject and object which constitutes consciousness itself. This is why , Oblak says, Transcendental Mannerism 'rejects the inertia and meaninglessness of the pre-given'<sup>75</sup>- which is not to say that the system rejects the external world as such (nor does it incorporate it), but, on the contrary -in a project of what Oblak characterizes as an 'inverted existentialism'<sup>76</sup>- it *extends* the world- i.e. creates the possibilities of new, creative, *transcendentally free* activity and experience.

Thus the subject of Transcendental Mannerism clearly cannot be seen to be Oblak herself (i.e. it does not represent a response to any 'inspiration' she may feel to 'express herself '); nor is Transcendental Mannerism 'about' our encounter with or reaction to itself (as the paintings of Mark Rothko or Barnett Newman can be said to be). Instead, the sole subject of Transcendental Mannerism is its own systematicity- hence the ' *inverted*' (or, perhaps better: 'objective') character of its existentialism. In this way , the Transcendental Mannerist method of formal self-regulation -in its production and consolidation of contingency (which is thus made 'necessary')- guarantees originality- thereby making it more than a mere formal practice into what Oblak describes as: 'a complex rational and existential adventure'<sup>77</sup>.

In light of this discussion of originality we can now see what Oblak means when she declares: 'Transcendental Mannerism is not some kind of private fantasy world.'<sup>78</sup> Something she says she always disliked in art was 'the idea of "expressing" oneself'<sup>79</sup>- so much so, she explains, that one of the major impulses for developing the system was the desire to avoid just such a personal form of expression. 'Expression' as such, she says, does not interest her; 'it repeats, tells old stories, and [worst of all] is unable to *surprise*'.<sup>80</sup> As far as Oblak is concerned, 'expression' can tell us only about what has been, and thus is unsuited to the pursuit of originality and freedom.

Instead, Oblak explains, Transcendental Mannerism is motivated by the rhetorical question of how an artist -as a subject- can enter into a relationship with something ostensibly objective (i.e. artistic media, subject-matter, art works, etc.) without, she asks, 'immediately divesting that other of its alterity?' <sup>81</sup> The answer, of course, is that one cannot; for as soon as an artist appropriates some objective phenomenon -i.e. makes it 'his own' and thus an instrument of his own self expression- we could say it becomes tainted with his subjectivity , or in Oblak's phrase: 'divested of its alterity'. Any genuinely rational content or universal significance the artwork might have had (as a unique form of knowledge) is now reduced to an aspect of the artist's personality- i.e. 'the way *he* sees it'. The 'expressive' work of art, therefore, is not about truth or freedom or love (or whatever), but about how the artist himself feels about these topics (and usually just *as* topics)- with the result that art is thus, to this extent, diminished in its 'absoluteness'.

As a response to this 'self-expressive subjectivism' in art, Oblak set out, she says, 'to get rid of myself as radically as possible- not for the sake of "neutrality" or "objectivity", but in order to create something which would be able to surprize me.'<sup>82</sup>

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**NOTE:** This attitude to creativity allies Oblak with the Canadian musician, writer composer Glenn Gould who, even though one of the world's most famous and charismatic pianists, gave up public performance altogether at the age of 31 in order to pursue what he referred to as a 'neo-medieval anonymity quest on behalf of the artist as zero'<sup>83</sup>, or, in other words: what he called the 'zero-to-one artist to audience ratio'. In an essay where he discusses this idea, Gould writes: 'I simply feel that the artist should be granted, both for his sake and for that of his public... anonymity He should be permitted to operate in secret, as it were'<sup>84</sup>.

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**NOTE:** Hegel himself speaks of the artist's need to*forget his own personality and its accidental characteristics in order to immerse himself... entirely in his material so that -as subject- he is only, as it were, the form for the formation of the theme which has taken hold of him.*<sup>85</sup>

## v. 'MANNERISM'

The word 'mannerism', as we have seen, is used in art history to refer to particular artists and artworks between the High Renaissance and Baroque periods. The stylistic traits which characterize Mannerism are generally regarded as: artificiality, intellectualism, eccentricity , obscurity, and so on- traits, in fact, which are also recognizable in the theory and practice of Oblak's Transcendental Mannerism. This is not to say , however, that Transcendental Mannerism may itself be regarded as 'mannered'. Rather than constituting a recognizably stylistic phenomenon, Oblak's system is, as she reminds us, developed and 'explored as

an idea, concept, or “state of mind”, and *not as a style*<sup>86</sup>.

The concept of ‘mannerism’ -like that of ‘transcendental’- continues the idea of originality- meaning, as Oblak says, that ‘transcendental’ and ‘mannerism’ are actually ‘two sides of the same coin’- for ‘the concept of mannerism has to be grounded in the transcendental dimension.’<sup>87</sup> Without this ‘transcendental’ basis the manneristic features of Oblak’s work would, as she points out herself, ‘strike us only as an excess of style- a “stylish” style’<sup>88</sup>- rather than as exemplars of transcendental freedom.

## VI. THEORY

### SUBLIME (AGAIN)

Defined as: ‘the idea of the deep inter-connection of freedom, reason, æsthetic experience, and [human] existence (developed simultaneously and reciprocally on both practical and theoretical levels)’<sup>89</sup>, the very idea of Transcendental Mannerism is difficult, if not impossible to realize either at the level of direct perception or of philosophical reasoning. These inter-connections, Oblak says, could thus be called ‘unpresentable’ and the practice which strives to address, comprehend, and articulate them: ‘sublime’.

‘Reason itself,’ she says, ‘which created the problem in the first place, is also the factor which will have to solve it’<sup>90</sup> (echoing Hegel who, we will remember from chapter one, says: ‘*It is thinking which both inflicts the wound and heals it again*’<sup>91</sup>). Oblak’s remark alludes to Transcendental Mannerism’s need to sustain its systematic unfolding and development after the establishment of its basic rules and central form. ‘Once the system is “born”,’ she says, ‘contingency needs hereafter to be regulated in a more systematic way. This means that, even as æsthetically free, forms need to emerge from the system and simultaneously *return* to it- affirming it as a more and more compact whole.’<sup>92</sup> Oblak describes this ‘affirmation’ as the system’s ‘reading’ and ‘crystallization’ of itself. In other words: she says it needs ‘to develop its arbitrary beginning as a plurality of wholes into autonomous self-sufficiency and totality’<sup>93</sup>. The system thus ‘develops complex forms with a high degree of individuality , novelty , and originality- each of which demands its own laws, rules, and concepts’<sup>94</sup>, as we shall see below.

Transcendental Mannerism inhabits what Oblak calls ‘the abyss of the necessary connection of reason and imagination’<sup>95</sup>, and thus simultaneously unfolds ‘the antithetical extremes of art and philosophy. All art is rational and -to a certain degree- theoretically reflected, but... only *Transcendental Mannerism* is genuinely able to exhibit self-awareness of æsthetic rationality and make it

simultaneously its form and subject-matter.<sup>96</sup>

Oblak describes Transcendental Mannerism's strictly philosophical aspect as '*externally internal*'<sup>97</sup> because philosophy is both the system's presupposition and what Oblak calls its 'surplus'. What this means is that certain philosophical concepts such as the sublime, freedom, autonomy , and, indeed, systematicity itself are, we could say, run through the machinery of Transcendental Mannerism and, as Oblak puts it, 'turned upside-down on an æsthetic level' <sup>98</sup> in order to become productive at a practical level, i.e. philosophically.

## VII. SYSTEMS

Throughout history there has been no shortage of systems- whether religious, philosophical, scientific, artistic, or otherwise. T ranscendental Mannerism, however, is not just another system for history's catalogue; for , as Oblak explains, 'it explores the possibilities of systematization as such. Systematization is the form *and* subject-matter of the system.'<sup>99</sup>

Unlike other systems which art employs in its creative enterprises (such as perspective, 'colour wheels', 'Objective Chance', and so on), T ranscendental Mannerism, on the contrary, is a system which *uses art* (or æsthetic experience) for the purpose of developing its own systematicity; in other words: system is the *end*, not the means of Transcendental Mannerism.

## VIII. VISUAL STRUCTURES OF THE SYSTEM

### RULES

We come now to the actual workings of the T ranscendental Mannerist system itself- which as a 'self-determined, self-referential, and self-perpetuating totality'<sup>100</sup>, Oblak says, unfolds in accordance with logical rules whose function, we have seen, is to 'regulate' the system and initiate contingencies within it. Contingency -or original material- as we have already discussed, can be generated in a number of ways. W e have seen Breton's 'objective chance', psycho-analytic dream analysis, 'automatic' writing, and free association, and we could also mention: Salvador Dalí's 'Paranoiac-Critical Method', Dadaist 'found' objects, Kurt Schwitters' ' Mertz' (i.e. collage), Max Ernst's ' *frottage*' (literally 'rubbing'- i.e. textured surfaces to obtain 'found' or 'hidden' images), and even Leonardo da Vinci's advice to artists: 'I have in the past seen in clouds and old walls patterns which have inspired me to beautiful inventions of many things.' <sup>101</sup> Now as far as inspiration -that is, external stimulus- goes, these methods can, as Leonardo attests, be quite effective, but for Oblak, they are inadequate; for they

neither arise from nor result in *free* activity. What they produced instead, as we considered briefly in relation to Breton and objective chance above, is thus always still related to and, therefore -even if only in the most tenuous way-determined by them rather than genuinely free.

In order to 'confront' this sort of necessity in a 'more radical and sustained way', Oblak says, she

formulated the system, and consequently the rules which would constitute the development of its field of relations in a ~~highly~~<sup>highly</sup> indirect manner- so that particular relations would not be recognized in their immediacy only indirectly through mediation within the *System*. This indirectness is important because it means a struggle for necessity- necessity which is not immediately imaginable, and so for necessity which really "escapes" us.<sup>102</sup>

Oblak's system, then, strives to achieve the same necessity (in an æsthetic sense) which all art seeks. [After all, whether one sets out to make 'hand-painted dream photographs' (like Dalí) or recycle used bus tickets and cigarette packets (like Schwitters) the goal in the end (if genuinely concerned with art) is to bring these contingencies together into some sort of necessity- i.e. the æsthetic unity of the finished artwork.] What is unique in Oblak's project, however , is what we could call her decision not to leave contingency to chance; her system may , in fact, be regarded precisely as a 'scientific' method or even a specialized computer for generating and guaranteeing genuine contingency- because it generates contingency out of (or within) itself, rather than depending upon external dream images, yesterday's rubbish, and so on. This is what allows Oblak to say that Transcendental Mannerism, though her own creation, is able to *surprise* her<sup>103</sup>.

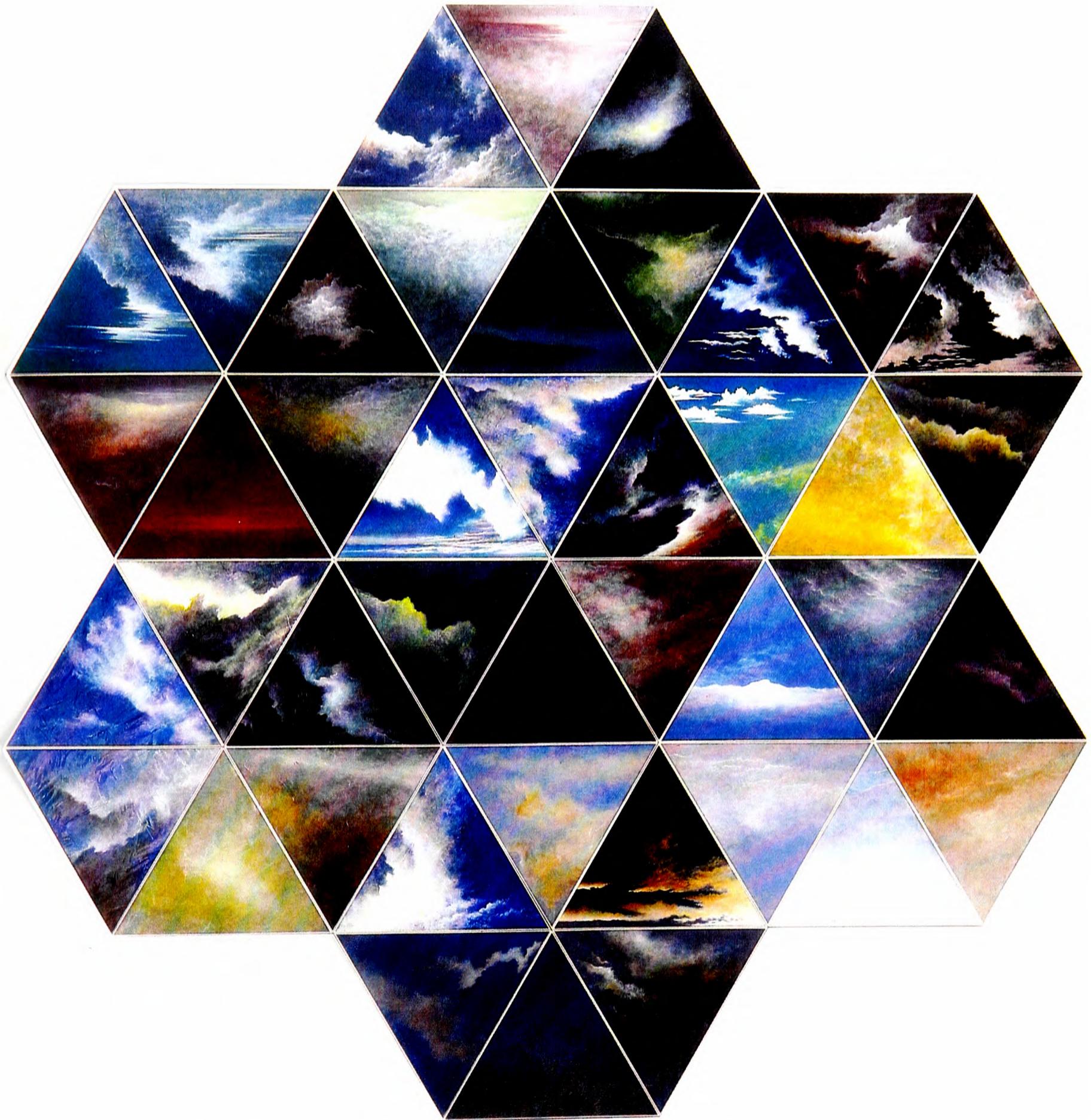
#### THE 'SYSTEM' ITSELF

The heart of Transcendental Mannerism is the complex geometrical manifold of forty-two individual triangular paintings which Oblak refers to as 'the Matrix' [figure 1]. Everything else in the system, Oblak says, is 'a kind of hermeneutical "reading" of this central form; everything emerges from and returns to it-initiating and exploring its latent possibilities.'<sup>104</sup>

'The system is an infinite form, i.e. one with infinite possibilities'<sup>105</sup>, Oblak says, but this infinity is generated from the finite structure of the original Matrix. Within the Matrix itself the forty-two basic elements constitute seven adjacent hexagons composed of six equilateral triangular panels each [figure 2]. Each hexagon comprises what Oblak identifies as three 'extremes' and their 'mediations'. Echoing the Hegelian-influenced thought and work of Mondrian, Oblak declares: 'Everything in the world and the way we think is based on dualities. Duality is inescapable.'<sup>106</sup> It is this 'inescapability' of duality -positive-

# **TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM**

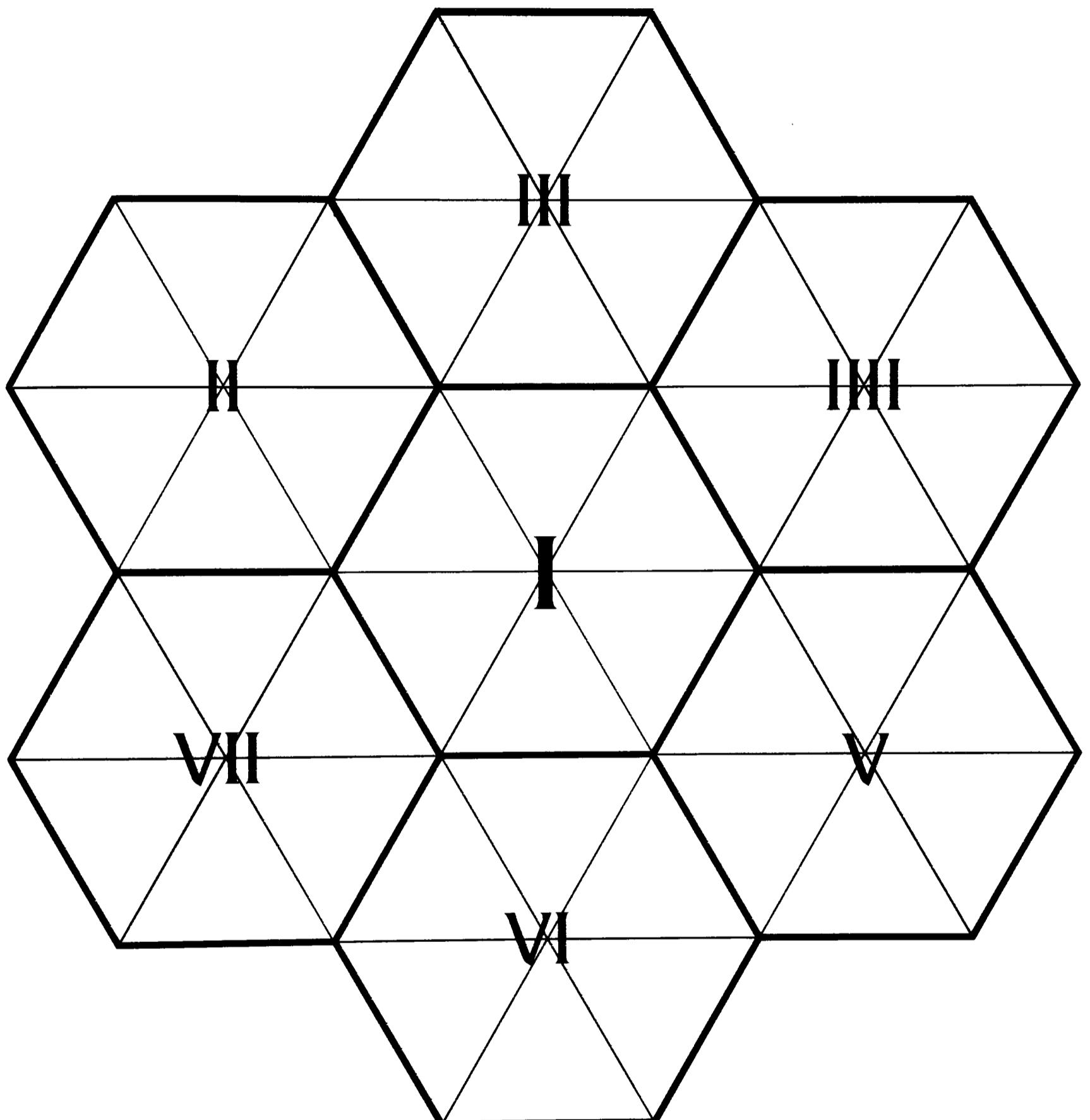
## **‘MATRIX’**



***MATRIX* of the System - Acrylic on Paper (360 x 340 cm)  
each triangular panel: 60 x 68 cm (approx. 2 ft high)**

[fig. 1]

**TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM**  
**SCHEMA OF THE SYSTEM**



The Seven Hexagons & Forty Two Triangles of the Matrix

[fig. 2]

negative, self-other, male-female, etc. (expressed in Mondrian's work by the composition of horizontal and vertical visual elements- i.e. his famous 'grid')- which led Oblak to base her system and its oppositions instead on the number three (i.e. the triangle)- thus introducing an unstable, chaotic, and -most importantly- *unpredictable* element. To her three signifies 'challenge and complication'<sup>107</sup>. 'Three means chaos'<sup>108</sup> and thus provides a greater potential for contingency and future creation.

The triangles occupy specific positions within the hexagons and exemplify æsthetic ideas [figure 3]. Oblak names the three primary , or 'unmediated' triangles: 'FORM', 'LIGHT', and 'COLOUR'- which, throughout the Matrix, explore the dialectical relations constitutive of all visual phenomena: i.e. of 'form to background', 'light to darkness', and of different colours to each other.

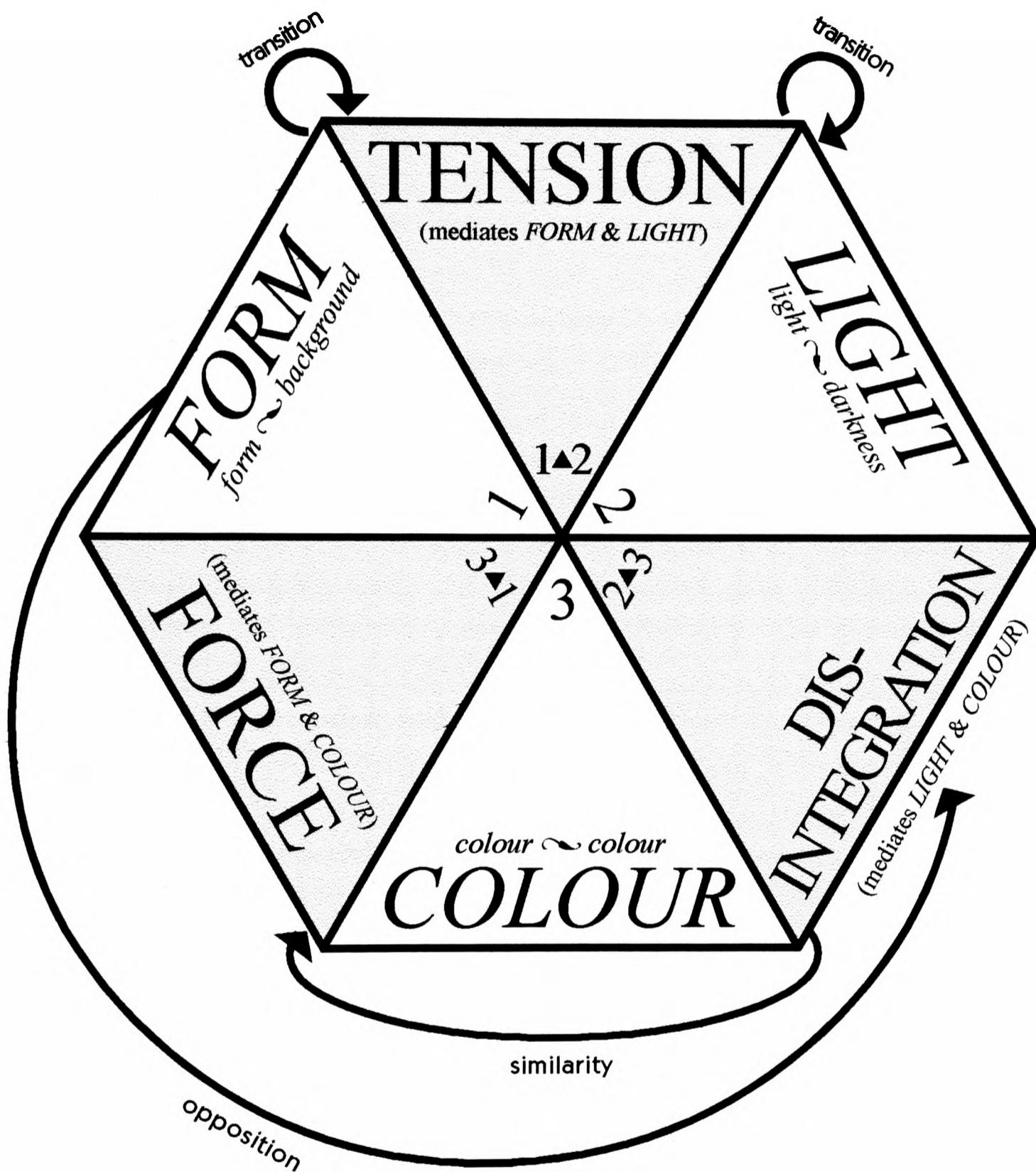
Between these 'primaries' lie the 'intermediary' triangles whose job is to *mediate* the primaries. Similar to remarks we saw Hegel make about dialectical unfolding, the mediation which these intermediaries achieve is no mere 'synthesis' (or formal 'mixing') of visual properties, i.e. a mathematical-style 'addition'. Instead, what takes place is described by Oblak as 'creative and contingent'<sup>109</sup>. 'It brings out connections... through contingency ... [and thus] creates rather than "deduces" their relation.'<sup>110</sup> In contrast to the 'stability' of the primary triangles, the mediating images, on the contrary , exemplify three different modes of *instability*- characterized by Oblak as: ' TENSION', 'DISINTEGRATION', and 'FORCE'.

Much more could be said about the theoretical basis and practical implications of the triangles' 'themes' (and indeed Oblak herself devotes many pages to discussing the particularities of each of the system's forty two elements), but the general ideas and dynamic relations of FORM, TENSION, LIGHT, and so on continue to hold throughout the system, and it is this general dynamic itself which shall concern us here.

Within each hexagon exists a variety of fifteen possible relations inherent in the arrangement of its triangular elements. Oblak describes three of the relations as 'tautological'- implying that they are no use creatively since the hexagon itself is based upon and thus already 'expresses' them; the relation of FORM and LIGHT for examples is expressed in the interposing TENSION triangle and thus generates no 'contingency'. FORM, LIGHT, and COLOUR, Oblak says, are 'unmediated' and therefore are related to each other merely by 'pure, blind chance'<sup>111</sup>; in other words: they have *no* relation. Six further relations are characterized as 'transitional'- which is Oblak's term for the relation of each triangle to its neighbour, i.e. the 'continuation' or 'course' of triangles around the

# TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM

## DYNAMICS



The Internal Structure of the Hexagons & Relation of Triangles

[fig. 3]

hexagon. Three other relations exemplify ‘similarity’- that of the ‘mediating’ triangles to each other (since each is there as a ‘product’ of the two triangles it mediates); and finally, three are said to be ‘in opposition’- meaning the triangles which directly oppose -or point to- each other.

To sum up: in each hexagon fifteen relations are established- three of which are already ‘mediated’ within it, nine more -i.e. of ‘transition’ and ‘similarity’- are ‘in relation’ and mediated to a degree, while the remaining three -those of ‘opposition’- remain totally *unmediated* and therefore totally indeterminate and contingent. Oblak describes these as ‘the most intriguing ones’<sup>112</sup> because their relation cannot be expressed at all within the hexagon they occupy (nor, as we shall see, can it be articulated within the Matrix at all).

The ‘transitional’ relation between *FORM* and *TENSION* or that of ‘similarity’ between *TENSION* and *DISINTEGRATION*, for example, while not explicitly declared within the hexagon, can, at least, be expressed in terms of common elements, and therefore can be seen to be ‘mediated’ to some degree. *TENSION* and *COLOUR*, however, are totally unrelated: *COLOUR* is one of the given ‘primary’ triangles, while *TENSION* is a product of *FORM* and *LIGHT*- neither of which, by definition, relates to *COLOUR*. For this reason, the opposition of *TENSION* and *COLOUR* constitutes precisely the sort of ‘surprise’ Oblak designed Transcendental Mannerism to produce. Unlike oppositions in a colour wheel, for example, between yellow and violet, or in the musical ‘circle of fifths’ between the keys of C and F# major , the oppositions encountered in the Transcendental Mannerist Matrix -while generated and governed by strict rules- cannot, by the same token, be understood or explained in terms of those rules. Opposition within the system is genuinely unpredictable and unexpected (i.e. a ‘surprise’); it is *absolutely contingent* and therefore totally unmediated. Mediation and articulation must thus arise *externally* to the original hexagon - i.e. through the appearance of six additional hexagons- one opposite each triangle of the central hexagonal form, thus bringing the total to seven [as illustrated in fig. 2].

The external ring of six hexagons, then, exists in order to mediate the contingencies of the central primary hexagon. This ring, Oblak explains, is not fixed in its original position [as seen in fig. 1], but instead may be ‘rotated’ and thus reconfigured (though the internal relations of the individual triangles are permanent)- thus generating the potential for hundreds of unexpected new contingent relations.

The triangular elements of the second through seventh hexagons come into being, Oblak says, ‘by developing certain latent, contingent elements or details’<sup>113</sup> inherent in the first. Thus the *FORM* triangle of the second hexagon

develops some aspect of the first FORM triangle- which, in turn, is then developed further in the third hexagon, and so on. At the end of this process we have the forty two paintings of the complete Matrix in place [as shown in fig. 1], but this result is only Transcendental Mannerism's beginning. Once the system is complete it may be regarded as a rigorously constructed and logically ordered whole, yet, at the same time, it is a seething, chaotic mass of unarticulated contingency. The Matrix itself indeed exists as a completed whole, but the unarticulated contingency which led to its consolidation as such can only now be addressed and explored outside the Matrix in new forms.

### x. 'CLOUDS'

Before considering the results or 'deductions' of the system, we should say a word about the significance of its elements- i.e. the forty two triangles themselves. Each triangle is an individual painting on a textured paper support of a cloud-like structure. These paintings, Oblak explains, must 'be understood as developed through a series of "logical" acts- and so as *produced*, rather than *re-produced*'<sup>114</sup>. Oblak is adamant, then, that the triangles are not paintings *of* clouds, but instead represent what she calls 'schemata' which are to be understood *as-if* they exemplify certain concepts- i.e. particular nuances of FORM, LIGHT, COLOUR, and so on (such as 'clarity', radiation', 'obscurity', etc.<sup>115</sup> ).

The triangles' 'cloudy' visual configuration represents what Oblak describes as 'the constant unfolding of the same whirl-like structure.'<sup>116</sup> What the cloud-forms embody, then, is what she calls: 'the pure automatism of a continual turbulent transformation of colour in a pictorial field'<sup>117</sup>. Thus, we must not regard the triangles as images of the sky, but instead, she says, '*as-if* they were... this whirling, turbulent movement themselves.'<sup>118</sup> In other words, Oblak can be seen as making her paintings in the same way that meteorological processes produce real clouds- that is, just as clouds -as simply water vapour suspended in the air- cannot be said to *represent* the natural forces which cause them, Oblak's 'clouds' also serve no symbolic or other significatory function other than simply representing the processes and movement which produced them.

As a result, the cloud-images are achieved so precisely -since it is out of the act of painting itself that they appear- that all traces of their making vanish into the imagery itself which merging with the constructed paper support and therefore seeming to emerge *out of* it, thus linking image and medium, the virtual and the real, space and surface, and so on. This technique, Oblak says, 'give[s] the impression that the cloudy structure -rather than being painted *on*

the paper- instead emerges *out of it*.<sup>119</sup> This ‘schema’ is painted in acrylic in layers of colour transparencies- a sophisticated and difficult technique called ‘glazing’ which was developed in the Netherlands in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and brought to perfection in Italy by Leonardo who used it to create the delicate, shimmering plays of light and shadow which make his *Mona Lisa* so famous. This technical merging of painted form and surface means that the clouds do not just give the illusion of virtual space, but also the illusion of what Oblak calls “depth” of material<sup>120</sup> itself. In fact, Oblak says she thinks of the cloud forms as ‘a kind of “culture” impregnating the paper’<sup>121</sup>- i.e. ‘the cultivation of living material in a prepared nutrient media’<sup>122</sup>. In short, Oblak says, Transcendental Mannerism’s ‘clouds’ ‘exemplify an *identity* of the *way* in which they present and *what* they present’<sup>123</sup>.

## XI. THE JEWELLERY

Another important aspect of Transcendental Mannerism to consider before turning to the ‘products’ of the system is a phenomenon known simply as ‘The Jewellery’- for it is in the logical space between the Matrix and the Transcendental Mannerist jewellery that the system unfolds.

If the Matrix may be regarded as Transcendental Mannerism’s ‘spontaneous’ beginning, it is the ‘jewellery’, Oblak says, which ‘exemplifies the final stage [or logical extreme] of the system’<sup>124</sup>. What she has in mind, however, is not the conclusion or termination of the system, but instead a logical finality in which the jewellery is seen in its ‘direct and unmediated relation... to the system as a whole’<sup>125</sup>. Unlike the system’s products through which mediates and thus ‘crystallizes’ itself, Oblak says the system ‘returns to itself’ in its logical conclusion in the jewellery; in this way it ‘recognizes itself in the originality of its basic idea.’<sup>126</sup> In short, Oblak says, it is the jewellery’s beauty , self-sufficiency, and arbitrariness which ‘shows the “truth” of the system’<sup>127</sup>.

Transcendental Mannerist jewellery is manifestly strange, eccentric, and, perhaps most significantly, unexpected and surprising [as seen in fig. 4]. It is not pretty or elegant, but instead imposing, intimidating, and emphatically ‘hand-made’. This hand-madeness is explicit, Oblak says, because the jewellery has to ‘differ from mere design’<sup>128</sup> (i.e. what is designed and worked out in advance rather than in the act of making itself). (In this contrast, in fact, Oblak says the jewellery is ‘at war’<sup>129</sup> with design.) It is blatantly original- as declared by its unusual components (polished stones whose swirling mineral patterns echo the system’s dynamic cloud-forms, and leather cords which are used, Oblak says, ‘in the same whirl-like, twisting manner as the clouds are structured’<sup>130</sup>). The choice

# **TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM**

## **JEWELLERY**



**Transcendental Mannerist Jewellery - Stones, Leather, & Other Materials**

**[fig. 4]**

and conjunction of these elements represents what Oblak calls ‘the contingent beginning of originality and æsthetic experience’<sup>131</sup>. For this reason the system’s jewellery is not created to adorn and beautify , but instead, Oblak says, to ‘exemplify the *ultimate meaning* of Transcendental Mannerism’<sup>132</sup>, that is: ‘the idea of æsthetically-based existential freedom’<sup>133</sup>. It turns out, in fact, to be the jewellery - rather than the Matrix and its productions- which achieves this revelation of freedom in its direct, material disclosure. By its very existence and presence the jewellery declares itself as that which the system can only allude to in a more theoretical way. Thus the jewellery is truly neither art nor decoration, but is instead explicitly arbitrary and useless, and therefore exemplifies its own originality and thus the very idea of T ranscendental Mannerist freedom. To introduce arbitrariness and freedom at this existential level, Oblak admits, is ‘almost cruel and inhuman’<sup>134</sup> because it represents -in a direct physical way- an attempt to live -to exist- in *total freedom*- freedom from personal desires, habits, attachments, and so on- in short, from all the contingencies of life itself. The jewellery represents the system’s ‘in-’ or at least ‘non-human’ obsession with its own systematicity to the exclusion of all other concerns. This is why the jewellery is not worn as a personal adornment, but is instead housed in a sealed glass chamber and displayed across an undulating field of green velvet- representing what Oblak calls: ‘the strange, wild, inhuman region- a kind of Arcadia (literally: “no man’s land”’)<sup>135</sup>. It is, she says, ‘from this land that the jewellery emerges’<sup>136</sup>.

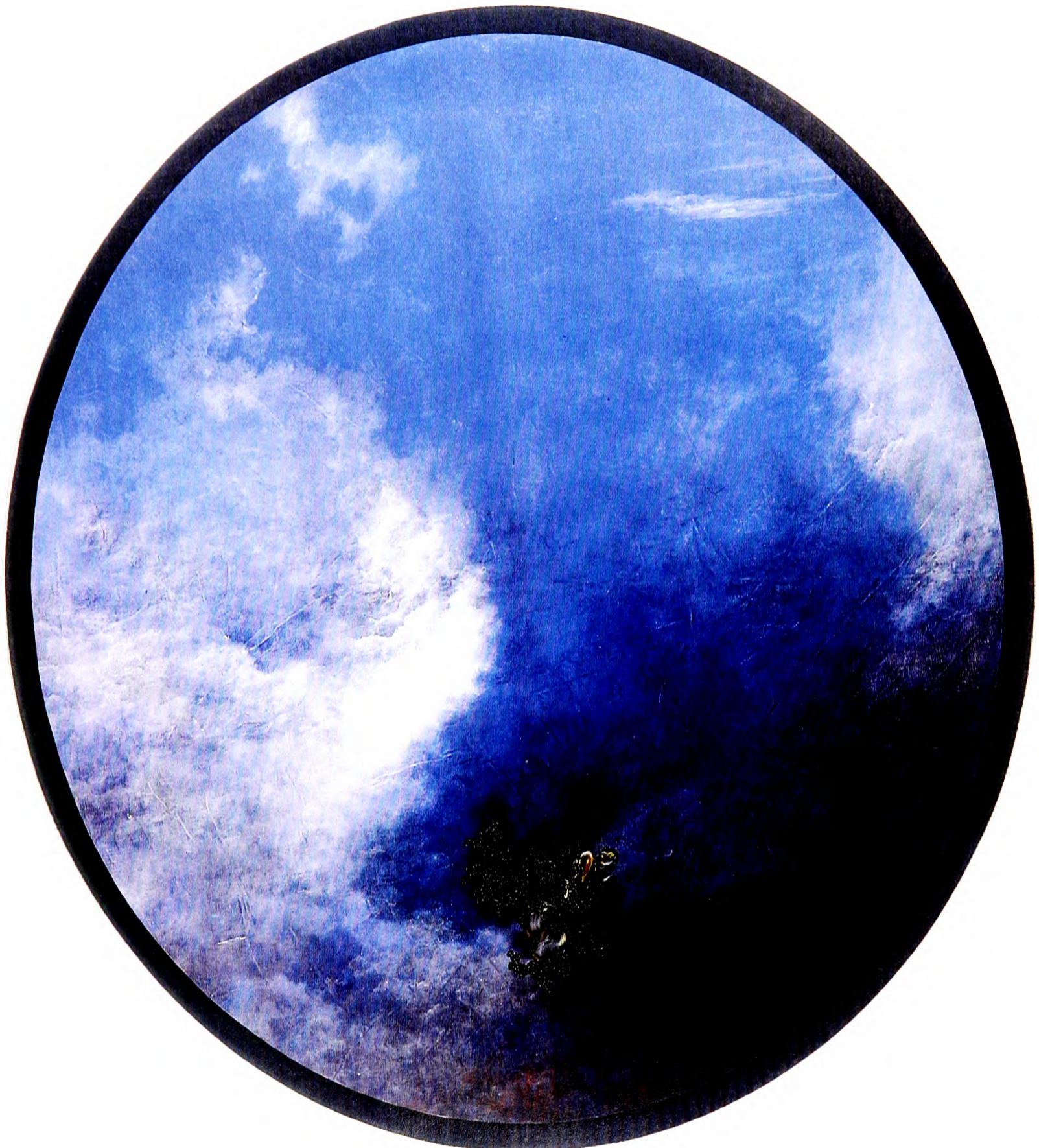
## xii. POST SCRIPT: OVALS

In addition to the Matrix’ seven original hexagons, its regular geometric structure allows us to see in it new , unintended figures- that is, other hexagons, larger aggregate triangles, diamond shapes, stars, etc. ‘In accordance with its rules’, Oblak says, ‘the system “thinks” by “creating” new figures or sets of figures.’<sup>137</sup>

The first ‘creation’ or ‘product’ of the T ranscendental Mannerism is a set of *oval* paintings [e.g. fig. 5] which return us to the ‘surprise’ of opposition we saw Oblak describe in section VIII above as the ‘most intriguing’ relation in the system. These *ovals*, Oblak states, can be defined as ‘pictures of a situation in which a certain triangle relates to its oppositional triangle by first being related to the oppositional triangle of a different hexagon’<sup>138</sup>. This ‘situation’ is more complicated than the original relations between triangles within their hexagons, and therefore, Oblak explains, ‘needs to be resolved in a more complex form’<sup>139</sup>.

**TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM**

**OVAL**

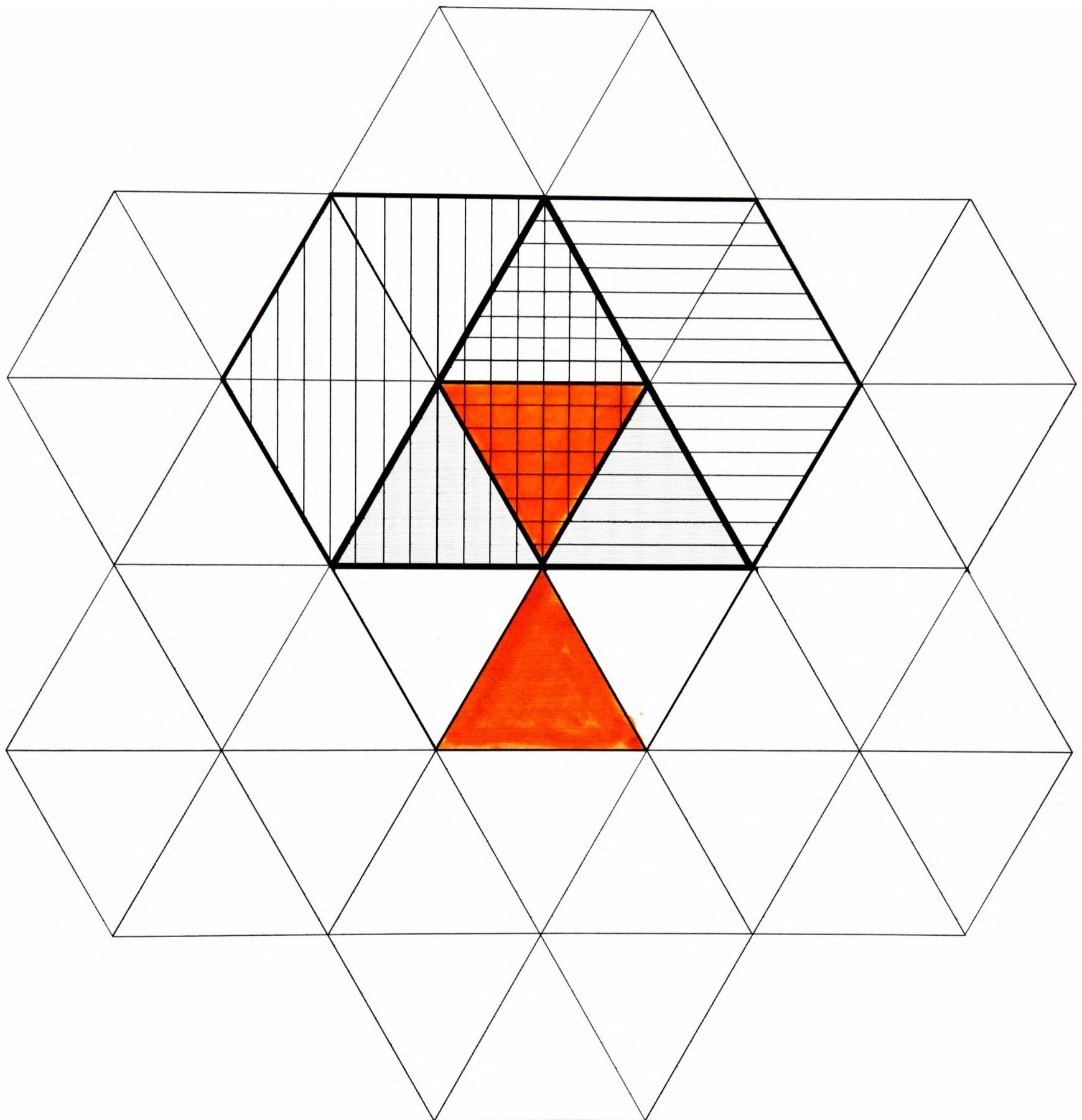


Blue *OVAL* Painting - Oil (+ Object) on Canvas over Silk

[fig. 5]

# **TRANSCENDENTAL MANNERISM**

## **DEVELOPMENT**



### **The Completed Matrix' First 'Production'**

An opposition in the original hexagon is developed through the intersection of two 'virtual' hexagons and their creation of a new larger triangle whose implications are explored outside the Matrix in an oval painting [fig. 5]

**[fig. 6]**

i.e. the *oval* painting itself. (Another arbitrary choice become a rule.) This new form must be understood, Oblak says, '*as-if* it were a painting which reproduces and makes an image of four triangles- or two simultaneous mediations'<sup>140</sup> [fig 6]. (In the diagram in fig. 6 the 'four triangles' Oblak refers to are the large 'composite' triangle in the center of the Matrix which is constituted by the intersection of two 'virtual' hexagons, as shown.)

In contrast to the system's original triangular images (constructed of acrylic glazes over collaged paper) the *ovals* are painted in oil on canvas, and the clouds they depict -or now really *re-present*- are 'merely an *illusion*'<sup>141</sup>. Oblak describes them as "'reproduced" triangles [or] paintings of triangles'<sup>142</sup>. In further contrast to the Matrix paintings' strong tangible presence, the *ovals'* material support of finely woven linen can be seen to be 'suppressed' in favour of a more complete illusion of clouds- i.e. as opposed to their emergence out of the thick acrylic 'culture' of the triangles. It is as if (*as-if?*) in response to this suppression that the *oval* paintings' material aspect itself -i.e. the canvass beneath the cloud-illusion- 'develops', Oblak says, a visually similar fabric frame of watered silk which 'continues simultaneously both the image and materiality of the *oval* paintings.'<sup>143</sup>

Now that the *oval* clouds are *declared* to be a reproduction (i.e. a representation of a previously indeterminate and unexpressed relation between triangles [as in fig. 6]), and its image is now recognized explicitly as an 'illusion' and as such no longer simply 'emergent' from the materials and processes of painting itself (as in the triangles' acrylic glazing), what emerges now from the surface of the painting is a bizarre jewellery-like conglomeration of leather , precious stones, and sculpted resin adhesive [as seen bottom-center in fig 5.]. It is through this object, Oblak explains, that the painting is 'developed further' - i.e. from the outside . . .

And so it goes.

•      •      •

In the published text of his Oxford Slade lecture series *Art and Anarchy* , Edgar Wind speaks of our ability in recent times to live in close proximity with art on the most comfortable and also, unfortunately, trivial terms. 'We are much given to art,' he says, 'but it touches us lightly , and that is why we can take so much of it- and so much of so many different kinds.'<sup>144</sup> Sometimes, however, as we noted early in the last chapter , in its pursuit of novelty and new frontiers, modern art can seem strange, foreign, even shocking. This effect, however , is not always, as Wind points out, 'the fault of the artist alone. W e all tend to raise

our voices when we speak to persons who are getting deaf.'<sup>145</sup> But inevitably, Wind continues,

the shock wears off when it becomes familiar and the device by which it was first achieved receives a place in the long gallery of modern devices where, well-classified and clearly labelled, it attracts and satisfies the dispassionate pilgrim, or just arouses his curiosity...

When these symptoms first began to appear they were clearly recognized by Hegel, who studied this modern malady. He explained that when art is removed to a zone of safety [i.e. curiosity, entertainment, etc.] it may still remain very good art indeed, and also very popular art, but its effect upon our existence will vanish.<sup>146</sup>

To get away from mere novelty and the subjectivity of mannerism we have seen artists attempt to produce works which are more 'universal' in significance. In the last chapter we mentioned the 'idealized' abstract forms of Brancusi and the 'objective chance' of Breton, and above we began with a reference to the 'tragic and timeless' 'colour field' painting of the Abstract Expressionists.

Other artists have developed specialized procedures in their pursuit of what we could call less subjective art. One contemporary example akin to Leonardo's cloud and water-stain technique (or that which Leonardo attributes to Boticelli of 'throwing a sponge soaked in a variety of colours at a wall'<sup>147</sup>) is the 'Panic-Design' method of the innovative and influential Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, described here by postmodern demagogue and designer Charles Jenks:

his creativity results from designing a huge project... with many variables moments before it is due. Forcing oneself to the edge of chaos with maximum information and difference in a psychological panic may result in a creativity not otherwise possible. In his case it resulted in his design for Parc de la Villette [in Paris] and the Hague City Hall- both breakthrough projects he might otherwise not have produced without being almost too late. Crisis-thinking can force through radical solutions.<sup>148</sup>

A more rigorous and systematic form of 'crisis-thinking' which we alluded to in 'Obsessed with Originality' is Salvador Dalí's 'Paranoic-Critical Method' (which greatly influenced Breton and had a lasting impact on Surrealism). Dalí regarded 'objective chance' and the other 'automistic' techniques of Dada and early Surrealism as genuine advances, but they were all by definition too passive for him, and thus not the dynamic vehicle he felt befitting of his genius. Dalí's response was to formulate, in his words, a 'spontaneous method of irrational cognition based on the critical interpretative association of delusional phenomena'<sup>149</sup>- by which he means to describe his process of 'cultivating genuine delusion' (i.e. 'paranoia'), yet from a stand-point of 'critical interpretation'. Dalí's interest in (if not, ironically, his *obsession* with) paranoia consists in its inherent

simultaneity of rationality and irrationality . (The best known product of this procedure is Dalí's iconic image of melting watches in *The Persistence of Memory*- suggesting the malleability of time, the transience of experience, and so on.) 'In a general way', he says, paranoic-criticism is 'a matter of the most rigorous systematization of phenomena and of the most delirious kind of material with the intention of making my most excessive and dangerous ideas tangibly creative.'<sup>150</sup> (This, then, is the significance behind one of Dalí's most famous utterances: 'The difference between me and a madman is that I am not mad'- i.e. that Dalí wanted to think like a madman, yet be able to reflect critically upon this experience and employ it creatively in his art.)

A much soberer , more contemplative, and perhaps more consistent example of the rigours approach to creativity we have just considered in Dalí is provided in the so-called 'Tintinnabuli' style of musical composition practised the by Estonian composer Arvo Pärt. Performer , director, and musicologist Paul Hillier describes Pärt's *Missa Sillabica* (1996) as:

a prime example of the underlying ['tintinnabuli'] technique with which Pärt literally draws music out of a text. Not only is the music syllabic, as the title suggests, but each pitch that we hear is determined by the length of each of the words in turn- within the various frameworks established by the composer for each movement. Similarlythe various rhythms and the pauses between phrases are strictly determined by the text's structure and punctuation. In a sense, then, the text (including its punctuation) has truly composed the music.<sup>151</sup>

In the notes accompanying Tõnu Kaljuste's recording of Pärt's most recent large-scale work, *Kanon pokajanen* ('Canon of Repentance', 1998) with the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir , Pärt himself speaks of his 'strictly defined rules of composition'<sup>152</sup>:

In this composition, as in many of my vocal works, I tried to use language as a point of departure. I wanted the word to be able to find its own sound, to draw out its own melodic line... [As a result] the entire structure of the musical composition is subject to the text and its laws: one lets the words 'create the music'.<sup>153</sup>

It is this 'getting rid of himself ', we could say, i.e. his method of allowing the music to 'compose itself ', which aligns Pärt with the aims of Mojca Oblak in her System of Transcendental Mannerism. In this eternal 'work in progress' Oblak has ties with all who seek advancement in art and especially artists -such as those we have considered here- who strive methodically for originality- that is, who do not sit around waiting patiently for the 'inspiration' which rarely (if ever) comes, but who instead set out on an active and positive course to produce original work.

What distinguishes Oblak, however, is what we have seen is the radical (in

fact, self-declared *obsessive*) systematization of her approach. When we concluded our examination of the dissolution of romantic art in Hegel's aesthetics, our reconstruction opened up the space for a third possible category of art in addition to the subjective and objective humours characteristic of art both in Hegel's day and still in our own. This third possibility was 'absolute' humour—i.e. an art which is neither wholly determined from without (as in objective humour), nor created solely as an empty vehicle for the artist's style (as in subjective humour). 'Absolute humour' in this way approaches Pärt's 'tintinnabulation' in which the texts he chooses ring out their own music, or the 'objective chance' techniques of Breton and the Surrealists who employed psycho-analysis, free association, 'automatic' writing, and so on to achieve breaks with tradition and create more universal (i.e. less 'subjective') artworks. But although these forms genuinely have the potential to produce creative and original art, it is not *new* art, at least not in any revolutionary or 'transcendental' sense. To make a 'hand-painted dream-photograph' of soft watches is not, in effect, fundamentally different from making a tempera panel of the birth of Venus (though over 400 years separate Dalí and Boticelli). Dalí has certainly created an original and compelling work of art, but he has not created a new *form* of art.

In Transcendental Mannerism we witness a revolution; for it is genuinely 'absolute' not only in the sense of being self perpetuating and self-determining (i.e. expressive only of itself rather than of Oblak as its creator or objectivity as such), but also in its 'absolute' content—which, as we have seen, is subjectivity itself. We will remember that, in Kantian terms, it is the rational autonomy of the will in giving laws to itself which is 'beyond all comparison great'<sup>154</sup> and thus genuinely *free* and *sublime*. This *transcendental* freedom (in stark contrast to caprice and arbitrariness) constitutes both the content and form of Transcendental Mannerism, and, as such, constitutes a new ideal in art.

But the ideal is not simply a correspondence of meaning and shape. As we saw in chapter two, truly beautiful art is that in which the content which is thus brought into sensuous configuration is not only true, but the *truth*. And as we have seen the ultimate meaning [which matches its form (and its means of production)] which Transcendental Mannerism embodies and thus *exemplifies* in the *aesthetic dimension* is the self-negating, self-returning, and thus truly self-conscious and self-determining 'infinite subjectivity' which is the '*substance*' of absolute knowing. But Transcendental Mannerism cannot simply be said to be *about* Hegel's *Science of Logic* or *Phenomenology of Mind* (as if these could somehow be represented in painting as Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is 'set to music' by Strauss).

Transcendental Mannerism is not simply *about* freedom, the sublime, truth, subjectivity, etc. It *is* these. If Oblak's work is to be genuinely free and genuinely sublime, it itself must *be-* that is, Transcendental Mannerism must *exist* not merely as the statement of these qualities (nor as their simple analogue or illustration), but as their *exemplification* in the world, in space and time. Transcendental Mannerism, as we have seen, does concern the truth and is indeed philosophical, but it is *not* philosophy.

In a letter Hegel expresses his idea of truth as follows:

*My view is... that the Idea can only be expressed and grasped as a process... for example as becoming- that is, as movement; for the truth is not merely at rest; it not merely is, but [is] as self-moving, as living... Only as this movement in itself -which is at once absolute rest- does the Idea, life, spirit, have being.<sup>155</sup>*

This is the truth of Hegel's philosophy , i.e. that what is true is neither object *nor* subject (neither materialism nor idealism), but the relation of one to the other- which is a process, i.e. *subjectivity*. In the *Phenomenology of Mind* and *The Science of Logic*, Hegel spends hundreds and hundreds of pages in pursuit of a full exegesis of this truth, but in taking the whole apart -that is, in dissecting the moments of 'substance'- as philosophy must, in keeping with its mode of reflection, the living unity of reciprocity (and, therefore, the truth itself) is lost. But when philosophy does manage to reunite them again, and the *Phenomenology* goes beyond arguments and explanations to give us a genuine *experience* of truth -a vision of infinity- to this extent does it become an æsthetic object itself.

But Transcendental Mannerism from the start is not merely the *idea* of 'æsthetically-based existential freedom', it *is* that freedom, and, as such, we have seen that it is truth's actual existence in the æsthetic dimension and thus a *new ideal in art*.

# ABBREVIATIONS

All texts by Hegel unless otherwise indicated

**AEA**=*After the End of Art* (Danto)

**BT**=*Beauty and Truth* (Bungay)

**CJ**=*Critique of Judgement* (Kant)

**CPR**=*Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant)

**Diff**=‘The Difference Between Fichte’s and Schelling’s Systems of Philosophy’ (Harris trans.)

**EL**=*Encyclopædia Logic* (Geraets/Suchtig/Harris trans.)

**EPR**=*Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Nisbet trans.)

**FTH**=*Freedom, Truth, and History* (Houlgate)

**HA**=*Hegel on Art* (Kaminsky)

**Letters**=*Hegel: The Letters* (Butler/Seiler trans.)

**LPFA**=*Lectures on the Philosophy of Fine Art* (Knox trans.)

**LHP**=*Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Knox trans.)

**LPWH**=*Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*  
(Nisbet trans.)

**PN**=*Philosophy of Nature* (Miller trans.)

**PR**=*Philosophy of Right* (Knox trans.)

**PM**=*Phenomenology of Mind* (Miller trans.)

**PhilM**=*Philosophy of Mind* (Wallace/Miller trans.)

**RR**=*Reason and Revolution* (Marcuse)

**Rothko**=*The Art of Mark Rothko* (Glimcher, ed.)

**SA**=*The State of the Art* (Danto)

**SI**=*Studies in Iconology* (Panofsky)

**SH**=*In the Spirit of Hegel* (Solomon)

**SL**=*Science of Logic* (Miller trans.)

**TM**=*Transcendental Mannerism* (Oblak)

- <sup>1</sup> Ottlie von Goethe, quoted in *Letters*, p. 711
- <sup>2</sup> EPR p. xxvii
- <sup>3</sup> EPR p. xxvii
- <sup>4</sup> LPH p. 53
- <sup>5</sup> LPWH p. 15
- <sup>6</sup> LHP p. 95
- <sup>7</sup> Diff (Surber trans.) p. 86
- <sup>8</sup> LPWH p. 66
- <sup>9</sup> SL p. 581
- <sup>10</sup> LPWH p. 66
- <sup>11</sup> Toews, *Hegel* pp. 88-9
- <sup>12</sup> Nietzsche *Ecce Homo* p. 33
- <sup>13</sup> LHP p. 47
- <sup>14</sup> PM ¶ 71
- <sup>15</sup> LPWH, Nisbet trans., p. vii
- <sup>16</sup> Knox, 'Hegel and Hegelianism' (computer database entry, no page references available)
- <sup>17</sup> Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology* p. 3
- <sup>18</sup> Knox, 'Hegel and Hegelianism'
- <sup>19</sup> Bungay, *BT* p. 1
- <sup>20</sup> LPWH p. 103
- <sup>21</sup> Hegel LPWH p. 95
- <sup>22</sup> PR p. 11
- <sup>23</sup> Bungay, *BT* p. v
- <sup>24</sup> LPFA p. 584
- <sup>25</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 3
- <sup>26</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 65
- <sup>27</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 168
- <sup>28</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 177
- <sup>29</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 167
- <sup>30</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 176
- <sup>31</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 177
- <sup>32</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 178
- <sup>33</sup> Kaminsky, *HA* p. 178
- <sup>34</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 130
- <sup>35</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 130
- <sup>36</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 139
- <sup>37</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 139
- <sup>38</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 151-2
- <sup>39</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 152
- <sup>40</sup> LPFA p. 60
- <sup>41</sup> LPFA p. 60-1
- <sup>42</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 169
- <sup>43</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 169-70
- <sup>44</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 174
- <sup>45</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 148
- <sup>46</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 148
- <sup>47</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 148-9
- <sup>48</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 150
- <sup>49</sup> George Braque, interview with Dora Maier quoted by Paul Crowther in *The Language of Twentieth Century Art*, p. 41
- <sup>50</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 170
- <sup>51</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 181
- <sup>52</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 181
- <sup>53</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 181

<sup>54</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 182

<sup>55</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 182

<sup>56</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 182

<sup>57</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 186

<sup>58</sup> *Phil.M* § 573

<sup>59</sup> *LPWH* p. 45

<sup>60</sup> *LPWH* p. 45

<sup>61</sup> *LHP* p. 141-2

<sup>62</sup> *LHP* p. 142

<sup>63</sup> *LHP* p. 160

<sup>64</sup> *LHP* p. 164

<sup>65</sup> *Phil.M* § 552

<sup>66</sup> *Phil.M* § 384 Z

<sup>67</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 226-7

<sup>68</sup> *PM* ¶ 10

<sup>69</sup> *PM* ¶ 10

<sup>70</sup> *PM* ¶ 10

<sup>71</sup> *LHP* p. 42

<sup>72</sup> Houlgate, *FTH* p. 227

<sup>73</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, 27 August 1811, p. 251

<sup>2</sup> LPFA p. 290-1

<sup>3</sup> PM ¶ 26

<sup>4</sup> PM ¶ 26

<sup>5</sup> PM ¶ 26

<sup>6</sup> Taylor, *Hegel*, remarks from section: 'Hegel Today'

<sup>7</sup> Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, p. 429

<sup>8</sup> Bungay, *BT*, p. v

<sup>9</sup> PN § 250

<sup>10</sup> all quotations from p. 14

<sup>11</sup> K. Westphal, *Hegel's Epistemological Realism*

<sup>12</sup> Kant, CPR p. A832, B860

<sup>13</sup> PM ¶ 20

<sup>14</sup> LHP p. 87

<sup>15</sup> EL § 14

<sup>16</sup> SL p. 61 note 1

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from Kant's *Philosophical Correspondence* in Solomon SH p. 88

<sup>18</sup> EL § 15

<sup>19</sup> Reprinted in Solomon SH p. 155

<sup>20</sup> Reprinted in Solomon SH p. 155

<sup>21</sup> PM ¶ 73

<sup>22</sup> SL p. 36

<sup>23</sup> Letters, Hegel to E.-C. Duboc, 30 July 1822, p. 492

<sup>24</sup> PM ¶ 74

<sup>25</sup> PM ¶ 74

<sup>26</sup> PM ¶ 74

<sup>27</sup> LHP v. III p 428

<sup>28</sup> PM ¶ 74

<sup>29</sup> PM ¶ 74

<sup>30</sup> PM ¶ 1

<sup>31</sup> LA p. 56

<sup>32</sup> EL § 24 (Addition 3)

<sup>33</sup> Diff p. 91

<sup>34</sup> LHP p. 42

<sup>35</sup> PM ¶ 29

<sup>36</sup> PM ¶ 11

<sup>37</sup> PM ¶ 11

<sup>38</sup> PM ¶ 11

<sup>39</sup> PM ¶ 11

<sup>40</sup> PM ¶ 38

<sup>41</sup> PM ¶ 39

<sup>42</sup> PM ¶ 39

<sup>43</sup> PM ¶ 39

<sup>44</sup> PM ¶ 3

<sup>45</sup> PM ¶ 36

<sup>46</sup> PM ¶ 802

<sup>47</sup> PM ¶ 84

<sup>48</sup> PM ¶ 48

<sup>49</sup> PM ¶ 85

<sup>50</sup> PM ¶ 67

<sup>51</sup> PM ¶ 68

<sup>52</sup> PM ¶ 35

<sup>53</sup> PM ¶ 31

- <sup>55</sup> *PM* ¶ 17  
<sup>56</sup> *PM* ¶ 17  
<sup>57</sup> *PM* ¶ 7  
<sup>58</sup> *LPWH* p. 27  
<sup>59</sup> *PM* ¶ 27  
<sup>60</sup> *PM* ¶ 16  
<sup>61</sup> *PM* ¶ 16  
<sup>62</sup> *PM* ¶ 16  
<sup>63</sup> *PM* ¶ 18  
<sup>64</sup> *PM* ¶ 20  
<sup>65</sup> *PM* ¶ 12  
<sup>66</sup> *PM* ¶ 20  
<sup>67</sup> *PM* ¶ 78  
<sup>68</sup> *LHP* p. 42  
<sup>69</sup> *LPWH* p. 69  
<sup>70</sup> *PM* ¶ 808  
<sup>71</sup> *SL* p. 581  
<sup>72</sup> *SL* p. 581  
<sup>73</sup> *PM* ¶ 111  
<sup>74</sup> *PM* ¶ 103  
<sup>75</sup> *PM* ¶ 165  
<sup>76</sup> *PM* ¶ 27  
<sup>77</sup> *PM* ¶ 805  
<sup>78</sup> *PM* ¶ 48  
<sup>79</sup> *PM* ¶ 37  
<sup>80</sup> *PM* ¶ 802  
<sup>81</sup> *PM* ¶ 87  
<sup>82</sup> *SL* p. 25  
<sup>83</sup> *SL* p. 51  
<sup>84</sup> *SL* p. 51  
<sup>85</sup> *SL* p. 48  
<sup>86</sup> *LHP* p. 68  
<sup>87</sup> *LHP* p. 68  
<sup>88</sup> *SL* p. 577  
<sup>89</sup> *SL* p. 51  
<sup>90</sup> *SL* p. 27  
<sup>91</sup> *SL* p. 51  
<sup>92</sup> *SL* p. 51  
<sup>93</sup> *SL* p. 60  
<sup>94</sup> *SL* pp. 60-1  
<sup>95</sup> *SL* p. 61  
<sup>96</sup> *SL* p. 61  
<sup>97</sup> *SL* p. 36  
<sup>98</sup> *SL* p. 36  
<sup>99</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>100</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>101</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>102</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>103</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>104</sup> *SL* p. 37  
<sup>105</sup> *SL* p. 38  
<sup>106</sup> *SL* p. 67  
<sup>107</sup> *SL* pp. 38-9

<sup>109</sup> *SL* p. 39

<sup>110</sup> *SL* p. 44

<sup>111</sup> *SL* p. 44

<sup>112</sup> *SL* pp. 44-5

<sup>113</sup> *SL* p. 45

<sup>114</sup> *SL* p. 45

<sup>115</sup> *SL* p. 45

<sup>116</sup> *SL* p. 592

<sup>117</sup> *SL* p. 592

<sup>118</sup> *SL* p. 46

<sup>119</sup> *SL* p. 46

<sup>120</sup> *SL* p. 27

<sup>121</sup> *SL* p. 31

<sup>122</sup> *SL* p. 31

<sup>123</sup> *SL* p. 27

<sup>124</sup> *SL* p. 56

<sup>125</sup> *SL* p. 56

<sup>126</sup> *SL* p. 190

<sup>127</sup> *SL* p. 56

<sup>128</sup> *SL* p. 56

<sup>129</sup> *SL* p. 56

<sup>130</sup> *SL* p. 43

<sup>131</sup> *EL* §17

<sup>132</sup> *SL* p. 50

<sup>133</sup> *SL* p. 43

<sup>134</sup> *PM* p. 56

<sup>135</sup> *SL* p. 68

<sup>136</sup> *SL* p. 68

<sup>137</sup> *SL* pp. 69-70

<sup>138</sup> *EL* §17

<sup>139</sup> *SL* p. 72

<sup>140</sup> *SL* p. 71

<sup>141</sup> *SL* pp. 71-2

<sup>142</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>143</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>144</sup> *SL* p. 57

<sup>145</sup> *SL* p. 28

<sup>146</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>147</sup> *EL* §24 (Addition 2)

<sup>148</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>149</sup> *EPR* § 31

<sup>150</sup> Singer in *H* p. 79

<sup>151</sup> *SL* p. 82

<sup>152</sup> *EL* §87 (Remark)

<sup>153</sup> *SL* p. 82

<sup>154</sup> *SL* p. 83

<sup>155</sup> *SL* p. 82

<sup>156</sup> See e.g.: Singer *Hegel*, p. 79, Stace *The Philosophy of Hegel*, p.136, and Taylor *Hegel*, p. 233

<sup>157</sup> *SL* pp. 82-3

<sup>158</sup> *SL* pp. 82-3

<sup>159</sup> *SL* p. 96

<sup>160</sup> *EL* §88

<sup>161</sup> *SL* n. 106

<sup>163</sup> *EL* §81 (Addition 2)

<sup>164</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>165</sup> *EL* §81 (Remark)

<sup>166</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>167</sup> Fichte, *Science of Knowledge* p. 16

<sup>168</sup> *SL* p. 54

<sup>169</sup> *LHP* p. 55

<sup>170</sup> *EL* §89 (Addition)

<sup>171</sup> *EL* §91

<sup>172</sup> *SL* p. 840

<sup>173</sup> *SL* p. 53

<sup>174</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>175</sup> *EL* §24 (Addition 2)

<sup>176</sup> *EL* §28

<sup>177</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>178</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>179</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>180</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>181</sup> *PM* ¶53

<sup>182</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>183</sup> *EL* §31 (Addition)

<sup>184</sup> *SL* p. 27

<sup>185</sup> *PM* ¶51

<sup>186</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>187</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>188</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>189</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>190</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>191</sup> *EL* §80 (Addition)

<sup>192</sup> *EL* §80 (Addition)

<sup>193</sup> *EL* §80 (Addition)

<sup>194</sup> *EL* §48 (Addition)

<sup>195</sup> *EL* §48 (Addition)

<sup>196</sup> *EL* §81 (Addition 1)

<sup>197</sup> *EL* §81 (Addition 1)

<sup>198</sup> *EL* §81 (Remark)

<sup>199</sup> *EL* §28 (Addition)

<sup>200</sup> *EL* §82 (Paragraph and Remark)

<sup>201</sup> *EL* §82 (Addition)

<sup>202</sup> *SL* p. 389

<sup>203</sup> *SL* p. 389

<sup>204</sup> *SL* p. 389

<sup>205</sup> *SL* p. 389

<sup>206</sup> *SL* p. 389

<sup>207</sup> *SL* p. 390

<sup>208</sup> *SL* p. 391

<sup>209</sup> *SL* p. 575

<sup>210</sup> *SL* p. 575

<sup>211</sup> *SL* p. 575

<sup>212</sup> *SL* p. 575

<sup>213</sup> *SL* pp. 591-2

<sup>214</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>216</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>217</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>218</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>219</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>220</sup> *SL* p. 587

<sup>221</sup> *SL* p. 596

<sup>222</sup> *SL* p. 597

<sup>223</sup> *SL* p. 597

<sup>224</sup> *SL* p. 597

<sup>225</sup> *SL* p. 597

<sup>226</sup> *SL* p. 597

<sup>227</sup> *SL* p. 756

<sup>228</sup> *SL* p. 756

<sup>229</sup> *SL* p. 758

<sup>230</sup> *SL* p. 761

<sup>231</sup> *SL* p. 761

<sup>232</sup> *SL* p. 761

<sup>233</sup> *SL* p. 775

<sup>234</sup> *SL* p. 583

<sup>235</sup> *SL* p. 842

<sup>236</sup> *SL* p. 842

<sup>237</sup> *EL* § 237 Addition

<sup>238</sup> *SL* p. 843

<sup>239</sup> *EL* §244

<sup>240</sup> *SL* p. 843

<sup>241</sup> *SL* p. 843

<sup>242</sup> *SL* pp. 843-4

<sup>1</sup> LPFA p. 91-2

<sup>2</sup> LPFA p. 53

<sup>3</sup> LPFA p. 53

<sup>4</sup> LPFA p. 53

<sup>5</sup> LPFA p. 53

<sup>6</sup> LPFA p. 53

<sup>7</sup> LPFA p. 53-4

<sup>8</sup> LPFA p. 54

<sup>9</sup> LPFA p. 54

<sup>10</sup> LPFA p. 54

<sup>11</sup> LPFA p. 54

<sup>12</sup> LPFA p. 54

<sup>13</sup> LPFA p. 54-5

<sup>14</sup> LPFA p. 56

<sup>15</sup> LPFA p. 55

<sup>16</sup> LPFA p. 55

<sup>17</sup> LPFA p. 56

<sup>18</sup> LPFA p. 56

<sup>19</sup> LPFA p. 1

<sup>20</sup> LPFA p. 1

<sup>21</sup> LPFA p. 2

<sup>22</sup> LPFA p. 2

<sup>23</sup> LPFA p. 4

<sup>24</sup> LPFA p. 23

<sup>25</sup> LPFA pp. 7-8

<sup>26</sup> LPFA p. 8

<sup>27</sup> LPFA p. 8

<sup>28</sup> LPFA p. 9

<sup>29</sup> LPFA p. 39

<sup>30</sup> LPFA p. 9

<sup>31</sup> LPR p. 111

<sup>32</sup> LPFA p. 152

<sup>33</sup> LPFA p. 152

<sup>34</sup> LPFA p. 152

<sup>35</sup> LPFA p. 13

<sup>36</sup> LPFA p. 13

<sup>37</sup> LPFA pp. 30-1

<sup>38</sup> LPFA pp. 31

<sup>39</sup> LPFA p. 36

<sup>40</sup> LPFA pp. 29-30

<sup>41</sup> LPFA p. 30

<sup>42</sup> PN § 251 (Addition)

<sup>43</sup> PN § 376 (Addition)

<sup>44</sup> LPWH p. 44

<sup>45</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>46</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>47</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>48</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>49</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>50</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>51</sup> LPFA p. 93

<sup>52</sup> LPFA p. 94

- <sup>53</sup> *LPFA* p. 94  
<sup>54</sup> *LPFA* p. 94  
<sup>55</sup> *LPFA* p. 94  
<sup>56</sup> *LPFA* p. 94  
<sup>57</sup> *LPFA* p. 95  
<sup>58</sup> *LPFA* p. 95  
<sup>59</sup> *LPFA* p. 95  
<sup>60</sup> *Phil.M* § 381 (Addition)  
<sup>61</sup> *LPFA* p. 36  
<sup>62</sup> *LPFA* p. 49  
<sup>63</sup> *LPFA* p. 94  
<sup>64</sup> *LPFA* p. 256  
<sup>65</sup> *LPFA* pp. 256-7  
<sup>66</sup> *LPFA* p. 257  
<sup>67</sup> *LPFA* p. 97  
<sup>68</sup> *LPFA* p. 97  
<sup>69</sup> *LPFA* p. 97-8  
<sup>70</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>71</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>72</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>73</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>74</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>75</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>76</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>77</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>78</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>79</sup> *LPFA* p. 98  
<sup>80</sup> *LPFA* p. 98-9  
<sup>81</sup> *LPFA* p. 99  
<sup>82</sup> *LPFA* p. 99  
<sup>83</sup> *LPFA* p. 99  
<sup>84</sup> *LPFA* p. 99-100  
<sup>85</sup> *LPFA* p. 99  
<sup>86</sup> *LPFA* p. 99  
<sup>87</sup> *LPFA* p. 100-1  
<sup>88</sup> *LPFA* p. 101  
<sup>89</sup> *LPFA* p. 101  
<sup>90</sup> *LPFA* p. 22  
<sup>91</sup> *LPFA* p. 101  
<sup>92</sup> *LPFA* p. 101  
<sup>93</sup> *LPFA* p. 106  
<sup>94</sup> *LPFA* p. 107  
<sup>95</sup> *LPFA* p. 107  
<sup>96</sup> *LPFA* p. 111  
<sup>97</sup> *LPFA* p. 111-2  
<sup>98</sup> *LPFA* p. 112  
<sup>99</sup> *LPFA* p. 112  
<sup>100</sup> *LPFA* p. 112  
<sup>101</sup> *LPFA* p. 113  
<sup>102</sup> *LPFA* p. 113  
<sup>103</sup> *LPFA* p. 113  
<sup>104</sup> *LPFA* p. 113

<sup>105</sup> LPFA p. 114

<sup>106</sup> LPFA p. 114

<sup>107</sup> LPFA p. 114-5

<sup>108</sup> LPFA p. 115

<sup>109</sup> LPFA p. 115

<sup>110</sup> LPFA p. 115

<sup>111</sup> LPFA p. 115

<sup>112</sup> LPFA p. 280

<sup>113</sup> LPFA p. 280

<sup>114</sup> LPFA p. 281

<sup>115</sup> LPFA p. 282

<sup>116</sup> LPFA p. 282

<sup>117</sup> LPFA p. 282

<sup>118</sup> LPFA p. 282

<sup>119</sup> LPFA p. 282-3

<sup>120</sup> LPFA p. 284

<sup>121</sup> LPFA p. 286

<sup>122</sup> LPFA p. 286

<sup>1</sup> LPFA p. 314-15

<sup>2</sup> LPFA p. 315

<sup>3</sup> LPFA p. 315

<sup>4</sup> LPFA p. 315-6

<sup>5</sup> LPFA p. 315-6

<sup>6</sup> LPFA p. 315

<sup>7</sup> LPFA p. 315

<sup>8</sup> LPFA p. 316

<sup>9</sup> LPFA p. 316

<sup>10</sup> LPFA p. 316

<sup>11</sup> LPFA p. 317

<sup>12</sup> LPFA p. 317-8

<sup>13</sup> LPFA p. 318

<sup>14</sup> LPFA p. 318

<sup>15</sup> LPFA p. 318

<sup>16</sup> LPFA p. 318

<sup>17</sup> LPFA p. 319

<sup>18</sup> LPFA p. 325

<sup>19</sup> LPFA p. 325

<sup>20</sup> LPFA p. 325

<sup>21</sup> LPFA p. 326

<sup>22</sup> LPFA p. 329

<sup>23</sup> LPFA p. 329

<sup>24</sup> LPFA p. 39

<sup>25</sup> LPFA p. 323

<sup>26</sup> LPFA p. 332

<sup>27</sup> LPFA p. 333

<sup>28</sup> LPFA p. 333

<sup>29</sup> LPFA p. 338

<sup>30</sup> LPFA p. 338

<sup>31</sup> LPFA p. 334

<sup>32</sup> LPFA p. 347

<sup>33</sup> LPFA p. 349

<sup>34</sup> LPFA p. 349

<sup>35</sup> LPFA p. 349

<sup>36</sup> LPFA p. 349

<sup>37</sup> LPFA p. 351

<sup>38</sup> LPFA p. 362

<sup>39</sup> LPFA p. 362

<sup>40</sup> LPFA p. 362

<sup>41</sup> LPFA p. 354

<sup>42</sup> LPFA p. 360

<sup>43</sup> LPFA p. 362

<sup>44</sup> LPFA p. 362-3

<sup>45</sup> LPFA p. 363

<sup>46</sup> LPFA p. 363

<sup>47</sup> LPFA p. 363

<sup>48</sup> LPFA p. 363

<sup>49</sup> LPFA p. 364

<sup>50</sup> LPFA p. 366

<sup>51</sup> LPFA p. 371-2

<sup>52</sup> LPFA p. 372

<sup>53</sup> *LPFA* p. 373

<sup>54</sup> *LPFA* p. 378

<sup>55</sup> *LPFA* p. 378

<sup>56</sup> *LPFA* p. 378

<sup>57</sup> *LPFA* p. 378

<sup>58</sup> *LPFA* p. 379

<sup>59</sup> *LPFA* p. 379

<sup>60</sup> *LPFA* p. 379

<sup>61</sup> *LPFA* p. 380

<sup>62</sup> *LPFA* p. 396

<sup>63</sup> *LPFA* p. 396

<sup>64</sup> *LPFA* p. 421

<sup>65</sup> *LPFA* p. 422

<sup>66</sup> *LPFA* p. 422

<sup>67</sup> *LPFA* p. 422

<sup>68</sup> *LPFA* p. 422

<sup>69</sup> *LPFA* p. 422

<sup>70</sup> *LPFA* p. 431

<sup>71</sup> *LPFA* p. 426

<sup>72</sup> *LPFA* p. 426

<sup>73</sup> *LPFA* p. 427

<sup>74</sup> *LPFA* p. 427

<sup>75</sup> *LPFA* p. 431

<sup>76</sup> *LPFA* p. 431-2

<sup>77</sup> *LPFA* p. 432

<sup>78</sup> *LPFA* p. 432

<sup>79</sup> *LPFA* p. 433

<sup>80</sup> *LPFA* p. 431

<sup>81</sup> *LPFA* p. 431

<sup>82</sup> *LPFA* p. 431-2

<sup>83</sup> *LPFA* p. 432

<sup>84</sup> *LPFA* p. 432

<sup>85</sup> *LPFA* p. 433

<sup>86</sup> *LPFA* p. 433-4

<sup>87</sup> *LPFA* p. 432

<sup>88</sup> *LPFA* p. 434

<sup>89</sup> *LPFA* p. 435

<sup>90</sup> *LPFA* p. 787

<sup>91</sup> *LPFA* p. 790

<sup>92</sup> *LPFA* p. 790

<sup>93</sup> *LPFA* p. 791

<sup>94</sup> *LPFA* p. 485

<sup>95</sup> *LPFA* p. 442

<sup>96</sup> *LPFA* p. 787

<sup>97</sup> *LPFA* p. 787-8

<sup>98</sup> *LPFA* p. 788

<sup>99</sup> *LPFA* p. 501

<sup>100</sup> *LPFA* p. 500

- <sup>101</sup> *LPFA* p. 436  
<sup>102</sup> *LPFA* p. 442  
<sup>103</sup> *LPFA* p. 1236  
<sup>104</sup> *LPFA* p. 517  
<sup>105</sup> *LPFA* p. 517-8  
<sup>106</sup> *LPFA* p. 518  
<sup>107</sup> *LPFA* p. 518  
<sup>108</sup> *LPFA* p. 518  
<sup>109</sup> *LPFA* p. 518  
<sup>110</sup> *LPFA* p. 518  
<sup>111</sup> *LPFA* P. 518  
<sup>112</sup> *LPFA* P. 518  
<sup>113</sup> *LPFA* P. 518  
<sup>114</sup> *LPFA* p. 519  
<sup>115</sup> *LPFA* p. 519  
<sup>116</sup> *LPFA* p. 519  
<sup>117</sup> *LPFA* p. 520  
<sup>118</sup> *LPFA* p. 520  
<sup>119</sup> *LPFA* p. 520  
<sup>120</sup> *LPFA* p. 520  
<sup>121</sup> *LPFA* p. 520  
<sup>122</sup> *LPFA* p. 522  
<sup>123</sup> *LPFA* p. 522  
<sup>124</sup> *LPFA* p. 522  
<sup>125</sup> *LPFA* p. 522  
<sup>126</sup> *LPFA* p. 523  
<sup>127</sup> *LPFA* p. 523  
<sup>128</sup> *LPFA* p. 523  
<sup>129</sup> *LPFA* p. 523  
<sup>130</sup> *LPFA* p. 523  
<sup>131</sup> *LPFA* p. 523-4  
<sup>132</sup> *LPFA* p. 525  
<sup>133</sup> *LPFA* p. 525  
<sup>134</sup> *LPFA* p. 526  
<sup>135</sup> *LPFA* p. 552  
<sup>136</sup> *LPFA* p. 552  
<sup>137</sup> *LPFA* p. 552  
<sup>138</sup> *LPFA* p. 552  
<sup>139</sup> *LPFA* p. 536  
<sup>140</sup> *LPFA* p. 553  
<sup>141</sup> *LPFA* p. 553  
<sup>142</sup> *LPFA* p. 554  
<sup>143</sup> *LPFA* p. 554  
<sup>144</sup> *LPFA* p. 573  
<sup>145</sup> *LPFA* p. 573-4  
<sup>146</sup> *LPFA* p. 594

<sup>1</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>2</sup> *LPFA* p. 517

<sup>3</sup> *LPFA* p. 517

<sup>4</sup> *LPFA* p. 517

<sup>5</sup> *LPFA* p. 594

<sup>6</sup> *LPFA* p. 576

<sup>7</sup> *LPFA* p. 586

<sup>8</sup> *LPFA* p. 586

<sup>9</sup> *LPFA* p. 586

<sup>10</sup> *LPFA* p. 593-4

<sup>11</sup> *LPFA* p. 574-5

<sup>12</sup> *LPFA* p. 575

<sup>13</sup> *LPFA* p. 575

<sup>14</sup> *LPFA* p. 575

<sup>15</sup> *LPFA* p. 9

<sup>16</sup> *LPFA* p. 10

<sup>17</sup> *LPFA* p. 10

<sup>18</sup> *LPFA* p. 10

<sup>19</sup> *LPFA* p. 576

<sup>20</sup> *LPFA* p. 594

<sup>21</sup> *LPFA* p. 594

<sup>22</sup> *LPFA* p. 595

<sup>23</sup> *LPFA* p. 529

<sup>24</sup> *LPFA* p. 595

<sup>25</sup> *LPFA* p. 594

<sup>26</sup> *LPFA* p. 595-6

<sup>27</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>28</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>29</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>30</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>31</sup> *LPFA* p. 598

<sup>32</sup> *LPFA* p. 598

<sup>33</sup> *LPFA* p. 599

<sup>34</sup> *LPFA* p. 599

<sup>35</sup> *LPFA* p. 600

<sup>36</sup> *LPFA* p. 600

<sup>37</sup> *LPFA* p. 600

<sup>38</sup> *LPFA* p. 600

<sup>39</sup> *LPFA* p. 600-1

<sup>40</sup> *LPFA* p. 601

<sup>41</sup> *LPFA* p. 602

<sup>42</sup> *LPFA* p. 602

<sup>43</sup> *LPFA* p. 604

<sup>44</sup> *LPFA* p. 603

<sup>45</sup> *LPFA* p. 604

<sup>46</sup> *LPFA* p. 604

<sup>47</sup> *LPFA* p. 604

<sup>48</sup> *LPFA* p. 604-5

<sup>49</sup> *LPFA* p. 605

- <sup>50</sup> LPFA p. 605  
<sup>51</sup> LPFA p. 605-6  
<sup>52</sup> LPFA p. 606  
<sup>53</sup> LPFA p. 607  
<sup>54</sup> LPFA p. 607  
<sup>55</sup> LPFA p. 607  
<sup>56</sup> LPFA p. 607  
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<sup>64</sup> LPFA p. 608  
<sup>65</sup> LPFA p. 608  
<sup>66</sup> LPFA p. 609  
<sup>67</sup> LPFA p. 609  
<sup>68</sup> LPFA p. 595  
<sup>69</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>70</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>71</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>72</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>73</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>74</sup> LPFA p. 596  
<sup>75</sup> LPFA p. 292  
<sup>76</sup> LPFA p. 291-2  
<sup>77</sup> LPFA p. 294  
<sup>78</sup> LPFA p. 295  
<sup>79</sup> LPFA p. 294  
<sup>80</sup> LPFA p. 600  
<sup>81</sup> LPFA p. 601  
<sup>82</sup> LPFA p. 601  
<sup>83</sup> LPFA p. 602  
<sup>84</sup> LPFA p. 604  
<sup>85</sup> LPFA p. 605  
<sup>86</sup> LPFA p. 605  
<sup>87</sup> LPFA p. 604  
<sup>88</sup> LPFA p. 603  
<sup>89</sup> LPFA p. 607  
<sup>90</sup> LPFA p. 607  
<sup>91</sup> LPFA p. 103  
<sup>92</sup> LPFA p. 102  
<sup>93</sup> LPFA p. 11  
<sup>94</sup> LPFA p. 103  
<sup>95</sup> LPFA p. 71  
<sup>96</sup> LPFA p. 11

<sup>1</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>2</sup> *LPFA* p. 104

<sup>3</sup> *LPFA* p. 104

<sup>4</sup> *LPFA* p. 104

<sup>5</sup> *LPFA* p. 104-5

<sup>6</sup> *LPFA* p. 13

<sup>7</sup> Duncan Forbes, *LPWH*, Nisbet trans., p. vii

<sup>8</sup> *LPFA* p. 600-1

<sup>9</sup> *LPFA* p. 595

<sup>10</sup> *LPFA* p. 595

<sup>11</sup> *LPFA* p. 609

<sup>12</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>13</sup> *LPFA* p. 596

<sup>14</sup> *LPFA* p. 610

<sup>15</sup> *LPFA* p. 611

<sup>16</sup> *LPFA* p. 609

<sup>17</sup> *LPFA* p. 609

<sup>18</sup> *LPFA* p. 609

<sup>19</sup> *LPFA* p. 18

<sup>20</sup> *LPWH* p. 215

<sup>21</sup> *LPWH* p. 170

<sup>22</sup> *LPWH* p. 170

<sup>23</sup> *LPWH* p. 171

<sup>24</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>25</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>26</sup> *PN* § 376 addition

<sup>27</sup> *PN* § 248 remark

<sup>28</sup> *PN* § 375

<sup>29</sup> *PN* § 375 addition

<sup>30</sup> *PN* § 376

<sup>31</sup> *LPFA* p. 284

<sup>32</sup> *LPFA* p. 75

<sup>33</sup> *LPFA* p. 75

<sup>34</sup> *LPFA* p. 76

<sup>35</sup> *LPFA* p. 103

<sup>36</sup> *LPFA* p. 31

<sup>37</sup> *LPFA* p. 163

<sup>38</sup> *LPFA* p. 22

<sup>39</sup> *LPFA* p. 9

<sup>40</sup> *LPFA* p. 71

<sup>1</sup> Rothko, p. 7

<sup>2</sup> Carter, 'Re-Examination of the "Death of Art"', pp. 93-4

<sup>3</sup> LPFA, Preface, p. vii

<sup>4</sup> Danto, SA p. 4

<sup>5</sup> Danto, SA p. 214

<sup>6</sup> Danto, SA p. 202-3

<sup>7</sup> both phrases Erich Heller, *The Artist's Journey into the Interior*, quoted in Carter, 'Re-Examination of the "Death of Art"' in Steinkraus & Schmitz' *Art and Logic*, p. 84

<sup>8</sup> Croce, *Aesthetics*, p. 302

<sup>9</sup> Croce, *Aesthetics*, p. 303

<sup>10</sup> Croce, *Aesthetics*, p. 302

<sup>11</sup> Fowkes, *Hegelian Account of Contemporary Art*, p. 82

<sup>12</sup> Croce, *What is Living and What is Dead...* p. 130

<sup>13</sup> LPFA p. 294

<sup>14</sup> LPFA p. 294

<sup>15</sup> LPFA p. 295

<sup>16</sup> Bungay, BT p. 89

<sup>17</sup> Bungay, BT p. 86

<sup>18</sup> Bungay, BT p. 86

<sup>19</sup> Knox, 'The Puzzle of Hegel's Aesthetics', in Steinkraus & Schmitz' *Art and Logic*, p. 1

<sup>20</sup> Knox, 'The Puzzle of Hegel's Aesthetics', p. 1

<sup>21</sup> Knox, 'The Puzzle of Hegel's Aesthetics', p. 4 (quotation extended slightly)

<sup>22</sup> LPFA p. 608

- <sup>1</sup> Danto, *SA* p. 4
- <sup>2</sup> Danto, *SA* p. 209
- <sup>3</sup> Danto, *AEA* p. 30
- <sup>4</sup> Danto, *AEA* p. 14
- <sup>5</sup> *LPFA* p. 63
- <sup>6</sup> *Phil.M* § 395 Z
- <sup>7</sup> *LPFA* p. 296
- <sup>8</sup> *LPFA* p. 103
- <sup>9</sup> Panofsky, *SI* p. 7
- <sup>10</sup> Panofsky, *SI* p. 7
- <sup>11</sup> Panofsky, *SI* p. 7
- <sup>12</sup> *TM* p.42 (quoting P. Davis's *Cosmic Blueprint*, Penguin Books, 1995, p. 54)
- <sup>13</sup> *LPFA* p. 103
- <sup>14</sup> *TM* p. 1
- <sup>15</sup> *TM* p. 1
- <sup>16</sup> *TM* p. 1
- <sup>17</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>18</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>19</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>20</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>21</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>22</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>23</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>24</sup> *TM* p. 2
- <sup>25</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>26</sup> Mondrian, 'Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art'
- <sup>27</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>28</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>29</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>30</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>31</sup> *TM* p. 3
- <sup>32</sup> Kant *CJ* §25
- <sup>33</sup> Kant *CJ* §25
- <sup>34</sup> *TM* p. 5
- <sup>35</sup> *TM* p. 5
- <sup>36</sup> Kant: *CPR*, last page
- <sup>37</sup> Kant *CJ* §25
- <sup>38</sup> *TM* p. 6
- <sup>39</sup> *TM* p. 21
- <sup>40</sup> *TM* p. 7; Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, A548, B576
- <sup>41</sup> *TM* p. 7
- <sup>42</sup> *TM* p. 7
- <sup>43</sup> *TM* p. 8
- <sup>44</sup> *TM* p. 8
- <sup>45</sup> *TM* p. 9
- <sup>46</sup> *TM* p. 10
- <sup>47</sup> *TM* p. 11
- <sup>48</sup> *TM* p. 11
- <sup>49</sup> *TM* p. 12
- <sup>50</sup> *TM* p. 12
- <sup>51</sup> *TM* p. 12-3
- <sup>52</sup> *TM* p. 13
- <sup>53</sup> *TM* p. 13
- <sup>54</sup> *TM* p. 13
- <sup>55</sup> *TM* p. 13
- <sup>56</sup> *TM* p. 14; Breton: *What is Surrealism?* p. 279
- <sup>57</sup> *TM* p. 14

- <sup>58</sup> *TM* p. 14  
<sup>59</sup> *TM* p. 14  
<sup>60</sup> *TM* p. 14  
<sup>61</sup> *TM* p. 14  
<sup>62</sup> *TM* p. 15  
<sup>63</sup> *TM* p. 15  
<sup>64</sup> *TM* p. 15  
<sup>65</sup> *TM* p. 15  
<sup>66</sup> *TM* p. 16  
<sup>67</sup> *TM* p. 16  
<sup>68</sup> *TM* p. 16  
<sup>69</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>70</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>71</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>72</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>73</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>74</sup> *TM* p. 18  
<sup>75</sup> *TM* p. 19  
<sup>76</sup> *TM* p. 19  
<sup>77</sup> *TM* p. 19  
<sup>78</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>79</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>80</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>81</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>82</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>83</sup> Glenn Gould, 'Glenn Gould Interview'  
<sup>84</sup> Glenn Gould, 'Glenn Gould Interview'  
<sup>85</sup> *LPFA* p. 288  
<sup>86</sup> *TM* p. 21  
<sup>87</sup> *TM* p. 21  
<sup>88</sup> *TM* p. 21  
<sup>89</sup> *TM* p. 24  
<sup>90</sup> *TM* p. 24  
<sup>91</sup> *EL*, §24, (Addition 3)  
<sup>92</sup> *TM* p. 41  
<sup>93</sup> *TM* p. 41  
<sup>94</sup> *TM* p. 42  
<sup>95</sup> *TM* p. 24  
<sup>96</sup> *TM* p. 24  
<sup>97</sup> *TM* p. 26  
<sup>98</sup> *TM* p. 26  
<sup>99</sup> *TM* p. 27  
<sup>100</sup> *TM* p. 30  
<sup>101</sup> Leonardo, *Leonardo on Painting*, p. 222  
<sup>102</sup> *TM* p. 30  
<sup>103</sup> *TM* p. 20  
<sup>104</sup> *TM* p. 33  
<sup>105</sup> *TM* p. 33  
<sup>106</sup> *TM* p. 34  
<sup>107</sup> *TM* p. 34  
<sup>108</sup> *TM* p. 34  
<sup>109</sup> *TM* p. 34  
<sup>110</sup> *TM* p. 34  
<sup>111</sup> *TM* p. 35  
<sup>112</sup> *TM* p. 35  
<sup>113</sup> *TM* p. 36  
<sup>114</sup> *TM* p. 31

<sup>115</sup> *TM* pp. 37-40

<sup>116</sup> *TM* p. 32

<sup>117</sup> *TM* p. 32

<sup>118</sup> *TM* p. 32

<sup>119</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>120</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>121</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>122</sup> dictionary definition of 'culture', *Webster's Third International Dictionary*, 1966, p. 552

<sup>123</sup> *TM* p. 32

<sup>124</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>125</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>126</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>127</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>128</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>129</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>130</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>131</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>132</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>133</sup> *TM* p. 47

<sup>134</sup> *TM* p. 48

<sup>135</sup> *TM* p. 48

<sup>136</sup> *TM* p. 48

<sup>137</sup> *TM* p. 43

<sup>138</sup> *TM* p. 43

<sup>139</sup> *TM* p. 44

<sup>140</sup> *TM* p. 44

<sup>141</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>142</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>143</sup> *TM* p. 46

<sup>144</sup> Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, pp. 7-8

<sup>145</sup> Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, p. 8

<sup>146</sup> Wind, *Art and Anarchy*, pp. 8-9

<sup>147</sup> Leonardo, *Leonardo on Painting*, p. 201

<sup>148</sup> Jencks: *The Architecture of the Jumping Universe*, p. 87

<sup>149</sup> Dalí, quoted in R. Passeron's *Concise Encyclopedia of Surrealism*, p. 59

<sup>150</sup> Dalí, quoted in M. Gérard's *Dali*, p. 227

<sup>151</sup> Hillier, Arvo Pärt: *De Profundis*, pp. 6-7

<sup>152</sup> Pärt, *Kanon pokajanen*, p. 9

<sup>153</sup> Pärt, *Kanon pokajanen*, p. 9

<sup>154</sup> Kant CJ §25

<sup>155</sup> Letters Hegel to E.-C. Duboc, 30 July 1822, p. 493

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