

STEPHEN SNYDER

End-of-Art
Philosophy
in Hegel,
Nietzsche
& Danto



End-of-Art Philosophy in Hegel, Nietzsche and Danto

Stephen Snyder

End-of-Art Philosophy
in Hegel, Nietzsche
and Danto

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I dedicate this book to my mother and father, Angela, and Ulysses.

PREFACE

This book began with the interest I took in Hegel's prediction that 'far reaching spirit' would 'spread its wings' and move beyond the current form of art: art, as he knew it in his day would come to an end. Hegel's prognosis that art would become conceptual drew my interest; after all, how often do philosophers predict the course of the future? I soon discovered Arthur Danto's *Art After the Era of Art*, an elaboration of his own end-of-art thesis. At this point, my interest in the end-of-art topic was set, and after nearly twenty years, this book is the result. Though Nietzsche's end-of-art claims seem more removed from the historical approach of Hegel and Danto, his anti-dualistic bent makes his work the best complement for them. The book began as a study of the relationship of philosophy to art. More importantly, though, it has become a book that philosophically explores the relationship of art to those who create and behold it. There are many other philosophers who have written significant tracts on the end-of-art topic, and books could have been written on their ideas, as well. These books will have to be someone else's story.

The theories of art presented by Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto are broad. Hegel studies the artistic forms of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry in great depth. Nietzsche focuses primarily on music, in particular, the dramatic form of tragic opera, but his writings extend to literature and, ultimately, the art of self-creation. The theories of Gombrich and Danto deal primarily with the visual arts, though Danto's writings on literature are, in my opinion, essential to his philosophy of art. The final chapter will focus on the visual arts and to some

extent literature. This is not because I do not feel that the theories presented by Danto, Gombrich, and myself do not apply to arts in general. Rather, it is because the theory is best shown using the visual arts, and my own knowledge of the arts is, for the most part, limited to the visual arts. Therefore, outside of the visual arts, my conclusions are applied sparingly.

Parts of Chapter 2 appeared in the essay “The End of Art: The Consequence of Hegel’s Appropriation of Aristotle’s *Nous*” (*The Modern Schoolman* 84 (4)). Sections of Chapters 4 and 5 were published previously in “Danto’s Narrative Philosophy of History and the End of Art: Does Inexplicability Mean Freedom?” (*Philosophy in the Contemporary World*, 22 (1)) and “Danto’s Narrative Notion of History and the Future of Art” (*The Aesthetic Dimension of Visual Culture*, 2010).

I would like to thank the many people who helped me put this work together: William Charron, for his indispensable guidance, especially in shaping the chapters on Hegel and Nietzsche; Barry Stocker and Manuel Knoll for their valuable comments on my Nietzsche chapter; thanks also to Randall Auxier and Brian Soucek for their feedback on Chapter 4. I appreciate the insights of James Bohman, who pushed me to reconsider the role Habermas’ theory of communicative action could play in a communicative theory of art. I owe much to Susan Cahan for her advice on the art historical questions raised in Chapter 5. I am in debt to Andreas Hetzel for his thoughts and ideas regarding the comments Habermas made on Danto in *The Logic of the Social Sciences* and in his late ’80s lectures on aesthetics. I would like to thank the Fulbright scholar program for the research grant that enabled me to complete the manuscript. I give my thanks to the artists who granted me permission to publish pictures of their works: Franco Mondini-Ruiz for the image of his *Brillo Box* piñatas; Thomas Hirschhorn for permission to use a picture of his *Bataille Monument*; Mike Bidlo for the photo of *Not Andy Warhol*; and many thanks to Steven Badgett and Matt Lynch of Simparch for the many hours they spent discussing art with me and for allowing me to ‘participate’ in their artist collective. Lastly, thanks to Angela Hamilton, who bore the brunt of my seemingly endless revisions. I owe this book to her.

Bebek/İstanbul, Turkey

Stephen Snyder

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in the text to cite works by Hegel:

- HW *Werke in 20 Bänden*. In twenty volumes. Suhrkamp.
AE *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. In two volumes. Translated by T. M. Knox.
EN *The Encyclopedia of Logic: With the Zusätze*. Translated by T. F. Geraets,
 W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris.
LP1 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Greek Philosophy to Plato*. In three
 volumes. Translated by E. S. Haldane.
LP2 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and the Platonists*. In three
 volumes. Translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson.
LP3 *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. In
 three volumes. Translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson.
PM *Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated by J. B. Baillie.
PR *Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet.
RH *Reason in History*. Translated by Robert S. Hartman.
SL *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by A. V. Miller.

The following abbreviations are used in the text to cite works by Kant:

- KW *Werke in zwölf Bänden*. In twelve volumes. Suhrkamp.
K1 *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith.
K2 *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Lewis White Beck.
K3 *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by Werner S. Pluhar.

The following abbreviations are used in the text to cite works by Schopenhauer:

- SW *Sämtliche Werke*. In three volumes. Suhrkamp.
 W1 *The World as Will and Representation*. Volume one. Translated by E. F. J. Payne.
 W2 *The World as Will and Representation*. Volume two. Translated by E. F. J. Payne.

The following abbreviations are used in the text to cite works by Nietzsche:

- NW *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke und Briefe*. Digitale Bibliothek Band 31: Nietzsche. Cited by the page and volume reference of the *Nietzsche-Werke* © C. Hanser Verlag. Edited by Karl Schlechta. Directmedia, Berlin.
 NWJ *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke und Briefe*. Digitale Bibliothek Band 31: Nietzsche. Cited by the page and volume reference of the biography *Friedrich Nietzsche* by Curt Paul Janz: © C. Hanser Verlag. Directmedia, Berlin.
 BGE *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
 BT *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music*. Translated by Shaun Whiteside.
 EH *Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
 GM *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale.
 GS *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
 HH *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by Marion Faber, with Stephen Lehmann.
 TI *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale.
 WP *The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale.
 Z *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Translated by Adrian Del Caro.

The following abbreviations are used in the text to cite works by Danto:

- AA *After the End of Art: Contemporary art and the Pale of History*.
 APA *Analytical Philosophy of Action*.
 APK *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*.
 BB *The Body/Body Problem*.
 CT *Connections to the World*.
 NAP *Nietzsche as Philosopher*.
 NK *Narration and Knowledge*.

PA	<i>Philosophizing Art.</i>
PD	<i>The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art.</i>
TC	<i>Transfiguration of the Commonplace.</i>
S	<i>Sartre.</i>
WA	<i>What Art Is.</i>
WK	<i>The Wake of Art.</i>
LLP	<i>The Philosophy of Arthur Danto</i> , Library of Living Philosophers Vol. 33.*
DCR	<i>Danto and his Critics</i> , 2nd Edition.*

*These volumes contain essays by multiple authors with responses from or an essay by Danto. When cited, if the authorial context is not clear, the author's name will be inserted after the abbreviation. Otherwise, assume that the reference is to Danto.

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CHAPTER 1

The End of Art Debate

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Four centuries after Greek tragedy was born out of Homer's epic story of the fall of Troy, Plato sought to put an end to it by banning the poets from his ideal *polis* in *Republic*. The impetus behind Plato's renunciation of the poets and their 'inspired' words is mixed. On the one hand, Plato placed works of art on the lowest rung of existence, at the lower extreme of the divided line, mere images of images "at the third remove from that which is" (1997, 598e). On the other hand, Plato saw a powerful but menacing force in poetry. At a time when the oral tradition was being challenged by the written tradition, the learning passed on by the poets—and perhaps those who would place too much authority in their cantos—seemed to impede the higher learning seen in reason and the written word. Aristotle's defense of poetry showed its value to the *polis*, arguing that its purpose and creation lay within the confines of reason. Yet, after 2000 years, art's status remains questionable under the critical scrutiny of philosophy. Despite the commitment of romantic philosophers to raise the status of the artwork, in the last 200 years the idea that *art is at an end* has emerged as a recurring theme.

The task of this book is to examine the end-of-art topic, which began in antiquity, from the perspective of three thinkers: Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto. I do not defend art against assertions that it has come to an end. I don't really see much need for that. My aim is to explain the reasoning of the philosophers who do make the claim that art has ended.

What I have found common to these claims is this: when an object is recognized as art, a transformation occurs that changes how we relate to it, and this is always linked more to a transformation of thought than of perception itself. Each of the thinkers examined strives, with differing approaches, to overcome Cartesian dualism, negating the two-world perspective that emerged in the thought of Augustine. This attempt to overcome dualism relocates the transformative effect of art from the eye to the mind. To understand art is not to understand what we see, but how we see it.

The end-of-art theories of Hegel and Nietzsche represent opposite sides of the romantic drive to overcome the merely real with the creative power of the mind. Though Hegel sees art as an essential element in the triumph of Mind over the physical, in the end it is conceptual consciousness that pervades the world. Thus, the imaginative and sensuous knowing of art cannot rise to the level of philosophy when its material can no longer sustain spirit's message. The antipode of Hegel's idealism is found in Nietzsche's nihilism. For Nietzsche, it is the individual's creative power that provides life justification as an aesthetic phenomenon. For the early Nietzsche, confronted with scientific advancement, art's enchanting power is diminished to the point at which he sees its end. With the encroachment of science on the realm of myth, art loses its ability to harness the inherent oppositions of existence that grant humanity the semblance of meaning. The absence of meaningful symbols, combined with the romantic artist's reliance on inspiration, led to the loss of artistic methods that sustained the communicative medium of art's transfiguring effect. Without art, the later Nietzsche writes, only the creative power of will can overcome life's dearth of meaning in the one world we have left.

In the art of the late twentieth century, Danto sees Hegel's prediction that art will end in its transformation into philosophy come true. Danto describes this end in terms of the fulfillment of the era of art's internal narrative. Danto aims to resolve the mind/body divide that Hegel, following Kant, also will overcome. But Danto's ontological approach is pre-Kantian, and though he ends up in a position similar to Hegel's, he sees the essence of art, as humans, embodied in material that represents. The question of art's essence, though resolved through history, is driven by the logic of the internal conversation chased on the medium of art. Danto interprets the change of art from the eye to the mind in terms of the locus of art theory, which becomes a conversation

no longer apparent within the artwork itself. With the end of the narrative of art, art is free to express itself in any manner, marking the end of the era of art. Having reached the limit of its internal drive for self-definition, art is now defined philosophically and interpreted through the theories of the artworld. In some sense, this completes Hegel's prediction. Because art has become aware of its definition, it is free from the driving constraint of finding a definition. The task of art's definition is passed on to philosophy, releasing it from the sort of narrative drive that could lead to further development of its concept. The freedom of art is bought at a price though. In the world of art after the era of art, artworld concepts, which explain what makes art *art*, are explained by theorists or critics who act as mediators, interpreting and communicating the embodied meaning when it is no longer perceived directly by the audience.

The primary task of this book is to clarify what each of the thinkers examined means by the end of art. In the process, a better understanding of their theories of art is gained, along with, I hope, a deeper insight into the nature of art and how its embodiment is transformed over time. In the final chapter, criticisms of these theories are presented in the form an alternative narrative of twentieth-century art. While I agree that art has undergone profound morphological changes, I argue that what art is has not fundamentally changed. Our historical context, our 'worldview', if I can use the term, has changed drastically. I hold that the toolkit artists use to create art is linked to the culture in which they live. Clifford Geertz argues, "art and the equipment to grasp it are made in the same shop" (1976, 1497).¹ If there is truth to his anthropological claim, changes at the level of our understanding of the world, likewise alter the tools and content with which art is made. I doubt that this is a controversial claim, and if we follow this notion that it is not art itself, but the tools and the shop in which they are made that have changed, we can make sense of the end of art with a slightly different narrative.

The approach mentioned above is not philosophical, and I want to remain within the bounds of philosophy. Different philosophical thinkers draw the boundaries of philosophy differently. However, within the boundaries drawn, a philosophical system must comport with the phenomenon to which it applies. Otherwise, 'reality' becomes a counterexample. Ernst Gombrich's theory of pictorial representation demonstrates how an artistic language develops, showing that art, or as Danto notes,

the pictorial image, has a history. Using primarily Gombrich's theory, which views art as a language of sorts, I present a narrative that gives an alternative to Danto's. Acknowledging the shortcomings of Gombrich's theory, it still has considerable explanatory power, especially toward the end of what Danto calls the era of art. I use Gombrich's theory to show that art is still exhibiting the problem-solving, conversationally-oriented, capacity of philosophy that Danto claims is absent in post-historical art. This does not show that Danto's theory has failed. Rather, it is a reinterpretation of it in light of a different narrative. Insofar as in 'post-history', art still strives to solve problems presented by the lack of precedent available in the new age of artistic pluralism; the internal problem-solving drive used in presenting metaphors, visual or otherwise, for interpretation has not changed.

1.2 THE BIRTH OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE END OF ART

Plato's relegation of art to the lower end of the spectrum of being led him to a critique of art that held it to be a copy of mere appearance. In Plato's view, if the beliefs acquired through the senses were an inadequate guide for moral development, mimetic copies of the sensual could only lead one further astray. Because the poem's cadence would bypass reason, it could never aid in showing the Good. Thus, the formal truths of the intelligible world must replace the shadowy images of mimetic art. Plato assessed the Homeric epics and the tragedies as inner appetite externalized. The poet aggrandized the gods, who were little more than the projection of human desire and weakness onto immortal beings. Reciting the poems brought the appetites back to us strengthened through repetition and intonation (Lear 1992, 209). In the appetite of the poet, Plato saw the appetite of the tyrant. Though the appetite of the tyrant acted itself out in the realm of society, the same tyrannical appetite existed in the poet, merely writ large in rhyme (Plato 1997, 568b). Plato hoped that by creating an ideal state with social roles that could rationally accommodate one's desires according to personality type, the gods on Olympus would disappear. It was Plato's argument that philosophy, not poetry, should be the source of moral values. It was at this juncture that art ended as a way of expressing the tragic truth of the world, and under the guidance of philosophy, art sought to show the world as a rational ideal, depicting the world as it *should* be.

Referring to the “ancient quarrel between [poetry] and philosophy,” Plato asks that one who loves poetry should prove its benefit to the *polis* (1997, 607). In *Poetics*, Aristotle meets Plato’s challenge by showing that poetry is a *technē*, that it is not an imitation that degrades reality, and that it ennobles rather than enflames the emotions. Thus, poetry does not threaten but serves to benefit the *polis*. It was not until the European Enlightenment, though, that the romantic quest to free the imagination posited the artistic creation, in a reversal of Plato’s schema, as the real world, in contrast to deceptive appearances. The romantic thinkers, seeing that the arts had mastered the illusion of replication, sought to take art one step further, and following a manifesto of “poetic imperialism” longed to conquer reality itself, imbuing all of reality with its aphoristic power. “Every aspect of the community of men—religion, science, politics—must, by direct attack or peaceful infiltration, become infused with the poetic spirit and in the end be transformed into a work of art” (Heller 1965, 92). Though Hegel was a romantic, his notion of reality would appear at face value to be closer to Plato than to his romantic contemporaries, for the tension between imagination and reason strongly divides these positions. Yet, their positions have more affinity than one would think. In the words of Erich Heller,

In both the early Romantics and Hegel, the human mind puts forward a total claim for itself, a claim in which revolution and eschatology are uneasily mingled. The world must become imagination and poetry, say the Romantics; and Hegel says, the world must become rational consciousness. (Heller 1965, 94)

The romantic vision foresees the permeation of all reality with art, but for Hegel, art merely paves the way for rational consciousness. Despite seeing the valuable role art plays in spirit’s progression, in the end Hegel falls on the side of Plato, noting “it was early in history that thought passed judgment against art as a mode of illustrating the idea of the Divine...even with the Greeks, for Plato opposed the gods of Homer and Hesiod starkly enough” (AE 103). For Hegel, the highest level of rational consciousness cannot be reached without negating all vestiges of imagination. Yet the reality of the romantics is still achieved through the power of mind to form a reality that is higher than what ‘is’. The early romantics and Hegel seek realities that are on opposite ends of the divided line; nonetheless, achieving these realities depends on the artistic imagination for actualization.

The end-of-art theme, which is explored in the following chapters, hinges on the power of art to effect change in how mind forms the world. Whether art functions to raise mind to a higher state of rational consciousness or serves to provide a saving illusion in light of life's overwhelming meaninglessness, its end comes when it is no longer able to perform its task effectively. The end-of-art theories of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto are examined in the following pages in light of the interplay of two basic themes: where is art located in the one world/one substance perspective; and what is the active element in the work of art? For Hegel, spirit passes through the material moving toward the more highly organized form of conceptual consciousness. For Nietzsche, will becomes the locus of agency. Will is able to transform the world from the inside, whether as myth that transforms its adherents or the *Übermensch* with the power to view any landscape as fertile and green: new worlds are willed through the power to name. Danto's ontological perspective sidesteps the normative questions posed by Hegel and Nietzsche. Art is transformed by perceiving an object as a new sort of thing. It is already transformed when interpreted as art. The embodied meaning, linked to the unique representation of one's world, is represented in the artwork, much as the artist manifests it in the style of their own person. When works of art are interpreted, a conversation is activated through artworld concepts, which have a logic of their own.

1.3 THE PROBLEM SOLVING NARRATIVE

For Hegel and Nietzsche, the end of art comes when the active element is no longer able to progress through the medium of art. For Danto, the end of art arrives when a self-reflective and self-defining process reaches its logical conclusion. At this point, the essential nature of art can be known, something that can only happen when the era of art is closed. Art, for Danto, is fundamentally different in post-history; there is a "triple transformation, in the making of art, in the institutions of art, in the audience for art" (AA 183). Viewing this transformation as the fulfillment of art's essential nature, Danto suggests that 'tribal' tendencies of the pluralistic arts community should be overcome by complete openness to all forms of art. I do not argue with the claim that openness may be good per se, and I accept the last two claims about the post-historical

art world; however, with the first claim, that art is made in a fundamentally different manner, I differ, for the following reasons. First, Danto seems to use a narrative explanation that does not completely cover the phenomenon. Other narratives are possible, suggesting that there is something happening, a process, which the covering narrative does not explain in full. Second, Danto claims that art is no longer philosophical. Art's philosophical drive for self-definition, if we accept this part of his explanation for the final phase of art, may have achieved its aim, and, yielding a new pluralistic definition (Danto's definition of art as embodied meaning), philosophy is no longer needed. But the structure of philosophy is a problem solving process, and as art employed this structure when compelled to find its self-definition, it did not abandon this structure, which is at the essence of philosophy. Art is not free from this. Art is still solving problems and facing challenges, now related, among other things, to the lack of artistic precedent. Third, art is still made in the same way as Danto defines it in *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, but the style is pluralistic. This does lead to a new understanding of institutions, and the audience changes. But how art is made and art itself has not changed; it is just the world that has shifted around it.

Gombrich's theory shows there is a process that is occurring, a process with an internal logic. When art need no longer adhere to verisimilitude, the need to resemble the object it portrays, visual making and matching fails. But artists are still engaged in a process that employs a problem-solving logic, regardless of the visual aims. Gombrich states, "all artistic discoveries are discoveries not of likenesses but of equivalences" (1995, 345). The theory of Habermas is used to both support and criticize Danto's claim, as I build an alternative narrative. Like Danto, Habermas observes in the late twentieth century that many of modernism's defining attributes are challenged. But where Danto sees the end of modernism in art, and the coming of the post-historical era, Habermas, sees the post-modern, the social and cultural analogue of post-history, as a self-critique of modernism, holding that the driving forces of modernism are still at play. Something like this is the argument I will make in regard to Danto's end-of-art theory. Art has certainly changed, but art is still 'happening' the way it was before. The problem-solving structure that drives art, which Danto argues is no more, is what still gives art its power to convey meaning. Without it, art truly would be at an end.

NOTE

1. “The artist works with his audience’s capacities—capacities to see, or hear, or touch, sometimes even to taste and smell, with understanding. And though elements of these capacities are indeed innate—it usually helps not to be color-blind—they are brought into actual existence by the experience of living in the midst of certain sorts of things to look at, listen to, handle, think about, cope with, and react to; particular varieties of cabbages, particular sorts of kings. Art and the equipment to grasp it are made in the same shop” (Geertz 1976, 1497).

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

- AA Danto, Arthur. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*.
- AE Hegel, G. W. F. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. 2 vols. Translated by T. M. Knox.

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CHAPTER 2

Hegel: The End of Art as Truth Incarnate

2.1 THE 'DEATH OF ART' TOPIC

Hegel states, “it is early in history that thought passes judgment against art” (AE 103). Despite this early decree, it is not until modern times that this judgment culminates in art’s philosophical death. Art’s demise, or at least the assertion of its demise, is clearly a phenomenon that takes place in latter history; nonetheless, it is unclear exactly when or if a death actually occurs. It should be noted that the phrase ‘death of art’ is used nowhere in Hegel’s writing. He does not use it to refer to the event of art’s passing beyond the pale of historical significance. Hegel only uses the term death (*Tod*) in the strictly biological sense of a human or an animal death. The ‘death of art’ moniker has, however, been associated with the contemporary philosopher and art critic Arthur Danto with the publication of a series of essays on the topic edited by Berel Lang. Ironically, Danto never actually uses the phrase ‘death of art’ that Lang attributes to him. Although Danto, who has at times claimed Hegel as his mentor, does use the phrase ‘end of art,’ Hegel, in fact, never uses this terminology to discuss the topic which history has ascribed to him. In the passage below, one of the first passages referring to the ‘end of art,’ Hegel refers to art no longer fulfilling the needs of spirit. Spirit “appears as beyond” (*über hinaus*) the capacity of art’s expression.

The Christian view of truth is of this kind, and, above all, the spirit of our world today, or, more particularly, of our religion and the development of

our reason, appears as beyond the stage at which art is the supreme mode of our knowledge of the Absolute. The peculiar nature of artistic production and of works of art no longer fills our highest need. We have got beyond venerating works of art as divine and worshipping them.¹ (AE 10)

Later in the introduction to his *Lectures on Fine Art*, in a well-known passage describing the ‘end of art,’ Hegel refers to art’s limitation, stating that the Absolute “passes over into higher states of consciousness”—*geht deshalb in höhere Formen des Bewußtseins über* (AE 102–103, HW 13:141). The connotation of passing over (*übergehen*) implies the transition of art, and not the death or end of art. He refers to a before and after of the stages of art, but the Absolute passes on to a stage where its expression in art is not adequate to it.

In Hegel’s proclamation that “for us art counts no longer as the highest mode in which truth fashions an existence for itself” (AE 103), art appears to be demoted, not terminated. The German: *Uns gilt die Kunst nicht mehr als die höchste Weise, in welcher die Wahrheit sich Existenz verschafft* (HW 13:141) does not imply a determinate end. The phrase *gilt nicht mehr* indicates that something is no longer valid, and in this case, art is no longer valid as the highest form of expression for truth, which does not imply art’s demise. The phrase “art points beyond itself” again denotes a form of transition or change, but not an end; rather, it refers to a passing over: *die Kunst über sich selbst hinausweist* (AE 103, HW 13:142).

Among the terms Hegel uses to measure art’s level of completion are *vollendet* and *vollends*, the root of the word meaning “perfection” or “termination.” Nonetheless, it is completion in regard to a final stage with an implied contrast to previous stages. The term *vollkommen* also implies “completion” or “perfection” in regard to a final stage. It denotes a completion that actualizes a final end that is greater than the whole of the parts. Surveying the different phases of art, Hegel refers to artworks in their beginnings, specifically symbolic artworks, as “not completely set in their full content”—*noch ihren vollen Gehalt nicht vollendet* (AE 103, HW 13:142). Art reaches its stage of perfection with classical art. Hegel claims that in this form of art, “the perfect content has been perfectly revealed in artistic shapes”—*der vollkommene Inhalt vollkommen in Kunstgestalten hervorgetreten* (AE 103, HW 13:142). However, art’s stage of perfection is not its final phase; spirit “turns back into its inner self.”² All we may do is hope that “art will always rise higher and come

to perfection” (AE 103). The phrase *die Kunst immer mehr steigen und sich vollenden werde*, as in the previous usage, implies that there is a completed phase—the perfected phase of classical art—that ceases to be (*aufhören*) the highest phase of spirit’s expression (HW 13:142).

Nonetheless, the only end for art is its place at the top. The implication is clear that art will go on, and in some phrases, it almost appears as if art is continuing without its physical forms of articulation.³ The link between spirit’s progress and art’s progress is not clearly broken; it is the link between the highest needs of spirit and humankind with the current forms of art that is severed. In the classic Hegelian sense, art has been sublated (*aufgehoben*) into the next phase. The term as Hegel uses it is to “annul” or “cancel,” and to “save” or “keep.” The conceptual meaning points to a state of having ended, yet the form of art is resolved into a higher level, changed, but not lost.

The purpose (*Zweck*) that is attained in art’s perfection, and then lost with spirit’s upward development, is the task of presenting the Absolute in a sensuous mode. When the Absolute is liberated from its concrete form, it reveals a truth that “is not exhausted in natural history but revealed in world-history” (AE 1236). For Hegel, in contrast to Kant, a purpose is not something external to an object, but is inherent within an object. In this sense, Hegel attributes real value to a work of art in itself, not just a sensation of the Beautiful. By attaining its purpose, part of the larger truth of the Absolute is revealed.

2.1.1 *The Significance of the End of Art*

Hegel’s lament at the passing of art is clear, but in its loss, he clearly recognizes its sublation into the synthesis of the higher form. Art may no longer hold the relevance it once did, but the spirit that drove art is still at work in philosophy. The spirit of art is not lost; it has matured. What art seeks is the highest expression of truth in the material. This expression is attained with perfection in the classical phase. The inward drive of spirit results in the transition of truth’s medium of expression. At this point the task is handled by the non-material discipline of philosophy, the material being no longer appropriate for conceptual manifestation.

Many commentators contest the view that Hegel actually envisioned a literal point in time when art would end. It is argued that Hegel never specifies an explicit time for the end of history, an event that the end of art closely parallels,⁴ so why assume that the end of art has come? Hegel

is clear about the end of a national people. There comes a time, in his estimation, when

this activity of spirit is no longer necessary; it has what it wanted. The people can still do a great deal in war and peace, internally and externally. But the living, substantial soul itself is, so to speak, no longer active. The deepest, highest interest thus has gone out of life; for interest is only where there is opposition. (RH 90)

Hegel compares the evolving social activity of spirit to the organic growth of a plant, whereby the seed signals both the beginning and the end of a people. The bearing of seed means the end of one cycle and the beginning of another (RH 94). The struggle of the spirit of a people is the opposition of the current manifestation of spirit in a people against the negative image of what the people are potentially to be. However, the “final purpose (*Endzweck*) of the process” is the ascension of the national spirit into the universal spirit. “The principles of the national spirits progressing through a necessary succession of stages are only moments of the one universal Spirit which through them elevates and completes itself into a self-comprehending *totality*” (RH 95, HW 12:103–104).

It is clear from Hegel’s assertions in *Reason in History* that a moment signaling the end of a culture is not specified. Rather, there exists a process, similar in the progress of art and culture, of spirit seeking articulation, spirit finding a balanced incarnation, and spirit moving inward. In the final phase of spirit’s unfolding, the forms of art, as the habits of a people, become externalized. Hegel gives no particulars by which one could determine the coming of the end of history or the end of art. Thus, one cannot be sure whether Hegel intends that the end of art has come in his own day or some time in the far future. Nonetheless, Hegel clearly observes the becoming of a new form of art in his own time, a trend that has extended to ‘our time’. The drive for historical completeness is essential in Hegel’s thinking. The contradictions of the finite are left to stand with objective spirit, but a resolution must be completed for absolute spirit. The artwork represents for Hegel an ontic example of a unity, a dialectically resolved totality. The unity of the artwork is important to Hegel because such a unity has no other existence. When the historic trend becomes fully determined, the unity which Hegel views as so important in the beauty of the artwork is overshadowed by

a higher more encompassing totality, thus making art's unity obsolete. Elaborating on the incarnation of the idea in the work of art, Hegel states the following:

in this unity the Concept is predominant. For, in accordance with its own nature, it *is* this identity implicitly already, and therefore generates reality out of itself as its own; therefore, since this reality is its own self-development, it sacrifices nothing of itself in it, but therein simply realizes itself. (AE 106)

The really real becomes the determinate as the resolution of the finite into the infinite proceeds.

Regardless of the temporal imprecision with which the Hegelian dialectical resolution of art into religion and philosophy occurs, following his view of cosmic unfolding, the infinite eventually returns to itself in a determined form. Despite the loss of art's beauty as a form of spirit's expression, it is incomplete, and the fully determined form better serves the Absolute. On the human need for completion, Hegel asserts,

what man seeks in this situation, ensnared as he is in finitude on every side, is the region of a higher, more substantial, truth, in which all oppositions and contradictions in the finite can find their final resolution, and freedom its full satisfaction. This is the region of absolute, not finite, truth. The highest truth, truth as such, is the resolution of the highest opposition and contradiction. (AE 99–100)

Though art brings humanity to the point at which its highest truth can be reconciled without contradiction through philosophy, the continued need of art by spirit would be a symptom of humanity's failure to achieve actualization. In light of this, it is clear that Hegel believes that art, as humanity has come to love it, will be no more. Art continues to serve the needs of humanity, but not spirit. Speaking of art in his time, Hegel explains that with "artistic interest and production we demand in general rather a quality of life in which the universal is not present in the form of law and maxim, but which gives the impression of being one with the senses and the feelings" (AE 10). Art no longer serves to show humanity the embodied universal, for the concrete universal is now extant in the imagination. Self-reflective awareness of human self-consciousness embodies art with a level of intellect that truncates art's capacity for

material manifestation. The intellect may still be in the work of art, but philosophy is now the mode of thought used to assess the universal articulated in the ‘spirit of art’.

2.2 OVERCOMING TRANSCENDENT METAPHYSICS: HEGEL AND KANT ON SUBLIMITY, BEAUTY, AND UGLINESS

2.2.1 *Art in History*

In the introduction to *Aesthetics*, Hegel distinguishes free art from servile art. Servile art, like the sciences and thought itself, serves some purpose external to the goal (*Zweck*) of art. Free art follows its own end; it is this form of art that Hegel examines in his *Lectures on Fine Art*. This demarcation reveals much about Hegel’s conception of art. Only when art independently pursues its own end does it fulfill its highest task. Manifest in this way, art functions on the level of religion and philosophy as a way of “bringing to our minds and expressing the *Divine*, the deepest interests of mankind and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit” (AE 7). Hegel’s aesthetic theory upholds art as the physical manifestation of truth, a universal notion embodied in a particular object. Insofar as “art’s task is to bring the spiritual before our eyes in a sensuous manner” (AE 78), it is a nexus. The work of art is not a composite of sensual and ideal, encompassing both; rather, it stands between the sensual and the idea in thought (*ideellen*).⁵ It is the idea articulated in sensuous form, the contradiction of a particularized universal reconciled into a “totality” (AE 70).

Hegel sees art progressing historically with a beginning, middle and end. In its inception, art, as is the Idea (*Idee*), is indeterminate. In its final phase, art approaches its fully determined and freely articulated notion of the Concept (*Begriff*). According to Hegel, absolute spirit unfolds in necessary stages, reflecting the structural necessity that Hegel attributes to history. Hegel separates his conceptions of the Beautiful and the forms of art into “essential categories,” forming a “philosophical garland” (AE 1236). This “garland” presents art as a totality of stages and forms. Hegel sees the historical stages of art as the symbolic, the classical, and the romantic (AE 76–79). Each of these stages bears a particular relation to the Idea’s level of determination.

The first stage is the symbolic. At this stage, the Idea has not yet found a proper medium for articulation. The Idea itself is still obscure

as art begins. In the symbolic form of art, “the Idea has not found the form even in itself and therefore remains struggling and striving after it” (AE 76). Because the Idea is not suited to outer reality at this point, the relation between the Idea and the phenomenon of its expression is a negative one. The fact that they are unsuited to one another shows itself in the distorted and disfigured way that the Idea is manifest in the symbolic form of art.

Art attains perfection in the next stage, the classical. The Idea reaches a level of maturity in the classical stage such that it can be represented adequately in matter. “This shape, which the Idea as spiritual—indeed as individually determinate spirituality—assumes when it is to proceed out into a temporal manifestation, is the human form” (AE 78). At this stage, the Idea is embodied in the human form as the incarnation of spirit. Thus the spirit of art (*subjektive Begriff*) finds this form and in it is able to successfully articulate the Idea (HW 13:110).

The romantic form of art, though higher, brings out the defect left behind in symbolic art. Like symbolic art, the form of romantic art is inadequate to the Idea. However, unlike its status in symbolic art, the Idea itself is not obscure. The only defect is in the inability of outer reality to articulate the Idea. In the form of romantic art, the expression of classical art is exceeded by the significance of the Idea. According to Hegel, the Greek gods were the unity of human and divine nature. Outer reality was thought to hold harmony and unity within it. Therefore, the Greeks find the highest ‘Idea’ in nature. The dissolution of this unity, in Hegel’s estimation, coincides with the advent of Christianity. The Greek god is an individual power, immediately embodied in the world. This allows the adequate expression of the Idea in an immediate form. However, the unity of human and divine nature in Greek art is potential, not explicit. When the unity becomes explicit, it moves from a sensuous form to “the inwardness of self-consciousness” (AE 80). Christianity presents God to the imagination as spirit, and not as an individual concrete unity. Thus freed from the confines of outer form, the Idea seeks to articulate itself in higher forms.

2.2.2 *Metaphysics and the Absolute*

Traditionally, Hegel has been read as a metaphysical philosopher, capping his teleological account of history with the philosophized notion

of God embedded within his notion of the Absolute. Recent scholarship has undertaken a reevaluation of this view of Hegel, either by making sense of Hegel's claims within the realm of metaphysics, or reinterpreting his works as philosophy focusing on the social and cultural dimensions of intellectual development, albeit admitting that in some cases Hegel makes careless and indefensible claims.⁶ Because the primary focus of this work is *Lectures on Fine Art*, my terminology will follow the metaphysical reading, which, despite the clearly anti-Romantic claim of art's end, emphasizes the Romantic influence on Hegel's thought. Along these lines, I find it instructive to look at a metaphysical reading such as Frederick Beiser's (1999, 2005) to make sense of why Hegel adopted the notion of the Absolute as the final phase of his teleological development.⁷ Such an understanding will make sense of the similarities and differences between Kant's aesthetic theory and Hegel's. This reading explains Hegel's metaphysics as a response to the epistemological problems central to Kant's First *Critique*. However, I would like to make the following preface. Despite following the metaphysical reading, the response to the end-of-art thesis I propose in Chapter 5, which is an alternative to Danto's quasi-Hegelian analytic narrative, is not tied to a metaphysical reading of Hegel. Hegel asserts that the artwork is the material incarnation of spirit's historical drive for truth, and Danto incorporates this directly into his essentialist definition of art. For Danto, all art for all times is embodied meaning, which he understands to have two necessary attributes: it must have material form, and the material form must incorporate the meaningful intention of the artist, which is linked to a historically indexed style or 'worldview'. In my critique of Danto (Chapter 4) I argue that his theory of embodied meaning needs some equivalent to Hegel's theory of the Absolute, nonetheless, this does not imply that Danto's theory requires a metaphysical component like Hegel's. Danto eschews Hegelian metaphysics, and is cautious of philosophy's overreach. He draws the boundaries of philosophy so narrowly that it excludes the area of social, cultural, and political interaction that Hegel refers to as spirit (CT 274). Regardless of whether one calls Hegel's historical engagement with culture 'metaphysical', I will argue that by limiting the purview of philosophy too strictly, Danto's ontological and essentialist theory of embodied meaning lacks the robust account of social/historical progression that a theory borrowed from Hegel, even if only in part, would need to fully account for the dynamics of art. This matter is discussed at length in

Chapters 4 and 5. However, it should be noted that the readings I use to support my reconstruction of Hegel's aesthetics, the metaphysical as well as the non-metaphysical, view Hegel's project as a response to Kant's critical idealism, which limits our knowledge to the experiential realm of the phenomenal.⁸

Hegel's notion of the Absolute originates from his early collaboration with Schelling and Herder. Together, they sought to reevaluate a Spinozistic idea of substance, the conception of which is achieved solely by its own means. Certainly, this notion of substance, echoing Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, cannot easily avoid the "metaphysical" rubric. Hegel and Schelling, with some influence from Herder, reinterpreted Spinoza's account of substance in non-mechanical terms, viewing it as an organism: a "self-generating and self-organizing" whole (Beiser 1999, 6; 2005, "The Organic Worldview", 81–101). This notion of the absolute, as an auto-productive and auto-regulating organism, does not differentiate between mind and body. Rather, mind and body are differently organized modes of a single substance. Schelling posits the Absolute as a subject-object identity distinct from the dualism of the Cartesian subject-object split. For Hegel, this is problematic, for there is no room for the finite within this notion of infinite substance. The Absolute, as a mode of consciousness, represents the whole, but it is through the whole that the finite achieves unity with the infinite. The unity of subject and object cannot be achieved in contrast with their separateness, for the final aim of unity is present in the unactualized division, a potential which strives to be actualized in unity with the absolute.⁹

Schelling and Hegel felt that they were working with Kant in overcoming deistic or theological metaphysical notions that ended in antinomies. These were the theories of the Leibnizian-Wolffian school which envisioned the Absolute as a supernatural entity (Beiser 2005, 70). Kant held that such metaphysical notions were impossible because they take recourse in an unknowable supernatural. Schelling and Hegel followed Kant in this criticism, but they sought to articulate the Absolute naturalistically. They did not argue that the supernatural was unknowable. Rather, they claimed that it did not exist; all that is knowable is given by nature in experience. Kant's failing was that he postulated the noumenal as a separate entity. Stated thus, the noumenal was unknowable, making absolute knowledge impossible. For Hegel and Schelling, the teleology of nature is internal to it; it is not a separate layer superimposed from without (Beiser 1999, 8; 2005, "Absolute Idealism", 53–79).

At this point, a stark contrast still remains in the two formulations, even though Schelling and Hegel were framing a metaphysical theory that was in line with Kant's critique. Beiser points out that in Kant's Third *Critique*, he argues that the teleology we see in nature cannot actually be known through experience. We know it only through analogy. Thus, for Kant, the idea of a natural metaphysics is not "constitutive" of experience. Rather it is a "regulative" ideal (Beiser 2005, 98, 106–107; 1999, 9; see K3 §71). For Hegel, in order to overcome Kant's critique of knowledge, it must be possible to know that nature is an organism, and that we are integrated into it as a single substance with higher or lower degrees of organization (2005, 87, 106). To overcome the barrier that Kant places between the form of experience and its sensuous content, Hegel must reformulate the distinctions Kant makes between the understanding (*Verstand*) and reason (*Vernunft*).¹⁰

The disjunction between a priori categories of the understanding and the faculty of sensibility, which presents a posteriori intuitions of the senses, led critics of Kant's theory to argue that the active a priori faculty could not engage the passive a posteriori faculty in synthesizing the form of experience. Fichte, in his 1794 *Wissenschaftslehre*, argued that the problem could not be overcome through the employment of theoretical reason. Knowledge is achieved through action rather than contemplation (Beiser 1999, 14; 2005, 72). The dualism of subject and object are insurmountable through thought alone. Therefore, there must exist an activity through which the subject-object unity is achieved. Fichte postulated a subject-object unity in an absolute ego. It was through the all-encompassing absolute ego that the objects of subjective knowledge were created. Therefore, it was through self-knowledge of the absolute ego that the subject-object unity was attained. However, for Fichte, this subject-object unity was nonetheless a regulative ideal that would guide human action toward its epistemological aim, a goal that could never actually be achieved (1999, 12–15).

This, according to Beiser, is why Hegel is compelled to view the Absolute as constitutive of experience, and not merely regulative. If the Absolute is not constitutive, then the activity which evokes the process of subject-object unity could never begin, much less be attained. This explains why the subject-object unity is necessarily found in the subject-object dualism of experience. The activity inherent in the Absolute that effects the progress toward the unity of the subject and object is, at the same time, the possibility of its achievement. This conceptual pattern

emerges in Hegel's discussion of will. "The distinction between thought and will is simply that between theoretical and practical attitudes. But they are not two separate faculties; on the contrary, the will is a particular way of thinking – thinking translating itself into existence [*Dasein*], thinking as the drive to give itself existence" (PR 35). The theoretical and the practical attitudes are contrasted as the universal 'I' without opposition, to the 'I' opposed to the world in particularity and activity. The two, though each is a separate mode of existence, cannot exist separately, for the theoretical attitude exists in the practical attitude.

The theoretical is essentially contained within the practical; the idea [*Vorstellung*] that the two are separate must be rejected, for one cannot have a will without intelligence. On the contrary, the will contains the theoretical within itself. The will determines itself, and this determination is primarily of an inward nature, for what I will I represent to myself as my object [*Gegenstand*]. (PR 35)

Similarly, the Absolute, as Schelling and Hegel theorize, is a single infinite substance that manifests both subject and object. Within the Absolute, the subjective self-consciousness represents the highest level of natural organization, while matter is the least organized mode of the Absolute. Only in this manner can the epistemological problems of the Kantian dualism be overcome. "What this means, in more Kantian terms, is that we can provide a transcendental deduction of those metaphysical ideas. For we can show them to be not only useful fictions for systematizing our empirical knowledge but also necessary conditions for the possibility of experience itself" (Beiser 1999, 16).

If Schelling and Hegel were to provide a transcendental deduction of the metaphysical idea of the Absolute—a necessary condition for experience—while at the same time remaining true to Kant's epistemological claim that knowledge cannot extend beyond the limits of experience, they would have to show how the Absolute is part of experience itself. Around 1804, Hegel parts ways with Schelling because he found his account of "intellectual intuition" insufficient for the task of achieving knowledge of the Absolute from within human experience. Hegel's solution to the problem was his notion of the dialectical process. Hegel contrasts this "higher dialectic," to the less sophisticated dialectic proposed by Plato. "This dialectic," Hegel argues, "is not an *external* activity of subjective thought, but the *very soul* of the content which puts

forth its branches and fruit organically” (PR 60). Through this process, self-consciousness tests its experience of reality against its own standard for knowledge. The standard is internal to the rationality of spirit and is manifested in the object. Thus, absolute knowledge, the subject-object unity, is achieved through the dialectical process inherent within experience itself that aims at actualizing the potentiality of knowing (Beiser 2005, 105–107; 1999, 17–19).

2.2.3 *Hegel and Kant on the Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Ugly*

The epistemological grounding for Hegel’s postulation of the Absolute, and the restructuring of the relationship of *Verstand* and *Vernunft*, carries over to his aesthetics. This is demonstrated through a comparison of Kant’s notions of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ugly to Hegel’s. Hegel associates each artistic period with a specific type of aesthetic judgment. The symbolic phase corresponds to the *Sublime*; the classical phase manifests the *Beautiful*, and the final stage, the romantic, exhibits the *Ugly* as spirit’s inward turn causes its abandonment of the external. The aesthetic judgment is based on the Concept’s level of indeterminacy and its ability or need to manifest itself in artwork. In his *Critique of Judgment*, Immanuel Kant also discusses notions of the Sublime, the Beautiful and, though not extensively, the Ugly. Comparing each thinker’s account of these aesthetic assessments shows the extent to which Hegel’s teleological notion of dialectical progress is written into the historical development of artistic forms in his aesthetic theory. Though Hegel and Kant are in some ways very close in their assessments of the Sublime, the relationship that the artwork bears to truth is quite different in the Beautiful and the Ugly. The contrast brings out similarities in the philosophy of each thinker insofar as Hegel, in his own way, is attempting to stay true to Kant’s limitation of knowledge to the realm of experience. At the same time, Hegel’s argument for how the philosophical *aporias* encountered in the aesthetic judgment should be resolved forced his solution to the metaphysical problem to the surface.

2.2.4 *The Symbolic Stage*

In its nascent phase, the art of the symbolic form is generated out of a sense of wonder (*Verwunderung*) (AE 315, HW 13:408). The sense of

wonder is a creative urge, conjured by a break with the immediate connection to the world thereby instigating the pursuit of a higher, universal connection to spirit. With this first instance of wonder, the need is felt “to make external ... the subjective feeling of something higher, essential and universal” (AE 315). Hegel distinguishes art at its inception from reverence for natural objects. Art at this stage embodied the inklings of the externalization of universal consciousness, however vague and unformed.

As the Idea emerges through symbolic art, its inner meaning strives to recognize itself in the natural. Spirit, or the ‘inner’ as Hegel refers to it, struggles to be free “yet preserves the impulse to picture to itself, in a real shape, what it is in its essence” (AE 351). Despite its indeterminate form, the Idea’s articulation in symbolic art points beyond the physical object to the universal (AE 352). As with the dialectic movement described in the unfolding of objective spirit, there is an impulse in absolute spirit that comes from within (PR 60). Spirit moving freely does so for no other reason than its own compulsion for articulation in overcoming its negative. The progress of art that effects spirit’s transition from undetermined to a fully determined state is an activity “devised” (*erfunden*) by spirit (AE 351, HW 13:453). Art embodies the free sensuous articulation of spirit in pursuit of its own determination.

2.2.5 *The Sublime*

Apparently under the guidance of Burke, Kant conceives of two kinds of aesthetic judgment: judgments of the Beautiful, and judgments of the Sublime. Both are brought about by the free play of the imagination and the cognitive faculties that occurs when they are employed without a determinate concept. Neither in respect of beauty nor sublimity does the aesthetic quality reside within the object, or in the case of the Sublime, the experiential moment. Rather, the judgment is evoked through the subjective experience. The Sublime is a sense of the infinite effected by enormity beyond comprehension—as with the mathematically sublime—or an overwhelming force—as the dynamically sublime. The mathematically sublime is experienced when reason is led by the imagination to think of a totality that lies beyond its capacity to comprehend. The dynamically sublime occurs as one is confronted with powers that make clear the fragile insignificance of one’s physical existence. These phenomena, such as a storm at sea, remind one of the intrinsic value of the moral self in contrast to the limitation of the empirical self.¹¹

In Kant's estimation, the effects of the mathematically sublime occur when the imagination employs the faculty of reason in a non-cognitive capacity. In this case, the imagination attempts to comprehend in one intuition what is or what appears to be an infinite series, as the imagination's estimation of the magnitude of an intuition proceeds "it encounters no obstacles"¹² (K3 §26:110). Lacking a purpose for its tabulation, the imagination uses no base unit with which to make the calculation. The effect of such aesthetic employment is the imagination's referral to the "supersensible...substrate underlying what is mere appearance, namely, our intuition of the world" (K3 §26:111). The experience of the totality of infinity, an actual contradiction, evokes a sensation Kant calls the Sublime.

The contradiction between reason's demand for totality and the imagination's attempt to estimate a "progressively increasing numerical series" (K3 §26:111) is avoided by reducing the unit of measure for the progression to the whole of nature. This measure "however, is a self-contradictory concept (because an absolute totality of an endless progression is impossible)" (K3 §26:112). Due to the self-contradiction brought about by reason's demand for unity, "sublimity must be sought only in the mind of the judging person, not in the natural object the judging of which prompts this mental attunement" (K3 §26:113). The resolution provided by reason is not an actual phenomenal resolution, and though one feels a sense of sublimity when reason harmonizes the infinite series with the idea of unity, that unity does not, *and never will*, extend to the *Ding-an-sich*. The contradiction is merely resolved due to what is perhaps a fluke brought on by an inadequacy of the imaginative faculty.

Hegel discusses the nature of the Sublime in *Aesthetics* while discussing unconscious symbolism. The extravagant proportion and wild sensuousness embodied in Indian art evokes, according to Hegel, something like the Sublime. In this sense, Hegel's view of the Sublime is much like Kant's. Hegel sees sublimity manifest in objects in which "the finite appearance expresses the Absolute" (AE 339). There is a hint of the Absolute in symbolic expression, but the Absolute withdraws due to the inadequacy of appearance. In the case of the infinite, Hegel explains, the idea "becomes sublime if it is to be expressed in temporal terms, since every greatest number is always not yet sufficient and must be increased on and on without end" (AE 340). Hegel notes the similarity with Kant. He asserts that despite Kant's *Weitschweifigkeit* (prolixity),

his discussion of the Sublime retains its interest (AE 362, HW 13:467). Both concur that the occurrence of sublimity issues from an inadequacy. For Kant it is the inability of imagination to complete its infinite progression without a determinate concept, and in Hegel's case, the Sublime is evoked by the inadequate notion of the Absolute (infinity) that is revealed, and then negated.

But as with their epistemology, a common starting point does not imply a common end. Hegel takes issue with Kant's reduction of the Sublime to a subjective interaction among the faculties of the mind. Hegel agrees that the feeling of sublimity emerges from the subject, not from nature itself. However, Hegel holds that the form of art is derived from a "double relationship of substance, as meaning, to the phenomenal world" (AE 363). The "double relationship of substance" Hegel refers to contains within it the contradiction of the concept of infinity and substance's inability to articulate it adequately. "The sublime in general is the attempt to express the infinite, without finding in the sphere of phenomena (*Bereich der Erscheinungen*) an object which proves adequate for this representation" (AE 363, HW 13:468). The meaning that attempts articulation in the object is immediately repressed due to the inadequacy of the material. This evokes the Sublime through the expression of the infinite. "This, therefore, differing from Kant, we need not place in the pure subjectivity of the mind and its Ideas of Reason; on the contrary, we must grasp it as grounded in the one absolute substance qua the content which is to be represented" (AE 363). The aesthetic feeling of sublimity is manifest in subjective experience, and, as part of the substance of the Absolute, within it the process of spirit's articulation of the infinite is also immanent.

2.2.6 *Contrasts on the Sublime*

Two differences in the Kantian and the Hegelian notions of the Sublime are emphasized. The first difference fundamentally demarcates the ontological status Hegel and Kant attribute to the artwork, and the second shows how Hegel and Kant confront the notion of the infinite. Each sees a dialectical tension between a numerical reality and a unified conceptualization of totality. Nonetheless, where Hegel sees the resolution of the dialectical conflict with the concept of the infinite fully articulated through the expression of the Absolute in experience, Kant holds that the tension is only temporarily attenuated in the Sublime. Kant explores

similar dialectical tensions in the antinomies of reason, and he resolves them by pointing out that the apparent quandaries are resolved by the doctrine of transcendental idealism, which recognizes the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon. Hegel, on the other hand, wants to show a determinate resolution to the dialectical tension.

2.2.7 *Ontological Status*

As stated before, Kant recognizes the aesthetic judgment and the faculties that allow common aesthetic judgments; nonetheless, he sees the object of aesthetic judgment as having no aesthetic attributes in itself. Unlike Kant, Hegel views the object itself as a nexus, the embodiment of a noumenal truth in a phenomenal object, to use Kantian terms.¹³ For Hegel, the expression of spirit springs from itself. Spirit's expression in matter is initiated through subjective self-awareness of spirit. Nonetheless, something of this transformative process remains in the object, however paradoxical its embodiment is.¹⁴ The very hint of the inadequately expressed universal notion conveys its negative, guiding spirit on its way to a more adequate expression. An object of art is more than the mere matter from which it is made: it embodies the struggle of spirit's metamorphosis of the world. Spirit's diffusion must come from its own moment, making art a phenomenon that cannot serve any external goal.

2.2.8 *The Infinite*

How Kant and Hegel treat the infinite further underscores the way their epistemological differences shape their views on the ontology of the artwork. The artwork has a structure that in Hegel's worldview holds in kernel the conceptual structure of the cosmos: a conceptual notion that entails a starting point, an end and an unfolding determinate concept. Hegel uses of the words *endlich* and *unendlich*, finite and infinite, in a sense that does not correspond to the common Newtonian usage. Instead, employing a notion of infinity that implies unbounded space and time, Hegel follows the Greeks. In *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel discusses the Greek notions of the infinite. He quotes Aristotle on the limitation posed by separability of being:

Being is not separable, for it is entirely like itself; it is nowhere more, else it would not hold together, nor is it less, for everything is full of Being.

The all is one coherent whole, for Being flows into unison with Being; it is unchangeable and rests securely in itself; the force of necessity holds it within the bounds of limitation.¹⁵ (LP1 253)

Aristotle attributes the notion of limitation that maintains necessary coherence to Parmenides. The Classical aversion to limitless is reflected in the Greek word for “the infinite”: *to apeiron* (τὸ ἄπειρον). This term applies more to indeterminate or inconceivable than a limitless expanse of space and time. Referring to the notion of being put forward by Parmenides and Aristotle, Hegel states that this “Being [inseparable] is not the undetermined (ἄπειρον) for it is kept within the limits of necessity” (LP1 253). Hegel contends that the notion of indeterminacy signified by *apeiron* was an uncultured one.¹⁶ It implied intractability and was associated with a negative evaluation.

Conceptually, Aristotle attempted to eliminate the indeterminate notion of the infinite from his worldview by positing the cosmos as limited. When forced to confront the unbounded infinite, as Aristotle was in his discussion of Zeno, he held that “space and time are not infinitely divided, but are only divisible,” that is to say the infinite divisibility is potential, not actual (“*potentia*, δυνάμει, nicht *actu*, ἐνεργείᾳ”)¹⁷ (HW 18:308, LP1 269). Zeno’s paradoxes revolve around the priority given to the *potential* infinite divisibility of the sensuous over the *actual* limitations imposed by continuity.

Like the Greeks, Hegel and other thinkers of his time saw two problems accompanying the notion of the infinite. The first is a logical problem. If the infinite is distinct from the finite, then the infinite is limited by it and is not infinite. Hegel held that the infinite is not distinct from the finite, but the finite is an aspect of the infinite. This conclusion is addressed to the notion that the infinite is separate from finite actuality. Again, in part addressing Kant’s transcendental idealism, Hegel proposes a form of naturalistic idealism, making it clear that there is no notion of God, the supernatural, or the Absolute that is separable from our experience. While Kant argued that we could have no knowledge of God, because God is beyond our experience, Hegel maintained that we cannot know a transcendent God, but not because it is beyond experience. Rather, it is because there is nothing beyond experience. The Absolute is completely knowable through experience. Thus, the Absolute must be part of experience and cannot be separate from the finite. The finite is merely a mode of the infinite. The second issue had to do with the

concept of the infinite regress. Hegel felt that such notions were self-defeating, and intellectually unsound. We never reach infinity; we only reach a finite segment. There is always some element further along in the series. He, like the Greeks, sees this type of infinity as intractable.¹⁸ The true infinite, according to Hegel, is circular. In *Science of Logic* he describes his circular notion of the infinite as finite yet boundless:

The image of the progress to infinity is the *straight line*, at the two limits of which alone the infinite is, and always only is where the line—which is determinate being—is not, and which goes *out beyond* to this negation of its determinate being, that is to the indeterminate; the image of true infinity, bent back into itself, becomes the *circle*, the line which has reached itself, which is closed and wholly present, without *beginning* and *end*. (SL 149)¹⁹

He contends that this notion of infinity as circular, in contrast with the bad infinity of the linear infinite series, corresponds to a higher, more determined reality. The affirmative reality of the true infinite, not the negated abstraction of the simply determined finite, is what is real. “Thus reality is further determined as essence, Notion, Idea, and so on” (SL 149).

Kant does not attempt a resolution of the problem of the infinite regress by conceptually rolling the infinite into a determinate “*circle*.” Kant accepts the “self-contradictory” quandary as reason’s demand for unity at odds with the understanding’s demand for completeness. He resolves the antinomies through his notion of transcendental idealism. In regard to the thesis of the Third Antinomy,²⁰ Kant holds that reason’s demand for unity is beyond the phenomenal capacity of the understanding. Reason places demands on our ordering of appearance into a unified experience. When the understanding’s demand for consistency and coherence in its ordering of appearance is held to reason’s demand for completeness, the pure concepts of reason and the pure concepts of understanding fall into contradiction.

Responding to the theorem showing that the demand for causal explanation leads to an infinite regress, Kant states: “The proposition that no causality is possible save in accordance with the laws of nature, when taken in unlimited universality, is therefore contradictory” (K1 A446/B474). However, without reason’s guidance, the framework of the categories of the understanding attains no unity, and the unity attained under reason’s regulating influence is imperfect. The application

of the pure ideas of reason to the pure concepts of understanding's synthesis of appearance in one experience is merely practical. "The absolute whole of all appearances—we might thus say—*is only an idea*; since we can never represent it in image, it remains a *problem* to which there is no solution" (K1 A328/B384–385). The practical application of the ideas of reason brings about what the concept contains, though imperfectly, in its direction of human action. Reason transcends experience, but it is indispensable in the activity of generating experience. The doctrine of transcendental idealism holds the dialectic in balance, and the imperfect application of the ideas of reason is the best cognition can attain: the whole of all appearances "*is only an idea.*" Kant's intention is to show that though ideas of pure reason are not immanent, their objective employment is. They are crucial in generating the conceptual ordering of sensation and the actualization of the regulative ideals is a practical employment, i.e., one that guides the action of the natural scientist.

In the context of the first *Critique*, Kant is referring to the conditions for the possibility of scientific knowledge, not of aesthetic judgment. However, Kant envisions the employment of the regulative ideas of reason as similar in the function of aesthetic and cognitive judgment. It is the reason's regulatory ideas that guide the activities leading both to the furtherance of scientific knowledge and to aesthetic judgment that results from the consensus of the *sensus communis*. The common ground shared by these judgment types is found insofar as the regulative ideas are not employed constitutively, but heuristically, through providing guidance to the formation of judgments.²¹ Kant holds that there is a gap between the idea of a conditioned totality and the limited and conditioned realm of appearances. While Kant maintains a dialectical balance, Hegel's notion of the dialectic would overcome this duality. Hegel's notion of the idea of reason, the Absolute, is constitutive of experience. What for Kant is only an idea, for Hegel is immanent in the actualization of the fully determined concept.

Kant wishes to see reason brought to the world; however he cannot foresee that the gap between subject and object is closed. Hegel, on the other hand, envisions the progressive completion of the thought of Parmenides, insofar as he holds that the real world is not the sensuous, but rather the ideal.²² In his assessment of Zeno's paradox, Hegel states that Kant's antinomies show no more than Zeno's paradox, though they do mean to show different things (LP1 277). He clarifies that the Eleatics intended to show "that the sensuous world, with its multitudinous forms, is in

itself appearance only, and has no truth.” Hegel paraphrases Kant’s view as holding that “the world is in itself absolute truth” (*die Welt ist an sich, absolut wahrhaft*), but that our knowledge, which to Hegel is spirit, is synthesized from appearance (LP1 277).²³ Zeno never resolves his dialectic, but he sees the necessity of overcoming thought, the thought that places limit and division in a position to cause contradiction (LP1 274). For this reason, Hegel sees Zeno’s dialectic as more valuable than its modern counterpart.

Referring to Zeno’s reflections on the paradoxical nature of infinite numerical progress, Hegel states: “It is superfluous to express this contradiction [of quantum in general and quantum in degree] in the form of infinite progress; on this topic *Zeno* rightly says (in Aristotle’s report) that it is the same to say something *once* and to say it *over and over again*” (EN §104:165). The infinite progress never moves beyond the finite. Thus, incapable of expressing true infinity, it is conceptually mired in the formlessness of the bad infinity. Hegel is critical of Kant’s refusal to accept the possibility of actualizing a unified notion of the infinite, of being unable to see the ideas of reason as constitutive of experience. Regarding the infinite progression, Hegel states that, “the spurious infinity...never gets beyond what merely *ought* to be the case, so that in fact it gets stuck in the finite” (EN §104:166). The association of the Kantian *ought* of pure practical reason with the bad infinite is made again by Hegel in a criticism of his moral theory. Kant asserts that because the willing of the achievement of the highest good in *this* world is a necessary tenet of the moral law, attaining a complete fit of the will to the moral law must be possible (ought implies can). Since rational beings in the sensuous world are not capable of the fit, Kant must postulate an immortal soul so that the attainment of complete moral virtue is possible. “This *infinite progress* is possible, however, only under the presupposition of an infinitely enduring existence and personality of the same rational being; this is called the immortality of the soul” [emphasis SS] (K2 129). In Hegel’s view, this is just putting off the attainment of the ideal to another time, to an unattainable time where the Idea does exist. The necessary supposition of an immortal soul to explain an obligation to complete conformity with the moral law is a form of “*infinite progress*, [which] is simply nothing but the contraction itself, posited as forever recurring” (EN §60:105). Hegel considers the Kantian *ought* to be laziness of thought. Dealing with the “highest Idea” as an *ought* is an easy way out of the dilemma since “in contrast to the actual realization of the

final purpose, it is allowed to hold on to the divorce between concept and reality” (EN §55:102).

Through his notion of the Absolute, as a single substance that entails both potential and actual modes of existence, Hegel will do away with Kant’s is/ought distinction. Both modes exist within the Absolute, albeit in varying forms of development. Just as in the ideal state, where the *ought* is concrete in our existence, Hegel envisions the actualization of Concepts through the Absolute that for Kant are merely regulative. Hegel, holds that as “*the good* – is made actual in the world” (EN §59:104), so should the Absolute Ideas, conceptually reconciling the “divorce” that Kant leaves between concept and reality. The infinite, a notion that for Kant cannot be realized, is articulated in the self-actualizing expression of spirit as, in Hegel’s view, the concept changes of necessity from an indeterminate to a determinate state. It is only a question of the unfolding and resolution of the dialectical process. The Sublime in art is paradigmatic of symbolic art: The feeling of the Sublime comes about due to an incomplete formation of the notion of the infinite hinting through an inadequate medium at its own complete conception that is known only negatively. As spirit approaches its fully determined form, the concept of infinity becomes clearer within artistic expression, and the feeling of the Sublime is no longer felt as an inadequacy.

2.2.9 *The Classical Stage*

Kant’s notion of the Sublime corresponds to the art Hegel felt most typified the symbolic era. This early turbulent and imperfect form of art is superseded, according to Hegel, by the art of the classical period. The status of art in this period is exemplified by the Beautiful. In Hegel’s terms, the articulation moves from inadequate expression of spirit itself, in a material equally inadequate for its expression, to the perfectly balanced inner-outer relation of the spirit’s content to the material form of its expression. The development of spirit throughout Hegel’s writings takes the form of the “in-itself”, an external manifestation of spirit, in which the concept is potential but limited by the understanding, to the for-itself of spirit, an actualized but not yet concrete manifestation of spirit, to the in-and-for-itself which is the concretization of the fully determined idea in the institutions and consciousness of humanity. The move from the symbolic phase to the classical phase can be viewed abstractly as the shift of spirit from the in-itself to the for-itself, from the

phase of spirit not knowing itself to its adequate material manifestation. The classical form of art for Hegel was most perfectly expressed in the idealized human form, epitomized in classical Greek sculpture.

The perfect balance of the concept embedded in the material is only implicit. When the relationship seeks explicit embodiment, the spirit of art moves on, and the balance is no longer stable. During the classical stage, however, the balance is maintained in the implicit potentiality of spirit's perfect embodiment in the material, as the universal individuality of the gods expressed through the human form.²⁴

2.2.10 *The Beautiful*

A type of balance also evokes Kant's notion of the Beautiful. For Kant, beauty is a judgment that is brought into play by a harmonious interaction between the imagination and the understanding (K3 §9:62). This harmonious interaction occurs when a presentation is made to "*cognition in general*" (K3 §9:62). When the imagination presents an image to the understanding that does not correspond to any determinate concept, the understanding is employed with no cognitive function. The cognitive powers are brought into free play, but the feeling apprehended as beauty is the harmonization of the free play according to the law-like nature of the understanding.

In Kant's estimation, the Beautiful is a perceptual form whose subjective finality is felt as a disinterested, universally communicable and necessary pleasure.²⁵ That a judgment of beauty is universally communicable is not a simple matter. The explanation of how we feel disinterested pleasure, and claim it valid, universally and without the representation of a purpose *necessarily*, is the focus of the antinomy of taste. Kant presents the following dialectic:

Thesis: A judgment of taste is not based on concepts; for otherwise, one could dispute about it (decide by means of proofs).

Antithesis: A judgment of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, regardless of the variation among [such judgments], one could not even so much as quarrel about them (lay claim to other people's necessary assent to one's judgment). (K3 §56:211)

To resolve this dilemma, Kant claims that the illusion of conflict appears due to an equivocation with the use of the term 'concept'. The thesis

refers to a determinate concept, while the antithesis refers to an indeterminate concept. Kant clarifies the difference by explaining that determinate concepts are “concepts of the understanding.” Concepts of reason are indeterminate and belong to “the transcendental concept of the supersensible” that undergirds all intuition (K3 §57:212). The indeterminate concepts are of the noumenal realm—the *Ding-an-sich*—so nothing can be known of them.

Determinate concepts (*Verstandesbegriff*) are definable through the corresponding sensible intuitions of which they are predicated.²⁶ This makes a correspondence between them possible. According to Kant, the determinate concepts of understanding are those of “laws which first make a nature possible” (K1 A216/B263). These laws are a priori and concern the connection of appearance to the necessary laws of nature. It is these necessary rules that “declare that all appearances lie, and must lie, in *one* nature, because without this a priori unity no unity of experience, and therefore no determination of objects in it, would be possible” (K1 A216/B263). The determinate concepts of the understanding are the principles that predicate possible behavior in space and time of substances in relation to each other and according to mechanical laws.

The aesthetic judgment does not connect the system of nature to the appearances. To the contrary, the aesthetic judgment *must not* apply the concepts of understanding to appearance. Kant clarifies the contrast between the aesthetic and cognitive judgment:

When we call the sight of the starry sky *sublime*, we must not base our judgment upon any concepts of worlds that are inhabited by rational beings, and then [conceive of] the bright dots that we see occupying the space above us as being these worlds’ suns, moved in orbits prescribed for them with great purposiveness; but we must base our judgment regarding it merely on how we see it, as a vast vault encompassing everything, and merely under this presentation may we posit the sublimity that a pure aesthetic judgment attributes to this object. (K3 §29:130)

The aesthetic judgment is different from the judgment of purpose that evokes the cognitive faculty. Kant’s contrast emphasizes that the powers of judgment are used differently when the poet and the scientist observe the same phenomenon. The scientist interprets the appearances as related to the laws of mechanics; the poet takes in the same sense data without the interpretation of reason. Though the aesthetic judgment does not

employ the determinate concepts to connect the appearances to a system of nature, it, nonetheless, possess a form of purposiveness. “Aesthetic purposiveness is the lawfulness of the power of judgment in its *freedom*” (K3 §29:131). The law-like nature of the power of judgment in its freedom is the harmonious balance attained by the free play of the faculty of the understanding or of the imagination provided by the regulative ideas, or the indeterminate concepts.

Indeterminate concepts, which underlie aesthetic judgment, are not open to further theoretical determination (K3 §57:213). “A judgment of taste is not based on *determinate* concepts; but the antithesis should read: A judgment of taste is indeed based on a concept, but on an *indeterminate* one (namely, that of the supersensible substrate of appearances)” (K3 §57:213). The supersensible substrate of appearances refers to transcendental notions common in the faculties of humanity, a concept, which Kant refers to as the “supersensible substrate of humanity” (K3 §57:213). This clarification, according to Kant, eliminates the apparent conflict.

2.2.11 *Sensus Communis*

Though the judgment of taste has no determinate concept, the aesthetic idea, on which it is based, has a non-purposive purposiveness. That people can come to agreement or make demands on the judgments of another’s taste is only possible because we share a common sense, or *sensus communis* (K3 §20–21:87–88). The *sensus communis*, Kant argues, is a necessary condition of the communication of all cognition. Without this faculty, we could have no knowledge. Because we have a public faculty that we use to assess matters of taste, discussion of the judgments of taste regarding the Beautiful, as opposed to the agreeable, are possible, though not subject to proof. “Only under the presupposition...that there is a common sense (...the effect arising from the free play of our cognitive powers)...can judgments of taste be made” (K3 §20:87).

The maxims of the *sensus communis* are (1) think for yourself, (2) think from the standpoint of others, and (3) think consistently. These provide the subject with a way to attain freedom from the subjective standpoint while also discerning one’s own position from a position imposed by others. This equilibrated perspective can be called a balance between the individual and the collective viewpoint. In epistemological terms this is a balance of inner and outer or subjective and universal perspectives. This state of harmony, for the well-informed populace, would

amount to a collectively necessary judgment of taste, a practical activity guided by a regulative idea:

We must [here] take *sensus communis* to mean the idea of a sense shared [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of presenting [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general. (K3 §40:160)

The balance met between the individual and the collective is the key to judgments assessing fine art, and in many ways it is analogous to the balance of the inner and the outer Hegel finds in classical sculpture. Both Hegel and Kant find the epitome of beauty in this harmonious equilibrium.

Prima facie the Kantian notion of the *sensus communis* appears to be diametrically opposed to an elitist notion of the aesthetic judgment such as the one proposed by David Hume. According to Hume (1979), the valid aesthetic judgment must issue from an exceptional individual who has “strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice” (289). Hume theorizes that the consensus of these experienced critics makes up a standard of taste. The strong democratic underpinnings inherent in the concept of the *sensus communis* are clear: think for yourself, think from the other's perspective, be consistent. Nonetheless, the conceptually egalitarian facet of the *sensus communis*, i.e., the shared “effect arising from the free play of our cognitive powers” (K3 §20:87), is merely a precondition of the possibility of cognitive communication and the ability to make an authentic aesthetic judgment. For Kant, as with Hume, the practice of aesthetic judgment is not merely a matter of consensus; it is a consensus of those practiced in matters of taste.²⁷ The exercise of the *sensus communis* as a presentation to “cognition in general” is a matter of individual and collective development that yields a communicable judgment of taste. Mere collective consensus cannot ensure that cultural progress, the natural yield of tasteful development, is the result. Taste is the result of a sharpened judgmental capacity. Without taste, there is no cultural progress, and taste must be maintained by heeding prior examples. The Kantian employment of the *sensus communis* to render a judgment of taste falls closer to the Humean assessment. This topic is taken up again later in the section.

For Hegel, the ideal of beauty is met when spirit is adequately manifest in the material. The balance of spirit's inner concept and the material representation of the human form are reciprocally adequate. The sculptures of the Greek gods represent universal incarnation in the subjective form. In the classical phase, "sculpture is above all adapted to represent the classical Ideal in its simple unity with itself, in which what is to come into appearance is universal divinity rather than particular character" (AE 486). Philosophically, the accounts of the Beautiful diverge insofar as Hegel envisions the role of art as spirit appropriating untransformed nature and imbuing it with the highest truth. This 'transformative consumption' of what is not yet spirit's is the Romantic urge to overcome the Kantian dualism. While this gives the material of art a higher status, it having been infused with mind, for Kant the art object itself is of little importance. The entire aesthetic experience remains a subjective encounter. Despite these differences, the basic premise of a balance of the inner and the outer, the individual and the collective, the particular and the universal remains at the locus of each thinker's conception of beauty.

2.2.12 *Contrasts on the Beautiful*

Though balance is the key to beauty for both Hegel and Kant, Kant's focus on taste, a standard he will share with modern art critics until Greenberg, represents the fundamental difference in their approaches. For Kant, the collectively honed balance achieved through the exercise of the *sensus communis* can effect a judgment of taste. There is no nascent truth attempting to articulate itself through the judgment of taste, just a common faculty allowing meaningful discussion regarding the validity of an assessment of the Beautiful. What for Hegel is the assertion of absolute truth, in the case of Kant's notion of the aesthetic judgment is not a concrete articulation; rather it is the regulative idea mediated through the practical application of the sharpened *sensus communis*.

Kant and Hegel are at odds regarding the valuation each places on natural beauty. In Kant's assessment, natural beauty stands higher than the beauty found in fine art. He argues that the aesthetic value of nature's creations are superior to man's and further supports his case by noting that the connoisseur of fine art is rarely of the highest moral fiber, whereas the greater appreciation of nature requires higher moral character (K3 §42:165–167). The disinterested appreciation of nature is further removed from the purposiveness, especially self-interested

purposiveness, often associated with the artifacts of humanity. Hegel, to the contrary, places art on a higher level. The productions of humanity embody the intellect through the creative process, which is the manifestation of spirit. It is the incomplete incarnation of spirit in the material that exhibits to subjective consciousness the truth of spirit's demand for determination. Therefore, it is not a judgment of taste that determines the Beautiful in Hegel's view. Taste "belongs to the external appearance of a work of art" and is "incapable of grasping the inner [meaning] and truth [of art]" (AE 16). This prescient claim, according to Arthur Danto, will allow Hegel's theory of art to maintain its relevance in the post-historical era, an era which abandons taste as the standard of art. Hegel also realized that taste is relative to different cultures and could not be manifest as a universal (AE 44), another facet of his philosophy making it appealing to critics who judge artworks in the era beyond the modern.

Though Kant maintains that judgments of the beautiful demand universal assent, he would likely agree with Hegel's claims regarding the difficulty of universalizing a notion of taste which is culturally dependent. Because there is no attribute in the object of art that holds aesthetic value; it is merely an "external appearance" that evokes a harmonious interplay between the faculties of the understanding and the imagination when presented to consciousness without a determinate concept. Kant does not assert that art serves no end beyond itself. "Fine art," he states, "is a way of presenting that is purposive on its own and that furthers, even though without a purpose, the culture of our mental powers to [facilitate] social communication" (K3 §44:173). Art is not, in Kant's estimation, determined by any concept of necessary progression (K3 §47:177). Where Hegel sees art's inner meaning as a driving force for bringing spirit to the subjective consciousness and thereby further fulfilling its determination, Kant views taste as a constraining force. It allows the lawfulness of the understanding to discipline the genius, or creative force, of the imagination and "severely clips its wings"²⁸ (K3 §50:188). Thus, taste adds clarity to works of fine art, giving them a civilizing effect that advances culture. Though Hegel agrees that imagination is in need of constraint, stating that "fine art cannot range in wild unfettered fancy," art cannot escape its fate: its "true task is to bring the highest interests of spirit to our minds" (AE 13). The spirit of art's drive for articulation pushes the imagination towards its conceptual fulfillment despite the physical limitations imposed by art's material manifestation.

The actualization of spirit in the material is the exemplification of Hegel's account of a single substance. The substance of the Absolute is distinguished through higher and lower modes of the organization of mind. It is spirit's dialectical process that evokes the change in status, and art's manifestation of the highest mode of mind in the material is one way of achieving spirit's aim. Though Kant's dualism would not give this epistemological value to art, both he and Hegel argue that a teleology is evident in the process of nature. Thus, a similarity is found in the end result, over time, of aesthetic expression; for each thinker, the pursuit of aesthetic expression in art results in clarity of ideas in social consciousness. Nonetheless, Kant argues that the teleology of nature can only be known by analogy (K3 §71:269), for Hegel, it must be constitutive of experience.

Kant holds that the *sensus communis* is necessary for the communication and assessment of both cognitive and aesthetic judgment among individuals. The harmony brought about by the free play of the imagination and the understanding when employed for non-cognitive aims "quickens the cognitive powers." Thus, the pleasure realized in the fine art's "purposive form is also culture, and attunes the spirit to ideas" (K3 §49:185, §51:195). The quickening of the cognitive powers and the attunement of spirit to ideas finds an analogue in the development of thought that for Hegel is spirit. In this sense, sharpening the faculty that is prerequisite for the communication of cognition, brought about by "a way of presenting that is purposive on its own and that furthers, even though without a purpose," must be seen as the development of nature's aim; thus, it parallels the dialectical unfolding of spirit through art. Indeed, Hegel praises what to him is Kant's attempt at reconciling the 'two-worlds' in his third *Critique*. After criticizing the Kantian moral *ought*, Hegel gives merit to Kant's analysis of aesthetic judgment, it being much closer to the expression of an actual idea than a practical judgment: "The *presence* of living organizations and of artistic beauty shows the *actuality* of the *Ideal* (*des Ideals*) even for the senses and for intuition. That is why Kant's reflections about these objects were particularly well adapted to introduce consciousness to the grasping and thinking of the *concrete* Idea" (EN §55:102). Nonetheless, Kant insists that the gap between the absolute knowledge and possible knowledge is insurmountable. Hegel holds the most vital task of art exists as a moment that breaches the gap, thus pointing to unification, even if that signification is negated in articulation. Ironically, the unification of inner

and outer that Hegel sees as the perfection of beauty in classical art is only potential, and it disappears when the relationship of inner and outer is actualized. For Kant, the indirect and productive practical employment of the regulative ideas at play in the expression of taste does not disappear when spirit is actualized, for the actualization remains outside of experience.²⁹ Beauty disappears when presentation is not adequate to give rise to the harmonious activity of the faculties, and taste disappears when the needs of culture are no longer served by artistic practice.

2.2.13 *The Romantic Stage*

For Hegel, the march of the Absolute seeks the sublation of the dialectic latent in the form of classical art. The harmony of inner and outer is left behind as spirit's concept becomes too complex for articulation in the material. The human form can act only as a temporary vessel for pure manifestation of spirit. Once spirit rests in the individual human shape, the particularity becomes specific, no longer appropriate for the Absolute, revealing the defect that ushers in the romantic stage of art (AE 78–79).

2.2.14 *The Ugly*

Recognizing the restrictedness of the physical form for its shaping of the outer world, spirit finds the perfect balance attained in classical art unactualizable. Spirit is at home in the inner world now, expressing itself best through thought itself. The subjective concept does not abandon the form of art, however. When the spirit is no longer drawn fully into the material, showing its substantial individuality, the relation of the subject matter to the material changes:

Romantic art no longer has as its aim [the representation of] the free vitality of existence with its infinite tranquility and the immersion of the soul in the corporeal, or this life as such in its very own essential nature; on the contrary, it turns its back on this summit of beauty; it intertwines its inner being with the contingency of the external world and gives unfettered play to the bold lines of the ugly (*Unschön*). (AE 526–527, HW 14:139)

The unfettered play of the Ugly typifies the form of romantic art. Hegel does not assert that all romantic art is ugly; rather, he anticipates that

the worldly content of art is no longer idealized by the inner harmony of spirit. Art holds its inner content as reconciled within, leaving its external form to represent empirical reality without spirit's inner glow. Hegel recognizes no concept of the Ugly, though he does speak of it. For Hegel, the Ugly is a privation, a lack of beauty. There is no concept that guides the Ugly; it is lack of order or lack of determination that effects it. In this sense, it bears a negative relation to beauty, though it has no "original existence" (see Hammermeister 2002, 106). Hegel's notion of the Ugly, in this sense, bears resemblance to the distorted forms found in the Hell of Dante's *Inferno*.³⁰ The further one travels from the form of the Good, or God in Dante's case, the less form an object has. The grotesque forms found in the lower levels of Dante's Hell had renounced God and, therefore, the orderly form of the universe. Though the Ugly for Hegel is not explicitly a renunciation of the form of the Absolute, it is certainly a privation. In Aristotelian terms, or perhaps in terms of a neo-Platonic reading of Aristotle, if goodness is full actualization of being, the artwork's being is necessarily lesser because the true form of 'being' is no longer actualizable within its matter. As the Absolute no longer needs the form of art for the purpose of making itself explicit to individual consciousness, art must no longer adhere to its rules of determination. Thus, through privation of absolute purpose, romantic art becomes ugly.

Kant sees a transition from beauty to ugliness as well, though not in the historical sense. Kant, like Hegel, also admits no formal notion of the Ugly. Kant only recognizes judgments regarding objects predicated under determinate concepts, cognitions having no aesthetic content, and judgments that are determined by indeterminate concepts, which are aesthetic. Of the aesthetic judgments, Kant speaks of the Sublime and the Beautiful and of judgments of taste. Nowhere does Kant mention a pure judgment of the Ugly (Guyer 2005). Nonetheless, Kant writes often about what is ugly. The Ugly is generally associated with feelings of disapproval and with what is not agreeable. Paul Guyer argues that there is a connection between aesthetic and moral disapproval, supported by Kant's own connection of moral fitness to aesthetic sensibilities. Clearly, Kant sees a connection between the moral and the aesthetic, but looking at the preconditions of taste shows another, albeit indirect, route to Kant's assessment of ugliness. Though there is no pure judgment of the Ugly, taste is developed through the *sensus communis*, and this, for Kant, is the precondition that determines the possibility of the aesthetic judgment (K3 §20:87).

Fine art, Kant holds, can show what is ugly (*büßlich*) by tasteful allegory (K3 §48:180, KW X:247). As long as fine art is presented in a form that is purposive, a form synonymous with culture, it remains beautiful. In aesthetic judgment, the imagination engages in a procedure “in order to perceive that the presentation is adequate for [giving rise to a] harmonious (subjectively purposive) activity of the two cognitive powers in their freedom” (K3 §39:159). When art is made for the sake of sensation, it does not give rise to harmonious activity, and it is perceived as a tiresome and “disgusting” (*anekelnd*) object (K3 §51:196, KW X:265). Exercised in a work of fine art, taste appeals to the purposive form and is a collective activity, thereby contributing to “culture.” When art, an ‘aesthetic’ object presented in the form of the non-purposive purpose, is no longer tasteful it does not evoke the free play of the faculties; thus, the object of art is no longer fine art. Without taste, fine art is dead, according to Kant, becoming “uncouth” and thereby lapsing into “crudeness”³¹ (K3 §32:147). In Kant’s estimation, because the aesthetic judgment is not determined by a determinate concept, it must rely on the precedents set for taste because it *is* a matter of progress. “Among all our abilities and talents, taste is precisely what stands most in need of examples regarding what has enjoyed the longest-lasting approval in the course of cultural progress” (K3 §32:147). Progression in taste is seen insofar as the artist’s sense of taste is “sharpened by practice” (K3 §32:146). As well, the critic, while working with others without submitting to their views, autonomously develops a personal view by investigating and clarifying through examples “the reciprocal subjective purposiveness” that results in judgments of the beautiful (§34:150). Finding examples lends to further understanding of the aesthetic phenomenon. Though there is no explicit judgment of the Ugly, the recognition of sensual objects that diverge drastically with what is known of taste, if not predicated by a determinate concept, will not “quicken” the reciprocal subjective interaction that is held to be beauty. Thus objects that exhibit a lack of taste are associated with ugliness. The ending of, or precipitous departure from, the precedent of taste would lead to fine art’s demise, though it could someday rise again, because a new precedent for taste can evolve. The question remains, however, as to whether or not the end of taste is associated exclusively with the Ugly, for the merely agreeable would also be a divergence from the pure judgment of taste required for classifying something as fine art.

2.2.15 *Contrasts on the Ugly*

For Hegel, taste is merely a by-product of fine art. Art passes beyond the highest need of spirit because spirit evolves to the point where art's suggestive prompting of subjective spirit is no longer needed. The disparity between the Kantian and Hegelian notions of the Ugly in art focuses again on the locus of what makes an object art. Each sees the Ugly in art when spirit or taste—in Kant's case guided by a regulative idea—is no longer present in art. Kant views the creation and appreciation of fine art and taste as something good in itself: art is an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. This implies that as long as fine art is being made, it also serves the greater good of furthering culture by strengthening our capacity for social communication. For Hegel, art has no higher function than serving the ends of spirit. Art is an end in itself, but insofar as it serves the ends of spirit, it is a means to an end. When that end is served, and when the concept is more fully determined, art is surpassed by spirit but continues to serve the other ends of humanity. Thus art descends to a realm that fosters the Ugly: art is held to no constraint and can be anything (AE 607). Self-awareness, inspired by the Absolute, heretofore occurs through the more fully articulated notion of the infinite in philosophy, not through imaginative representation. Though Kant would agree that art ends when it no longer serves the progress of culture—or spirit, if we see cultural progress linked to capacity for human knowledge—he would not say that art is no longer able to serve the interests of spirit. Rather, Kant could argue that when art is ended, the interests of spirit are no longer being served. For Hegel, the end of art is the fulfillment of art's project, for Kant, the eventuality of art's end would signal its death. In some ways, Hegel and Kant are closest on this account, for each sees in ugliness a lack. Nor does either thinker recognize a pure judgment of the Ugly, for, again, ugliness has no "original existence"; it is the failure to achieve something higher. The disparity is found again in Kant's view that the judgment of taste is evoked through a means of presenting which furthers culture through an unpurposive purpose outside of experience. Thus, the Ugly does not manifest any form of universal judgment; it is a subjective. For Hegel, the Ugly, when expressed through romantic art, is nonetheless on a continuum with the Beautiful, for all of existence is entailed within the Absolute, exhibiting higher or lower modes of consciousness.

2.2.16 *Conclusion*

The contrasting notions of the Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ugly espoused by Kant and Hegel show that for Hegel the status of the artwork is ontologically unique. The artwork is more than the universal manifest in the individual. It is also a historical record of spirit's development that in its indeterminate nature provides a negative image of the determinate shape of the Absolute Concept it embodies. The artwork appears to represent the this-worldly resolution to the somewhat other-worldly problem of the bad infinite (Desmond 1986, 68, 72). This fits with Hegel's assertion that solutions to the epistemological questions posed by Kant are not found outside of experience. There are no 'other-worldly' problems for Hegel because there is but one world and one substance, and the artwork contains within its kernel the teleology of the Absolute. According to this view, Hegel envisions that the artwork embodies the manifestation of subject and object coming together through spirit's self-awareness, a union that Kant held to be self-contradictory and forever beyond our capacity. Hegel holds that though Kant's assessment of the nature of consciousness and finite knowledge is correct, it is limited as a "mere inventory of the moments of consciousness" (EN §60:107). Hegel's philosophy postulates that this limitation becomes a problem of potentiality and actuality if the cosmos is understood as the self-actualization of the vital and organically structured material that makes up all experience. Thus our experience cannot end in appearance: "On the contrary, there is still a higher land; but for the Kantian philosophy it remains an inaccessible beyond" (EN §60:108).

Hegel's conception of the infinite resembles a self-contained cosmos, more like the one conceived by Aristotle than by Newton. Despite the conceptual cleanliness Hegel sees in the classical notion of the infinite, the Newtonian infinite of unbounded space and time is difficult to eliminate. When the circular infinite returns to its starting point, it is not returning to the same point. Hegel did not support the mythic belief of the eternal return. However, as history approaches its goal, his text is 'indeterminate' in regard to its actual locus in space and time. Hegel rejected the Kantian notion of theoretical resolution outside of time, as an infinite progression that repeats the same contradiction over and over again. Nonetheless, Hegel's desire to overcome the problems left

by Kant resulted in a complicated metaphysical system which is hardly defensible, even if understood in its context. His exhortation, “We must renounce that *progressus in infinitum* in order to reach the consciousness of the genuine Infinite” (EN §104:166) does not indicate a philosophical solution; rather Hegel is urging the reader to ‘transform’ and embrace a different notion of space and time. Hegel asserts that this contradiction is resolved in the realm of the Absolute through the medium of art, which brings the Concept’s potential to actuality. However, the very vehicle of thought’s salvation disappears in its actualization. When history completes what appears to be a historical cycle, Hegel’s claim to resolution (*Aufhebung*) through a conceptual shift comes into question.

Perhaps, as Desmond (1986) suggests, Hegel is attempting to reconcile the Judeo-Christian notion of eschatology with the classical notion of the infinite by positing both a beginning and an end in time while also showing that the cycle returns to itself with the division of the whole (72). But, if we look at Hegel’s Aristotelian legacy, the idea of a cycle that returns to itself, with a beginning that is inherent in the end, is reminiscent of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Viewing the cosmos as a single teleologically enmeshed substance, in which the first cause presupposes the final cause (potentially and not actually) we see the problem is not in the merging of two conflicting accounts of temporal progress, but with the claim that the process in actuality reaches its end. The notion of teleological ‘completeness’ in history plays a central role in his aesthetic theory, for in the end, art’s progression cannot attain a fully determinate form of the Absolute’s expression of self-awareness. As the actual approaches its potentially final form, the Absolute is no longer expressible in the material. Because art serves no other purpose than that of spirit, when spirit no longer needs it for its highest expression, art falls off the scope of history’s highest calling. Analogously, it is as if the sculptor is no longer needed when the sculpture is finished. The efficient cause is only the means to the final, and free art is only a cause of the final form of human history. Only art which serves the ends of spirit, in Hegel’s eyes, is free. Ironically, Danto claims that only after art no longer serves philosophy, the highest interest of spirit, is it truly free of all constraints. But, as discussed later, the notion of freedom Danto uses is not compatible with Hegel’s.

2.3 THE END OF ART AND ITS CAUSE

A few years before he died in a wave of cholera that swept through Germany, in his 1829 Berlin lectures on fine arts, Hegel predicted that the end of art would come when “far-seeing spirit” has passed beyond its need for art. As if reading a eulogy, Hegel claims: “We may well hope that art will always rise higher and come to perfection, but the form of art has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit” (AE 103). This bold prognosis, taken on its own—regardless of its appeal to some contemporary critics of the art world—makes little sense without looking at where the “end of art” fits into Hegel’s schema of spirit’s transition from an indeterminate to a determinate form.

Hegel’s aesthetic theory is born out of his cosmology. His view of the universe entails the dialectical process of the Concept’s actualization in nature. The Concept (*Begriff*), when in real existent form, is the Idea (*Idee*). They are identical in many ways, except that the Idea has existence. The Idea is the unity of real existence and the Concept. The difference is subtle: the “‘Concept’ and ‘Idea’ are often used without being distinguished. But it is only when it is present in its real existence and placed in unity therewith that the Concept is the Idea” (AE 106). The real existence of the Concept manifests itself in time through subjective, objective and absolute spirit. The Idea unfolds like a plot with beginning, middle and end encompassing “the whole field of our existence” (AE 94). On the level of particularity, *Geist* is found in subjective spirit, taking form in the studies of individual minds separate from their social contexts. *Geist*’s social manifestation in the institutions of state and civil society comprises objective spirit, the second element. This is the highest form of life, or spirit, to be attained in outer form. Objective spirit is the self-embodiment of history. Spirit, however, is compelled to seek higher forms of actualization, in a “more substantial truth, in which all oppositions and contradictions in the finite can find their final resolution” (AE 99). Absolute spirit, outside of finite history per se, finds articulation in art, religion, and philosophy. The essence of the Absolute is not separate from objectivity; it is inherent within it. Thus, these three forms belong to the realm of spirit insofar as they share “a preoccupation with truth as the absolute object of consciousness” (AE 101). The project of art is to bring subjective consciousness closer to absolute consciousness.

The Absolute seeks objective articulation, but in order to have objectivity, it must be subjectively grasped. The Absolute, when “entering upon actual reality...has confronting it an external surrounding world which must be built up, adequately to the Absolute, into an appearance harmonizing with the Absolute and penetrated by it” (AE 623). Art prepares and transforms actual reality for penetration by the Absolute, almost as a propaedeutic to Absolute truth. Though absolute spirit drives the creation of art, in the end, when objectified, it seeks expression in a form that is beyond art. When art has prepared the world, its services are no longer required by spirit.

Hegel’s vision of history sounds peculiarly like a story. Some say that Hegel’s narrative of history is much like the “medieval *aventure* epics” (Hammermeister 2002, 90). The idea that plot adds meaning lacking in history is found in antiquity. Aristotle’s claim that the poem holds a universal meaning not extant in history appears to have been very influential in Hegel’s thinking.³² The poem has cohesion and unity; history does not necessarily end with a lesson or a meaning that can tell us something about universal human experience. The bad infinite is at work in history as Aristotle construes it, hand in hand with the finite, yielding events that proceed without any determinate unity. For Hegel, the succession of unconnected events is overcome through the self-knowledge of spirit writing meaning into history. Desmond (1986) holds that “art too reveals a secret history for Hegel” (60). Desmond does not see Hegel’s notion of art as anti-historical or ahistorical, rather it is an attempt for humankind to appropriate some form of self-knowledge. It is also not a replacement of historical fact for artistic fiction. Instead, “for Hegel art involves an imaginative effort to gather up from history an essential meaning” (61).

Nonetheless, Hegel’s efforts to find meaning in history through art place him in the conceptual position of privileging the more highly developed forms of matter over those with lower conceptual content, or, simply put, form over matter. When the Concept pervades the real, then what is rational is really real, and the really real, if not rational, has no place for expression in history. Lamenting the passing of the age of art, Hegel claims that the time comes in every civilization where “art points beyond itself,” (AE 103) and “thought and reflection ... spread their wings above fine art” (AE 10). At the end of the story, spirit’s form of expression has moved from the concretely sensual in art to the conceptual in philosophy. Ostensibly, the historical path art has taken since

Hegel declared its end reflects the transition from the sensuous to the conceptual, from the eye to the psyche. It is by no means a stretch to claim that art has become more philosophical.

Hegel explains the transition of art from sensual to conceptual through three historical stages. In these stages, he recognizes five art forms. The level of articulation that the Concept finds in the material varies according to the maturity of the Concept. The Concept unfolds initially through art's seeking out adequate content; at the appropriate juncture, art finds adequate content. As the Idea becomes determinate, the content of art transcends its formal incarnation (AE 967). The first form of art recognized by Hegel is architecture. He associates architecture with the symbolic stage because it is the most material form of art. The Idea is seen externally in architecture. The material is structured according to mechanical rules that are not internal to the object. It is opposed to the Idea (AE 84, 624). At this phase, architecture embodies the in-itself of spirit. Spirit does not know itself, and the external manifestation is an inadequate groping for balance. The symbolic phase is typified by the architecture of Eastern antiquity. These works express the Sublime. The inadequate external articulation of spirit only hints negatively at its potential, leaving the viewer with a sense of longing for the infinite.

Spirit's transition from architecture completes itself in sculpture. Hegel links sculpture, the second form of art, to the classical stage. Architecture creates an external order establishing an open inner space for spirit within its confines. In sculpture the Idea corresponds perfectly to the material. At this point, the highest form of the Idea is the individual human form, which is manifested by the classical gods. Matter is perfectly suited to articulate this version of the Idea (AE 85, 624–625). The balance met in the classical phase represents the for-itself of spirit in which it finds adequate material embodiment. Hegel considered artworks of this era to be the incarnation of beauty. The perfect balance of inner and outer brings art to its highest level of fulfillment (*vollendet, vollkommen*). Spirit, however, does not rest in its most perfect phase. With the end of Hellenistic culture, the classical phase comes to a close, ushering in the arts of the romantic phase.

The art of the romantic stage infuses the individual god of the classical stage into the community.³³ The idea of unity is introduced to the individual's inner self. This move introduces spirit to the community and spirit is re-articulated through the medium of color, sound and the

indications of inner intuitions through speech (AE 86, 625). The art forms Hegel associates with the romantic stage are painting, music and poetry.

Hegel has been criticized for breaking the traditional configuration of the visual arts into architecture, sculpture and painting and, instead, links painting, music and poetry together as the romantic arts (Hammermeister 2002, 101). *Prima facie* this criticism is understandable given that the traditional bundling of the visual arts is contingent on the way the work is perceived. However, this challenge loses sight of Hegel's larger project. Hegel acknowledges the traditional groupings of architecture, sculpture and painting as the visual arts, music as the art of sound and poetry as the art of speech (AE 622–623). He asserts that dividing the arts along these purely sensuous grounds misses the deeper divisions found within these forms. Hegel asserts that “the work of art, however, is not purely sensuous, but the spirit appearing in the sensuous” (AE 621). The mediums of visual and aural perception, augmented by a third element, that of *ideas*, suffice to support the traditional configuration of the arts (AE 622). However, the traditional configuration does not take into account the task of art, which is to “bring before sensuous contemplation the truth as it is in the spirit” (AE 623).

Hegel defines the romantic arts in terms of a progressive relationship of the articulation of spirit in history. Each individual art unfolds according to the dialectical task of transforming the world such that it becomes adequate for the Absolute. The defining factor in each successive step is the balance of form and matter, concept and real existence, or higher and lower organization of substance. Architecture and sculpture are three-dimensional and always maintain the moment of physicality, even when, in the case of sculpture, the balance is perfect. Architecture progresses through the three stages with a differing function, though it always remains the most external expression of spirit. In the symbolic phase, architecture³⁴ is in itself an expression of the forces of nature, often taking the form of an animal, plant or god.³⁵ In this phase architecture is almost a form of sculpture. Classical stage architecture provides the ideal external and open structure for the housing of the statues of individual divinity (Fig. 2.1). Architecture of the romantic stage is limited to an enclosure for the spirit. The openness of inner and outer that was so prevalent in the classical phase is no longer prevalent. Spirit must move inward, to the inner sanctum of the churches of late antiquity the



Fig. 2.1 Greek, Theseum, c.450–440 B.C.E., Athens, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

medieval era, which are defensive on the outside, while fostering the inwardness of spirit on the inside (Fig. 2.2).

Sculpture, in the symbolic stage, is still architectural. The great pyramids and the Sphinx were architectural and sculptural (Fig. 2.3). In the classical phase, the Greek gods are represented in human form, but they are not anthropomorphized. They do not have human emotions or frailty.³⁶ The Greek goddesses are not maternal; they are not shown displaying the maternal bond with their divine children. The human attributes come forth in romantic sculpture. The emotion, the anxiety, the pain of humanity is embodied at this phase in a manner not present in classical sculpture. The mother and child bond found in the Madonna and child motif epitomizes the inwardness of romantic sculpture.

When the romantic stage arrives, the inward dialectical trend continues within the romantic forms of art. The artistic articulation of Spirit in its inward turn tends toward what is shocking. The focus on



Fig. 2.2 Byzantine, Interior, Hagia Sophia, 537 C.E, Istanbul, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

inwardness abandons the outer form to the harsher elements of materiality.³⁷ Romantic art's tendency to represent the external form of a body distinct from its inward spirituality is ugly. In the form of sculpture: "the individual element is combined and closely interlaced with the universal, and the character is raised to an *ideal* individuality" (AE 863). The ideally balanced combination of universal and particular found in sculpture is not presented as a unified whole in painting. The particular elements are presented severally. The canvas provides a context that shows the inward spiritual moment unpenetrated by the "realm of nature," in the real world setting imbued with that "nature." Of the romantic artist's relationship to ugliness, Hegel writes, "for the expression of spiritual beauty the artist will avoid what is absolutely ugly (*Häßliche*) in external forms, or he can subdue and transfigure it through the power of the soul that breaks through it, but nevertheless he cannot entirely dispense with the ugly (*Häßlichkeit*)" (AE 864, HW 15:101).



Fig. 2.3 Egyptian, Pyramid of Chephren and *The Sphinx*, c.2530 B.C.E., Giza, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

The transition from sculpture to painting emphasizes why the arts of the Romantic stage, for Hegel, break with the visual art's traditional bundling. Losing its third dimension, painting may seem to yield less to the viewer. Compelled to represent the three dimensions in two, color is utilized to complete this task. In sculpture the image is self-sufficient; the material form is the coexistence of the spiritual and the sensuous.³⁸ The painting cancels this materially sensuous experience and transforms it into pure appearance.³⁹ The painting does not lose its dimensionality however. The painting merely moves the articulation of the dimensionality from the immediate spatial realm to a higher conceptual realm. Hegel states that the expression of spirit moves to a higher form of abstraction within the sphere of the visible.

So painting does indeed work for our vision, but in such a way that the object which it presents does not remain an actual total spatial natural

existent but becomes a reflection of the spirit in which the spirit only reveals its spiritual quality by canceling the real existent and transforming it into a pure appearance in the domain of spirit for apprehension by spirit. (AE 805)

The Idea steps out of its isolated spatial unity and into a conceptual context in the painted form. This changes the relation of the actual artwork to its surroundings. Rather than being a separate existent object in the viewer's presence, the painting becomes a dimensional window, creating, as it were, a new space on a different level of visual perception. "In order to make prominent the appearance of the *physical* element, there must be a departure from the totality of the spatial dimensions" (AE 808). While commenting on sculpture, Hegel clarifies the higher aims of spirit. Spirit is not satisfied with its manifestations in human or animal form. "Spirit fashions its proper objectivity beyond perceptible life—i.e. in philosophy which has no other reality save that of thought itself" (AE 715). As in the case of the stoic, the Idea does not find an outer reality suited to itself, so it turns inward. The expression of the spiritual in the painted image is a step towards the inner expression of spirit.

Painting, according to Hegel, splits into two extremes, representing on the one hand depth of topic, on the other hand the skill of the artist. At this phase, art passes its zenith; the Ugly becomes more prevalent. In the artworks typified by depth of content, the subject matter is religious. In these works the Ugly is embodied in the suffering of martyrs—those under whose hands they suffered—and the evil of sinners (AE 864).⁴⁰ In Flemish and German painting, Hegel notes that, "an aspect which deserves notice is the transition from a more peaceful and reverential piety to the portrayal of torments and the ugliness (*Unschönen*) of the world generally" (AE 883, HW 15:126).⁴¹ The other camp, which relied more on the artist's skill, chose for its subject matter scenes from the everyday. These paintings, typified by those of the Dutch masters, naively portray the everyday life of the people as merry and enchanting, illuminating the universal human spirit in the daily happenings of life. The comical and cheery presentations of daily life gave way, though, to the merely vulgar in paintings that were contemporary to Hegel. With the Dutch paintings the elements of the bad depicted in the painting were counteracted with the comical elements such that they presented to us something other than what they were.⁴² It provided an enlightening caricature to the viewer. However, painting devolves to the point that "in

modern (*heutigen*) pictures, a painter tries to be piquant in the same way, what he usually presents to us is something inherently vulgar, bad and evil without any reconciling comicality”⁴³ (AE 887, HW 15:130).

Music moves one step further up the ladder toward the pure expression of spirit. The transition from painting to music begins, in Hegel’s estimation, with *sfumato*, the technique developed by Leonardo da Vinci to create the illusion of reality by actually blurring details of an image.⁴⁴ For Hegel, the magic of *sfumato* consists in:

so handling all the colours that what is produced is an inherently objectless play of pure appearance which forms the extreme soaring pinnacle of colouring, a fusion of colours, a shining of reflections upon one another which become so fine, so fleeting, so expressive of the soul that they begin to pass over into the sphere of music. (AE 848)

The shift of spirit to music obliterates spatial dimensionality. The spatial form is left behind altogether, and the only place this art form can manifest itself is in the inner self. There is no external manifestation of music. The form of music is subjective human feeling; the medium of music is sound. The expressive manifestation of music in subjective inwardness is immediately cancelled by its ephemerality.

Where the locus of a sculptural work is the three-dimensional object possessing a self-subsistent existence, the locus of music is in the inner self (AE 905–906). The “actual self,” according to Hegel, “itself belongs in time.” The self sets itself in motion through temporal rhythm, which is the basic configuration of music (AE 907–908). In this sense, music speaks directly to the self and bears a special relation to it. Music cancels the negative juxtaposition of individual moments in time by unifying them with spirit. Hegel views time as “the unbroken series of the coming to be and the passing away of these points of time, which, taken purely as such and in their unparticularized abstraction, have no difference from one another; consequently time proves to be both a uniform stream and also an inherently undifferentiated duration” (AE 913). Music, in its expression of spirit, “cannot leave time in its indeterminacy, it must on the contrary determine it more closely” (AE 913–914).

Hegel’s notion of time mirrors the bad infinite. It is an uninterupted series that he refers to as “empty progress.” The artistic expression of spirit through music predicates the indeterminate, providing the inner-simple self an order that evokes self-awareness and recognition of

itself objectively. Hegel describes time as the “negative element of the sensuous world,” in *Reason in History*. “Thought,” he continues, “is the same negativity, but its deepest, its infinite form” (RH 93). In describing the overcoming of time through the universal spirit, he cites the myths of classical antiquity. “Thus at first Cronos ruled, Time itself—the golden age without moral works. What it produced, its children, were devoured by it. Only Zeus, who gave birth to Athene out of his head and whose circle included Apollo and the Muses, conquered time and set a limit to its lapse” (RH 91–92). With the historical inception of spirit, the overcoming in thought of the indeterminate form of time—an unbounded infinite—is likewise essential to the human activity that brings itself to awareness and the actualization of reason in the world it inhabits.

In the passage below, Hegel describes the process of music interrupting the infinite series of time, providing the differentiation necessary to attain the abstract unity of the persistent self. In a sense, the notion of a persistent self is connected to the overcoming of the bad infinity and the surmounting of the indeterminateness of the world without self-awareness:

But the self is not an indeterminate continuity and unpunctuated duration, but only becomes a self by concentrating its momentary experiences and returning into itself from them. The process of self-cancellation whereby it becomes an object to itself it turns into self-awareness and now only through this self-relation does it come to have a sense and consciousness, etc., of itself. But this concentration of experiences essentially implies an *interruption* of the purely indefinite process of changes which is what time was as we envisaged it just now, because the coming to be and passing away, the vanishing and renewal of points of time, was nothing but an entirely formal transition beyond this ‘now’ to another ‘now’ of the same kind, and therefore only an uninterrupted movement forward. Contrasted with this empty progress, the self is what persists in and by itself, and its self-concentration interrupts the indefinite series of points of time and makes gaps in their abstract continuity; and in its awareness of its discrete experiences, the self recalls itself and finds itself again and thus is freed from mere self-externalization and change. (AE 914)

Music provides a structure for the inner most self. The innermost self is the self that is carried away by music, the pure feeling self, unobjectifiable and separate from the intellectual considerations. This “sphere of inner sensibility, abstract self-comprehension” is the “simple” self that “music takes for its own” (AE 905).

The structure that music provides for this inner realm is akin to the structure that architecture gives to the external. However, architecture cannot resolve the contradictions inherent within it. The external manifestation of spirit through architecture cannot create more than a harmony of external form, regardless of the level of spirit's readiness for articulation. In the realm of the inner, however, music bridges the opposition of the free inmost movement of the soul and provides a concrete basis for its expression through the mathematical nature of music (AE 911). Through the overcoming of the empty passage of time, music binds the several units of time into a unity "in which the self makes itself aware of its self-identity" (AE 915). The self achieves identity through musical articulation of spirit because of the order it recognizes, and the unity it brings to the self is its own.

The satisfaction which the self acquires, owing to the bar, in this rediscovery of itself is all the more complete because the unity and uniformity does not pertain either to time or the notes in themselves; it is something which belongs solely to the self and is inserted into time by the self for its own self-satisfaction. *For in nature this abstract identity does not exist* [emphasis SS]. (AE 915)

The determinateness that brings awareness to the self involves the overcoming of the bad infinite of brute nature. The actualization of the self, according to Hegel, begins the process of forming a higher level of unity that is lacking in the lesser organized stratum of 'nature'.

Through the sphere of the simple inner self, art's inward journey leaves behind its dimensionality in favor of an inner form, effecting its "concrete unification with spiritual content." The simple inner self is the most individual level of existence. The power of music is "an elemental one" which "carries us along" without regard for the intellectual analysis generally accompanied by art (AE 906). The simple inner self is united with the universal through time, evoking its awareness through the beat of music. It is ironic that the beat of music would sow the seeds of the abstract identity—the final fulfillment of which leads to the highest level of rational organization in nature—because Plato so distrusted the influence the poet's rhythm had on the soul that in book X of *Republic*, he suggests that the poets be banned from the ideal city.

For Plato (1997) rhythm is an "imitation" strengthening the irrational part of the soul such that it "destroys the rational one" thereby encouraging disunion within the individual (603d, 605b). In contrast,

for Hegel it provides the individual with the ability to overcome the disunion of dialectical contradiction through harmony. Interestingly, the essential differences in their notions of the artistic endeavor are found in Hegel's assertion that in music there is no imitation of nature. Rather, in Hegel's eyes, it is the self-activation of spirit recognizing in its own evocation a unity present neither in nature nor its imitations. This self-recognition is the bringing together of opposites: the subjective realization of its objective potential. As the harmony finds a unity in a contradiction of chords, the self finds identity through music's succession in time by displaying a "necessary movement of a progress founded upon itself" (AE 929).

The resolution that spirit finds through harmony remains at the inner level. Where the medium of spirit's articulation in the visual arts is the concrete object, for music, the vehicle of expression is spirit itself. The measure of music brings restraint, using melody to "bridle the emotions" of the inner self ensuring that they are not "carried away into a bacchanalian rage or whirling tumult of passions," allowing that the experience of the emotions results in tranquility and not despair (AE 939). Despite its balance, the articulation of spirit achieved through music does not extend to the outer world. Spirit needs another medium to give shape to concrete actuality, and the text of poetry supplies this.

As sculpture stands at the midpoint between the symbolic and the romantic stages, music stands between the "abstract spatial sensuousness" of painting and the "abstract spirituality of poetry" (AE 88). Hegel calls the non-spatial reception and internal dissipation of music a "double negation of externality" (AE 890). Music's internal movement cannot facilitate spirit's need for expression in concrete ideas. Thus, "it deserts the inner world of pure feeling and works it out into a world of objective actuality developed likewise in the inner sphere of imagination" (AE 962). The closing of the dialectic signals a move that brings art to a higher phase in the final form of poetry.

Poetry is not just the highest and final phase of the arts. It is the "universal art of the spirit." Though transmitted through sound, the true element of poetry is "the poetical *imagination* and the illustration of spirit itself" (AE 89). Hegel asserts that this property of poetry makes it adequate to all forms of art. The beautiful imagination that is the poetic essence is appropriate to all forms of the Beautiful; therefore, it transcends the hierarchy of historic phases and individual forms of art.

Despite poetry's pinnacle as the true form of expression as spirit, it is lacking as a balanced art form and does not attain the harmonious equilibrium of sculpture. Hegel concedes that what poetry "wins in this way on the spiritual side it all the same loses again on the sensuous" (AE 626). Its materiality retains nothing of its spiritual content and poetry becomes a means for articulating spirit to spirit.

Although poetry cannot attain the descriptive definiteness that painting achieves through sense perception, poetry has the advantage of not being restricted to one moment. While painting is restricted to a single instant, poetry generates an image for the imagination through a succession of portrayals. Spirit draws the succession together into a single unity that spans time. This unity prevents the telling of a mere sequence of events, such as a historical rendering, that is "prolonged *ad inf.* backwards in its causes and forwards in its consequences" (AE 1088). Though poetry is lacking in the explicit ability to portray imagery through the senses, it makes up for it through the manifold of images it can present through the medium of the imagination (AE 961).

In music, the external slips away, and spirit is expressed through its inner activity. But it does not get beyond the abstract general character of beat. With poetry, spirit moves beyond the inner self and combines the abstract generality of music into a "concrete" assemblage of "ideas, aims, actions, and events." This combination of abstractions is worked "out into a world of objective actuality developed likewise in the inner sphere of imagination" (AE 962). Poetry is withdrawn from the real world and is in no way subordinate to it, yet it moves within it. The one-sidedness of the form of poetry pushes the "original conception of art" to the point of incompatibility; nonetheless, sublated within it poetry contains the essence of all of the forms of art (AE 968).

Because the medium of poetry is the imagination transmitted through the spoken word, it finds itself confronted with the task of distinguishing itself from its everyday means of expression. The "double duty" of poetry is to use the language of prose while distinguishing itself from prose. Poetry arrives at the point where spirit is communicated through the most common medium but must distinguish itself from the common form of that medium by "the choice, placing, and sound of words"⁴⁵ (AE 969).

Poetry, in the final phase of art, knows this distinction. However, according to Hegel, primitive poetry does not know this difference:

It is the original presentation of truth, a knowing which does not yet separate the universal from its living existence in the individual, which does not yet oppose law to appearance, end to means, and then relate them together again by abstract reasoning, but which grasps the one only in and through the other. (AE 973)

The unity of universal and particular in an “animated” whole becomes self-aware in poetry’s final phase. Hegel makes it clear that poetry’s universality is not the abstract universality of philosophy. Poetry remains “manifest, ensouled, determining the whole” (AE 973). However, it is interesting to note that the primitive poetry of which Hegel speaks has in its kernel the abstract universality of philosophy, but it is not explicit. This is arguably true of the pre-Socratic philosophy that was not yet separate from tragedy. Philosophy is born when this separation is first made explicit (Kaufmann 1992). Yet poetry must maintain this separation if it is to remain distinct from the everyday. The realm of poetry is the inner, and it must not trespass into the prosaic sphere of religion or science, while, nonetheless, remaining within the medium of prosaic expression; art must distinguish itself from the commonplace. In the end though, Hegel sees the addition of cadence or beat to the art form as what separates it from the most universal form of thought, despite that cadence or beat is the element used to overcome indeterminate time, the negative of thought.

Hegel breaks the basic genres of poetry down into epic, lyric and dramatic. Epic manifests the struggle of the inner in an overwhelming external reality. Fate and the path that the subjects are drawn through dominate the epic. Lyric is expression of subjective feeling. It does not lead to action. Rather, lyric poetry is manifest through a self-reflection that is contrasted to external circumstance. Drama is the collision and resolution of individual strengths and weaknesses driven by justified and unjustified pathos. These three forms comprise the triad of external manifestation in epic, inner expression through lyric and a reconciliation of inner and outer in the form of dramatic poetry.

Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* epitomize the epic poem for Hegel. This classical stage poem manifests the spirit of the people through the telling of a tale of an individual that does not evoke the innermost subjectivity, rather an awareness of the universality of duty in the face of overwhelming external circumstances. The individual is not judged by the choices confronted by an externality that leaves little room for subjective choice. The action is judged in its entirety.⁴⁶ In symbolic stage poetry, as with

the other symbolic forms of art, the universal is not yet fully formed at the time of the poetic expression. Such is the case with Eastern poetry, in Hegel's estimation. The poetry of the epic proper, however, must occur in the early stages of a people's existence. The epic discloses the nascent spirit of a people's hope and aspiration for its rational articulation.

The romantic epic entails a deeper religious or nationalistic sentiment, perhaps the most notable being Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The romantic epic, though, eventually becomes the romance novel (AE 1092), leaving lyric and dramatic poetry as the most vital forms of art in the later phase of a culture. The later phase of "a people's life" leads to the separation of the individual's spirit and the concrete unity of the national fate and attitude. This later phase results when,

the universal principles which have to guide human action are no longer part and parcel of a whole people's *heart* and attitude of *mind* but already appear objectively and independently as a just and legal order, firmly established on its own account, as a prosaic arrangement of things, as a political constitution, and as moral and other prescriptions; the result is that man's substantive obligations enter as a necessity external to him, not immanent in himself. (AE 1046)

With lyric, a subjective and self-reflective form of expression is made with little inclination to action. The lyric poet gains such individual importance that the subject matter is of little importance; everyday topics can be awarded significance through poetic gestures (AE 1142). The overbearing weight of the external in epic and the inner whimsicality of lyric are resolved in dramatic poetry. In the case of dramatic poetry, the aim of expression is practical individual action and expression of the firmness of individual character.

Drama, in Hegel's schema, is the highest form of poetry and art overall. In the dramatic production, the characters determine fate. With drama, the divine enters the world through action (AE 1193). Without action, the substance of ethical life encounters no conflict, as with the plurality of the gods. However, with action, comes collision, and the necessity of resolution.⁴⁷ The one-sidedness of competing powers is brought to the fore in drama. The resolution may be tragic, or comic, depending on the dramatic form.

In classical tragedy, the individual characters are led by fate, though they may have a pathos, it is understandable.⁴⁸ Characters are neither

innocent nor guilty; they are simply trapped in their roles. In modern tragedy, the characters have more options. They are given choices, and the fate they choose is of their own making. In classical tragedy, the resolution of the collisions is the often brutal, and of course tragic, eternal justice, whereas the resolution in modern tragedy is more likely to be human justice or revenge. As the collisions in classical tragedy are universal and neutral aspects of ethical life, such as state and family, the modern tragedy does not have the clear-cut collisions of substantial issues, only the choices of the individuals in their subjective circumstances.

Comedy, unlike tragedy, is not the collision of forces that result from fate or subjective will.⁴⁹ In comedy, the individual characters possess a mastery of the situation. They are not swept away by the powers around them. Theirs is the folly of insubstantial action. The audience laughs as the characters weave the web of their own destruction. There are collisions, but the collisions are themselves insubstantial, so their failure is also without substantial consequence. In classical comedy, the corruption and flaws of society are exposed, but there is no redemption in modern comedy; in Hegel's own time, he holds that comedy at its peak leads to the dissolution of art through its insubstantiality.⁵⁰

The task of spirit is satisfied; having mastered the "real world," subjective spirit is inwardly free. Spirit's initial task, when "entering upon actual reality" is to prepare the world for the Absolute. As spirit initially enters the world, it "has confronting it an external surrounding world which must be built up, adequately to the Absolute, into an appearance harmonizing with the Absolute and penetrated by it" (AE 623). In the final phase of art, spirit's task is close to complete, and the world has been transformed to the point at which it harmonizes with the Absolute. The expression of the Absolute in comedy is no longer possible because the self-destruction of comedy no longer serves spirit's self-actualization. The forces at play in comedy are explicitly free in the "real world." Therefore, the Absolute withdraws, "satisfied in itself," from its material incarnation in art (AE 1236). It appears somewhat strange that Hegel ends on comedy, having placed the resolution of tragedy and comedy in a "tragicomic" form of drama that blunts the opposing contradictions, thus making resolution easier. Nonetheless, the insubstantiality of the comic forms of art make them inimical to spirit's goal of reconciling with the Absolute, leading it to articulate its needs in higher forms.

With the twilight of the arts, absolute spirit approaches its final stage of self-knowing. Having passed through the physical mediation of the forms of art, spirit now exists in-and-for-itself. The penetration of spirit into real existence is adequate for spirit to enter and recognize itself in subjective consciousness and social institutions—raising the material organization of the cosmos to the highest level of potentiality. The contradictions of finite reality have been resolved to the point at which the torch must be passed on to the higher forms of absolute expression in religion and philosophy. The level of indeterminacy in the world-spirit has been reduced such that art no longer serves to further refine its level of determinacy. Despite the exquisite beauty that is felt in view of the world's great masterpieces of art, “we bow the knee no longer” before this form of spirit's representation (AE 103).

2.4 THE SUPERIORITY OF PHILOSOPHY TO ART

Art, religion and philosophy are linked by their common “preoccupation with truth,” a truth that Hegel finds at the nexus of concept and matter in the form of art. “In short, art has the function of grasping and displaying existence, in its appearance, as *true*” (AE 155). Nonetheless, the truth is not at home in the finite particular per se. It must manifest itself in a way such that the particular elements are still reflecting the totality of the universal in each particular instance. The difficult task of art is to “cast aside everything in appearance which does not correspond with the Concept and only by this purification does it produce the Ideal (*Ideal*)” (AE 155). Art sits precariously between vulgarity and flattery. It cannot show too much of the common nature of external existence while at the same time avoiding the appearance of impetuously “grasping and displaying” inner existence.

In the end, sensuous knowing expressed through art is no longer capable of striking the balance. The Concept inevitably becomes too complex for articulation in the material, “art, far removed...from being the highest form of spirit, acquires its real ratification only in philosophy” (AE 13). The medium of choice for expression of the truth of absolute spirit must pass on to religion and philosophy. The religious pictorial thinking is similar to the unified image generated by poetry, but the religious image is a strictly inner and subjective one. The objective content of art, now empty of externality, is reconciled with the inner subjective

image of religion, united in the “free thinking of absolute spirit” in philosophy (AE 101).

2.4.1 *The Aesthetic Tradition and the Ancient Quarrel*

The notion that the driving element of art progresses to philosophy does not begin with Hegel. Plato (1997) refers to “an ancient quarrel between [poetry] and philosophy” in *Republic* (607b). Plato sees no room for the caprice of the artist in the highest good. All correct thinking must conform to the strictures of reason. It seems that Hegel also succumbs to this view of art insofar as the Absolute, which he equates with the highest good in *Science of Logic*, in its most determinate form cannot adequately express itself through the not fully determined means of aesthetic expression. Why, then, would artistic expression be so important to the needs of spirit?

Historically, this question is of importance to German aesthetic thinkers (see Hammermeister 2002).⁵¹ Alexander Baumgarten focuses on showing the importance of aesthetics as a form of sensual cognition. Baumgarten attempts to demonstrate that the aesthetic perception is a type of low-grade cognition that, though inferior to rational cognition, is nonetheless essential to it. Baumgarten is fighting a philosophical tradition that still recognizes the “quarrel” between the aesthetic and the rational set in motion by Plato. Following Leibniz’s notion of confused cognition,⁵² Baumgarten works to develop a science of sensual cognition that shows the aesthetic to be deficient in rationality but not deficient in truth. The abstract truth of the Hegelian Absolute, then, would also be lacking in Baumgarten’s estimation, insofar as it represents only the cognitive aspect of truth. It is not Baumgarten’s intent to undermine the rationalist metaphysics of his day. Nonetheless, his positioning of aesthetic truth as a form of cognition capable of contrasting and challenging rational cognition gives it a place next to rationality that is not subordinate.

The notion that art embodies some form of truth value, that if not purely rational is nonetheless cognitive and has a value independent of the rational, is integral to Hegel’s aesthetic theory. Kant saw a value, independent of the cognitive, in the aesthetic judgment. Though believing the aesthetic judgment held no value in terms of cognitive truth, Kant held it to be capable of bridging both the sensuous and the cognitive and the sensuous and the moral. Kant does not attribute any truth

value to the object of aesthetic judgment. However, under his theory, the aesthetic judgment gains a sense of value not enjoyed since Plato declared that it detracted from the rational in *Republic*.

Despite Kant's recognition of the aesthetic judgment's value, the bridge that he envisions is merely one that enables the coordination of other faculties. The *sensus communis*, which for Kant is a precondition for the communication of cognitive knowledge as well as the foundation of taste that is a propaedeutic to morality, yields nothing valuable in itself. Yet it enables the act of aesthetic judgment to participate in cognition without actually being cognitive.

The split that remains between noumenal and phenomenal leaves the object of art without any inherent aesthetic qualities other than the disinterested pleasure or feeling that it evokes. This presents the thinkers of the Romantic Movement with a challenge. After Kant, the romantic philosophies of Schiller and Schelling focus on aesthetic theories aiming to overcome the gap between nature and the ideal through art. In their theories, the artwork is seen as a way to attain the cognitively unattainable idea of unity. What could not be achieved through rationality could be hinted at, and one could make a transition to this higher state of knowledge through art. Schiller and Schelling add a historical dimension to the development of the aesthetic, through which an ideal moral community is attained in aesthetic revelation, which could not have been reached merely by cognitive presentation.

Being a child of this philosophical tradition, Hegel sought to craft an aesthetic theory that revives art as a form of truth, which is indirectly cognitive, for art falls under the inquest of philosophy. Art is a preparation for conceptual truth, as the romantic philosophers and Kant held, but breaking with Kant, Hegel recognizes that art also holds a historical dimension. Art, however, is not merely developmental. It also represents a totality: a unity of subject and object, nature and ideal that is beyond the grasp of objective spirit. This unity attained by absolute spirit in art, at a moment in history when the Idea itself is not yet fully determined, is a guiding light for the development of objective consciousness in subjective life. Nonetheless, the tidiness of Hegel's conceptual notion of completion leaves no room for art as an indeterminate form of truth. Only philosophy, art's superior, can carry the torch to the apex of Absolute knowledge.

At this point, it may appear that Hegel merely dispels the problems bound up in finitude by declaring the predominance of the infinite. Has

Hegel really resolved the paradoxes of the finite and the infinite, paradoxes that led Kant to postulate two worlds to resolve, or has the paradox of Zeno been swept under the carpet with the expulsion of the bad infinite? The elevated position Hegel allots art within the developmental scheme of absolute spirit demonstrates his recognition of its intrinsic value. Despite this, Hegel appears, as many philosophers before him, to underestimate philosophy's dependence on the finite, sensuous, branch of knowing represented by art. Hegel's dismissal of the form of art, however, is not as simple as that of the metaphysicians who had come before him. As Beiser makes clear, Hegel's metaphysics evolved as a reaction to the flawed deistic or supernatural metaphysical systems that preceded him (2005, 53–79; 1999, 7–9). Hegel followed Kant in opposing transcendent metaphysics.

Kant, though seeing no inherent truth value in the artwork, recognizes the place that the aesthetic judgment has as a cognitive aid and does not see its usefulness fading as history advances. Perhaps the acceptance of the precarious balance of the concepts of the understanding and the ideas of reason, though unsatisfactory for those seeking conceptual completeness, has the advantage of avoiding the seemingly absurd conclusions encountered when assuming completeness is possible. The work of art, as Hegel views it, is an individual and embodied truth. Such individual truths are ideally suited to serve a multiplicity of individual and local needs. The universal truths of philosophy may serve the true needs of the Absolute, but not necessarily those of each culture (Habermas 1990; Hammermeister 2002, 104). Hegel states that art will continue to serve the needs of mankind but not those of absolute spirit. At this point, one must question the aim of Hegel's broader project, for what exactly are the needs of absolute spirit outside of the needs of humanity? Is it not so that the needs of the Absolute and the needs of the subject are one, for they are both bound, albeit at varying levels of organization, into the same organic whole. In the same vein, we must ask, if philosophy rose out of a quarrel with art, can it resolve itself into something outside of art's sensuality, or, if we are true to Hegel's vision of cosmic organization, will philosophy always be tied to the material font from which it sprang? Though Hegel's account of the dialectic of spirit will argue to the affirmative, I will argue in the final chapter, that to lose sight of the immanent connection between art and philosophy is as disastrous for philosophy as it is for art if philosophy serves the highest needs of humanity in concept only.

2.4.2 *Art as a Lure*

Hegel claims that to qualify as fine art, art must be pursued only for its own sake. In Hegel's view, this entails meeting the highest needs of spirit. Yet, Hegel follows an artistic tradition that uses art to hint at a higher, ungraspable cognitive notion. He formulates his aesthetic theory in like manner. In some senses, Hegel, as many thinkers before him, is using art as a form of lure. In the time of Abbot Suger, aesthetic beauty was a lure for "a dull mind to rise to truth." In the German aesthetic tradition that preceded Hegel, aesthetic beauty was a quasi-rational method for leading cognition to more complete notions of unity and infinity. In this way, Hegel also views art as a lure—a lure to absolute truth. The very notion of the Absolute appearing, albeit as a negation, in symbolic art is a lure. The inadequate glimpse of the Absolute hinted at through the Sublime is an allusion to what the fully articulated Absolute could be.

Hegel postulates that art has been used by religion, thus doing the bidding of a sphere other than that of the art (AE 104). In its servitude, art does inhabit a less perfect stage, as romantic art served the inner subjectivity of the religious sensibility, the classical art of antiquity stood fully in its own sphere, making it the most perfect of the art forms. Nonetheless, Hegel views the reception of art's intuition as an activity of spirit that lures the subjective thinker toward acceptance of a unified notion of the infinite. This activity completes one side of the dialectic, that of the objective externality of sensuous knowing in art. With it, the other side of the dialectic, the subjective inwardness of religious pictorial thinking, resolves itself into a unity of the three stages of the concept—universal, particular and individual—as the freethinking of absolute spirit in philosophy.⁵³ Through the freethinking of the Absolute, the subjective thinking of every participant is in congruence with the Concept, or thought, itself. In the same manner that subjects are unified with the state, objective spirit, in the ethical substance of *Sittlichkeit*, subjective thought achieves the final aim of absolute spirit—absolute knowledge—through the actualization of the Concept in the material substance that is the cosmos.

2.4.3 *End of History*

Hegel's writings on the end of history parallel his account of the end of art. The end of history that accompanies the end of art is in many

ways ideal. Despite the lack of historical struggle that gives an epoch its character, spirit—as do the people—has what it wants (RH 90). Hegel’s claim that comedy leads to the dissolution of art comes with the assertion that free in the “real world” are forces bent on particular and subjective aims inimical to the actualization of the Absolute. Even if the struggles of history may be laid aside so that art can pursue a sort of Wildean triviality, at the end of history art itself does appear ‘utopian’.

The relationship of the Concept, in concrete thinking and acting individuals, to the Concept, as it exists beyond them, is mentioned often in Hegel’s writing. Though he rarely elaborates, these remarks are usually made in crucial concluding passages. In the concluding passage of *Lectures on Fine Art*, Hegel states, in a passage that could be interpreted as a warm farewell to the audience, “when the link forged between us generally and in relation to our common aim has broken, it is my final wish that the higher and indestructible bond of the Idea of beauty and truth may link us and keep us firmly united now and for ever” (AE 1237). Elsewhere in *Lectures on Fine Art*, referring to the death of Hector, Hegel speaks of death in terms of the individual and the collective: “With death nature is at an end, but not man, not moral principle and ethical order” (AE 1089). When the individual dies, the order created by the individual’s culture lives on, but what of the death of a culture?

At the close of Hegel’s introduction to *Philosophy of History*, he compares the activity of spirit, insofar as spirit returns to itself as the completion of its activity, to the function of a seed, which is “both beginning and result of the plant’s whole life” (RH 94). The activity of passing the fruits of one cultural cycle on to the next, like the cycles of nature, is clearly what Hegel has in mind in terms of a people’s life cycle. With some drama, Hegel asserts that the seed of the culture that matures it may be its own poison, but not the poison of the next generation:

The life of a people brings a fruit to maturity, for its activity aims at actualizing its principle. But the fruit does not fall back into the womb of the people which has produced and matured it. On the contrary, it turns into a bitter drink for this people. The people cannot abandon it, for it has an unquenchable thirst for it. But imbibing the drink is the drinker’s destruction, yet, at the same time the rise of a new principle. (RH 94–95)

The substantial activity of a people passes on to a new principle, presumably in a new culture. Hegel views the unfolding of a culture in the

historic stages of objective spirit much as Aristotle viewed the change of a seed into a plant. The *entelechy*, the final purpose or form of an organism, is passed on to the next generation. Using the analogy of a tree and its bud, Hegel states that “the buds have the tree within them and contain its entire strength, although they are not yet the tree itself” (PR 25). Unlike the tree, however, in terms of human culture, each generation passes its principle on to a “new and higher one,” something more than the last. Earlier in this study it was suggested that Hegel’s paradoxical end-of-art thesis might have been a problematic fusion of a classical cyclical view of the cosmos with a Judeo-Christian notion of linear eschatology. Hegel appears to be incorporating the classical notion of temporal cycle with a progressively developing “substantial principle” that is passed on, in a cumulative manner, to the next cultural cycle. Certainly, this falls in line with his notion of the progressive self-organization of the Concept within the single substance of the universe. But the end point of the process is less than clear. Examining specifics of Hegel’s notion of philosophy illuminates where, at the end of a historical cycle, art and culture stand.

2.4.4 *The Independence of Philosophy*

Ostensibly, the subordination of art and religion to philosophy, and philosophy’s independence from other forms of spirit, precipitate the eventuality of art’s end. Spirit’s passing beyond the form of art to the independent form of philosophy, which cannot fully assimilate the last vestiges of finitude extant in even the highest forms of art, points to a dualism of the mind and body, the infinite and the finite. Despite passages that support this, the dualism would be better explained as elements of the dialectical movement. It is the overcoming of the dualism that leads Hegel to envision the end of one of spirit’s highest forms. The apparent divide is better explained as the process of spirit’s development through which spirit’s articulations of truth are made obsolete in the transformation of the sensible they effect.

Hegel does argue, in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, that the history of philosophy is not a topic that refers to past history, as an archeologist might view a dig, dredging up relics of antiquity for the sake of learning how a now dead culture may have lived. Quite to the contrary, philosophy survives the thinker, and the topics revealed by past philosophers are very much active and alive today.

What is obtained in this field of labour is the True, and, as such, the Eternal. The bodily forms of those great minds who are the heroes of this history, the temporal existence and outward lives of the philosophers, are, indeed, no more, but their works and thoughts have not followed suit, for they neither conceived nor dreamt of the rational import of their works. Philosophy is not somnambulism, but is developed consciousness; and what these heroes have done is to bring that which is implicitly rational out of the depths of Mind [*Schachte des Geistes*], where it is found at first as substance [*Substanz*] only, or as inwardly existent, into the light of day, and to advance it into consciousness and knowledge. (LP1 38–39, HW 18:57–58)

The idea that philosophy is “deposited in the temple of Memory,” while also being valid for contemporary thinkers, separates it from art and religion. The thought which becomes philosophy is non-material, and non-representational, unlike art and religion. Works of philosophy “have as medium neither canvas, paper, marble, nor representation or memorial to preserve them. These mediums are themselves transient, or else form a basis for what is such” (LP1 39). When thought becomes Thought, it is eternal, and beyond corruptibility. “The conquests made by Thought when constituted into Thought form the very Being of Mind [*Sein des Geistes*]” (LP1 39, HW 18:58).

Philosophy, presented as such, is not the property of the individual. Hegel attacks the notion of exoteric philosophy, as ideas which can be passed on as possessions. “This would appear as if the philosopher kept possession of his thoughts in the same way as of his external goods: the philosophic Idea is, however, something utterly different, and instead of being possessed by, it possesses a man” (LP2 11). The apparent independence of philosophy is not shared by the materially enthroned work of art. And while philosophy remains relevant across time, the art of different historical epochs is incommensurate. The task of spirit changes with its level of development. Thus, the art of the Classical age, despite its beauty in contemporary eyes, cannot speak to modernity the way it spoke to those of antiquity.

In order to become thought, to be deposited as philosophy in “the temple of Memory,” mind must separate itself from the world-spirit that bore it. “Since Mind [*Geist*] requires to separate itself from its natural will and engrossment in matter [*Stoff*] if it wishes to enter upon Philosophy, it cannot do so in the form with which world-spirit

[*Weltgeist*] commences” (LP1 95–96, HW 18:117). For Hegel, spirit separates itself from all material elements, the sensuous and the imaginative forms that compel the subjective concept—the spirit of art—to actualize itself into the Absolute. In the Hegelian schema, philosophy is the Absolute’s eternal form.

Plato’s depiction in *Phaedo* of the funeral of Socrates also supports a mind/body dualism. Hegel is critical of Plato for holding the soul to be that which thinks, for in Hegel’s view, this connects the immortal existence of the soul to thinking, as substance is to weight. As a substance would not exist without weight, so the soul would not exist without thinking, and according to Hegel, the activity of the enduring soul is thought, but it does not subsist in thinking (LP2 37).⁵⁴ Nonetheless, Hegel praises Plato’s presentation of the body as a pollutant, blocking the attainment of pure thought. Socrates, upon his death, is released from the burden of the sensuous, which is merely an obstacle to wisdom (LP2 41).⁵⁵

This interpretation of the death of Socrates is puzzling. On the one hand, there is a strand of Hegel’s philosophy inclined toward the disassociation of the spiritual from the sensuous, even memory and imagination, in order to achieve pure articulation of the Absolute. On the other hand, the notion of the Absolute that he adopts from Schelling, with some modification, views the most highly organized form of substance as mind, and the lesser organized form of the single substance as matter. Nonetheless, they remain a single substance on opposite ends of the spectrum. Hegel even criticizes Schelling, perhaps unfairly, in the introduction to *Phenomenology* for suggesting that the infinite modes of the Absolute are separate from its finite modes (Beiser 2005, 93; 1999, 6–7).

His criticism of Plato shows it is not the thinking that is imperishable; it is thought. Yet, thought does not consist in thinking. The activity makes the end possible, but it is not the activity that is the end. Thus, it stands that the intransmutability of particular feeling and image into the pure cognition of philosophy is fixed in Hegel’s schema of absolute knowledge. Nonetheless, the higher organization of mind that is manifested in art by the artist is revealed to its beholders through the lesser organized material, and because Hegel sees a unity, there is no dualism that separates the form and content (Beiser 2005, 297–298). But art, the universal embodied in the particular, the image of the Absolute supplied to humanity so that it can better attain knowledge of it, cannot join the

pantheon of eternal Thought, relegating it to a subordinate role. Despite passages that seem to explain the subordination to a form of dualism, this is not the case. Rather, the subordination of art to philosophy stems from the transformation that occurs as the role sensuality plays in spirit's expression of the concept in art's object is diminished.

If we accept Hegel's idealism, and the notion that nature's higher organization is in *mind*, it is arguable that Hegel appropriated the subordination of sensuous knowing to philosophical truth from *De Anima*, where Aristotle (1941) distinguishes three types of *nous* (νοῦς), or intellect. The agent intellect (*nous poietikos* - νοῦς ποιητικός) is the cause of thought, a catalyst, so to speak. Aristotle defines possible intellect (*nous dunamei* - νοῦς δυνάμει) as the thinking power, or potential intellect. Lastly, passive intellect (*nous pathetikos* - νοῦς παθητικός) is the individual imagination, the pictorial content that is presented to the intellect (III.5). It is the division that Aristotle draws between agent and possible intellects and imaginative passive intellect, which is instructive for interpreting Hegel (see Snyder 2006).

To differentiate the cognitive elements of intellect from the imaginative passive intellect, Aristotle (1941) holds that agent and possible intellect are "separable" from the soul. The agent intellect is the creative moment that prompts possible intellect to think. The differences between possible intellect (*nous dunamei*) and the passive intellect (*nous pathetikos*) can be explained as follows. "Mind [*nous dunamei*] is in a sense potentially whatever is thinkable, though actually it is nothing until it has thought" (429b, 30). This *tabula rasa*, or mind (*nous dunamei*), is transformed into "actual knowledge" which "is identical with its object" (430a, 20). With the imagination providing the pictorial material, from the passive intellect, the agent intellect produces an intelligible form, thus raising the possible intellect to knowledge. The passive intellect—the images, emotions and memories of mind—perishes with the body.

When mind is set free from its present conditions it appears as just what it is and nothing more: this alone is immortal and eternal (we do not, however, remember its former activity because, while mind in this sense is impassible, mind as passive [*nous pathetikos*] is destructible), and without it nothing thinks. (430a, 22)

Humans use the faculty of sense, imagination (passive intellect), to attain knowledge, which survives the passing of the body. Nonetheless, having

achieved transformation into mind, the imaginative passive intellect expires with the body, while agent and possible intellect remain.

Certainly some confusion exists in the writings of Aristotle as to the precise relation of the elements of *nous*. The issue at hand, though, is the influence Aristotle has on modern thinkers in terms of the relationship of particular sensuous and universal expression. Hegel discusses the passage from *De Anima* cited above in *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, chiding those who misinterpreted Aristotle as holding the mind to be a *tabula rasa*, noting the active as well as passive nature of mind.

Hegel associates the unity of subject and object, in his terms, with Aristotle's conception of *nous*. "*Der νοϋς ist das Tätige, das Denken und das Gedachtwerdende.*"⁵⁶ *Nous* is activity, thought and the subject of thought (the thing that thought thinks). In the agent, possible and passive intellect, Hegel sees the unity of the subjective and objective, in his terms the concept of the Absolute, entailed in Aristotle's theory of *nous* (Snyder 2006). The Absolute that is present in philosophy, which is pure knowledge, can contain no image or form of sensuous knowing. Art and religion serve to bring to consciousness, out of the immediate perceptions and the sensuous idea they manifest, the objective self-consciousness of spirit (LP1 68–69). But it is this consciousness, the form of thought, "the universal content which is in and for itself, [that] first belongs to Philosophy" (LP1 67).

The imaginative intuition and pictorial representation of art and religion still belong to the realm of the finite; they have as their object the universal, and as part of the process through which the universal is actualized, they are revelatory. Nonetheless, they are incomplete, and, like Aristotle's *nous pathetikos*, they retain some aspects of finite reality as their content (LP1 81–82). Spirit seeks the substantial content of these images and brings it into thought itself, making it the material of philosophy. Citing Aristotle as the first to have noted that *nous* is the thought of thought, Hegel goes on to claim the ultimate superiority of philosophy over religion and art. "Philosophy is thus the true theodicy, as contrasted with art and religion and the feelings which these call up—a reconciliation of spirit, namely of the spirit which has apprehended itself in its freedom and in the riches of its reality" (LP3 546).

Hegel draws a sharp distinction between the rational and non-rational animals when he postulates that the repository of human knowing is passed on to the next cycle of civilization. In the case of humanity, the universal thoughts of a people—purged of image, memory, or the

sensuous—are cumulatively passed on to the Absolute in what may appear as the ‘exosomatic’ form of philosophy. Philosophy arises, according to Hegel, when society declines. When a people’s concrete substantiality has passed, the activity of philosophy accelerates, withdrawing from the activity of the culture which bore it (LP1 51–52).⁵⁷ Philosophy “is not in the possession of a man” (LP2 135). In *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel writes that Aristotle also sees philosophy’s independence, despite its origins in the subjective will. “For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize” (LP2 135; See Aristotle 1991, 982b, 13). But in the end, Aristotle (1991) concludes, the “possession” of the form of knowledge inherent in philosophy “might be justly regarded as beyond human power” (982b, 28).

Art and religion are possessions of humanity, but philosophy is not. When art and religion take up an image, whether a sacred image or the universal manifest as the Beautiful, they present this image to consciousness. It is necessary that consciousness begin with an “external comprehension of this form: it must passively accept report and take it up into memory” (LP1 74). But this form cannot remain in such a transitory state; to do so is the rejection of spirit.

The man who speaks of the *merely* finite, of *merely* human reason, and of the limits to mere reason, lies against the Spirit, for the Spirit as infinite and universal, as self-comprehension, comprehends itself not in a “merely” nor in limits, nor in the finite as such. It has nothing to do with this, for it comprehends itself within itself alone, in its infinitude. (LP1 74)

For Hegel, art must recede for the form of spirit to proceed, as when Virgil disappears from Dante’s side in Purgatory in order that Dante can progress to the next level (Canto XXX, 45–57). So it is for Hegel with the sensuous memory of art, all finite aspects of thought, all sensuous recollection, must be purged before the transformation to the infinite of the Absolute occurs. Perhaps this is why Hegel urges the overcoming of the bad infinite via the form of art. Kant makes a compelling *argument* as to why logically sound but contradictory notions of the finite and the infinite exist side by side in separate modes of thought, yet Hegel *urges* the reader to find higher ground.

Pushing for this transformation of thought is almost a Kierkegaardian leap: have faith in the infinite, or despair with the finite. There is an existential strain in Hegel. To accept the notion of the bad infinite, which

is mired in the finite, is “to reject the Spirit. The sins of him who lies against the Holy Ghost cannot be forgiven. That lie is the refusal to be a universal” (LP1 74). The task of humanity is a task that goes beyond itself. Imposed upon all human kind, according to Hegel, is the progressive mission of bringing to light the highest form of knowledge in the form of philosophy. To conclude his lecture on the history of philosophy, Hegel urges the audience to take this task to heart:

We have to give ear to its urgency...and we have to make it a reality. It is my desire that this history of Philosophy should contain for you a summons to grasp the spirit of the time, which is present in us by nature, and—each in his own place—consciously to bring it from its natural condition, *i.e.* from its lifeless seclusion, into the light of day. (LP3 553)

But notwithstanding this existential moment, urging his audience to leap with him, Hegel is not an existentialist. Hegel, in his philosophical teachings, despite his claim that the individual cannot consciously aid the cause of spirit, is attempting to secure the collective intellectual legacy of humanity for the future generations. In the same manner that his lectures prod the audience, the beauty of art, for Hegel, is a lure, through which the disclosures of spirit will subjective consciousness to change the particular sensual images of the finite world into a pure notion of the infinite to be assimilated by absolute spirit. In this sense, art is a lure to a transformation of consciousness. But in Hegel’s system, the lure is part of the process. The wonder that sparks the spirit’s initial movement is that period’s highest organization of mind manifest in art, and as art transforms the world, the essential elements are ‘saved’ and ‘cancelled’ as they rise to a higher level. What is essential to art, the *now* that is passed on, is purportedly retained in the more highly organized form of substance that results from spirit’s dialectic.

In his article “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” T. S. Eliot (1975) notes the sacrifice of the individual artist, who is absorbed into something greater. “What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (40). The artist must surrender the part of the self that is most particular; in order to imbue the work of art with a meaning that can be valued for all humanity—an element of universality. For Hegel, how does the artist’s sacrifice of the self, for the general presentation of a higher

meaning to humankind, maintain individuality when the transformation is fulfilled?

These passages show a common logic in the concept of *nous* found in Aristotle's *De Anima* and Hegel's idealism, for through transformation of mind, Hegel shows how a cultural legacy can be passed on without sensual embodiment. Philosophy, in Hegel's esteem, is universal and valid for all time, but art, though it may still be extant, is the art of another epoch. Formulated thusly, the imagination and feeling embodied in the quasi-universal form of art must separate from what is eternal in order for it to pass to the higher form of the Absolute. Hegel's praise for Aristotle is limited. But even as Hegel argues that Aristotle's theory lacks the unifying principle that links the Idea's particular conceptual components, his writings are, nonetheless, colored by the Aristotelian account of separable mind.⁵⁸ If Hegel is read as seeing the cosmos as a single vital substance, unfolding into a perfect organic whole, such a separation is not tenable because the severance of the parts from the whole would prevent the achievement of absolute knowledge.

Though arguably there may be streams of thought within Hegel's vast writing which cannot be made compatible, a look at Hegel's notion of free will and property provides an example that helps explain the apparently divergent aspects of his aesthetic theory. If we accept that at the core of Hegel's project is the desire to resolve the problems left in Kant's transcendental idealism, then the overcoming of the subject-object gap must be viewed as a primary aim of the Hegelian system. As mentioned earlier, the notion of the Absolute that evolved in Hegel's thought during his collaboration with Schelling resembled a subject-object identity. Though Hegel found this notion of the Absolute inadequate, the dialectical approach he adopts does not abandon this goal. Texts that elaborate on the first steps spirit takes toward transformation of the external often provide fascinating examples. As the beat provides the inner self a way to overcome the infinite meaningless of time, in the case of property, the free will, in which "the truly infinite has actuality and presence" (PR 54), is able to bridge what, for Kant, could not be bridged. "The activity of the will consists in cancelling the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity and in translating its ends from their subjective determination into an objective one, while at the same time remaining *with itself* in its objectivity" (PR 57). With the acquisition of property, according to Hegel, the individual will is asserted upon the external object, thus unifying that object with the ends of that person's will. This process injects

the will—the *interests*—of spirit into the material, “cancelling” the opposition that exists between them. This process of will’s appropriation of the material object, for Hegel, is a direct contradiction to Kant’s claim that the *Ding-an-sich* lies beyond the purview of knowledge (PR 76).⁵⁹

To be sure, objective spirit and absolute spirit exist on different planes within the hierarchy of *Geist*. However, the patterns of dialectical movement are repeated throughout Hegel’s writings. What this example shows is that while art may no longer serve the highest needs of spirit, as its form is exhausted, spirit’s will and activity is, nonetheless, embedded within art; it is part of the whole, and through it, the higher aims of spirit are revealed. Transformed, spirit passes the task of art on to the most adequate form of the Absolute’s articulation. Thus, Hegel’s metaphysical solution avoids dualism while suggesting how art’s essence may still be in the forms of religion and philosophy without its traditional embodiment.

If this account helps us to understand Hegel’s philosophy, it may not leave the reader satisfied with Hegel’s solution to why the form of art was shifting from one that appealed to our judgment rather than our visual enjoyment. But, as Charles Taylor (1977) points out, it is not necessarily Hegel’s solutions, but his approach to the interrelations and philosophical implications of humans to culture that give his works relevance today (460; see Beiser 2005, 2–3). In order to move beyond the transcendental idealism of Kant, Hegel adopts a notion of the cosmos underwritten by a historically unfolding organic teleology. Hegel’s idealistic solution compels him to write the passing of art into the development of the Absolute. But if we do not accept his final aim, we should not overlook the social and historical meanings that Hegel held were embodied within the artwork. Though we pass over Hegel’s solution to the problems of art’s nature, his approach is revisited when the transformation of the sensible is examined in the theories of Nietzsche and Danto, and a new perspective is presented on the end-of-art thesis in the final chapter.

NOTES

1. “Von solcher Art ist die christliche Auffassung der Wahrheit, und vor allem erscheint der Geist unserer heutigen Welt, oder näher unserer Religion und unserer Vernunftbildung, als *über* die Stufe *hinaus*, auf welcher die Kunst die höchste Weise ausmacht, sich des Absoluten bewußt zu sein. Die eigentümliche Art der Kunstproduktion und ihrer

Werke füllt unser höchstes Bedürfnis nicht mehr aus; wir sind *darüber hinaus*, Werke der Kunst göttlich verehren und sie anbeten zu können” [emphasis SS] (HW 13:24).

2. The language Hegel uses here: *so wendet sich der weiterblickende Geist von dieser Objektivität in sein Inneres zurück* is similar to the language he uses in *Science of Logic* to describe the circuitous path of “true infinity.” Hegel asserts that “the image of true infinity, bent back into itself, becomes the *circle*” (SL 149)—*als wahrhafte Unendlichkeit, in sich zurückgebogen, wird deren Bild der Kreis* (HW 5:164). Hegel’s notion of the infinite (*Unendlichkeit*) is discussed at length in the next Section.
3. “But just as art has its ‘before’ in nature and the finite spheres of life, so too it has an ‘after’, i.e. a region which in turn transcends art’s way of apprehending and representing the Absolute” (AE 103).
4. Compare the following text describing the end of history with the wording Hegel uses to describe the end of art. “Even though [the people’s] imagination may have gone further, it has abandoned more far-reaching (*darüber hinausging*) purposes. If reality did not fit them, [the people] fit the purposes to reality” (RH 90, HW 12:100). “But if the perfect content has been perfectly revealed in artistic shapes, then the more far-seeing (*weiterblickende*) spirit rejects this objective manifestation and turns back into its inner self” (AE 103, HW 13:142).
5. “Das Kunstwerk steht in der **Mitte** zwischen der unmittelbaren Sinnlichkeit und dem ideellen Gedanken” (HW 13:60). “The work of art stands in the *middle* between immediate sensuousness and ideal thought” (AE 38).
6. Robert Pippin (1993) defends a non-metaphysical reading of Hegel based on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Logic*, while admitting that many of Hegel’s speculative applications of his philosophy are “ludicrous” (11).
7. Despite finding Beiser’s (2005) reading of Hegel very instructive, I do not concur with his assessment of the end of art, which sees no value in contemporary art beyond individual expression (305). For a critique of Beiser’s end-of-art interpretation, see (Giladi 2016).
8. This point is argued by Pippin (1993). It is also, according to Beiser, critical to any understanding of why Hegel incorporates the Absolute into his philosophical system.
9. “Es ist das Werden seiner selbst, der Kreis, der sein Ende als seinen Zweck voraussetzt und zum Anfange hat und nur durch die Ausführung und sein Ende wirklich ist” (HW 3:23, PM Preface).
10. See Charles Taylor’s (1977) discussion of Hegel’s transformation of the Kantian opposition of the understanding and reason (116–119).

11. Kant refers to sublimity in a manner analogous to the dynamically sublime in the conclusion of the second *Critique*. This implies that his notion of sublimity is ancillary to the larger task of the third *Critique*, which, according to some readings, is to find middle ground between understanding and reason.
12. See Hegel on the Sublime and enormity in architecture: “Self-consciousness has not yet come to fruition, is not yet explicitly complete; it pushes on, seeks, divines, and produces on and on without attaining absolute satisfaction and therefore without repose. For only in the shape adequate to spirit is spirit in its completeness satisfied and then only does it *impose limits* on its productive activity; whereas the *symbolic work of art is always more or less limitless*” [emphasis SS] (AE 646–647).
13. Discussing the aesthetics of Kant and Hegel, Israel Knox (1958) states, for Hegel, “beauty is the sensuous presentation of the Idea. And by Idea Hegel means nothing less than the concrete cosmic process in its integrated unity. What is this unity of the world-process? It is Spirit construed neither as an abstract, transcendent, and empty universal nor as a series of atomistic, particular limited exemplifications but as the single totality of both, *as the unity of Kant’s phenomenal and noumenal*, of necessity and freedom, of the natural and the metaphysical” [emphasis SS] (82).
14. Compare Hegel’s account of possession in *Philosophy of Right*. Subjective will actualizes itself through possession of property. In this acquisition, the potentially infinite individual will is manifested in the material, negating its merely finite existence through use. “The thing is reduced to a means of satisfying my need. When I and the thing come together, one of the two must lose its [distinct] quality in order that we may become identical. But I am alive, a willing and truly affirmative agent; the thing, on the other hand, is a natural entity. It must accordingly perish, and I survive, which is in general the prerogative a rationale [*Vernunft*] of the organic” (PR §59, see “Property,” §41–71).
15. Hegel is citing Simplicius’ comments on Aristotle’s *Physics* (17a; 31, 19).
16. It is reported that Hegel chastised a group of astronomers to whom he was lecturing when they attributed the greatest sublimity to their science due to the innumerability of the stars and the heavens and the incalculable expanses of space and time that was their subject matter. Hegel responded that it is not immeasurability, but measure and law that evoke sublimity in the heavens. See Meredith’s notes to Kant’s third *Critique* regarding the statement “In rude nature merely as involving magnitudes” 262 in Kant (1911).
17. As Aristotle defines the infinite divisibility of space as potential and not actual, note that Hegel calls the perfect unity of the inner and outer found in classical sculpture a potential, not an actual unity, so that when

spirit is no longer at home in the unity, the potential state is transcended. “Abandoning this [classical] principle, the romantic form of art cancels the undivided unity of classical art because it has won a content which goes beyond and above the classical form of art and its mode of expression...In classical art the concrete content is implicitly the unity of the divine nature with the human, a unity which, just because it is only immediate and implicit, is adequately manifested also in an immediate and sensuous way” (AE 79). Hegel defines the world of appearance, as potential, the world of reality, as actual, placing sculpture at the highest level of potentiality. “Der eine ist das, was als Anlage, Vermögen, das Ansichsein, wie ich es nenne (*potentia*, δύναμις), bekannt ist. Die zweite Bestimmung ist das Fürsichsein, die Wirklichkeit (*actus*, ἐνέργεια)” (HW 18:39).

18. Hegel’s enlistment of the poets in his diatribe against the “spurious infinite” underscores his negative sentiments.

I heap up monstrous numbers,
Mountains of millions,
Time I pile on time
And world on top of world;
And when from the awful height
I cast a dizzy look on Thee:
Then all the might of number,
Numbered itself a thousand times,
Is not yet a simple part of Thee.

The poem, written by Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777), was also read by Kant, who called Haller’s depiction of eternity “terrible sublimity” (K1 A613/B641). After noting what for Hegel is an inadequate response from Kant, Hegel quotes the final line of the poem, affirming his position counter to Kant’s:

These I remove, and thou liest all before me.

This final line expresses for Hegel the poetic justification of his Absolute goal: “We must renounce that *progressus in infinitum* in order to reach the consciousness of the genuine Infinite” (EN §104:166).

19. Compare a similar account of the circular infinity in the *Philosophy of Right*. “Infinity has rightly been represented by the image of the circle, because a straight line runs on indefinitely and denotes that merely negative and false infinity which, unlike true infinity, does not return into itself” (PR 54).
20. In the Third Antinomy (K1), Kant attempts to show that free causality is not incompatible with causal necessity. The antinomies show that given sound principles, and sound logic, there can be contradictions. In order

to save reason, an alternative perspective must be shown. Kant's solution is the two worlds theory. He holds that, in the case below, the thesis applies to the world of things in themselves, and the antithesis applies to the world of appearances. Though the Third Antinomy addresses the issues of freedom and causality rather than the finite and the infinite, the logical diagram of the antinomy shows how Kant deals with the logical problem encountered with the infinite regress.

Thesis: Free causality can exist with determinate laws of nature (DLN):

1.	DLN \rightarrow Preceding Event for Any Event	Assume
2.	Preceding Event for Any Event \rightarrow \sim First Cause	Assume
3.	\sim First Cause \rightarrow Infinite Regress	Assume
4.	Infinite Regress \rightarrow \sim Complete Explanation	Assume
5.	\sim Complete Explanation \rightarrow \sim Sufficient Explanation	Assume
6.	DLN \rightarrow Sufficient Explanation	Assume
7.	\sim DLN \rightarrow Free Causality	Assume
8.	DLN \rightarrow \sim Sufficiency	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
9.	\sim DLN	6, 8
10.	Free Causality	7, 9 QED

Antithesis: There is no free causality

1.	Free Causality \rightarrow Spontaneity	Assume
2.	Spontaneity \rightarrow Absolute Beginning	Assume
3.	Absolute Beginning \rightarrow \sim DLN	Assume
4.	\sim DLN \rightarrow \sim Possible Experience	Assume
5.	Experience	Assume
6.	Experience	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 QED

Kant asserts that free causality in the realm of possible experience is not a possibility, but that free causality can coexist with the determinate laws of nature because the origin of free causality is the world of the thing-in-itself.

21. In the creative artistic process people "may even restructure experience; and though in doing so we continue to follow analogical laws, yet we also follow principles which reside higher up, namely, in reason (and which are just as natural to us as those which the understanding follows in apprehending empirical nature)" (K3 §49:182).
22. In recognizing the limitation that absolute necessity places on being, Hegel refers to Parmenides as "the first philosopher." Supporting this Hegel cites Plotinus' commentary on Parmenides: "Parmenides adopted this point of view, inasmuch as he did not place Being in sensuous things; identifying Being with Thought, he maintained it to be unchangeable" (LP1 253).

23. To distinguish the Eleatic notion that the sensuous world is only an appearance that holds no truth, from what Kant draws out in the Antinomies, Hegel states: “But Kant does not mean this, for he asserts: ‘Because we apply the activity of our thought to the outer world, we constitute it appearance; what is without, first becomes an untruth by the fact that we put therein a mass of determinations. Only our knowledge, the spiritual, is thus appearance; the world is in itself absolute truth (*die Welt ist an sich, absolut wahrhaft*); it is our action alone that ruins it, our work is good for nothing.’ It shows excessive humility of mind to believe that knowledge has no value” (LP1 277, HW 18:317).
24. Fred Rush writes that the end of art occurs twice in Hegel’s writings: first, when the classic stage ends, art is no longer able to manifest its most perfect form, and second, in Hegel’s own day, when spirit becomes self-conscious and its highest needs move beyond the form of art. Rush prioritizes the first end over the second (LLP 460, 470).
25. Kant presents his notion of the Beautiful under four headings he calls “moments,” (K3 §1–22).

Quality: “*Taste* is the ability to judge an object, or a way of presenting it, by means of a liking or disliking *devoid of all interest*. The object of such a liking is called *beautiful*” (§5).

Quantity: “*Beautiful* is what, without a concept, is liked universally” (§9).

Relation: “*Beauty* is an object’s form of *purposiveness* insofar as it is perceived in the object *without the presentation of a purpose*” (§17).

Modality: “*Beautiful* is what without a concept is cognized as the object of a necessary liking” (§22).

The first and third moments explicate the qualifications for an experience of the Beautiful which is a disinterested pleasure emerging from a form of finality. The second and fourth moments refer to universality and necessity. Taken severally, no form is adequate in itself, but working together, Kant believes that the four moments satisfy the requirements for an aesthetic experience distinct from other modes of experience.

26. “Von der erstern Art [dem bestimmbarern Begriff] ist der Verstandesbegriff, der durch Prädikate der sinnlichen Anschauung, die ihm korrespondieren kann, bestimmbar ist” (KW X:280).
27. There is an interesting parallel in the structure for Hume’s (1979) argument that a standard of taste is possible to Kant’s antinomy of taste. Briefly, Hume argues that despite all questions of taste being subjective, one can still get it wrong. If one can get it wrong, at a minimum, there is room for discussion regarding the possibility of agreement on taste (277–299).

28. See Kant's (1989) *Prolegomena*, §35: "But the Understanding which ought to *think* can never be forgiven for indulging in vagaries; for we depend upon it alone for assistance to set bounds, when necessary, to the vagaries of the imagination."
29. "By an aesthetic idea I mean a presentation of the imagination which prompts much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e., no [determinate] *concept*, can be adequate, so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it. It is easy to see that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which is, conversely, a concept to which no *intuition* (presentation of the imagination) can be adequate" (K3 §49:182).
30. There are a number of curious parallels found between Hegel's aesthetic theory and Dante's poetic situation of the divine spectrum which likely originate in Aristotle. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante begins his journey in the ugliness of Hell, proceeds to the earthly beauty of Purgatory and ends the journey in the sublimity of Paradise mirroring, in reverse, the aesthetic types found in the subjective Concept's unfolding in world-history. Another interesting parallel is found in Virgil's accompaniment of Dante. As Virgil is sent to assist Dante on his journey through the levels of the afterlife, the subjective Concept, or spirit of art, accompanies humanity on the progressive actualization of its self-awareness. However, as Virgil cannot accompany Dante to paradise, art cannot accompany humanity to its final oneness in the Absolute: the material is not adequate to the content.
31. The authors of the critical opening essay of *The Wake of Art* (Danto 1998) present a neo-Kantian criticism, suggesting that the end of art is really the end of taste. The aptness of this criticism depends, to a greater or lesser degree, on how closely Danto's thought follows Hegel's.
32. See *Poetics*, Chapter Nine. "It is a further clear implication of what has been said that the poet's task is to speak not of events which have occurred, but of the kind of events which *could* occur. For it is not the use or absence of metre which distinguishes poet and historian ...[,] the difference lies in the fact that the one speaks of events which have occurred, the other of the sort of events which could occur.... It is for this reason that poetry is both more philosophical and more serious than history, since poetry speaks more of universals, history of particulars" (Aristotle 1997, 41).
33. This shift is analogous to the shift away from the perfect balance Hegel sees in the localized *Sittlichkeit* of the *polis* to the higher form of *Sittlichkeit* which is only achieved in the modern nation state.
34. Hegel only includes architectural structures as art if their attributes are not merely functional.

35. The Egyptian papyrus columns still existing at Karnak, c.1500 B.C., are good examples of the plant form in architecture.
36. An obvious exception would be *The Laocoön Group* and other works by the Pergamene School. Hegel considered the Pergamene School to be a transitory movement. Occurring somewhat later than the art made in the peak of Greece's classical stage, it presages the passion of romantic art. Nonetheless, the pathos appearing in the classical period was unresolved, representing only the manifestation of misfortune. The anguish appearing in the art of the romantic phase signifies a reconciliation that does not destroy the individual.
37. T. S. Eliot (1960) notes this Romantic tendency: "The contemplation of the horrid or sordid or disgusting by an artist, is the necessary and negative aspect of the impulse toward the pursuit of beauty" (169).
38. Hegel was not aware that the sculpture at the height of the classical era was painted. He was misled by reading Meyer. See Knox's note (AE 706).
39. Hegel uses *Erscheinung* and *Schein* to make this distinction (AE 625–626, HW 14:260).
40. See Michelangelo's *The Last Judgment*, 1536–41, on the frontal wall of the Sistine Chapel in Rome.
41. Torment in religious art is exemplified by Grünewald's *The Crucifixion* and *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, both panels from the Isenheim altarpiece, 1515.
42. The realistic portrayals of events from daily life by the Dutch painters Jan van Eyck and Pieter Bruegel provide good examples of this trend.
43. The German corresponding to these negative descriptions is "innerlich Gemeines, Schlechtes und Böses ohne versöhnende Komik."
44. Da Vinci used his *sfumato* technique painting the corners of the eyes in his *Mona Lisa*, 1502.
45. Hegel discusses the relationship of poetry to beat, in terms of articulating structure to the inner, much in the same way he discussed beat in music. The chaotic indeterminate is overcome in the beat, closing the door to "unregulated chance" (AE 1016).
46. Bertolt Brecht reflects this interpretation in his notion of *episches Theater*.
47. The collisions brought on by individual action are central to the development of the self in the community. The dialectical collision and resolution of the self's actualization in acquiring property, the recognition of contracts, and crime and punishment are among the parallels found in *Philosophy of Right*.
48. Hegel refers to many tragic dramas in *Lectures on Aesthetics*, often referring to structural elements, rather than focusing on their place within his schema of art history. Among the most frequently mentioned works representative of classical tragedy are those of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The tragic dramas of Aeschylus that receive the most attention are *The Orestia*

trilogy, specifically *The Eumenides*. The Sophoclean tragedies that receive most notice are *Antigone*, which Hegel claims to be the greatest work of its kind (AE 1218), *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus Coloneus* and *Philoctetes*. Euripides is discussed with less frequency, *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* being the most often cited of his dramas. Hegel appears to place him on a lower level than Aeschylus and Sophocles, noting his regretful replacement of “indestructible harmony” with pity and emotion (AE 1215). He also points out how Aristophanes ridicules Euripides for the direction that he took tragedy (AE 1221), perhaps anticipating the position Nietzsche would take in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Hegel refers to Goethe, Schiller and, above all, Shakespeare when citing examples of modern tragedy. *Intrigue and Love*, *Maid of Orleans*, *Wallenstein* and *Robbers* are the most frequent tragic works of Schiller cited by Hegel. Hegel calls Goethe’s *Faust* the “one absolutely philosophical tragedy” (AE 1224), and often mentions *Götz von Berlichingen*, comparing the character vacillations to those of Euripides. Shakespeare is given the highest praise Hegel can bestow upon a poet, stating that one “will scarcely find any other modern dramatist who can be compared with Shakespeare” (AE 1228). Shakespeare, in Hegel’s eyes, gravitates to the top in almost every aspect of drama, while the others, even Goethe, can merely aspire to such greatness. Fifteen works by Shakespeare are discussed in Hegel’s *Lectures on Fine Art*; while many works are referred to numerous times, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* receive copious mention.

49. Hegel focuses on Aristophanes as his primary example of the classical comedic dramatist. Rarely mentioning Aristophanes’ works by name, Hegel refers to aspects of *The Clouds*, *The Frogs*, *The Knights*, *Ecclesiazusae*, *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Peace*. Hegel discusses Aristophanes primarily in an abstract and comparative manner. Hegel situates Molière and Shakespeare as the foremost authors of modern comedy. Molière’s *Tartuffe* and *L’Avare* are noted for the bitter nature of their humor, typified by the deadly serious nature of the characters and the absurdity of their aims (AE 1234). Shakespeare tops Hegel’s list of comedians as well as tragedians. Though none of Shakespeare’s comedic dramas are explicitly mentioned, Hegel claims that Aristophanes and Shakespeare attained perfection in their respective fields of classical and modern comedy (AE 1236).
50. “Doch auf diesem Gipfel führt die Komödie zugleich zur *Auflösung* der Kunst überhaupt” [emphasis SS] (HW 15:572).
51. The importance of art for higher thinking also has a history in medieval aesthetics, perhaps influenced by Neoplatonism. In the twelfth century, Abbot Suger held that the form of art would be a guide to higher truth for those who could not read or write. “The dull mind rises to truth,

through that which is material and in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion” (Inscription placed on the West front of the abbey of St-Denis under the direction of Abbot Suger).

52. Among the many levels of cognition that Leibniz postulates, he draws a distinction between obscure and clear. Leibniz differentiates the two in terms of recognition of the concept of the object. In the case of clear cognition, the concept of the object is recognized. Regarding obscure cognition, one cannot clearly discern the object of perception. Clear cognition, however, entails a wide range of levels of clarity. Under these rankings there are confused and distinct levels of cognitive insight. With clear distinct, one can fully list all of the attributes of the object. In the case of clear confused, one may not be able to discern all attributes separately, though they are known to exist. Leibniz suggests many more levels within clear and distinct cognition, reserving the highest for God. Baumgarten’s aesthetic interest related to Leibniz’s notion of confused cognition, which cognitively apprehends the object but cannot analytically complete the cognition. It is a necessary condition of a judgment of beauty that it be a confused cognition, which cannot advance to distinct cognition (Hammermeister 2002, 5–6).
53. Beiser’s (2005) explanation of the three stages of absolute spirit is helpful (288–289).
54. “As regards this point, the main feature of the idea is that the soul should be able to subsist as an imperishable thing without having imagination, thought, &c. With Plato the immortality of the soul is, on the other hand, immediately connected with the fact that the soul is itself that which thinks; and hence that thought is not a quality of its soul, but its substance” (LP2 37). This passage supports the assertion that though there is much in Hegel’s notion of the Absolute that seems Platonic, perhaps from Neoplatonic interpretations of *Timaeus*, he adheres to an Aristotelian interpretation of *nous* found in *De Anima*, insofar as he separates absolute spirit into art, religion and philosophy, with the sensuousness of art a necessary but transitional part of spirit’s fulfillment.
55. In *Phaedo*, Socrates denies that pure knowledge can be attained through the senses. The ideals sought in this life are not found through the senses, but in thought alone. Socrates asks, “if it is impossible to attain any pure knowledge with the body, then one of two things is true: either we can never attain knowledge or we can do so after death. Then and not before, the soul is by itself apart from the body” (Plato 1997, 66e–76a).
56. “Das, was wir heutigentags die Einheit des Subjektiven und Objektiven nennen, ist hier in der höchsten Bestimmtheit ausgesprochen.

Der *vouç* ist das Tätige, das Denken und das Gedachtwerdende, - jenes ist das Subjektive, dies das Objektive; beides unterscheidet er wohl, aber ebenso streng und fest spricht er auch die Identität von beiden aus. In unserer Sprache ist das Absolute, Wahrhafte nur das, dessen Subjektivität und Objektivität ein und dasselbe, identisch ist; dies ist ebenso auch im Aristoteles enthalten" (HW 19:217–218). "What we presently refer to as the unity of subjective and objective is articulated with the highest clarity [in Aristotle's text]. *Nous* is activity, thought and the subject of thought. The former is the subjective; the latter is the objective. [Aristotle] appropriately distinguishes each, but with equal conviction he pronounces their mutual identity. In our terms the Absolute is, and is only, something of which subjectivity and objectivity is one and the same identical; this is also extant in [the writings of] Aristotle" (author's translation). This passage does not appear in the Haldane translation. The Haldane translation is based primarily on the abridged Michelet edition of 1844. Since then, several sets of notes and corrections have been edited into the Suhrkamp edition. However, despite its flaws, the Michelet version is still considered one of the most important records of Hegel's lectures on the history of philosophy.

57. Hegel elaborates again on the theory of philosophy rising out of a decline in the "Berliner Niederschrift der Einleitung" of 1820 (HW 20:483–485).
58. "In Aristotle the Idea (*Idee*) is at least implicitly concrete, as the consciousness of the unity of subjective and objective, and therefore it is not one-sided [dogmatic]. Should the Idea be truly concrete, the particular must be developed from it." Hegel holds that Aristotle's philosophy has reached the unity of subjective and objective essential to what he terms the Absolute. However, Aristotle's theory is lacking a unifying principle that links together the "series of particular conceptions" that make up the "Idea." If these particular conceptions could be organized under the singular Concept (*Begriff*), then the particular could also be derived from the universal (LP2 229–230, HW 19: 247–248).
59. Regarding the precise connection of the will to the thing within property, Hegel states that the positive relationship consists in *taking possession*, the negative relation to the will consists in its *use*, and the "reflection of the thing back into itself" represents *alienation*, or the infinite judgment of the will upon the thing. As I understand Hegel's logic, the use of the object negates the hold of the will's positive possession, which results in the will's turning the object over to other wills, thus raising the dialectical level of will's objective manifestation (PR 83–84). See note to §53 on 409.

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

- CT Danto, Arthur. *Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy*.
- LLP Auxier, Randall E., and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. *The Philosophy of Arthur C. Danto*.
- WK Danto, Arthur. *The Wake of Art: Criticism, Philosophy and the Ends of Taste*.
- HW Hegel, G. W. F. *Werke in 20 Bänden*.
- AE Hegel, G. W. F. *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. 2 vols. Translated by T. M. Knox.
- EN Hegel, G. W. F. *The Encyclopedia of Logic: With the Zusätze*. Translated by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris.
- LP1 Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Greek Philosophy to Plato*. Vol. 1. Translated by E. S. Haldane.
- LP2 Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Plato and the Platonists*. Vol. 2. Translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson.
- LP3 Hegel, G. W. F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. Vol. 3. Translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson.
- PM Hegel, G. W. F. *Phenomenology of Mind*. Translated by J. B. Baillie.
- PR Hegel, G. W. F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet.
- RH Hegel, G. W. F. *Reason in History*. Translated by Robert S. Hartman.
- SL Hegel, G. W. F. *Hegel's Science of Logic*. Translated by A. V. Miller.
- KW Kant, Immanuel. *Werke in zwölf Bänden*.
- K1 Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by Norman Kemp Smith.
- K2 Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Lewis White Beck.
- K3 Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by Werner S. Pluhar.

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CHAPTER 3

The Transformative Power of Creativity in Nietzsche's Saving Illusion

The extreme idealism of Hegel's theory of art finds its opposite in Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy. Where Hegel views the role of art as a component of spirit's dialectical penetration of the real, a process that reorganizes the material according to the Concept, Nietzsche sees the creative power of the artist transforming the cold harsh reality of human existence into the highest form of subjective beauty. In essence, it takes the power of art to bless being as it is, to see the ugly as beautiful, without spirit's metamorphosis of reality into the Ideal. As Nietzsche notes, just because humanity has a metaphysical need does not mean there is a metaphysical solution. There is just a hunger, and true aesthetic satisfaction demands that art ask the tragic question of existence. In the artistic form of comedy, inimical to the aims of spirit, Hegel sees the dissolution of art. Nietzsche, analogously, suggests that when the metaphysical secret of the thing-in-itself is finally found, a Homeric laugh would ensue at the realization that it is empty. The point at which Hegel calls an end to art's progression, because it is damaging to the Concept's progress, is the moment when Nietzsche sees myth, or in his later writings the formative power of language, failing. When this happens there is a need to embrace the dark irony of the world with the strength of the artist's lie, creating a love for the 'real' such that the world is worth living in.

This chapter explores Nietzsche's anti-idealistic notion of art as it develops throughout his life. From his early to his late phases of writing, the stances Nietzsche takes toward the philosophical issues he confronts, including art, shift in ways that seem contradictory. To make sense of

Nietzsche's ever-changing attitude, most authors divide his writings into three to five periods.¹ Those advocating five periods usually count the juvenile years, and almost all see the first period of significant writing, the early years, ending more or less with *The Birth of Tragedy*.² The middle period is typified by *Human, All Too Human*,³ usually focusing on the break with Wagner, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche's early romanticism. Though commentators differ as to precisely which books belong in which phase, few stray from the division just mentioned between the early and middle periods.⁴ Some variation of opinion exists as to which book is the final work of the middle period and whether there are one or two stages between the middle period and Nietzsche's mental breakdown. There is also disagreement as to whether or not *The Gay Science*⁵ belongs to the middle period, and when, if there is one, the fourth period begins, though most see it as 1888. Some scholars see a different breakdown of the phases for Nietzsche's political, moral, or religious thought.⁶ Julian Young's (1992) analysis of Nietzsche's aesthetics breaks the writings into four periods, placing *Science* in a third phase, separate from the writings of *Human*, with a fourth and final phase for the works written in 1888. Given that the focus of this chapter is aesthetic, I tend to agree with Young, though I think Book Five of *Science*, added in 1887, includes sections that are important for understanding *Twilight of the Idols*,⁷ placing it closer to the works of 1888 than those of 1882. In *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, without ever explicitly defining the periods, Danto appears to follow a similar breakdown. Despite minor 'border disputes' among scholars, by grouping Nietzsche's work in this way, one can discern a distinct yet largely consistent stand on art in each period.

The Will to Power should be given special consideration. It should not be treated as a separate work since it is a compendium of unpublished writings. As well, because of the spurious editing of Nietzsche's sister, many scholars argue that the *Will to Power* should not be cited at all. Still, there is much in the unpublished writings, referred to as the *Nachlass*, that is relevant, especially what was written in the frenzy of his final year before the breakdown. Danto argues that several books could have been crafted from these notes (NAP 196). Nonetheless, most of the *Nachlass* was not intended for publication (Young 1993, 4), and unavoidable subjective editorial organization would necessarily be imposed on the texts in surmising what Nietzsche might have published. I hold there is much of value in the *Nachlass*; I cite passages from it with caution, and unless justified, not without support from other sources.⁸

It may appear that one can take Nietzsche's aphorisms severally, using them 'standalone', as Danto argues (NAP 7). This, for Danto, justifies his extensive use of the *Nachlass*.⁹ However, in Nietzsche's published works, his aphorisms are strung together in a context, for the most part giving support or contrast to the surrounding sections. Recognizing this aspect of Nietzsche's work is essential for the best interpretation.

Though neither Young (1992, 1–2) nor, surprisingly, Danto (NAP 7) address the end-of-art topic in their studies of Nietzsche, they recognize a progression in his works. In this progression, the end-of-art theme is found in two ways, applying to what Danto refers to as art understood in a narrow and a wide sense.

“Art,” then, has both a wide and a narrow use in Nietzsche's writings and the wide use takes its meaning from the narrow one. Because we know what artists in the narrow sense distinctively do, we are able to see how we, in other activities, are artists as well. Nietzsche thus means to claim that our original and most fundamental involvement with experience is artistic and transforming, that we spontaneously seek to express, in images and apposite cadences, the way in which we feel and perceive the world. He speaks of a “primal faculty of human fantasy” through which the human individual functions essentially as “an artistically creating subject.” (NAP 27)

The end-of-art theme that applies to art in the narrow sense is explicitly manifest between the first and second phases. In the early period, represented by *Birth* and *Wagner at Bayreuth*, Nietzsche claims that Western civilization has lost religion and art. Still, the myth and experience of authentic Greek tragedy can be revived through the genius of Wagner. If myth is restored, humanity can return to a metaphysical state of health. The end-of-art theme is found insofar as the end of myth and the end of the metaphysical underpinnings of art effectively spell the end of serious art in the narrow sense. In the second stage, epitomized by *Human*, Nietzsche rejects all romantic and mythical notions. In the first stage, as the second, the scientific mind kills art. However, in the second stage, science is a salvation. It brings the end to religion and myth, which are merely opiates blocking the path of truth. With lament, art must pass, for it no longer serves to further the progress of humanity.

The end-of-art thesis is implicit in an undercurrent of the third and fourth periods. It is found in the struggle to overcome language only with the language one aims to get beyond. “New ways I go, a new

speech comes to me; I became weary, like all creators, of old tongues. My spirit no longer wants to wander on worn soles" (Z II "Mirror":64). Zarathustra pushes for a new way of articulation, one that does not yet exist. This revolution that Nietzsche advocates would come to be, if it ever does, through the creative drive needed to make the world afresh, to create new values. In the wider sense of artistic creativity, life's old schemas are rejected to make way for the new, if only we could escape the old. The third stage, seen best in *Science*, embraces joyful wisdom, like that of the Troubadours, calling for a Provençal or self-art that manifests "the dignity of folly." Because God is dead, there is an Apollonian need for style and transfiguration that demands artistic self-creation. The fourth and final aesthetic period is constituted by the 1888 writings, perhaps best represented by *Twilight*. Nietzsche returns to a tragic view, if he ever left it, and looks back to the Greeks. The stance he takes is much like the position he presents in *Birth* without the praise of Wagner, but Nietzsche's philosophy is transformed by a closer assessment of the consequences of nihilism. Nihilism, for Nietzsche, sparked by his realization that God is dead, has deep moral and epistemic consequences. One of the primary tools humans use for survival is language, and in his assessment, given the linguistic tools we inherit, we must reject the idea that anything essential about the world can be known; hence, in a sense, all truth claims become both equally false and equally true. Writing *Human*, Nietzsche had turned away from art and philosophy, embracing, even if tentatively, the path of science. In his final stage, he rejects even science, and with nowhere left to go, he realized that pure creativity must rise out of the ashes of his diagnosis of nihilism. His perspectivism points the way to a struggle to overcome the linguistic framework in which one's world is enmeshed, a path, which if achieved, is dependent on the right attitude toward life. At this stage, only art that manifests the correct attitude toward life will help one reach that end.

The end of art, for Hegel, arrives when art is no longer capable of articulating the complexity of the evolving Concept. Art, as such, ceases to serve the higher needs of humanity, and spirit passes over art. For Nietzsche, the end of art is the consequence of art no longer providing an adequate metaphysical shield for humanity. Humanity still has a desperate need for what art provided. Though his position on whether art is a saving illusion or an opiate shifts, the hunger that art alleges to satisfy remains a central theme in his writing. It is in the late period of

Science that Nietzsche explores the existential reality of a world without art, and this world, completely without art, cannot even sustain meaning outside of what individuals can craft out of their own artistic creativity. At this point, Nietzsche stands at the polar opposite of Hegel's notion of a world that no longer needs art. For Hegel, humanity has reached its *telos*; for Nietzsche, humanity must face a world in which God is dead. Nonetheless, the approach of each seeks a solution to overcoming the subject-object divide. Hegel does this by postulating that the unifying drive of spirit will transform the base material such that it is able to manifest the highest level of spirit's reason. Nietzsche, on the other hand, rejects the division in the first place. In his late work, he denies that there are two worlds to merge. There is but one world and our search for truth lays a foundation of error. The only way to supplant this error is to shed one's skin, so to speak, and create a new world *ex-nihilo*. We can do this, however, only when we become aware that the old skin, the old language, is no longer of value for life. Then, if we have the *power*, we *will* to create a world from a new language, even if there is no one who can understand it.

3.1 THE NATURE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ART IN *THE BIRTH OF TRAGEDY*

In the fall of 1886, with his sight failing, Nietzsche revisited his first work, *Birth*. An early draft for the new preface to his 1872 work shows his intent to redeem the brash errors of his youth: the embarrassing enthusiasm he had for Schopenhauer and Wagner, along with his romantic inclination. Nietzsche writes that the role of art is formed on the basis of belief in an alternative to truth "because it is not possible to live with the truth, because the 'will to truth' is already a symptom of the deterioration."¹⁰ In a move to circumvent the romantic notion that art connects us to a primeval force, he proposes that the deterioration that brings the 'will to truth' is the weakness of a failing culture: a culture that wills its decline through its pursuit of a truth that adheres only to rationality and morality (BT "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" §5:9). But where does that leave one? The madness (*Wahnsinn*) emerging from any divergence from the 'will to truth' is itself also a sign of decline. With the realization that truth does not exist in any form, and all claims to truth are equally in error, Nietzsche ponders this question: is there a "neurosis of *health*?"

Is the goat-man represented in the tragedy by the satyr an insane manifestation of a duality that holds the only solution to the degeneration of civilization? (BT “Attempt at a Self-Criticism” §4:7).

Reference to duality of truth and illusion symbolized by the satyr is found in Plato’s *Cratylus* (see Hoy 1982, 1). In Plato’s (1997) *Cratylus*, Socrates states that “Hermes’ [name] seems to have something to do with speech: he is an interpreter (*hermēneus*), a messenger, a thief and a deceiver in words, a wheeler-dealer—and all these activities involve the power of speech” (408a). Socrates places language in a questionable position, and though it communicates, it need not be the messenger of truth. “Speech,” Socrates asks, “signifies all things (*to pan*), and keeps them circulating and always going about [on the move], and that it has two forms—true and false?” (408c). Pan, the son of Hermes, who is half goat and half man, exists perpetually in two worlds, the world of truth and the world of falsehood.¹¹ Socrates continues, “the true part is smooth and divine and dwells among the gods above, while the false part dwells below among the human masses, and is rough and goatish (*tragikon*); for it is here, in the tragic (*tragikon*) life, that one finds the vast majority of myths and falsehoods” (408c). This tragic dualism is reflected in Nietzsche’s writing. In his early writings, he held that the thing-in-itself was inherently cruel. Facing the terror of nature, and the even more debilitating realization that the terror has no meaning, the illusion of art provides humanity with a way to keep going and face the only world it inhabits despite its emptiness. He renounces the two-worlds dualism in his later writings, and the mercurial property of language itself manifests a tragic duality. Always deceiving, it is still what *keeps things moving*; one needs the wings of Hermes to stay above it.

In a draft introduction to the 1886 version of *Birth*, Nietzsche writes, “The will to appearance, to illusion, to deception, to becoming and change (to objective deception) here counts as more profound, primeval, ‘metaphysical’ than the will to truth, to reality, to mere appearance”¹² (NW 3:693 [853]). The truth we seek, in Nietzsche’s eyes, is a tragic truth. Because there is no truth, when we seek truth, we seek only error. Therefore, the will-to-truth pushes us to decline as swiftly as the will to avoid it. If there is no truth, then seek the words that keep things *always on the move*, which work the best for your life. Error cannot be avoided, so pick the error that makes you the best. Because the truth leaves us with no chance for redemption, a tragic truth, a neurosis of health, is what is best for life. Thus, Nietzsche places illusion at the highest level, and in *Birth*, the creative power of art is a saving illusion.

3.1.1 *Nietzsche and Schopenhauer*

The notion that 'truth', as veracity, is somehow less valuable than the illusion of art stems from Nietzsche's one-time mentor, Schopenhauer. For better or for worse, Nietzsche made his initial impression on the academic world through his highly original *Birth*. Despite its originality, the structure relies heavily on the metaphysics of Schopenhauer. At the time of the first edition, published in 1872, Nietzsche felt his ideas were at one with Schopenhauer's. To better understand the Apollonian/Dionysian distinctions brought out in *Birth*, a brief sketch of the structure of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* is in order. Schopenhauer's *magnum opus* is divided into four books. Each book represents a different aspect of will or representation. Book 1: *World as Representation: First Aspect*, deals with the experience of routine perception that comprises the world of material objects. In many ways, Schopenhauer follows Kant, upon whose work he claims to be improving, insofar as to know this world we must renounce attempts to know the thing-in-itself. In Book 2: *World as Will: First Aspect*, Schopenhauer reveals an alternative aspect of the same world. Schopenhauer is not presenting a contradictory or negating view to the world as representation in the first aspect. It is simply a different view of the same world. Following the Kantian two-worlds notion of phenomenon and noumenon, he asks what is the noumenal *Ding-an-sich*, or the world-in-itself? Schopenhauer postulates that it is *will*. The world as will is a surging riot of conflicting needs that never rests in its striving. The first aspect represents these elements of the world, representation and will, as they are experienced without reflection.

Book 3: *World as Representation: Second Aspect*, explores the aesthetic realm. Schopenhauer views the aesthetic world as the negation of the world of will. Through experience of the aesthetic, a temporary state ensues that abates the will. In this moment, the subject is free from the ceaseless struggle and purposeless suffering manifest in will. Unlike Kant, Schopenhauer places a high value on aesthetic experience as a form of cognition. In possession of a superabundance of intellect, the artist is able to perceive objects outside of the grasp of the underlying will. When experiencing the object of art, subjects in contemplation lose their sense of material individuation and rise to the level of "pure subject of knowing" (WI §34:179). Art, according to Schopenhauer, gives its viewers a temporary reprieve from the meaningless burden of ordinary existence by revealing the 'Idea' within the object outside of the lens of will, thus, launching them into a pure and timeless state of ecstasy (WI §71:410).

In Book 4: *World as Will: Second Aspect*, Schopenhauer deals with, in his estimation, the final way of escaping the will. Discussing the human condition from a broadly ethical standpoint, Schopenhauer arrives at his pessimistic world-denying solution, aimed at saving us from the cruel meaninglessness of will. Schopenhauer denies the existence of an absolute being that dictates moral imperatives and claims that subjective human actions are dictated by an individual's fixed character traits and coinciding mental condition. Despite the fatalist view of human action and the unintelligibility of will, Schopenhauer asserts that individuals still feel responsible for their actions due to having an intelligible character. Determined by our character and facing the unavailability of death, Schopenhauer questions the very value of life. The only hope lies in seeing individual existence as insignificant. Through renunciation, the will is focused on denial of the self as human individual, struggling against the individual wills of others. Humans alone have the capacity for consciousness. Because consciousness serves the will, it is essential for humans to recognize the necessity of seeing beyond individuality, thus, seeing oneself as part of the whole in order to allow the will to quiet itself. Schopenhauer sees this self-dissolution of will as the only aim of life in this universe.

There are two forms of escape from the will. One is aesthetic; the other is ascetic denial of will. Both serve to separate consciousness from the will. Schopenhauer's escape is not moral; rather, it is an epistemological transformation brought about by releasing the will's grasp on cognition. The aesthetic route has two functions (1) affective and (2) effective (Foster 1999, 217). In the case of the first, through apprehending the beautiful, one becomes peaceful and the will is quieted. This gives temporary exposure to metaphysical truth. In the second case, the effective method brings one to awareness of a higher form of consciousness, above ordinary knowing and out of the control of will, to a pure subjective knowing. Ordinary representation veils the truth; thus, reality is illusion (W1 §28:156). In the case of art, its task is to unveil what is behind the "mask" or illusion that obscures "what is hidden beneath it" (W2 XVIII:195).

Essential to Schopenhauer's metaphysics is a biological determination that is proto-Darwinian.¹³ His notion of the world as will—presenting a cruel and untamed struggle, endless and without purpose, and the world as representation, an illusion that focuses the individual on the task at hand, lest they should see the truth—is uniquely summed up in the

chapter “The Metaphysics of Sexual Love.” Schopenhauer cynically proposes that all sexual relations are in fact a delusion of nature, driving the individual to do the bidding of the species, to the actual detriment of the individual. Elaborating on the sexual impulse, Schopenhauer states, “now in this case the sexual impulse, though in itself a subjective need, knows how to assume very skillfully the mask of an objective admiration, and thus to deceive consciousness; for nature requires this stratagem in order to attain her ends” (W2 XLIV:535). The delusion, which drives our conscious thought, is the will. Because consciousness serves the will, if one is not aware that will is pulling at the puppet strings, one’s actions appear sound. But if one could detect the motive of will, one could see that one is really being tricked by nature. Speaking of matrimonial commitment, Schopenhauer pessimistically declares:

In such a case, nature can attain her end only by implanting in the individual a certain *delusion*, and by virtue of this, that which in truth is merely a good thing for the species seems to him to be a good thing for himself, so that he serves the species, whereas he is under the delusion that he is serving himself. In this process a mere chimera, which vanishes immediately afterwards, floats before him, and, as motive, takes the place of reality. This *delusion* is *instinct*.¹⁴ (W2 XLIV:538)

Schopenhauer the philosopher, and most likely Schopenhauer the man, sourly concludes that after procreation has occurred, “everyone who is in love finds himself duped; for the delusion by means of which the individual was the dupe of the species has disappeared” (W2 XLIV:540). This pessimistic worldview, defined by the cruelty of nature on one side and the illusion that drives the individual to struggle forward, pervades the work of Schopenhauer. It is also prevalent in Nietzsche’s work, and it cannot be understood outside of this context.

In *Birth* Nietzsche incorporates Schopenhauer’s metaphysics without the same degree of pessimism. The term pessimism is problematic in Nietzsche’s writing.¹⁵ As I will discuss later, he will eventually deny the opposition of pessimism and optimism altogether. But for now, to say that Nietzsche is less pessimistic than Schopenhauer could be seen in the contrast he draws between willing nothingness versus not willing (GM III §1:97): Schopenhauer negates the will and the will to live. Nietzsche acknowledges the harshness of a world bereft of meaning but affirms it anyway. That said, Nietzsche’s skepticism regarding the cruelty

of nature's use of the individual for its own purpose is clear. In the first paragraph of the 1872 version of *Birth*, he states a goal for his readers. "We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics" when it is directly perceived that "art derives its continuous development from the duality of the *Apolline* and the *Dionysiac*; just as the reproduction of species depends on the duality of the sexes, with its constant conflicts and only periodically intervening reconciliations" (BT §1:14). Clearly, Nietzsche is in line with Schopenhauer regarding the illusion created in the world as representation to cloak the raw cunning that drives the world as will. The Olympian pantheon, as presented by Homer, "is one of those illusions that nature so often uses in order to attain its goals. The true goal is veiled by a phantasm: we stretch our hands towards one thing, and nature deceives us to achieve the other"¹⁶ (BT §3:24). Despite his acknowledgment of Schopenhauer's pessimistic view that a natural delusion lies behind the realization that "*illusion* is opposed to *reality* as deception of *understanding*" (WI §6:24), Nietzsche remains ambivalent. His notion of tragedy does not leave humanity without hope. In the 1886 introduction to *Birth*, Nietzsche asks, "Is there a pessimism of *strength*?" (BT "Attempt at a Self-Criticism" §1:3). Though this question comes from the more positivistic attitude of a later period, Nietzsche still concurs with Schopenhauer that the world is cruel and meaningless, and that the truth of the material or everyday aspect of the world offers little solace for life's ills. Nonetheless, he also subscribes to a form of hope rooted in the creative spirit of humankind. Where Schopenhauer saw sexuality as an inescapable abyss, Nietzsche recognized its potential horror, but saw life and will as creative powers that would be present in any redemption of this world. Through the recognition of the meaninglessness and terror of reality, it is overcome by a creative illusion that allows one to carry on. In *Epistles*, as Nietzsche was aware (BGE §264:214), Horace said, "Expel nature with a pitchfork, she still comes back" (I.10, 24). Nature cannot be expelled from our notion of the world without consequence.

Horace's recognition, manifest in art, is its saving illusion. But a distinction must be drawn between what this recognition means for Schopenhauer and for Nietzsche. Certainly, for each, the cruelty of nature is ineluctable, but despite many comments that seem to support a Darwinian notion of survival of the fittest, Nietzsche is not a Darwinian.¹⁷ For Nietzsche, overcoming the struggle of all against all is not a matter of genetic survival; it is the success of a narrative that

gives meaning. This is what makes a life worth living, and without this guiding meaning, the survival of the body is of little consequence (NAP, 205–206).

3.1.2 *Apollo and Dionysus*

While incorporating Schopenhauer's metaphysical schema, Nietzsche appropriated Apollo and Dionysus in two senses.¹⁸ One is literal, as Apollo the god of sculpture and Dionysus the god of music. The other usage is metaphysical. As one Apollo is used in an artistic way as the god of the visual arts, the other Apollo symbolizes a metaphysical usage, the upholding of the illusion. The aesthetic Apollo is the world upheld as the beautiful. The metaphysical Apollo is a delimiter that tames the barbaric Dionysus. The artistic god Dionysus is the god of the non-visual arts. When used in a metaphysical sense, the Dionysian takes on a sense of intoxication that lets one get beyond the notion of the self, the illusion of individuation.

To the two gods of art, Apollo and Dionysus, we owe our recognition that in the Greek world there is a tremendous opposition, as regards both origins and aims, between the Apolline art of the sculpture and the non-visual, Dionysiac art of music. These two very different tendencies walk side by side, usually in violent opposition to one another, inciting one another to ever more powerful births, perpetuating the struggle of the opposition only apparently bridged by the word 'art'; until, finally by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'will', the two seem to be coupled. (BT §1:14)

There are numerous oppositions bound up in Nietzsche's metaphoric use of *Apolline* and *Dionysian*: sculpture vs. music, representation vs. will, dream vs. intoxication, and individuality vs. altruism and unity.¹⁹ But in tragic art, they are always united, even if briefly.

The metaphysical structure in Nietzsche's work follows Schopenhauer in several ways. They agree insofar as the visual arts are representing something like Platonic forms. According to Nietzsche, visual arts give us pleasure in "the immediate apprehension of form" in which "nothing is indifferent or unnecessary" (BT §1:15). This concurs with Schopenhauer's notion that the work of art conveyed 'ideas' directly through their perception. Nietzsche's different uses of Apollo and

Dionysus also correspond to different aspects of the world as representation and will. The metaphysical Apollo parallels Schopenhauer's world as representation first aspect. In this sense, Apollo manifests rationality and individuation. Nietzsche uses Apollo in his aesthetic aspect to reflect Schopenhauer's idea or world as representation second aspect. In Dionysian-rapture we see a correspondence to Schopenhauer's world-as-will first aspect. Through intoxication we reach an ecstasy that compels us to behold reality as primordial unity. Nietzsche lays out three forms of illusion (*Illusion*) evoked as a response to will (BT §18:85). Nietzsche sees the first path as that of Socrates, a path he clearly rejects, which ultimately ends in despair. The second, the path of relief through art, is one that Nietzsche shared with Schopenhauer, but it is only a temporary relief, ultimately only a "prophylactic" (BT §21:100). The final path of world rejection, the "Buddha-like denial of the will" that Schopenhauer sees as the ultimate aim of life, is disavowed by Nietzsche (BT §7:39). This represents a break with the pessimism of Schopenhauer at the very deepest level.

3.1.3 *Transfiguring Illusion*

In *Birth*, Nietzsche proposes a solution to Schopenhauer's pessimistic trap, which does not entail the escapism of the world-renouncing religions. Within altruism, according to Schopenhauer, one is self-effacing, and through the self-effacement of the individual self, the will is overcome. This is the highest goal of the individual in Schopenhauer's scheme: world-as-will second aspect. Nietzsche recognizes altruism in the Dionysian, but unlike Schopenhauer, he also sees a terror that could be unleashed. Referring to the Bacchic festivals of antiquity, Nietzsche warns that "the most savage beasts of nature were here unleashed, even that repellent mixture of lust and cruelty that I have always held to be a 'witch's brew'" (BT §2:19). A great terror could also be the result of the unfettered breakdown of individual boundaries. Seeing that the intoxication of the Dionysian was a two-edged sword, Nietzsche refrained from endorsing it unconditionally. Dionysus should be confined to the artistic realm, and Apollo maintains this boundary against Dionysian barbarism (see Young 1992, 32–34).

Nietzsche formulated an alternative title for the 1886 edition: *The Birth of Tragedy, or: Hellenism and Pessimism*.²⁰ His later writings suggest that this may have been a better title, as he understood his early

interest in Wagner to be a distraction. Nietzsche's solution to the problem of Dionysian barbarism is found in the "metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'will.'" What follows from the Hellenism-and-Pessimism theme is this: it is only as aesthetic phenomenon that life is justified. The horror is survived through art. But the horror is not just the cruelty of life: it is the comprehension of the meaninglessness inherent in the universe that suffering has no purpose. The realization that there is nothing we can do to control the cosmos or human nature is unbearable for Socratic man. Socratic man believes we can control our destiny or affect its progress. The Dionysian type knows the nature of the universe, its tragic helplessness in light of the cruel powers of nature.

Greek art creates a saving illusion. The Apollonian art provides a shield to suffering, but it is still "deluded": pain is lured away from the nature of things (BT §16:80). Homer incorporates the terrible as well as the good. In this way it is a realistic illusion. Still, the Apollonian outlook is one that is numb to humanity's inner suffering. Apollonian art portrays the misery without empathizing too strongly with the sufferer; the existence of pain is just accepted. The misery is not hidden, but we are "deluded away" from it. This is why Nietzsche holds that the veil provided by Apollonian art is not the best.

In tragic art, Nietzsche envisions a transfiguring moment that entails the Dionysian as a solution. The Dionysian art of music is a reflection of pure will. Only through the Dionysian music can the destruction of the individual be delightful, and not terrible (BT §16:79). "Dionysiac art, too, wishes to convince us of the eternal delight of existence – but we are to seek that delight not in phenomena themselves but behind phenomena" (BT §17:80). Nietzsche sees the combination of Apollonian art and Dionysian art at its best in Greek tragedy. The tragic experience affects us in such a way that we become the primordial being and the barbarism of terror is experienced in a symbolic sacrifice to Dionysus. After the Dionysian glimpse, the viewer is restored to a 'normal' state with the aid of the Apollonian illusion. "Understanding kills action – action depends on a veil of illusion" (BT §7:39). Following the symbolic experience of horror, the saving veil of illusion is restored; participants are transformed, thus, better able to confront reality's ills.

The nature of the artwork for Nietzsche is illusory, but it is more than mere illusion. The pure illusion is manifest in the Apollonian perspective. Apollo, as god of sculpture, bringing metaphysical redemption through the gift of the appearance of a stable world worth struggling in, does

present a saving illusion. But the Apollonian illusion in and of itself cannot provide redemption for humanity; it is only delusion. Over time, the delusion is revealed, and the society is led to despair. The Dionysian element, the ecstatic exposure to will and the acknowledgement of our inability to discern any purpose in nature, prevents the illusion from becoming a mere delusion. This is the “metaphysical miracle” of transfiguration that makes the fragile illusion real enough to be a redemption without leading to the extremes of Apollonian delusion or Dionysian terror.

Nietzsche’s account of redemptive art does mirror Schopenhauer’s account of the tragic sublime (W1 §40–§41:207–212), in that it involves a shock to the system. As discussed in Chapter 2, this is common to all notions of the sublime, going back to Longinus. What seems to be different is the epistemic value of the tragic sublime. For Kant, the sublime is a non-sensuous encounter with the noumenal evoked through an overwhelming phenomenal experience. One comes away with a sense of the power of the infinite or the greatness of the noumenal moral self in the face of a shock or threat to the phenomenal, finite self. The epistemological point is not so far from Hume’s (2007) claim, contrary to Kant’s, that the passions do not and should not serve reason: “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions” (2.3.3 SB415:266). Reason is passion’s tool. But in Schopenhauer’s view, we are not aware of this. Art brings us to awareness through a jolt to the system, so to speak, bringing a temporary reprieve from the tyranny of will. The same can be said of Nietzsche. But Nietzsche’s tragic sublime takes a turn away from Schopenhauer’s ‘resignation’ and denial of will through ‘negation’ of a number of life’s most central drives. Here, the symbol of the satyr becomes ever more important. Nietzsche, recognizing the duality of existence, embraces the satyr, the dual nature of truth and error. What must be embraced is that we need something we call truth, even though we know we can have no truth.²¹ To pursue ‘truth’ as ‘Truth’, as he claims science does, is an error that will lead to decline. To pursue a truth for oneself, that allows one to create a narrative best for oneself, despite the error of truth AND the error of one’s own narrative, is the ‘truth’ of tragic knowledge.

The satyr was something sublime and divine; he must have seemed particularly so to the painfully broken gaze of Dionysiac man...[H]ere, the illusion of culture had been erased from the archetype of man—it was here

that the true man revealed himself, the bearded satyr celebrating his god. Before him, the man of culture shriveled up into a mendacious caricature. ...[T]he [satyr] chorus is a living wall against encroaching reality because it...depicts existence more truly, more authentically, more completely than the man of culture who sees himself as the only reality. (BT §8:40–41)

In *Birth*, tragic knowledge is conveyed through myth, created by a culture, or by the geniuses born of it. The “Dionysiac Greek wanted truth and nature at the summit of their power - and saw himself transformed into a satyr” (BT §8:41). The “man of culture” cannot make this transformation, which occurs only to the one to whom the myths are real, and for this, Germany needs new myths.

3.1.4 *Pessimism and the Influence of His Mentors*

Given what Nietzsche perceived as the unviability of the Christian solution, in 1872 he proposed that the anguish brought on by the lack of a metaphysical foundation in life could be ameliorated through a rebirth of tragedy in the music of Wagner. The close friendship the young Nietzsche had with Wagner had a profound effect on him. They shared a great admiration for the philosophy of Schopenhauer, who had influenced the work of each of them. After having promoted Wagner as the savior of the German spirit, their falling out caused Nietzsche to rethink his romanticism. The rift occurred when Nietzsche received a copy of Wagner’s opera *Parsifal* in 1878. As Kaufmann (Nietzsche 1968a) describes it in his introduction to *The Case of Wagner*, the outraged Nietzsche found the opera shameless: “Wagner was exploiting Christianity for theatrical effect, and the self-styled modern Aeschylus was celebrating the anti-Greek ideal of what Wagner himself called ‘pure foolishness’” (605). Wagner’s indignation at Nietzsche’s *Human*, which made no mention of him, sealed their break. As a slap, Nietzsche had dedicated the book to Voltaire, supporting the French in opposition to Wagner’s vehement anti-French sentiments. The breach in the relation of these once-close friends never healed, and around the time that Nietzsche parted ways with Wagner, he also declared a break with Schopenhauer. These factors led to a dramatic shift in his underlying thought, the ramifications of which would unfold throughout his writing career. Some of these changes are reflected in his “Attempt at a Self-Criticism,” which was published with the third 1886 edition of *Birth*. Nonetheless, when

Birth was first published in 1872, Nietzsche was clearly in line with and heavily influenced by Schopenhauer and Wagner.²²

There is no question as to whether Nietzsche incorporates the metaphysics of Schopenhauer in his own theory of art. Nonetheless, the extent to which Nietzsche concurs with Schopenhauer in *Birth* is often blurred. Nietzsche's view of art as a saving illusion places it above Schopenhauer's notion of art as a mere this-worldly escape. Despite this, Young (1992) still argues that the first edition of *Birth* is still pessimistic (28–29). Though the third edition's retrospective renunciation of Schopenhauer is clearly an attempt to distance himself from his old mentor after the fact, in 1872 his allegiance to Schopenhauer is clear. So the question remains as to whether he shares the same pessimism.

Though Nietzsche offers two solutions to the problem of the human need for meaning in a cruel and meaningless world, Young (1992) holds the first edition of *Birth* is still fundamentally pessimistic. The themes named in the 1886 alternative title, *The Birth of Tragedy or Hellenism and Pessimism*, run through the book in tandem. The latter theme, for Young, confirms the book's pessimism. *Hellenism and Pessimism* dealt with the way the Greeks, despite being very sensitive to the terror of nature, found psychological relief through their art. By incorporating both Dionysian and Apollonian elements into their art, they were able to adapt and thrive, despite the harsh quandaries of existence. This, in Young's estimation, is still deeply despairing, and both themes point to a world rejecting pessimism (30–31).

Many commentators, Young argues, suggest Nietzsche is not as pessimistic as Schopenhauer merely by citing Nietzsche's own assertions to the contrary. To Young, this is misconstrued given Nietzsche's frequent exhortations to embrace life in a joyous manner *without regard to life's overwhelming hopelessness*. Still, it is difficult to argue on the side of Young when reading a line such as this: "Precisely their tragedies prove that the Greeks were *not* pessimists: Schopenhauer went wrong at this point, as he went wrong everywhere" (EH "The Birth of Tragedy" §1:270). This text is from a later period, and we're discussing 1872; the pessimism of the later years is taken up later. Nonetheless, Young may be right to question whether Nietzsche's renunciation of pessimism makes him an optimist.

Outside of noting that Young (1992) cites the 1886 title, *Hellenism and Pessimism*, to make his case for the pessimism of the 1872 edition,

the specific points he argues are well considered and, for the most part stand on their own (47–55). However, I think his case for pessimism on the whole does not stand. There are a few specific claims I feel compelled to address; after this I make the case for why Nietzsche is not as pessimistic as Schopenhauer. First, Young (1992) concedes that though Nietzsche shares Schopenhauer's belief that life is meaningless, he does not concur with Schopenhauer that the only thing we can do is deny, or negate, our will, and for that matter, the possibility that our life has any meaning. While Schopenhauer is doubly negative, Nietzsche sees a way out of the trap of will through an aesthetic justification. For Young, because Nietzsche starts with the same negativity, he finds Schopenhauer's solution more straightforward and more human, preferring it to Nietzsche's (55). This is a rather subjective assessment and does not strengthen his case. Second, though Young is right that Nietzsche is renouncing his mentors after the fact, Nietzsche admits in "Attempt at Self-Criticism" §6 that he lacked the courage, and language, to express what he wanted, and that he adopted the pessimistic 'language of resignation' from his mentors. I have no doubt that Nietzsche is squirming away from a position he regrets, but moving away from an old language to form a new one is a prevalent theme in Nietzsche's later works (NAP 79). This should be taken into account when assessing the work as 'optimistic' or 'pessimistic'.

Lastly, I ask what the charge of pessimism really means in a book that sees Socratic optimism as the cause of decline; obviously Nietzsche will lead the reader away from a resolution linked to 'optimism.' The pessimism is, nonetheless, overcome (EH "Birth of Tragedy" 270). That said, I believe an obliquely optimistic reading can be found in *The Greek State*, an unpublished part of, or essay to be paired with, an 1871 draft of *Birth* (Geuss 2007, xvi; Knoll 2014, 251–253). In *The Greek State*, the issue of the individual being used by nature returns. But in a break with Schopenhauer, he concedes that some good comes from this. We may feel shame in the sexual act, having been used by nature, but we still behold the beauty of our children. *The Greek State* is also interesting because Nietzsche still holds some value in communal interaction, though one may grimace at his claim that the purpose of the state, and the struggles of its members, has the sole aim of creating an Olympian person. This may do little to support my argument that the first edition is optimistic, but at this period, the influence of Wagner, in terms

of the revival of myth, was optimistic. Habermas (1990) writes that for Wagner, an “aesthetically renewed mythology is supposed to relax the forces of social integration consolidated by competitive society. It will decenter modern consciousness and open it up to archaic experiences. This art of the future denies that it is the product of an individual artist and establishes ‘the people itself as the artist of the future’” (88).²³ Despite Wagner’s flaws, this is not fundamentally pessimistic. There is a positive theme in the early thought of Nietzsche and Wagner, which reiterates Hegel’s idea that aesthetics should be present at the highest level of social guidance. This “motif,” Habermas writes, emphasizes that “in the forms of a revived mythology, art can reacquire the character of a *public* institution and develop the power to regenerate the ethical totality of the nation” (88). The reference Nietzsche makes to Plato’s *Republic* is relevant in this context. Nietzsche (2006a) suggests that Plato had created the plan for a state that would create the ruling geniuses of wisdom and learning. Driven by Socrates’ dialectical optimism, Plato excluded the artist.

The fact that he did not place genius, in its most general sense, at the head of his perfect state, but only the genius of wisdom and knowledge, excluding the inspired artist entirely from his state, was a rigid consequence of the Socratic judgment on art, which Plato, struggling against himself, adopted as his own. (173)

Nietzsche, at this point, would add artists back into the equation. Even if not ruling, this still places them among the Olympian geniuses at the top of the state. His suggestion that Socrates should listen to his musical voices supports the vision of this early introduction (BT §14:70–71).

Why is this ‘optimistic’? First, if Nietzsche references *Republic*, he is suggesting that the geniuses, who are the aim of the state to produce, also help the state. They should return to the cave, and their greatness will ‘trickle down’ to the ones who labor and toil to create the genius. The genius of *Birth* is Wagner, the hero of the 1872 edition. At this point, he will evoke the rebirth of tragedy through the spirit of music, and despite the bleakness of all that Nietzsche says of the world and life, and the fragile temporary stability brought on through the experience of opera tragedy, the notion that the aesthetic education manifests itself in some way as a public institution is still optimistic, insofar as a book that eschews optimism can be.

3.2 THE CONDITION OF REDEMPTIVE ART

In 1872 Nietzsche wrote, “without myth all culture loses its healthy and natural creative power” (BT §23:110). Modern man, stripped of myth by the encroachments of science, is an abstract man who can achieve nothing beyond “the lawless wandering, unchecked by native myth, of the artistic imagination;” lacking his own myth he is condemned to “feed wretchedly on all other cultures” (BT §23:110). Because of the preemptive effect of science and philosophy, art with the power of transfiguring human life is a thing of the past; redemptive art is dead. It “can never blossom again” (HH §220:132). Having retracted his nomination of Wagner as the genius capable of giving the German spirit new life, Nietzsche understands that the unifying myth, the necessary soil of art, cannot be resurrected. Still, his view on art does not change significantly. What has changed is Western culture’s relation to myth. Without myth, the Dionysian beholder cannot be aesthetically transformed, and great art will be no more.

3.2.1 *The Aesthetic Listener*

A culture unified by a powerful myth that provides a concentrated meaning-giving image of the world furnishes the framework in which significant art can be created. The forces of artistic imagination are unfettered madness without the controlling myth to which the artist submits. “Only a horizon surrounded by myths can unify an entire cultural movement. Myth alone rescues all the powers of imagination and the Apolline dream from their aimless wanderings” (BT §23:109). The riot of incoherence that Nietzsche attributes to the vagaries of the imagination untrammelled by myth is the pure Dionysian, the primal unity in its pure incomprehensible horror of contradictions. The structure of myth, however, is not a mere balancing force, simply a way to present the world so the people of a culture can understand the Dionysian; it is a force enmeshed in a culture that allows the myth to be real to the *aesthetic listener*. Without a listener capable of responding to myth, there can be no enchantment, *no transfiguration*, on the stage. At this point, art is merely a saving—not a transfiguring illusion. The existence of living myth in a culture is essential for the *experience* of art.

Attempting to draw the reader into the possibility of a *rebirth of tragedy*, Nietzsche proposes a test to see if one is a true “aesthetic spectator,”

or if one is more closely related to the Socratic critic. To perform the test, one need only ask oneself,

honestly about the feeling with which he responds to *miracles* portrayed on the stage: whether his historical sense, aimed at the strict psychological causality, is insulted; whether he accepts miracles, with a benevolent concession, as a phenomenon intelligible to children but remote from himself; or whether he responds in some other way. He will thus be able to tell whether he is at all capable of understanding *myth*, the concentrated image of the world which, as an abbreviation for phenomena, cannot do without miracles. (BT §23:109)

In order for the balance of Apollo and Dionysus to exist in a culture, a balance that Nietzsche holds to be crucial to its creative vitality, the Dionysian element must transfigure the tragedy's audience so that they momentarily feel the presence of the gods on stage, not a representation of the character god, but an ecstatic moment that comes when the god walks among the spectators. In Nietzsche's view, this transformative moment is redemption. The transfiguration is only possible within the Apolline world that brings tragedy to the stage, but the power of myth cannot be lost, lest the redeeming transformation also be lost. Theoretical culture may, as Nietzsche suggests, react to a miracle as if it were something a child might believe in. If this is the case, redemptive art is lost to such a culture. The Dionysian music brings relief from the terrors of the primal unity. By acknowledging the terror, we can be saved from it. But if the power of Dionysus is denied, then, as revealed in Euripides' *Bacche*, the Dionysian terror returns to haunt all attempts at civilized living.

The advance of science and theoretical culture brings an end to myth and our power to be redeemed by art. As Nietzsche saw it in 1872, when science has no redeeming power within it, it is simply a misconceived 'optimism' and ends ultimately in despair. The theoretical culture reduces the transfiguring power of music to a mere reflection of the phenomenal. Music at this point is little more than a cheapened imitation, validating Plato's critique of mimetic art. In this stage of cultural development, music is the slave to text. The new tragedy of Euripides disenchants the art, leaving it impotent and bereft of its saving power. The ultimate evolution of the Socratic culture results in a state such that "music is utterly estranged from its true dignity as a Dionysiac mirror

to the world, to the point where, a slave to appearance, it can only imitate the forms of the phenomenal world" (BT §19:94). Tragic art does not seek to reproduce tragedy itself, as 'knowledge' attempts to mirror some corresponding reality; rather, it aims to transcend the tragic nature of truth (NAP 37). In this period of Nietzsche's thinking, myth is the medium through which those who can enter it move beyond the tragedy of existence. This, Danto suggests, anticipating his own theory of art, creates for the audience something like an "art world."

Art (in the narrow sense) creates for us another world alongside the real world—an *art world*, as we might call it—into which we may from time to time escape, finding respite and repose from the pains and struggles of existence, if only for a suspended moment [emphasis SS]. (NAP 29)

Art creates an alternative world into which one can escape, that, in some way, is manifested in myth.

3.2.2 *The Rebirth*

The tide of theoretical culture only recedes when its optimism runs its course. The recognition of Dionysian pessimism is necessary for the psychological continuation of a culture, in light of scientific efforts to cover what cannot be covered. Socrates, according to Nietzsche, is the prototype of theoretical man. Such a person takes delight in everything that exists, and is thus shielded from the "practical ethics of pessimism." The shield of scientism, Nietzsche continues, is revealed by Lessing, who claimed that the scientist "took greater delight in the quest for truth than in the truth itself" (BT §15:73). The quest for truth, then, is put in place of the finding of truth. Thus, ultimate disappointment always lurks below the surface. The relentless honesty of Socrates initiates a profound illusion in "the unshakeable belief that rational thought, guided by causality, can penetrate to the depths of being, and that it is capable not only of knowing but even of *correcting* being" (BT §15:73). The Socratic mission is to make existence appear intelligible and justified. This optimistic attitude, in Nietzsche's estimation, endeavors to "encompass the whole phenomenal world" through knowledge. But as science reaches its limits, and still no truth is revealed, "the optimism essential to logic collapses." Nietzsche, perhaps alluding to Dante, refers to how a noble individual, "even before the mid-course"²⁴ of life, encounters the

impossible boundary of logic. When staring at the ineffable, protection is required, and this is provided by the illusion of art. Upon seeing “how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge, which needs art as both protection and remedy” (BT §15:75). Danto suggests that this passage shows Nietzsche’s awareness of the logical impossibility of his position. Perspectivism, if true, is still just one of many positions, all of which are false (NAP 62–63). Logic bites its tail, leaving Nietzsche “alone in a dark wood” without a language to articulate the new tragic knowledge.

For such a transformation to occur, theoretical culture must recognize its need for music, the mirror of the Dionysian, and, as he suggests in *The Greek State*, integrate the aesthetic genius into its fabric. ‘What of the music-making Socrates?’ Nietzsche asks, referring to the intuitive voice in the mind of Socrates telling him to make music, despite his commitment to the banishment of intuitions (BT §14:70–71). From his standpoint, Nietzsche sees the quandary of a culture that is losing its optimism in science and lurching toward despair. Thus, the theoretical culture of the West can revive itself through recognitions of the suppressed voice of intuition, as Socrates could have saved himself if only he would have made music. The new culture of artistic creativity and myth would spring from the failure of scientific culture. This path rejects both the resignation of Schopenhauer and Socratic optimism, but the language of a new myth would be required.

The only hope for a contemporary nation, which in Nietzsche’s case is Germany, is the resurrection or rebirth of the art exemplified in Greek tragedy and its saving myth. By shunning the “Alexandrian” influence of rationalism and the “apron-strings of Romance civilization,” Nietzsche suggests “*the rebirth of tragedy*” can be won (BT §19:95). At the stage of the first edition of *Birth*, the young Nietzsche held that Wagner had the genius to do just that in his new-style of music-drama.

3.3 THE CAUSES OF THE END OF REDEMPTIVE ART

The shift in Nietzsche’s stance toward art, which could be called an end-of-art thesis, appears first in *Human*. In the 1878 edition of *Human*, Nietzsche renounces many of the tenets expressed in *Birth* while his view of art remains much the same. Nietzsche had already faced his break with Schopenhauer, and disillusion replaced the exuberance he once held for Wagner. Danto notes that given Nietzsche’s break with his past, “one

might truly describe his intellectual activity from this point on as a quest for a philosophy to fill the space left empty by art" (NAP 43). In the pages of *Human*, Nietzsche renounces Schopenhauer, ostensibly sheds his 'pessimism', and no longer holds the genius in reverence, thus paving the way for a Socratic stance toward life. With a newfound acceptance of progress, Nietzsche's confidence in science appears to have strengthened, making room for the belief that it can aid humanity in abolishing suffering. At this stage of Nietzsche's intellectual development, myth and art stand in the way of progress by propagating illusions that block what can really save us.

Repudiating his past, *Human* attempts to overcome the metaphysics of dualism and of art. Nietzsche's approach is two-pronged, but its focus, stated or not, starts with a renunciation of the basic tenets of *Birth*: the metaphysics of Schopenhauer and the romantic notions bound up with his relationship to Wagner. *Human* ends with a full endorsement of science as the means to forge a new path out of the annulment of the old. Despite rolling back expressions of his earlier stance, Nietzsche's views of art and nature remain much the same as those expressed in *Birth*. In many ways, the doctrinal changes he makes in *Human* are "modifications rather than rejections" (NAP 46). Though he repudiates his claims about art in the narrow sense, much of what he says about art in the wide sense remains intact in his philosophy.

3.3.1 *Optimism and Pessimism*

In the eyes of the 1878 Nietzsche, pessimism and optimism become "disreputable words." These words now hold a bias toward the world, and bias is no longer of any use to humanity. "Away with those tedious, worn-out words 'optimism' and 'pessimism.' Every day there is less and less cause to use them...For why in the world should anyone want to be an optimist if he does not have to defend a God who must have created the best of all possible worlds"? (HH §28:33). The words are used only for "reviling" and "glorifying" the world; affirming neither pessimism or optimism, Nietzsche collapses the oppositional pair and aims for a psychological explanation for why one chooses one term over the other. This is a strategy he will use frequently in his later writings (NAP 96–97). Philosophy and art both sought to paint an optimistic world-view because "the importance of knowledge for life *ought* to appear as great as possible." But this presentation, he continues, is also a deception

of a kind. “Here we have the antagonism between individual scientific fields and philosophy. The latter, like art, wishes to render the greatest possible depth and meaning to life and activity. In the sciences, one seeks knowledge and nothing more—whatever the consequences may be” (HH §6:16–17).

Nietzsche, once despondent regarding the outcome of such a scientific quest for knowledge, though not ‘optimistic’ in the strict sense, is confident in its ability to further the needs of humanity. Progress, once deemed illusion, is now put forth as a *possibility*. The death of myth, or the “old culture,” also puts to death the mistrust of progress. “Progress is *possible*. I mean to say, it is premature and almost nonsensical to believe that progress must of *necessity* come about; but how could one deny that it is possible?” (HH §24:30). Accepting that the cycle of human despair can be broken, Nietzsche renounces the use of religion and art to “opiate” humanity’s unrequited metaphysical need.

3.3.2 *Metaphysical Need*

Cultural forms that fulfill humanity’s metaphysical needs do so through a delusion “by changing the way we judge experiences” (HH §108:77). This “anesthetizing” illusion, though, is only a temporary aid that helps those who seek solace through them by alleviating their symptoms. In order to get beyond the metaphysical distress that leads people to seek metaphysical cures, humanity must follow the path of science, thus overcoming the distress itself, instead of the symptom. Nietzsche realizes this is not easy, for “one might bleed to death from the truth he has recognized” (HH §109:79). Nietzsche cites from Horace’s *Odes*: “Why do you torture your poor reason for insight into the riddle of eternity?” (2.11.13). Why not just stop the torture, why pursue this riddle? Following Horace, Nietzsche simply ceases to pursue the mystery. The Dionysian, or the *Ding-an-sich*, becomes irrelevant. Nietzsche sought a ‘naturalized’ notion of art and the world, emphasizing the importance of this-worldly solutions to life’s ills. Without yet denying the dual nature of existence, Nietzsche dismisses the notion that the noumenal world holds any interest at all. Following the “arduous process” of science will show humanity that the value passed on to the ineffable is false. “Perhaps we will recognize then that the thing-in-itself deserves a Homeric laugh, in that it seemed to be so much, indeed everything, and is actually empty, that is, empty of meaning” (HH §16:24). Turning his back on

his one-time mentor Schopenhauer, Nietzsche denies the malevolence of the natural world. There is no terror in nature; such a notion is a mere misunderstanding.

3.3.3 *Asceticism, Inspiration, and Illness*

Nietzsche had not accepted Schopenhauer's world-rejecting asceticism in *Birth*, and in *Human*, he attacks the world-rejecting presuppositions of original sin expressed through the self-denial of the ascetic saint. Self-denial is not driven by altruism but by some inner need of the self: "man *wanted* to consider himself as bad and evil as possible" (HH §141:99). Thus, he repudiates Schopenhauer's notion of a self-denial that dissolves the illusion of will: the notion of the evil self is invented to gain power with its renunciation. Because giving up all of one's will is easier than moderating it, ascetic self-denial is a sign of weakness used to gain power (HH §139:96–97).

Nietzsche's attempt to discredit asceticism leads into his attack on romantic inspiration. The states of the saints, he notes, impoverished, unhealthy, inwardly withdrawn, with vacillating madness, were not in themselves divine, but they were perceived as divine (HH §142–143:100–101). Nietzsche concedes that illusion is empowering; the illusion of the saint or seer, as the illusion of the artist, is a creative power. At times, illness is raised to the level of divinity. The Greeks, he continues, "turned diseases into great beneficial forces of culture." The prototypes of the bacchante were created from "widespread nervous epidemics." The Greeks turned lack of health into a strength: "their secret was to honor illness like a god, too, if only it were *powerful*" (HH §214:128). This empowering illusion, in the 1872 edition of *Birth*, manifests the saving grace of Hellenic culture. Now it is an illusion with no power, a nostrum that diverts the energy of humanity away from the effort to overcome its true ills. It should be noted that in the 1886 "Attempt at Self-Criticism," Nietzsche lauds the Greek "pessimism of *strength*" and the possibility that there may exist a "neurosis of *health*." But in 1878, he decries this notion: in *Human*, there is no tolerance for inspiration or its simulacrum; madness must be taken for what it is.

Under the topic of "Art and strength of false interpretation," he revisits the inner voice of Socrates, the divine voice that told him to make music. In *Birth*, Nietzsche proposes that Socrates should have listened to that voice, suggesting an alternative solution to the despair of theoretical

culture. In *Human*, Socrates' *Daimonion* is a disease that he did well to ignore. This strength, in renouncing the inner voice of intuition, is precisely what modern citizens need. Praising Socrates, Nietzsche states that this disease of the ear,

is not different with the madness and raving of prophets and oracular priests: it is always the degree of knowledge, imagination, ambition, morality in the head and heart of the *interpreters* that has *made* so much out of them. One of the greatest effects of men who we call geniuses and saints is that they exact interpreters who *misunderstand* them, to the good of mankind. (HH §126:88)

The illusion of good that springs from specious inspiration is evoked through the will of the ascetic to “tyrannize certain parts of their own being” (HH §127:95); the interpreter’s misunderstanding is simply an error.

3.3.4 *The Romantic Illusion*

This change of emphasis is evident in Nietzsche’s assertion that art be purged of its “romantic fantasizing” (HH §24:30, §155–165:107–114). The “romantic illusion” does not mistakenly acknowledge a metaphysical layer, a primal unity or the *Ding-an-sich* when there is none (Young 1992, 62). Rather, the error of the romantic illusion is to attribute an importance to the metaphysical that is not warranted. In *Birth*, the primal unity, which is “a boundless sea, a changing weft, a glowing life,”²⁵ had enormous power that directed life beyond human control (BT §8:45). Religion sought to predict this metaphysical ebb and flow. In *Birth*, Nietzsche has no confidence in the success of science to provide any level of predictability in light of the overwhelming indeterminacy of the Dionysian. In *Human*, Nietzsche concedes that science has the capacity to predict events in a manner he had not previously recognized; the “changing weft” that drove art, and above all tragic art, works in pursuit of science rather than tragedy (HH §222:137).

The effect on culture that Nietzsche observes in the disenchanting social sphere is the end of myth through the progress of science; for art’s survival, discipline is required in place of other-worldly inspiration. Nietzsche’s purpose in *Human* is to create free spirits, as the subtitle implies, who can live free of convention, superstition, ideals and myth.

Nonetheless, his radical turn does not renounce his previous views on myth. Nietzsche merely changes his attitude toward them; to anticipate Danto's narrative philosophy, he "re-describes" the phenomenon.

In the mind of the 1872 Nietzsche, the modern *aesthetic listener* must be capable of receiving the recreation of myth through music in order to experience the transfiguration that redeems the beholder. Without this attribute, the work of tragedy remains just an imitation of the phenomenon, not something that gets beyond it. In *Human*, Nietzsche holds that "art renders the sight of life bearable by laying over it the gauze (*Flor*) of impure thinking" (HH §151:105). Myth and art serve to alleviate the pain of the world, but this relief is only temporary, and it comes at the cost of seeing clearly. In 1878, Nietzsche holds it is better not to put off the suffering. It is pain that pushes one to action and lack of clarity in thought that keeps one from seeing a way out. Science now offers humanity a real solution to the ills of the world, and hard work is required to get rid of the cause of suffering. The opiates of myth and art should be set aside in favor of progress.

The place Nietzsche accords for art in *Human* is that of a bridge between religion and science. "Art raises its head where religions decline" (HH §150:105). As art supplants religion, the artist becomes the priest. The "impure thinking" that comes with art is often the fault of the genius. Targeting Wagner, Nietzsche addresses the dangers of "worshipping the genius." The belief in the superhuman (*übermenschlichen*) mental powers of the genius is a superstition. He addresses the notion of the aesthetic listener (perhaps autobiographically) that he proposed in *Birth* (§22). While admitting of its advantage for the listeners to submit their intellect to an inspirational source, such a source is not always trustworthy. Referring to Schopenhauer's notion of the genius, Nietzsche concedes, "they are credited with a direct view into the essence of the world," able to "communicate something ultimate and decisive about man and the world." The aesthetic listener, the one who can assimilate the miracle of inspiration, may gain greatly from this experience. "As long as anyone still believes in miracles in the realm of knowledge, one can admit perhaps that the believers themselves gain an advantage thereby, in that by unconditionally subordinating themselves to great minds, they provide the best discipline and schooling for their own mind during its development" (HH §164:112–113). But geniuses are not to be trusted; they have personal motives, which drive the need to prolong their status as geniuses. The madness, taken for inspiration,

which vaults them to the status of genius, eventually becomes a poison. The geniuses' inability to accept criticism, assuming a kind of personal divinity, leads to their doom, and, if the aesthetic listeners held their tragic experience to be of value, it would be to their great dismay.

3.3.5 *The Dissolution of Art*

Nietzsche's new post-inspirational conception of art replaces the genius or priest with a scientific person. He abandons the notion of a genius fueled by inspiration for that of an artist who labors arduously then appears magical when revealing the final product with the draw of a curtain. Art demands scholarship, discipline, and time, not the flash of inspiration that comes from the supernatural. The true artist fully understands discipline.

Artists have an interest in others' believing in sudden ideas, so-called inspirations; as if the idea of a work of art, or poetry, the fundamental thought of a philosophy shines down like a merciful light from heaven. In truth the good artist's or thinker's imagination is continually producing things good, mediocre, and bad, but his *power of judgment*, highly sharpened and practiced, rejects, selects, joins together.²⁶ (HH §155:107)

We are transported by art, but it is not super-scientific; rather, it is pre-scientific. The disciplined artist is full of tricks, but not of magic. "Artistic creation is, then, a mundane, human (all too human) phenomenon that is passed off by the artist-magician as something pregnant with supernatural overtones" (Young 1992, 69). The notion of beauty, resembling Kant's and Schopenhauer's notion of the sublime, which "intoxicates" and shocks the sensibilities into a non-cognitive mode, is eschewed in favor of a type of beauty that can be assimilated slowly, without tricking the senses (HH §149:104–105).

Nietzsche's anti-metaphysical stance, recognizing the function of art's role in the transfer of humanity from a religious to a scientific worldview, would accept that art is in a state of dissolution. Like other thinkers in the German aesthetic tradition, in *Human*, Nietzsche allots art a place as a lesser form of cognition, or a form of expression that helps lead from "impure thinking" to the purer mode of thinking presented by science. Having used art in easing its pain, humanity is now compelled to cure the pain rather than mask it. Nietzsche still recognizes that Apollonian as well as Dionysian art is metaphysical and that each veils a painful dichotomized reality by placing an imperfect cover over it. But

in *Human*, Nietzsche appears to have little use for art. Without pain, humanity will not take those difficult steps toward progress. Nietzsche appears to have made a shift from the acceptance of a classic cyclical worldview, which sees little point in escaping the cycles of nature, to a Judeo-Christian (perhaps Zoroastrian) notion of progress that expects the ills of this world to be overcome. The institutions of religion and philosophy merely transfigure the errors of humanity into art, providing a “gauze” to cover the symptoms of illness. This shift, for Nietzsche, signals the end of art.

Not without deep sorrow do we admit to ourselves that artists of all times, at their most inspired, have transported to a heavenly transfiguration precisely those ideas that we now know to be false: artists glorify mankind’s religious and philosophical errors, and they could not have done so without believing in their absolute truth. Now, if belief in such truth declines at all...art that presumes not only a cosmic but also a metaphysical meaning in the art object, can never blossom again. There will some day be a moving legend that such an art, such an artistic faith, once existed. (HH §220:132)

Linking art, religion, and philosophy, Nietzsche ties the decline of religious faith and the advance of modern progress to the end of art as we know it. Art becomes an empty mask bereft of metaphysical meaning, desensitized, as the dread it once addressed loses its power. The symbols of old are retired as reason takes precedence over presence. “All our senses have in fact become somewhat dulled because we always inquire after the reason, what ‘it means’ and no longer what ‘it is’” (HH §217:130). We can, however, give up art and religion without giving up what we have learned from it: “The scientific human being is a further development of the artistic one” (HH §222:137). The twilight of art leaves us with just a pleasant memory: as one mature in years looks back on the years of youth, one sees art fondly as something passed: “The sun has already set, but our life’s sky glows and shines with it still, although we no longer see it” (HH §223:137).

3.3.6 *Two Factors*

Two causes emerge in Nietzsche’s explanation of the end of art: the apotheosis of science and the dominance of romanticism. The first of these is decay: science and critical philosophy destroy myth, thereby

undermining institutions of redemptive art. The second is the romantic acceptance of inspiration and revolution as primary directives in art production. The romantic ideal led to a lack of discipline and a cult of personality bent on breaking the rules of artistic production. This romantic rebellion is good only for one generation; after that, it merely creates loss.

In *Human*, Nietzsche states, “Religion and art (as well as metaphysical philosophy) strive to effect a change in our feeling, in part by changing the way we judge experiences” (HH §108:77). The more one focuses on the reinterpretation of events for the sake of amelioration, the less one is able to see the real causes of events. Thus, a push toward a demythologizing science is needed for humanity’s progress.

The more the rule of religions and all narcotic arts decreases, the more squarely do men confront the real elimination of the misfortune—of course, this is bad for the tragic poets (there being less and less material for tragedy, because the realm of inexorable, invincible fate grows even smaller). (HH §108:77)

Despite Nietzsche now favoring the Socratic stance, abandoning the tragic worldview for the reasoned path of science, he does not speak as if we have a choice; he is simply ‘changing the way *he* judges experience’ by describing it differently. Nietzsche recognizes this in his later work.

Romantic whim ushers in the second cause for art’s dissolution. Nietzsche attacks romanticism much as Plato does through Socrates. As Socrates criticized Ion for reciting from inspiration, in *Human*, Nietzsche attacks the notion of the gift of genius. Hiding the arduous labor involved in the work of art, we behold them as if they appear finished and whole. But the artist is a craftsman who works on every piece, finally revealing the finished product as if it were nothing, when in fact it may have taken years. There are many great people who were not gifted.

But they *acquired* greatness, became “geniuses” (as we say) through qualities about whose lack no man aware of them likes to speak; all of them had that diligent seriousness of a craftsman, learning first to form the parts perfectly before daring to make a great whole. (HH §163:112)

Preferring to break rules of aesthetic moderation, infected by the romantic ideal, modern culture loses its ability to create or recognize great art.

Once the sense of aesthetic is destroyed in the modern world, without the power of myth, it cannot be retrieved.

The modern spirit has come to rule in all areas, with its unrest, its hatred of moderation and limitation, at first unleashed by the fever of revolution, and then, when attacked by fear and dread of itself, applying the reins to itself again—but the reins of logic, no longer of artistic moderation. (HH §221:134)

In the revolutionary spirit, modern culture has thrown off the “unreasonable’ shackles of Franco-Hellenic art.” The artistic spirit is free to transcend these rules. But, as is typical of the postmodern malaise, there is no commensurate replacement for the rules of practice that once governed the creation of great art. “Without knowing it, we have gotten used to finding all shackles, all limitation unreasonable. And so art moves towards its dissolution” (HH §221:134).

3.4 THE ART OF THE SELF: PERSPECTIVISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF VALUES

In the years between art’s dissolution in the 1878 publication of *Human*, and the return in 1888 to the tragic vision of *Twilight*, Nietzsche sought relief, in turn, in science, Provençal gaiety, and the ideal of the *Übermensch*, while apparently accepting the finality of the death of classical tragic art. Having seen no path to redemption in philosophy, art, or religion, in *Science*, Nietzsche moves away from his new-found confidence in science. First published in 1882, *Science* included four books; a subsequent fifth book and preface were added to an 1887 edition. In *Science*, Nietzsche returns to art, but this time, to “surface art,” art in the “wide” sense, in the spirit of the gay poets of Provence. “If we convalescents still need art, it is another kind of art – a mocking, light, fleeting, divinely untroubled, divinely artificial art that, like a pure flame, licks into unclouded skies” (GS “Preface” §4:37). But for some, the newly adopted gaiety of the once convalescent Nietzsche is questionable, and if genuine, it is purchased at the cost of accepting the most extreme form of nihilism.

To Young (1992), those who accept the joyous tone of *Science* have been “duped.” In Young’s estimation, gaiety expressed at this period of Nietzsche’s life could only be a sort of “manic frivolity which is really no

more than a symptom of desperation and despair” (92). At face value, one might agree with Young; there seems to be a mocking veneer to the joy he professes. But even though Nietzsche’s nihilistic pessimism is different from the pessimism of *Birth*, Young still argues that in this phase, despite Nietzsche’s claim of having overcome the pessimism of Schopenhauer, he fails to do so (3, 26–30). As I see it, to claim that Nietzsche is pessimistic to the core is to misunderstand his nihilism: a deeper thread runs beneath the perhaps specious gaiety of his prose, and Young misses this.

The most poignant expression of Nietzsche’s aesthetic theory, his attempt to formulate how one could survive, metaphysically, in a world without God, meaning, art, hope, or metaphysics, comes in the period of *Science*. The creativity needed to overcome this is powered only by nihilism (NAP 174–175, 209–210). With God dead and no truth, anything is possible. The deepest levels of nihilism, to which Schopenhauer had led him, can only be overcome with a passionate ‘Yes’ for life that is brought about solely as a consequence of the force of individual creative will. It is only through recognition of nihilism that the creative power to craft a story of one’s life that makes it the best possible is conjured. The creativity of life needs nihilism; the one spawns the other.

If the idea of creating meaning from nothing is couched in terms of the dualism of pessimism and optimism, it is optimistic. But on Nietzsche’s terms, it is the justification of life as aesthetic. Danto sees nihilism as a precondition for creativity, clearing the way for the drive of will:

Will-to-Power imposes upon that unshaped substance the form and meaning which we cannot live without. There is no specific form or meaning without which we cannot live, however. How we shall live, and what we shall mean, is up to us to say. (NAP 210)

Young (1992) argues that the will to power is an unimportant notion (1–2). But agreeing with Danto, Young reads the will to power in a sense that is too narrow. It is the will to power that unchains us from the bench in the cave, to use a Platonic metaphor, and wills us to move outside of the social and linguistic framework within which we are trapped. Certainly, Young recognizes this. But his claim fails to recognize the way in which Nietzsche the writer seems to be struggling within the text. Nietzsche will have the *Übermensch* be the one that can start afresh

with the new language. But only the Dionysian can hear the message, and Dionysus is absent. Nietzsche himself lacks that language, and he is trying to transform the self with a language that does not yet exist. He must start anew, wiping the slate clean so he can move beyond nihilism. It is the will to power that lets us transform the world, and with it, our subjectivity. This is tough medicine that Young cannot see as optimistic. Even if Young were right that Nietzsche's 'optimism' is still 'pessimistic', we should at least recognize what Nietzsche, who has, after all, denied the opposition of pessimistic and optimistic, is trying to say. If we read Young's critique on Nietzsche's terms, Young is off the mark, and he is unable to use the language of philosophy to overcome the attitude that pushes him to a pessimistic reading.

3.4.1 *De-deification of the World*

In *Human*, Nietzsche took a strong anti-metaphysical, anti-romantic stance that left little room for the artistic opiate. With *Science*, he goes even further, de-deifying the world, taking a completely anti-idealistic stance and eschewing any notions of value imposed and maintained by social norms that lay outside the realm of what "is real." This move to "naturalize" the world, which Danto calls Nietzsche's "positivism," follows Schopenhauer's anti-idealistic tendencies. But, as characteristic of *Science*, Nietzsche is attempting to transform the tragic reality into a comic gaiety. The first book focuses on the dichotomies of species and individual, much as discussed in Schopenhauer's chapter on "The Metaphysics of Sexual Love" (W2). But the lightness of being that Nietzsche suggests is not really contrary to the tragic nature of the struggles that both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche point to: the struggles of the sexes, the struggles of individual vs. the species, the good of the individual and the good of the species, etcetera. Nietzsche notes that much of what is considered noble is observed in the person who acts on behalf of the species, instead of the self. In an ironic twist, Nietzsche claims that since the species is of the utmost importance, and the individual is none, individuals should not be concerned with the tragic situation in which they exist.

Even laughter may yet have a future. I mean, when the proposition "the species is everything, one is always none" has become part of humanity, and this ultimate liberation and irresponsibility has become accessible to

all at all times. Perhaps laughter will then have formed an alliance with wisdom, perhaps only “gay science” will then be left. (GS §1:74)

Nietzsche sees the aesthetic as something fundamentally “decentering.” The Dionysus of *Birth* tore away identity, exposing one to the experience of a world unconstrained by the theoretical and social constraints of Apollo (Habermas 1990, 92–95). The notion that humans have a metaphysical need that must be met is expressed in *Human*. The human animal has created a need distinct from other animals: the need for a purpose. But this does not mean there is a purpose. “Hunger does not prove that any food to satisfy it *exists*, but it wishes the food” (HH §131:90). In *Science*, the aesthetic decenters the subject, tearing down structures of individuation, but with just one world, there is no shield of Apollonian illusion. To survive the *hunger*, Nietzsche claims that one must have great health and remain lighthearted. The world is still in the tragic phase, but soon the “comedy of existence” will come to consciousness (GS §1:75). The hunger of our conscience, and our science, surely leaves us dissatisfied with the present state of humanity and its loftiest goals. With no solid ground, those who want more must float above the abyss.

In *Science*, the confidence in science and alleged human purpose is lost. To contrast the varied stances he took regarding the world of illusion and the world behind it in *Birth* and *Human*, Nietzsche again uses the analogy of a dream. “I suddenly woke up in the midst of this dream, but only to the consciousness that I am dreaming and that I must go on dreaming lest I perish” (GS §54:116). He sees there is a primal element in all of his action—love, invention and inference—which is covered by illusion. But what can he do? Would he even exist if stripped of his errors? He cannot wake, lest he perish; he must continue the dream, even if an error. Unlike his former notions of the Apollonian dream and the Dionysian *Ding-an-sich* behind it, what lies beyond the dream is not its opposite; it is just what is outside the dream. The ineffable that lurks below the surface is not something that can be unmasked.

Appearance is for me that which lives and is effective and goes so far in its self-mockery that it makes me feel that this is appearance and the will-o'-the-wisp and a dance of spirits and nothing more....The sublime consistency and interrelatedness of all knowledge perhaps is and will be the highest means to preserve the universality of dreaming and the mutual

comprehension of all dreamers and thus also *the continuation of the dream*.
(GS §54:116)

Nietzsche now proposes that one does not remove the veil; there is nothing behind it. How foolish is one, Nietzsche follows, to think that merely pointing out the “shroud of delusion” destroys that “so-called ‘reality.’” Now, the only destruction of this reality is through creation (GS §58:122). The role of artistic creation resurfaces in our capacity to interpret reality, and there is no reality for us outside of our own interpretation.

A shift away from dualism is also seen in how Nietzsche presents the Dionysian in *Science*. In *Birth*, the contrast of Apollo and Dionysus reflects the dualistic structure of Schopenhauer’s worldview, but in *Science*, the Dionysian is opposed to Christianity and romanticism. With only one world, Dionysus, as the absent god, was not a force that was fleeing. Rather, Dionysus would appear when the world was ready for him, only then would the dream end. Danto proposes that the dream state, though taking on a slightly different meaning depending on the period in which the reference is made, shows the structure of Nietzsche’s thought at two levels. The first, indicated clearly in the passages quoted above, is the notion that with all truth being error, and no way to access what lies behind the illusion, our dream world and waking world are not as different as we suppose. Both are simply illusions—one slightly less real than the other—that are the product of our artistic power to organize the world. This is part of Nietzsche’s ‘system’, as Danto calls it, if he indeed has one (NAP 53–54). The second aspect of Nietzsche’s thought emphasized in reference to the dream within a dream is that the inner is just a product of the outer; the inner world of the human is also mere appearance (NAP 128–129). This topic will be taken up later, but collapsing the inner into the outer takes a step toward undoing Cartesian dualism, albeit not as Descartes would have envisioned it. This approach is similar to the one Danto takes in his own system of thought (BB 143), which is discussed in the next chapter.

This modification of Nietzsche’s thought—the understanding that the integument between our thought and that which lies beyond it is broken—opens up the possibility of an infinite number of realities (GS §377:338). With the perspectivism Nietzsche introduces in *Science*, he recognizes that there is no one truth hidden behind the veil; there is no world but what we create, and there are as many worlds as there are

interpreters. Having proclaimed the shocking realization that “God is dead” (GS §108:167), the only truth available is that of artistic creation in poetic reinterpretation of one’s life. With the possibility of infinite perspectives, Nietzsche settles on what appears to be the fatalistic stance of loving one’s fate (GS §276:223).

Prima facie, this could appear as a stoic stance. But this is far from what Nietzsche had in mind; the stoic is merely thick-skinned (GS §306:245). Now that we understand the situation of human existence, with no metaphysical underpinnings and no metaphysical safety net, the horizon is clear. Referring to a little boat, he speaks of the awesome “horizon of the infinite” and the fear that comes when, having set sail, one realizes that there is no land (GS §124:180). Nietzsche also spoke of a little boat in the first section of *Birth*, quoting a passage from Schopenhauer (WI §63:352–353). In this passage, the little boat weathers the storm because the *principium individuationis* provides the veil of illusion that gives safe passage. Now, standing at the helm, there is no veil of illusion. One sees there is no shore; the conditions of the water may not be ideal, but there is nothing more to wait for. It is safe, as safe as possible in any case, to venture out into the ocean; the horizon is free, and the sea is now “our sea” (GS §343:280).

Having burned all bridges, in a de-mythologized, de-deified world, artistic creativity is no longer fulfilled through ‘art’ (in the narrow sense), which is merely a distraction. Nonetheless, artistic creation (in the wide sense) is needed to become who one is. “What do we learn from artists?” Nietzsche’s answer is, how to make something beautiful and attractive, even when it’s not. “For with them this subtle power usually comes to an end where art ends and life begins; but we want to be the poets of our life” (GS §299:240). The move Nietzsche makes is not to veil the ugly behind the illusion of art, religion, or a metaphysical worldview that provides a theodicy or an opiate. Rather, the world *as is* is the one that should be embraced and held to be beautiful. “I want to learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly ... some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer” (GS §276:223). And what is needed to say ‘Yes’ to the world, to transvalue it, is the artistic creativity of one with an overabundance of life. Through the Dionysian creative will, a new world is forged such that a new subject inhabits it, one that is a “Yes-sayer.”

3.4.2 *Pessimism of Strength*

In the final section of the fourth book, originally the last section of the 1882 edition, Nietzsche introduces Zarathustra, the archetype of the new individual in possession of an overabundance of health. Between 1883 and 1885, before he wrote the preface and fifth book of *Science*, he completed what some consider his masterpiece, *Also sprach Zarathustra*. In it, he again uses the metaphor of the sea:

My brothers, when I told you to break the good and the tablets of the good, then for the first time I launched mankind onto their high seas.

And only now the great fright comes to them, the great looking-around oneself, the great sickness, the great nausea, the great seasickness. (Z III Tablets, §28:172)

In “Old and New Tablets,” Zarathustra urges one to ‘shoot beyond’, to destroy the old and create the new. “Not where you come from shall constitute your honor from now on, but instead where you are going! Your will and your foot, which wants to go over and beyond yourself—let that constitute your new honor!” (Z III Tablets, §12:163). Over and over, the theme is voiced that one should escape the now to the beyond, destroy the old and create a new, leave old friends, find new. Zarathustra is the one who can dance above the abyss with the strength to write his life anew such that it could be relived eternally. In Book Five of *Science*, Nietzsche appears to have changed his mind. Where and what is ‘the new’? Even Zarathustra is not strong enough for this task. Nonetheless, his proclamation that a new form of pessimism, the pessimism of strength he mentions in the 1886 “Attempt at Self-Criticism” (BT), is also raised in Book Five. The Dionysian, which is crucial to his 1872 work, is redefined in the 1887 edition. By opposing Dionysus to Christianity and romanticism—striving for independence from his past—Nietzsche turns the tables on his old mentor Wagner and the brashness of his youth.

Section 370 of *Science* is arguably the most important of the book. In this section, Nietzsche confesses that his previously held notion, that the pessimistic thought embraced by many thinkers in the nineteenth century was somehow superior, was mistaken, and that this form of pessimism is actually romanticism. Twice, Nietzsche asks in the paragraph title caption, “What is romanticism?” Every philosophy and art, he

continues, aids sufferers in the struggle for life, but there are two kinds of sufferers, those who suffer from an over-fullness of life and those who suffer from an impoverishment of life. The latter, with whom Nietzsche places Wagner and Schopenhauer, are seeking rest, and “redemption from themselves through art and knowledge, or intoxication, convulsions, anesthesia, and madness” (GS §370:328). This form of metaphysical need, the art of the saving illusion (once the art of Dionysus), is the weak art of those lacking strength and needing the comfort for their metaphysical ills. But there is another form of sufferer in which Nietzsche redefines the art of Dionysus:

He that is richest in the fullness of life, the Dionysian god and man, cannot only afford the sight of the terrible and questionable but even the terrible deed and any luxury of destruction, decomposition, and negation. In his case, what is evil, absurd, and ugly seems, as it were, permissible, owing to an excess of procreating, fertilizing energies that can still turn any desert into lush farmland. (GS §370:328)

For the new Dionysian, the right attitude toward the world is neither pessimistic nor optimistic, but it sees a land which is to be made lush, no matter what the condition.

Nietzsche opposes the Christian-romantic to the newly coined term “Dionysian pessimist.” Romantic messianism saw in Dionysus, the frenzied wine god, a figure whose association with Christ would “rejuvenate” the West, bringing the power of myth back to the Christian world without its primeval elements (Habermas 1990, 91–93). The unusual position he takes reflects his break with Wagner and, at least in part, a rejection of the romanticism of *Birth*. This naturalistic notion of the Dionysian no longer reflected a duality of worlds, but a duality articulated in terms of psychological attitudes toward creativity—Wagner and Schopenhauer representing non-Dionysian “romantic pessimism” (GS §370:330). The key distinction between the artistic stance he revered in 1872 and the new Dionysian notion of creativity is revealed when one asks, does the creative urge come from superabundance or from hunger, a lack? The creative urge that issues from a lack, or from a metaphysical need, comes from “the hatred of the ill-constituted, disinherited, and under-privileged who destroy, *must* destroy, because what exists, indeed all existence, all being, outrages and provokes them” (GS §370:329). Some forms of artistic expression are like an art of “apotheosis”

spreading “glory over all things.” Other artistic forms manifest torment and struggle. Nietzsche points to a form of pessimism that is “classic” in origin, but, given the staleness of the term, he calls the pessimism of the future “Dionysian pessimism.”

3.4.3 *Anti-Idealism, New Language and the Absent God*

In what appears to be the nadir of Nietzsche’s nihilism (1882), he revisits *Phaedo* (Plato 1997) and the deathbed of Socrates, citing his last words: “Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius” (118a). Nietzsche asserts that the real meaning of these words is “O Crito, *life is a disease*.” The offering of the rooster to Asclepius, the god of medicine, implied that a disease had been healed, and for Socrates, the ills of life had found a cure in death. ‘Is Socrates a pessimist after all?’ Nietzsche asks in apparent dismay. Could he have kept up the cheerful demeanor his entire life while holding in such dark doubts about life? (GS §340:272). Kaufmann suggests that Nietzsche’s use of the “artistic Socrates” in *Birth* was a foreshadowing of the attitude of *la gaya scienza*, embodied in the *Übermensch*, the one who danced over the abyss with the light agility and gaiety of the troubadour.²⁷ I suggest otherwise. References to Socrates are interspersed through all stages of Nietzsche’s work, and rather than foreshadowing, his mention of Socrates seems to reflect some aspect of Nietzsche’s current stance.²⁸ Socrates is a central, though minor, figure who in some senses plays the role of Nietzsche’s interlocutor with reason. He is an unchanging figure in Nietzsche’s work, but as the underlying currents of his own position as an advocate of reason’s other shift, he adapts his posture toward Socrates. This is also true of his view of art and the creative power it manifests, which is surprisingly stable throughout his body of text. Only his perspective on art changes, it is as if Nietzsche is approaching art from every angle; in *Birth* as a saving illusion, in *Human* as an opiate, and a distraction to be ignored, in *Science*, it is the creative impulse that lets one embrace the cold truth of ‘reality’ in a joyous life-affirming manner.

The end-of-art theme emerges in his later thought obliquely and needs further clarification. In *Human*, Nietzsche writes,

That which we now call the world is the result of a number of errors and fantasies, which came about gradually in the overall development of organic beings, fusing with one another, and now handed down to us as

a collected treasure of our entire past—a treasure: for the *value* of our humanity rests upon it. From this world of idea—strict science can, in fact, release us only to a small extent (something we by no means desire), in that it is unable to break significantly the power of ancient habits of feeling. But it can illuminate, quite gradually, step by step, the history of the origin of that world as idea—and lift us, for moments at least, above the whole process. (HH §16:24)

Having lost his confidence in science, Nietzsche sees no way to even “illuminate” the “power of ancient habits.” Zarathustra understands that he is in some sense constituted by this “collected treasure” and sees no way out but to break the old tablets and create new. “New ways I go, a new speech comes to me; I became weary, like all creators, of old tongues. My spirit no longer wants to wander on worn soles” (Z II Mirror:64). Zarathustra sees the usefulness of the ‘way the world is understood’ ending. He wants the new, but only has the tools, the language, of the old tablets. How does he use the old tools to craft new? This phenomenon is similar to what Gombrich argues occurs when the old ‘schemata’ of modern art are rejected for new. The process of how new icons that transmit the meaning of a new era are created is anything but clear. But without jumping too far ahead, the process or artistic creativity is what will evoke the creation of the new out of the old. It is the creative pressure of one set of ‘metaphors’ breaking out of another, older, set of metaphors. What will be carried with it? Ideally, Nietzsche says, nothing must follow.

In *Birth*, Nietzsche saw myth as an alternative reality that could be artistically crafted. If aesthetic listeners held the myth in some way to be true, they could step into this other world, even if just in the tragic opera drama. But now, there is no alternative. There is one world; we are in it. To escape, we cannot craft an alternative; we craft a new world; we banish the old to forge a new subjectivity. Dionysus represents the decentering power of art, the power to tear down identity and enable subjective rejuvenation. But with Dionysian pessimism, there is nowhere to flee; the world, the language, is transformed to accept the new—the return of Dionysus. Danto reads Nietzsche as suggesting, in his later years, that humans lack an agency of their own. There is indeed an agency, but it belongs more to the formative power of language than the individual: “language is a form of thought” (NAP 88). We assume our agency because we are grammatically compelled to do so, but in actuality, we are

formed by an agency-attributing process to which no individual entity corresponds.²⁹ Danto, perhaps controversially, attributes this to the will to power (NAP 80, 88–91). For the purposes of this chapter, it helps to understand Zarathustra as trying to re-create himself by recreating language. This would entail the creative power of art in the wide sense ending one form of ‘creative’ imposition, in order to impose another ‘creatively’ crafted form of language on the self, thereby transforming it. Understanding art in the wider sense, I see in Dionysian pessimism a second, albeit implicit, ‘end-of-art’ thesis in Nietzsche’s writing.

3.4.4 *Twilight of the Idols*

As the window of Nietzsche’s sanity begins to close, he attempts a reconciliation with the positions he advocated in *Birth*. While distancing himself from the views of Schopenhauer, and acknowledging embarrassment at his earlier praise of Wagner, he returns to a position that again embraces the merits of art. In the *Nachlass* of 1888 Nietzsche writes,

What is essential in art remains its perfection of existence, its production of perfection and plenitude; art is essentially *affirmation, blessing, deification of existence*—What does a pessimistic art signify? Is it not a *contradictio*?—Yes.—Schopenhauer is *wrong* when he says that certain works of art serve pessimism. Tragedy does *not* teach “resignation”—To represent terrible and questionable things is in itself an instinct for power and magnificence in an artist: he does not fear them—There is no such thing as pessimistic art—Art affirms. (NW 3:784 [821])

Art is neither pessimistic nor optimistic; it merely affirms what is. Nietzsche recast his philosophical thought in the time between *Birth* and *Twilight*. *Birth*’s dualism gave way to a sort of nihilistic “positivism,” a tendency Danto sees most strongly in the final phase of his coherent work (NAP 64). To distance himself from his earlier romantic position, Nietzsche denies the dualism of subject and object, the phenomenal and the noumenal, cause and effect, as well as optimism and pessimism. *Twilight* is representative of these changes. Art still effects a saving illusion, leveling pessimism and optimism into an affirmation of the creative “lie.” At this stage, Nietzsche seems to give some value to an empirical approach evaluating the experience of art based on the psychological state in which it is created (NAP 96–97; Young 1992, 144–145).

Differentiating between creation and experience, Nietzsche emphasizes that art created out of an affirmation of life—that despite its terrible nature draws from the deepest wells of human creativity—is good art which promotes the health of humanity. Art that is created from the alienation of the romantic mind will manifest its sickness in the beholder.

In *Twilight*, Nietzsche's views on art seem to have changed very little, but as his core philosophy shifted, he circumscribed the topic in a different way, barking up every tree, and then settling, matured and wiser, on a variation of his initial stance that "art affirms." But the puzzling notion that the illusion is better than the 'truth', even after we recognize it as illusion, returns us to his anti-idealistic movement to "complete our deification of nature." He asks, "when may we begin to 'naturalize' humanity in terms of a pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?" (GS §109:169). In his mature writing, there is no opposition of truth to error; there is just error. Hence, illusion is better than truth that is error; the will to power and nihilism replace the dualism of Apollo and Dionysus. In one world, we have nothing but the will to give form and what it acts upon.

Will-to-Power is related to Nihilism, in the mature phase of Nietzsche's philosophy, in much the same way as the Apollonian was related to the Dionysiac in its early phase. Here, as in his conception of art, both forces or concepts are required. Nihilism is needed to clear the way for creativity, to make it plain that the world is without significance or form. And Will-to-Power imposes upon that unshaped substance the form and meaning which we cannot live without. (NAP 210)

With the recognition that the *real*—the Platonic *real*, the idealistic *real* that corrects our being—had to be banished, Nietzsche felt that he must seek refuge in the *other real*, the material real. Yet this other real was once the realm of the Dionysian, the flux beneath the illusion of stability, that he now holds to be inconsequential. But where would he retreat? In *Twilight*, Nietzsche declaims the "History of an Error," in "How the 'Real World' at Last Became a Myth." In this parable, he concludes, "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? The apparent world perhaps? ... But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!*" (TI IV §6:51).

Nietzsche's embrace of the de-mythologized, de-deified world, however, is no more paradoxical than the idealist's embrace of the idea. In *Human*, he had already acknowledged this in theory.

It is not the world as a thing in itself, but the world as idea (as error) that is so rich in meaning, deep, wonderful, pregnant with happiness and unhappiness. This conclusion leads to a philosophy of the logical denial of the world, which, by the way, can be combined just as well with a practical affirmation of the world as with its opposite. (HH §29:34)

The idealist predilection for world rejection is no more or less a matter of choice than Nietzsche's desire to affirm it. Nietzsche claimed that "Plato is a coward in the face of reality – consequently, he flees into the ideal" (TI X §2:118). Thus, to Nietzsche, the idealists had become afraid of the sensual material of life, fearing that the senses would "lure" them from the world of ideas, into a warmth that would melt their cold virtues. "Having 'wax in one's ears' was then almost a condition of philosophizing; a real philosopher no longer listened to life insofar as life is music; he denied the music of life—it is an ancient philosopher's superstition that all music is siren's music" (GS §372:332).

Which world is left, though, when the "real world," the world of "truth" is abolished? One is left "homeless," and the *gaya scienza* is recommended for those who yet have no home. "We feel disfavor for all ideals that might lead one to feel at home even in this fragile, broken time of transition; as for its 'realities,' we do not believe that they will last." The homeless, those with no world, need not plug their ears against the sirens; there is no need to work for progress (GS §377:339). Heller (1988) expresses this well: it is "not merely that from now onwards we shall have to make ourselves at home in *one* world, but much more: that now we must be prepared to exist in *not even one*, at least in no world which would allow us truly to exist" (169).

The "malevolence" of Nietzsche's pessimism comes out in his early prototype for the 1886 introduction to the third edition of *Birth*. Denying the duality of worlds that he wove into the fabric of his 1872 work, he states, "The antithesis of a real and apparent world is lacking here: there is only *one* world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning—a world thus constituted is the real world" (NW 3:691–692 [853]). But the embrace of the world thus described cannot be achieved as is. "This reversal of Platonism will not work," Heller (1988) notes, and Nietzsche appears implicitly to recognize this. The abolition of the "real world" and notions within it such as "God" and "truth" would lead to an incomprehensible nihilism. Heller asks, "would this not be also the abolition of art?" (171).

For Nietzsche to achieve this embrace of the world as “false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning,” he still needs art, even if in the wide sense, and its creative power. It is the power of art that transfigures the world of ugliness into the world of beauty. “*We have need of lies* in order to conquer this reality, this ‘truth,’ that is, in order to live.—That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence.” Art affirms, and “life ought to inspire.” To transform the world with love, an excess of love that the artist has, one must be “a liar by nature.” Thus, “one must be above all an *artist*” (NW 3:692 [853]).

At this point, Nietzsche has completely circled the mountain. “I again return to the place from which I set out – *Birth of Tragedy* was my first revaluation of all values: with that I again plant myself in the soil out of which I draw all that I will and *can* – I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysos” (TI X §5:121). Embracing its tragic message, art is again a saving illusion. The illusion is different from the one proposed in 1872, but the Dionysian illusion, which enables one to take the poison of a metaphysically bankrupt world and survive with the overabundance to love it still, is the pessimism of strength that remains throughout. The pessimism of strength is the power to see the naked world bereft of the filter of the idea and to embrace it as the highest possible ideal. To will the eternal recurrence of this world, exactly as it unfolds now and as it has before, is Nietzsche’s theodicy, “an absolute affirmation [*Ja-sagen*] of the world” (NW 3:627 [1019]).³⁰

Nietzsche’s admission, “we possess art lest we perish of the truth,” is at the same time both clear and impossible (NW 3:832 [822]; see GS §107:163–164). Heller (1988) suggests that perhaps “the sentence instantly *shocks* us into understanding it” (170). But, as with the shock of sublimity, do we really understand? Nietzsche recognizes that reason alone cannot grapple with the issues that tragic art encompasses; tragedy, like sublimity, pushes the beholder beyond language, phenomenon, reason and the tragic action that is itself represented. His final assessment of Socrates suggests that he knew of this dilemma and that he wasn’t morally opposed to what he couldn’t understand; rather, Socrates was afraid to confront the riddle of life that reason could not answer (BT “Attempt at Self-Criticism” §1:4; TI II §12:44). But if the tragic question is not asked, classical art cannot persist, and art’s power to transfigure is lost.

The tragic question, then, must return to art. “Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems, the will to life rejoicing in

its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types – *that* is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I recognized as the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet” (TI X §5:121). Art that does not say ‘Yes’ to the world is negative and will not bring salvation but descent. Reasserting his difference with Schopenhauer, Nietzsche decries the notion that tragedy was evidence that the Greeks were pessimistic. Rather, they loved life; they eternalized it through exaltation of the procreative drive that maintained the species. “The Hellenic instinct expresses itself – its ‘will to life’” through the Dionysian condition, which places “the triumphant Yes to life beyond death and change; true life as collective continuation of life through procreation, through the mysteries of sexuality” (TI X §4:120). There is an element of tragic heroism in this, the struggle of the suprasensible over the sensible, of freedom, even if specious, over fate (Eagleton 2003, 32). This view of tragedy as a saving illusion is comparable to the “delusion of instinct” that Nietzsche and Schopenhauer referred to as the chimera, which disappeared as the hand reached for one thing but retrieved another. Young (1992) argues that Nietzsche’s adoption of the phrase *will to life*, instead of the *will to power*, which he rejected in *Zarathustra* (Z II Self-Overcoming:89–90), is a sign of his acceptance of Schopenhauer’s terminology in *Twilight* (136–137). Yet, after *Birth*, Nietzsche never ceases to renounce Schopenhauer’s pessimism. Young claims that in the end, Nietzsche does return to the same pessimism of Schopenhauer, and again, I differ (3, 148). Rather than viewing the delusion of nature as a ruse to be avoided, through art or through a state of mind that renounces the self and the world, Nietzsche embraces the unending flux of will that drives humanity through the endless cycles of pain and reproduction. This *is* the real world, and we cannot flee it. But we can change who we are and how we live in it. This life must be embraced as the Greek tragedians embraced it, sanctifying its pains and trials as the essence of what is. While assiduously documenting the change in Nietzsche’s stance toward the world, it seems Young does not fully take the implications into account. Young agrees with Danto that truth and error are no longer juxtaposed in Nietzsche’s later writings; there is only the error of a ‘truth’ that reaches for unattainable knowledge and an illusion known to be false (96–97). Tragic art, the tragic sublime, starts with the terror of this error, but its shock allows for a creative transformation that catapults one beyond it. Still, Young can never get past the original pessimism of Nietzsche’s thought.

Nietzsche sees that for Schopenhauer beauty and art are merely a bridge, a temporary state that provides escape and eventually lures one to a state of redemption through world rejection (TI IX §22:91). This, for Nietzsche, represents their greatest divide; for art “is the great stimulus of life” and its creation issues more of the same, not an alternative state, whether escape from the world or ascension of it. Nietzsche asks, is not stimulation toward a desire for life purpose enough? What higher purpose could art need? (TI IX §24:93). In *Science*, through the power of will, the individual with a superabundance of life creates a self-narrative that fills the metaphysical gap left by existence. In this case, the artist acts alone and produces no art, for there is no audience. In *Twilight*, the love of fate is passed on to the species so that individuals do not succumb to the will of nature but make it their own. As the tragedians saw it, the only free act in the face of fate is to embrace it. “A spirit thus emancipated stands in the midst of the universe with a joyful and trusting fatalism, in the faith that only what is separate and individual may be rejected, that in the totality everything is redeemed and affirmed” (TI IX §49:114). The tragic effect, like sublimity, shows how one can attain freedom against fate, but this decentering “totality,” “baptized” with the name of Dionysus, is, nonetheless, not the life-denying altruism of Schopenhauer. The freedom from fate, in the elder Nietzsche’s mind, is the ongoing process of the ‘will to life’, affirmed through tragic art. The tragic question of the unanswerable riddle is asked, and thus the art affirms. But in the final stage of Nietzsche’s theory of art, the tragic poet again has an audience. The transfiguration is not effected through the medium of myth. Rather, it is communicated through artists. “*What does the tragic artist communicate of himself? Does he not display precisely the condition of fearlessness in the face of the fearsome and questionable?... He communicates it, he has to communicate it if he is an artist, a genius of communication*” (TI IX §24:93). The communication of the tragic question is transferred via the common psychological state of health in the artist and the viewer. The will to live with the eternal recurrence of meaningless pain and endless struggle, to love life against all odds, forms the common bond among artists and viewers that is the “neurosis of strength.”

What differentiates the common bond of Nietzsche’s later writings, and the myth of *Birth*, is better understood if we examine his view of inner and outer consciousness. Danto discusses this at length (NAP 98–104). This point is relevant to the next chapter, wherein I argue that

Danto maintains a position that is not far from Nietzsche's. Though Danto holds that Nietzsche had not fully worked out the implications of removing the distinctions between inner and outer consciousness, it gives crucial insight into the writings of his final phase. In *Science* §354, part of Book Five added in 1887, Nietzsche proposes that human consciousness evolved through the evolutionary need for humans to communicate; thus, language and consciousness developed together. Nietzsche's claim is rather extraordinary in that "he was endeavoring to break the grip of a prejudice we are almost unaware that we are dominated by; namely, that we know what we are better than we know anything in the world" (NAP 98). With this, he attempts to break the philosophical assumption that we have privileged access to the internal workings of our minds. The argument is that our inner consciousness, our self-reflexive consciousness that makes us aware of what we are aware of, developed simply so we could communicate. We are vulnerable animals; under great evolutionary pressure, for the sake of making our needs known, and likewise understanding others, we internalized a set of signs, symbols, and the means of communication through language. The possibilities of our internal expression are structured by a system designed for understanding others and communicating details of the external world. Thus, our inner-most world, what we consider makes us unique, actually conforms to an external structure. There is nothing we are conscious of that cannot be communicated, and our inner consciousness is really just an aspect of the external world. The geniuses, the artists counted among them, are the ones who command how the language is constructed; thus, they are the ones who structure how the world is organized for the 'herd' (GS §354:299; cf. GM 2 §24:96).

Given the argument presented in GS §354, what Nietzsche writes in *Twilight*, that the artist is the master communicator, indicates that the artist can in some way structure language such that it embodies a way to embrace life, to say 'Yes' to life, despite the nihilistic realization that all truth is error. Shifting away from Schopenhauer, and the earlier claims made in *Birth*, there is no myth here. Myth is an alternative; now, the artist re-crafts the language, breaking out of it from within and decentering, so that its formative power favors the well-being of the whole. This is not a temporary affect, as the tragedy opera of Wagner, nor is it resigning. Seeing the artist as shifting the language that forms us, and transferring the change in attitude to the species, we may understand Young's (1992) critical observation that the audience for art in Nietzsche's earlier

writings seems to be “nonhuman” (52–53, 120). This also dovetails with Danto’s reading of Nietzsche, which surmises agency to be something beyond the individual. Read this way, the artistic genius is able to ‘reverse-engineer’ the language that forms reality, so to speak, making it better for all, perhaps even intergenerationally.

3.5 THE IDEAL AND THE REAL: PHILOSOPHY AND ART

At the core of Nietzsche’s nihilism is his realization that our language can never correspond to anything in the world that could connect us to truth. This does not necessarily imply that the world is irrational, simply that we cannot properly distinguish irrational from rational. The will to truth, then, is a kind of decline. If no truth is available, then pursuing it does little good, and we must create our own truth. Philosophy, for Nietzsche, should be an instrument used to pursue what gives us health.

*Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: They say, “thus it shall be!” They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labors of all philosophical laborers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, and their will to truth is—*will to power*. (BGE §211:136)*

Philosophers seeking truth in an afterlife or another realm have turned their backs on life. Recalling Hume, reason should serve will; philosophy should help us survive (NAP 57). Danto sees in Nietzsche’s philosophy a number of interesting parallels to logical positivism.³¹ Recognizing a huge gap between Nietzsche and the logical positivists, Danto observes they both focus on the problem of the meaninglessness of sentences that have no reference. Both see utterances with no reference as meaningless, but while the logical positivists thought they could find a solution, Nietzsche perceives only problems (NAP 83–84). For Nietzsche, the solution is to create a new world, one that has meaning for the creator, regardless of the relationship of the utterances to ‘truth’.

The place for art, in Nietzsche’s schema, falls between the extremes of idealism and his notion of nihilistic realism. Truth as ideal, an ideal that seeks a correction of incarnation, is a defacement of the real, of the

spirit and body of humanity. But the naked truth is perhaps harsher still. In *Birth*, Nietzsche held that art flourishes in the human world of myth, where the spectator is enough a part of the myth to accept its saving illusion. When myth is destroyed—the myth that provides the soil for discipline, obedience, and growth in a single direction, or the social spiritual manifestation that is both individual and universal—then, art in the narrow sense is destroyed.

The attitude Nietzsche adopted toward myth when he wrote *Birth* and *The Greek State* represents the last time he viewed artistic creation as a cultural process, a medium through which the transfiguring message is communicated. Nietzsche is painfully aware of the need for an overarching narrative structure, whether it be mythical, religious, or scientific. Despite its “anti-rational” foundation, he recognized that Christianity was the driving force behind the strength of European culture. A driving force, even if illusion, is required if a culture is to progress. In 1886 he writes,

what is essential “in heaven and on earth” seems to be...once more, that there should be *obedience* over a long period of time and in a *single* direction: given that, something always develops, and has developed, for whose sake it is worth while to live on earth; for example, virtue, art, music, dance, reason, spirituality—something transfiguring, subtle, mad, and divine. (BGE §188:101)

This obedience enables production of what is worthwhile in life, though it is neither moral nor good for individuals. In later texts (1887–1888), Nietzsche referred to the self as a “fiction” and wrote that our consciousness is not directed by our own agency, but by a higher one (NW 3:540–542 [552], 666–667 [524]; TI III, VI §8, IX §11, §26). Certainly, Nietzsche does not refer to a divine agency, but his imperatives are directed “to the whole human animal, to *man*” (BGE §188:102). Ultimately, Nietzsche holds that the transfiguring power of creativity in art channels a higher creative agency that is to the benefit of the species.

In this sense, as an aesthetic phenomenon embodied in culture, Nietzsche’s notion of art is similar to Hegel’s. In Nietzschean terms, however, Hegel follows the Socrates of 1872, envisioning a conceptual finalization of rationality, the Idea, through art and history. Nietzsche shunned any philosophy that resembled rational idealism: the ‘Idea’, like a vampire, sucks the life out of the philosopher. The actualization of the Idea through the subject in absolute consciousness is anathema to the

unified balance of Apollo and Dionysus. Hegel's fully articulated Idea exists as a single substance that no longer entails the balance of opposites, leaving the destructive and ecstatic power of Dionysus behind when spirit completes its task. The disintegration of tragic art, which according to Nietzsche comes by the hand of Socratic rationalism, pitted "'rationality' *against* instinct." Nietzsche recognizes the social acceptance of "'rationality' at any price" as "a dangerous force that undermines life" (EH "The Birth of Tragedy" §1:271). But Nietzsche's own attempts to purge the creative thought of idealism led him to a nihilistic notion of only one world. As Hegel sees the end of art in the completion of the Idea in history, Nietzsche is confronted with the end of art as the deification and de-mystification of reality. In Nietzsche's eyes, there still can be a transfiguring rebirth, though not through myth. It is the creative aesthetic force that pushes one beyond nihilism by creating a new world or new language from the old.

Hegel and Nietzsche, despite clear differences, view the mythical, spiritually manifest realm that is necessary for art to survive in a similar manner. Both recognize the existential necessity of imposing a notion of future progress on human consciousness. But for Hegel, through the progress of history, physical reality is prepared by spirit. It is not just that the idea pervades how subjective consciousness understands physicality; the material substance is itself transformed through the becoming of its immanent teleology: the spirit of art prepares the way for the Idea to enter into the world (AE 623). Nietzsche views artistic creativity as a force that should also penetrate reality, but not so that the Idea can be at home there, rather so that humanity can be at home in what is 'real'. The one who can accomplish the artistic feat of affirming the *one* real world is an "artist, a genius of communication" (TI IX §24:93).

[T]he creative spirit whose compelling strength will not let him rest in any aloofness or any beyond, whose isolation is misunderstood by the peoples as if it were flight *from* reality—while it is only his absorption, immersion, penetration *into* reality, so that, when he one day emerges again into the light, he may bring home the *redemption* of this reality: its redemption from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it. (GM 2 §24:96)

But this creative spirit is for a future time. In his final days of sanity, humanity, as Nietzsche views it, still needs art. Art makes life richer: art,

which is not Dionysian, that merely imitates the phenomenon, is just what Plato claims it to be: an imitation of an imitation. But when art, in the wide sense, becomes a part of what is real, rewriting the story of life to make the real bearable, then, it serves the highest purpose in life. "The effect of works of art is to *excite the state that creates art*" (NW 3:784 [821]; see TI IX §24). Thus, the work of art serves no end other than affirming, stimulating and *continuing* the life force.

Nietzsche and Hegel, each coming from opposite corners, strive to overcome dualism: for Hegel all of existence falls under the rubric of mind; Nietzsche denies the existence of anything but one impoverished world. Ultimately, within Hegel's system, the subject-object divide is resolved. The achievements of subjective spirit are dialectically reconciled and sublimated into the all-encompassing absolute. Art plays a part in this process by penetrating the material and manifesting it with the rational spirit that will allow the highest levels of spirit to enter into it. For Nietzsche, there is no rational embodiment of any sort; only the will of the creative individual shapes the world. This may be done through the creation of new language, through art that communicates a new way to live in this world, or through a new philosophy. In each case, the aesthetic power brings a way to order the world such that it best suits the individual. As Nietzsche abandons the common notion of myth as the cultural conduit of aesthetic transformation, he sees, more obliquely, a way for language to transform, somehow ending a form of life no longer beneficial, and ushering in the new. In poetry's "double duty," Hegel also recognizes its struggle to escape a word's prosaic meaning in order to create a new aesthetic meaning, all the while using the same words (AE 969). Nietzsche's call for the new is paradoxical. The call for a new language seems to imply there is something outside of this one world that the language can attain (TI IX §26:94). But he knows there is but this one world. Danto compares it to a Zen *koan*: "his intentionally paradoxical utterances, and his deliberately perverted use of terms might be taken in the spirit of the Zen *koan*, calculated to crack the shell which linguistic habit has erected between ourselves and reality and to expose us to open seas" (NAP 81, xxiv). At times, the striving for the new seems to be just for the individual, but in his most mature writings, he indicates that the creative genius can pass these changes on to others, through the world they create and communicate. Like Hegel, creative 'spirit' penetrates the world, and unlike Hegel, for Nietzsche, the world is not made better; how we conform our self-understanding to it is.

How the attempt to overcome dualism plays a role in the function of art is of particular importance for this study and is relevant to the discussion of Danto in the next chapter. While Hegel postulates a complex philosophical system to surmount the problem of subject-object dualism, Nietzsche takes a less systematic route. For Hegel, reconciliation of subject and object occurs through the spirit's organization of the material into more rationally integrated forms associated with mind, with art playing a significant role in this process. By leveling the inner and outer realm, pushing the inner world out of the exclusive and privileged realm of subjective agency, Nietzsche argues that anything we are conscious of is capable of communication in common terms because our inner conscience evolved solely for that purpose. The power of creativity itself has agency, and human consciousness works under its direction; thus, human agency is achieved less through inner knowledge than in our creative articulations. Creativity provides agency insofar as it makes it possible to move "beyond whatever we have words for" (TI IX §26:94). In this way, artistic creativity penetrates the inner and the outer: it decenters the self when this difference is made less stark, and by placing agency within the purview of the will to power, new values can be created, which can be communicated without the medium of myth. Without resorting to idealism of any sort, Nietzsche suggests a way to aesthetically communicate a new way of life, to legislate new values, perhaps across generations, through the formative, and in some sense agency-giving, power of new forms of language and culture. For Nietzsche, creative actions—in the form of art or simply 'creating anew'—transcend the artist. As I read Nietzsche, and I believe Danto concurs, the aesthetic creativity in some sense takes on agency of its own—the absent Dionysus—and as it returns, it penetrates, and redeems, reality "from the curse that the hitherto reigning ideal has laid upon it."

Philosophy, for Nietzsche, was an aesthetic phenomenon that could help make one the poet of one's life. Without the aesthetic phenomenon, which he recognizes as a "cult of the untrue," "the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable" (GS §107:163). Nietzsche held in 1872 that art could justify an aesthetic existence. In his final analysis, art cannot do this, but it can at least make life sufferable. "As an aesthetic phenomenon, existence is still *bearable* for us" (GS §107:163). To try to correct the world, to abandon the fabric of existence to an ideal

is the highest intellectual crime in Nietzsche's view. But the abolition of the world of ideals leaves one a convalescent and in need of an artistic illusion to bear the pessimism. This Dionysian pessimism, channeled through the artistic illusion that provides a desideratum for life, becomes a pessimism of strength.

NOTES

1. Tracy Strong (1998) seems to be an exception. Eschewing chronological exegesis, she states, "It is my conviction...that Nietzsche's works are all (or almost all) of a piece" (ix).
2. Henceforth referred to as *Birth*.
3. Henceforth referred to as *Human*.
4. Karl Schlechta's *Werke* seems to be the exception, seeing two major periods outside of the writings of his youth, the breaking point being Nietzsche's departure from Basel in 1879 (NW).
5. Henceforth referred to as *Science*.
6. Brobjer (1995) argues that the phases of Nietzsche's work are broken down differently depending on whether the focus is his moral or religious writing (283–285). Manuel Knoll (2014) argues that despite the utility found in dividing Nietzsche's work into three periods, it makes little difference when it comes to the normative core of his political thought (243).
7. Henceforth referred to as *Twilight*.
8. I consider alternative introductions found in the *Nachlass* to published works discussed herein important to the topic and need no further justification when citing them. I cite the *Nachlass* as organized by Karl Schlechta. I have used Walter Kaufmann's (Nietzsche 1968c) English translations of these passages. I have checked Kaufmann's excellent translations and see no reason to alter them.
9. Walter Kaufmann is critical of Danto's claim that Nietzsche's texts can be read in any order, as well as his failure to properly distinguish the value of published and unpublished writings in what he refers to as Danto's otherwise distinguished study. See Kaufmann's (Nietzsche 1968a) translation of *Genealogy of Morals* (458 n5). In the Expanded Edition, Danto concedes that there is an ordering to the aphorisms and to Nietzsche's work in general, but he still insists that Nietzsche's aphorisms can be read in any order (NAP xvii).
10. "dass es nicht möglich ist mit der Wahrheit zu leben: dass der 'Wille zur Wahrheit' bereits ein Symptom der Entartung ist" (Nietzsche 1920, 326).
11. "Pan himself symbolizes speech. The reason why he is more fully known as Pan *aipolos*, 'Pan the goatherd', is that speech is that which 'indicates

everything and is always on the move' (*ho pan mēnuōn kai aei polōn*). Why is speech always on the move? Because it deviously shifts between truth and falsity. It has a dual nature" (Sedley 2003, 96).

12. Compare the German found in the *Nachlass* of 1886 "Der Wille zum Schein, zur Illusion, zur Täuschung, zum Werden und Wechseln (zur objektivierten Täuschung) gilt hier als tiefer, ursprünglicher, »metaphysischer« als der Wille zur Wahrheit, zur Wirklichkeit, zum Schein" (NW 3:693), with the German in another draft of the new introduction to the 1886 *Birth*. In the following version, Nietzsche contrasts *Sein*, or being, with appearance, *Schein*. "Die Wille zum *Schein*, zur Illusion, zur Täuschung, zum Werden und Wechseln ist tiefer, 'metaphysischer' als der Wille zur *Wahrheit*, zur Wirklichkeit, zum Sein" (1920, 326–327). This translates to, "The will to *appearance*, to illusion, to deception, to becoming and transformation is deeper, 'more metaphysical' than the will to *truth*, to reality, to being." The former version, as translated by Kaufmann, contrasts 'appearance' with 'mere appearance'. The juxtaposition of appearance and being that we see in these drafts is not often made in Nietzsche's published texts, and then, not before 1887, except in *Human* §51, *Wie der Schein zum Sein Wird*, he accepts how a person eventually becomes what they appear to be, despite that they may start out as something completely different. At this anti-metaphysical stage, he seems to accept the difference between *Schein* and *Sein*, but also acknowledges that the difference may not matter in the end, perhaps anticipating the attitude he took describing the dream within the dream. In *Twilight*, Nietzsche abrades the philosopher's reason for blaming the senses for hiding being, *Sein*, behind the illusion of *Schein*. "Es muß ein Schein, eine Betrügerei dabei sein, daß wir das Seiende nicht wahrnehmen: wo steckt der Betrüger?" (NW 2:957). In *Science*, note the first poem in the "Appendix of Songs" is "To Goethe."

Welt-Spiel, das herrische
Mischt Sein und Schein: -
Das Ewig-Närrische
Mischt uns - hinein!...

World game, the ruling force,
Blends false and true:
The eternally fooling force
Blends us in too.

This ambiguity is at the core of a central theme that Nietzsche wrestles with throughout his philosophy. The ability to cope with this 'blending' is always tied to the creative capacity.

13. Note that Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was first printed in 1859, the year before Schopenhauer died.
14. "Daher kann, in solchem Fall, die Natur ihren Zweck nur dadurch erreichen, daß sie dem Individuo einen gewissen *Wahn* einpflanzt, vermöge dessen ihm als ein Gut für sich selbst erscheint, was in Wahrheit bloß eines für die Gattung ist, so daß dasselbe dieser dient, während es sich selber zu dienen wähnt, bei welchem Hergang eine bloße, gleich darauf verschwindende Chimäre ihm vorschwebt und als Motiv die Stelle einer Wirklichkeit vertritt. Dieser *Wahn* ist der *Instinkt*" (SW II:688).
15. He often links pessimism to nihilism, sometimes suggesting that pessimism is an early form of nihilism (BGE §208; *Nachlass*: NW 3:547, 533, 693).
16. Compare the German terms Nietzsche chooses for delusion or madness and instinct in the following quotation with the way they are used by Schopenhauer. "Es ist dies eine solche Illusion, wie sie die Natur, zur Erreichung ihrer Absichten, so häufig verwendet. Das wahre Ziel wird durch ein Wahnbild verdeckt: nach diesem strecken wir die Hände aus, und jenes erreicht die Natur durch unsre Täuschung" (NW I:31). Schopenhauer's usage of *Wahn* can be seen in the quotation (SW II:688) of W2 Chapter 44 above. Note also the phrase, "This *delusion* is *instinct*," is expressed similarly in the German used by Schopenhauer, *Wahn ist der Instinkt*, and by Nietzsche, *Wahn ist als Instinkt*. "Dieser erhabene metaphysische *Wahn ist als Instinkt* der Wissenschaft beigegeben und führt sie immer und immer wieder zu ihren Grenzen, an denen sie in Kunst umschlagen muß: auf welche es eigentlich, bei diesem Mechanismus, abgesehen ist" [emphasis SS] (BT §15; NW I:84–85). In the following passages Nietzsche's use of illusion and delusion, *Schein* and *Wahn*, corresponds closely to Schopenhauer's usage. Nietzsche expresses the contrast of appearance and illusion in this passage referring to the phenomenal (*Erscheinung*) world as deception: "unter die »Täuschungen«, als Schein, Wahn, Irrtum, Ausdeutung, Zurechtmachung, Kunst" (BT "Attempt at Self Criticism §5, NW I:14). Schopenhauer contrasts illusion and reality in the following passage. "*Error* is opposed to truth as deception of *reason*; *illusion* is opposed to *reality* as deception of *understanding*" (W1 §6:24). The usage of *Schein* as illusion in the German: *Der Wahrheit steht der Irrtum als Trug der Vernunft, der Realität der Schein als Trug der Verstandes gegenüber* (SW I:58), is the same in both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. The similarity in usage fortifies the suggested connection between Nietzsche and Schopenhauer regarding the delusion of nature that lurks behind the phenomenon.
17. There is some dispute of this in the literature. Many argue that Nietzsche is a Darwinist, not simply because he embraces an ethos of survival of the

- fittest, but because he appears to be accepting it as having some scientific merit. See Knoll (2014, 244). I am looking at Nietzsche performatively here, in terms of his placing the survival of ideas over the genes.
18. Berrios and Ridley (2013) break Nietzsche's usage of Apollo and Dionysus into three categories, the metaphysical, epistemological, and aesthetic. For the purposes of this chapter, two categories are sufficient. I bundle the epistemological aspects into the metaphysical.
 19. Though Nietzsche's philosophical appropriation of the mythical opposition between Apollo and Dionysus is effective insofar as it is symbolic of the divide between appearance and illusion, it is odd that he proclaims Apollo to be the god of the visual arts when he is often depicted with the harp as his instrument of choice. The tale of Marsyas and his ill-fated wager with Apollo was viewed in antiquity as representative of the opposition between Apollo and Dionysus. This account confirms the dual nature of Apollo and Dionysus but belies Nietzsche's appellation of Apollo as the god of the visual arts. According to legend, Marsyas found a flute made by Athena. Athena was not happy with her creation and discarded it. Marsyas was able to play the instrument with such skill that he challenged Apollo to a musical contest, wagering he could play better on his flute than Apollo on his harp. The first round of the challenge ended in a draw, but Apollo asked for a second round. In the second round, Apollo played the harp upside-down, a feat Marsyas could not duplicate. The wager allowed the winner to treat the loser in any manner he chose. Apollo chose to tie Marsyas to a tree and flay him alive. The suffering figure of Marsyas has parallels to the terrible end the young Dionysus meets at the hands of jealous gods; thus, they are equated.
 20. *Die Geburt der Tragödie, Oder: Griechenthum und Pessimismus, Neue Ausgabe mit dem Versuch einer Selbstkritik* (NW 3:1384). See Nietzsche's retrospective review of *Birth* in *Ecce Homo*. In it he states, "'Hellenism and Pessimism' would have been a less ambiguous title – suggesting the first instruction about how the Greeks got over their pessimism, how they overcame it" (EH 270).
 21. In "Taking Danto's Suggestion Seriously: Nietzsche's Theory of Truth Revisited," Tiziana Andina proposes that Nietzsche has a two-tier epistemology, arguing that he uses a "naïve ontology" and a metaphysical "prescriptive theory" that are fundamentally neo-Kantian (LLP 483–509).
 22. The first title of the work, printed privately in Basel in 1871, was *Sokrates und die griechische Tragödie*. The 1872 text was roughly the same, but the passages pertaining to Wagner and the modern opera were missing (NW 3:1384). The title for the private printing supports Nietzsche's claim in the third, 1886 printing, that the work is oriented more to the Hellenic attitude and the death of tragedy at the hands of Socrates, rather than tragedy's rebirth through the music of Wagner.

23. Habermas is citing Wagner, *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen*, vol. 10, 211.
24. Midway in our life's journey, I went astray
 from the straight road and woke to find myself
 alone in a dark wood. How shall I say
 what wood that was! I never saw so drear,
 so rank so arduous a wilderness!
 Its very memory gives a shape to fear.
- Dante (1982), *The Inferno*, Canto I.
25. "*ein ewiges Meer, ein wechselnd Weben, ein glühend Leben*" (NW 1:54).
26. Nietzsche's phrase referring to the thinker's or artist's "power of judgment, highly sharpened and practiced," *seine Urteilskraft, höchst geschärft und geübt* (NW 1:549), is reminiscent of language used in Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Kant states, of the "aesthetic idea," that it "is a presentation of the imagination which is conjoined with a given concept and is connected, when we use imagination in its freedom, with such a multiplicity of partial presentations that no expression that stands for a determinate concept can be found for it. Hence, it is a presentation that makes us add to a concept the thoughts of much that is ineffable, but the feeling which quickens our cognitive powers and connects language, which otherwise would be mere letters, with spirit" (K3 §49:185). The corresponding German phrases *Asthetische Idee... Erkenntnisvermoegen belebt* (KW X:253) are not exact matches with Nietzsche's, but the similarity may not be coincidental. The influence of Schopenhauer on Nietzsche's early works is clearly established, yet the influence of Kant is often underplayed. In an 1866 letter to Hermann Mushacke, Nietzsche wrote after reading a book by Albert Lange, which had greatly inspired him, "Kant, Schopenhauer und dies Buch von Lange – mehr brauche ich nicht" (NWJ 1:198–199). Kant is clearly one of the strongest influences on the young Nietzsche. In the years of 1867–1868, Nietzsche completed his studies of Kant from the two-volume work on Kant by Kuno Fischer and Kant's third *Critique* (NWJ 1:198–199). It is established that the only work that Nietzsche ever read in original by Kant was the *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (NWJ 1:504). Often, Kant and Schopenhauer are praised in the same passage for having the courage to recognize the limits of knowledge. This certainly shows that Nietzsche was quite familiar with Kant's aesthetic writings, even if his commentary on other aspects of Kant's work may have been less apt. In his rejection of Schopenhauer, without rejecting the strong metaphysical differentiations proposed by Kant, perhaps under the influence of Lange, Nietzsche is reverting to the pragmatic acceptance of the relevance of the metaphysical duality of the world that

- is represented in the writing of Kant's third *Critique*. Though the questions that Nietzsche and Kant are asking in their larger projects are different, their ultimate assessments of the place of art, in the third *Critique* and *Human*, are of interest. It has been noted that Nietzsche's first critique of Schopenhauer was a neo-Kantian critique (HH, "Introduction" by translator xxiii). Nietzsche's passages concerning the balance of geniuses and knowing the minds of others (HH §158, §180) are similar to Kantian notions of the *sensus communis*. The positions that Nietzsche takes in the work following *Human* come even closer to some of the Kantian notions of artistic practice. In *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*, Nietzsche views art as something that regenerates culture and promotes human decency. Compare my assessment of the Kantian notion of artistic practice in Chapter 2. See Young (1992), Sects. 14, 15, 22 in the chapter on "Human, All-too-human." Of humorous interest is Nietzsche's comment on the difficulty Kant had grounding the categorical imperative. "Kant who had obtained the 'thing in itself' by stealth...was punished for this when the 'categorical imperative' crept stealthily into his heart and led him *astray—back* to 'God,' 'soul,' 'freedom,' and 'immortality,' like a fox who loses his way and goes astray back into his cage" (GS §335:264).
27. See Kaufmann's note GS §327 n54, 258. Also see GS §340 n70, 272–273.
 28. Nietzsche's changing views on Socrates are discussed at length in Nehamas (2000).
 29. Danto uses text from the *Nachlass* to make his case (NW 3:487–488 [556], 540–541 [552], 587 [707], 667 [524], 673 [477]). Danto gives equal weight to the *Nachlass* and Nietzsche's published works; nonetheless, he also supports this argument using these published works (TI III §5; BGE §54; GS §354).
 30. The only reference I found in which Nietzsche connected affirmation of the world and theodicy is in the *Nachlass* of 1888.
 31. Danto writes, "my aim [in writing *Nietzsche as Philosopher*] was to show that he was or should have been the patron saint of analytical philosophy" (LLP 21).

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

- LLP Auxier, Randall E., and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. *The Philosophy of Arthur C. Danto*.
- BB Danto, Arthur. *The Body/Body Problem*.
- NAP Danto, Arthur. *Nietzsche as Philosopher*.
- NW Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke und Briefe*.
- NWJ Janz, Curt Paul. *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke und Briefe*.
- BGE Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
- BT Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music*. Translated by Shaun Whiteside.

- EH Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Ecce Homo*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
- GM Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale.
- GS Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann.
- HH Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Human, All Too Human*. Translated by Marion Faber, with Stephen Lehmann.
- TI Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale.
- Z Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. Translated by Adrian Del Caro.
- SW Schopenhauer, Arthur. *Sämtliche Werke*.
- W1 Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. 1.
- W2 Schopenhauer, Arthur. *The World as Will and Representation*. Vol. 2. Translated by E. F. J. Payne.

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CHAPTER 4

Danto and the End of Art: Surrendering to Unintelligibility

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the century following Hegel's presentiment that art would find its end, Danto believed he found it on East 74th Street in Manhattan. Danto's encounter with an exhibition at the Stable Gallery, piled high with instances of Andy Warhol's *Brillo Box*, led him to a philosophical transformation. For Danto, these boxes, indistinguishable in appearance from their commercial counterparts except for size, signified the confluence of the art object and the object it is said to represent, an event that marked the end of an artistic era. The notion that identical objects should have a different ontological status, one being art, the other not, is crucial in Danto's schema. Why do Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* count as artworks while the original Brillo boxes, created by the commercial artist James Harvey for retail purposes, do not? Danto's philosophical definition of art turns on the questions posed by indiscernible objects such as these, for these works no longer attempt to present art expressively or even mimetically, which in some formal sense imposes a definition of *what art is*; rather, they ask the question 'Why is this art?'¹ This momentous shift, for Danto, signaled the end of the western narrative of art history, which for centuries focused on art as representational, either of nature, or of our human inner life, or both.

This chapter investigates Danto's claim that the narrative of art is over: with the era of art at an end, art is free from any "master narrative"; art can be whatever it will, and philosophy steps into explain art's

meaning. This mirrors, as Danto makes explicit throughout his writings on the philosophy of art, Hegel's nineteenth-century claim that the spirit of art has spread its wings above art in its current form, moving over it toward the more conceptual format of philosophy. Danto's claim is, nonetheless, significantly different from Hegel's, and I aim to show it cannot be fully understood without reference to his earlier 'non-aesthetic' writings. Danto is best remembered for his writings on art, but before his 1964 essay "The Artworld,"² despite being an artist before becoming a philosopher, he had never written on art. Danto's writings form a system, which, by his own admission, were never completely integrated (BB 15). Many, maybe most, commentators will not understand Danto's philosophy of art fully if they do not read his earlier works. Without understanding his 'system', they tend to misread him. This is also true for my own early studies of his work. To some extent, Danto is to blame for these misreadings, as his attraction to the Hegelian end-of-art thesis has led him all too often to be read as a Hegelian.³ As well, Danto makes frequent explicit and implicit references to his previous writings, and many charge that he proceeds with unstated premises⁴; thus, without understanding several of the key tenets of his philosophy, one may form a reading of his aesthetic writings that is only partially correct. It could also be the case, as Randall Auxier notes, that, true to his own philosophy, Danto's full system did not come into view until his system, in his later years, was complete (LLP xxv).

4.1.1 *Danto's System*

Danto tells us that he was inspired by Santayana's five volume *Life of Reason* to write a system of philosophy in five volumes; *Analytical Philosophy of History*, *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*, *Analytical Philosophy of Action*, *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, and *The Body/Body Problem*,⁵ are the results of this endeavor (BB 14–15). These books, which I will discuss in greater detail later—concerning narrative sentences, what we can know in the space between language and the world, basic actions, the definition of art, and his representational materialist answer to the mind body problem—are all relevant to the theory of art he presents in *Transfiguration*. On pages 204–208 of *Transfiguration*, he gives an explanation for what he means by "style is the man." It is my assessment that his non-aesthetic writings, in particular the themes

presented in *Body/Body*, are needed to understand this section and to go beyond a superficial reading of his theory of art.

One reason that Danto is often miscategorized as a Hegelian, outside of his frequent praise of Hegel's aesthetic theory and his apparent adoption of Hegel's end-of-art theory, is that in his effort to overcome the mind/body problem, he shares Hegel's aim of overcoming transcendent metaphysics, a task Hegel has in common with Kant. Though his approach is more ontological than Kant's epistemological project, Danto strives to 'eliminate' Cartesian dualism by reducing, in some manner, the significance of the inner-subjective state that Descartes uses to ground his own existence as one separate from the external, material world. In the end, Danto recognizes that the dualism cannot be completely eliminated, and he posits a sort of Spinozistic-materialism in response to Descartes, arguing that there are two aspects of material existence: there is material that represents and material that does not (BB 192, LLP 60–61). He refers to this as "representational materialism."⁶

A critic once argued that one does not need to know anything about the subject in Danto's philosophy of art. I could not disagree more. Though Danto clearly eschews the Cartesian notion of inner subject often evoked in Continental philosophy, in order to support his own answer to the mind/body problem, he replaces the Cartesian subject with a 'thinner' subject that in my estimation is outside the mainstream of philosophical thought. The thinner notion of the person, that Danto refers to as *res* or *ens representans*,⁷ is, I hope to show, the key to understanding Danto's argument at a deeper level.⁸ In fact, in my assessment, his arguments cannot be fully understood without understanding his account of the human as a representational being. In *Body/Body* Danto writes:

There is a general problem of how our representations are embodied, presumably in our central nervous system, but I have been struck, in reading through the essays that compose this volume, by how frequently I drew upon analogies between human beings and artworks, preeminently paintings and photographs, to clarify issues in the metaphysics of embodiment and of truth. In the past some years I have written extensively on the concept of art, but what these essays make vivid is the degree to which that concept has dominated the way I have thought philosophically about any topic, and this has set my writing apart from much of the philosophical mainstream. But that can be explained, I think, through the fact that art is typically thought to be marginal to philosophy, a kind of ontological frill,

whereas it is in my view absolutely central to thinking about subjects—especially subjects having to do with our own philosophical nature, to which the pertinence of the concept of art seems initially remote ... [These essays] project a single, evolving conception of human beings, considered as beings who represent as *ens representans* with works of art simultaneously being understood as materially embodied representations. (BB ix-x)

As does Hegel, Danto holds that art and philosophy are intertwined in the course of the lived experience, and they both strive, in their philosophies, to overcome the subject-object dualism defining the mind/body problem. This, given Danto's claim that art has ended, leads readers to the conclusion that there must be a Hegelian reading of Danto. But even if influenced early on by Hegel, as many have noted, Danto takes a fundamentally different position and his solution to the mind/body problem moves in many ways closer to Nietzsche as a "body/body" problem. The representational subject Danto postulates lives in a "sentential state,"⁹ in which "belief is a relationship between a person and a sentence" (LLP 32). But humans are not the only material that represents; hence, examining this connection more closely will yield a fuller account of his theory of art.

My hope is not so much to urge more philosophers to become aestheticians, much less philosophers of history, but to make plain what we sacrifice in our ultimate self-understanding if we think of art and of history as anything but fundamental to how we are made, and how our bodies must therefore be in order for this to be true. (BB x)

Danto had planned to write a book on *ens representans* (BB 15), but confessed he never had the energy. Still, he sees representations as the unifying theme of all of his five major works (LLP 29–30), and pushing the implications of his thinner, perhaps Zen-like, notion of the person leads to a far richer understanding of his theory of art. It also reveals a stream of thought that points to what I see as a radically different account of humans and their art, and though it goes well beyond the scope of this book, it could open the way to new theological insights.

4.1.2 *Common Themes and Parallel Structures*

Mark Rollins suggests that Danto's work can be understood broadly in terms of the concepts of representation and indiscernibility (DCR 1–2). At the core of Danto's work is the idea that the sphere of human mental

existence is mediated through representations (BB x, 17), and the parts of the world to which we have no access are experienced only indirectly through representations.¹⁰ Danto holds that the sentence, as the human, stands simultaneously within and without the world. As far as truth is concerned, the sentence stands outside of the world, for it is the world that makes a thing true. As a part of the world, sentences—as do humans—stand in relation, for the most part causal, to other parts of the world. These relations are of a different order than the relations that make a sentence true. Sentences—like humans—exist in an area between these two orders, in the gap between language and world (APK ix). For this reason, Danto holds that representations are the best way to ground a philosophical system. Representations, as he construes them, mediate between language and world; insofar as understanding is not collapsed into knowledge, the relations of the world are not collapsed into what is true. The representation for Danto allows relations between parts of the world to precede truth, allowing for the formation of definitions upon which knowledges' truth or falsity is based (APK 159–178; LLP Ankersmit 415). Representations are not, for Danto mental entities that exist independently in the subject's mind, as Descartes may have envisioned it. Representations are not self-contained (self-instantiating) concepts (APK 167), they are part of the world. While the representation for Danto is cognitive, it is not exclusively so, it includes other more specifically human aspects of the world which go beyond the scope of philosophy. The human, as Danto sees us, is representational: we are *res representans*, not *res cogitans*.

The set of indiscernible objects or events, as David Carrier notes, is part of a method of discovery. The discovery of a set of indiscernibles presents a problem that cannot be resolved visually (in the case of art) and demands a philosophical answer as to how the two are actually different. The final phase of the investigation is a demonstration, employing a philosophical theory that shows how the indiscernibles are not really the same at all (DCR Carrier 22). The discovery leads to the realization that the narrative description can transform the experience of an event, it differentiates an action from a movement, distinguishes knowledge from belief, an artwork from its counterpart in the world of objects, or explains how a lived body cannot be reduced to the neurochemical structure it inhabits.

I want to point out three structures or motifs used throughout his works. First is the notion that some events, or knowledge thereof, occur in a mediated vs. unmediated manner, such as a basic vs. non-basic action.

In the case of art, style is ‘basic’ insofar as true style is unmediated and cannot be learned, and a body is something that can only be known directly; what it ‘knows’ of itself cannot really be known in a mediated fashion. Another central theme is the historical indexing of representations upon which we base our knowledge and action. Though *prima facie*, the philosophical interest in “epistemology, theory of action, and historiography” is for all times, the definition of art is knowable only in abstraction until it can be known directly through the unfolding of history. Only through the changing forms of art, in particular the modern form, is the essence of art made clear (DCR Carrier 18). In *Body/Body*, one of Danto’s later works, he discusses the unavoidability of inserting ourselves into our own analysis; we are outside of the world in our relation to truth, we are inside of it in relation to causality (APK; CT xxiii). The eliminativists strive to remove any aspect of “folk psychology” from theoretical or scientific analysis. But “folk psychology” is a representation, our history, and representation is needed, for science itself is a representation (BB 200–203, WA 97). Removing history from the process of scientific research would make it impossible. In the end, Danto questions the extent to which the self—one’s voice or style, or the lived experience of the writer—should be omitted from philosophy (BB 241–245). The result of revealing the difference between phenomena or objects that appear indiscernible is to understand that through narrative description revealing a rule, a “transformation in perception” occurs: objects that remain constant in the visual field, can be “seen in a whole new set of relationships” (NK 221). A mere object can become a work of art, a world can shift when something is added or removed from one’s representation, causing one to change one’s philosophical position, as *Brillo Box* changed Danto’s, and Kuhn’s philosophical revelations changed his own world (DCR 309; BB 18). The closing of a ‘chapter in history’ must occur before narrative statement referencing that period can be justified. Still, historical events or chapters acquire meaning as time passes, and as Donald Davidson noted, the basic action acquires consequences, intended and unintended in the course of history (Herwitz and Kelly 2007, 14). To be known, art’s definition relied on its historical completion in modernity. Though he never works it out in detail, Danto employs a category of indirectly knowable possibilities, which become known through the passage of time.¹¹ This concept is prevalent in his philosophy of history, and in the end of art. It is not the case, though, that this epistemic category is used in his theory of action and knowledge.

Lastly, Danto frequently employs the terms “transparent” and “opaque.”¹² His use of transparent is at odds with its common use in political discourse, where it means ‘visible to all’ in the name of openness. For Danto, it is more like a transparency, something always there that one is unaware of. Opaque refers to what happens when the transparency becomes ‘foggy’ or ‘blurred’ such that it is no longer clear, and one becomes aware of it. He generally refers to this in terms of the transparency of one’s representation of the world. One’s background presuppositions cannot be prehended because they are constantly engaged and simply accepted as true. One’s world is opaque when one can ‘know’ it, or be aware of it. At this point, it is no longer “transparent.” In the case of customs or laws that are transparent to locals, these rules, the world of others, may become “opaque” insofar as a newcomer is aware of customs that she does not know and may have to have unstated customs or rules made explicit (APA 114).

4.2 DANTO’S THEORY OF HISTORY AND HIS THEORY OF ART

Below, I introduce Danto’s essentialist definition of art and discuss elements of Danto’s non-aesthetic writings I believe are needed to explain his aesthetic theory and defend, to the extent that I can, his claim that art has ended. Most of these are alluded to in his aesthetic writings, but without a deeper understanding, because some of Danto’s thoughts fall outside of the mainstream, the chance for a misreading becomes greater. Topics I will discuss are, his account of narrative sentences, which are needed to understand his end-of-art topic, and his notion of class-type and world, to clarify how they relate to his use of style.

4.2.1 *A Short Version of Danto’s Theory of Art*

As with indiscernible actions, Danto answers the question posed by *Brillo Box*, ‘Why is this art?’ by seeking a theory that shows how the phenomenon in question can be differentiated by going beyond what is perceptually given. Danto’s essentialist definition of art delimits the realm of art from that of the everyday with two necessary, but not sufficient, conditions that he adopts from Hegel: (1) the art object is ‘about something’, rather than ‘being something’, and (2) the manifest intention or aboutness is embodied.¹³ Danto cites the following passage from Hegel’s

Aesthetics as the source of his essentialist definition of art. “What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment but our judgement also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration (i) the content of art, and (ii) the work of art’s means of presentation, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of both to one another” (AA 30–31, 194–195). The aboutness of a work is linked to the place and time of the artist, and again following Hegel, Danto holds that the meaning of an artwork is stamped with the iconography of the times. Thus, the art of different eras is understood to be incommensurate, even artworks that appear to have a common formal style. We encounter here Danto’s notion of “knowable” ideas that are not actualized in history at a certain point in time. The essence or concept of art is, and was, pluralistic; this is the intension of art, but the historical extension of art manifests incompatible differences across times. His historically indexed essentialist definition of embodied meaning strives to address this. But the essence of art is only directly known through history, which for Danto is art’s end. “The concept of art, as essentialist, is timeless, but the extension of the term is historically indexed; it really is as if the essence reveals itself through history” (AA 196). When art is defined as such, artworks are interpreted through the common, historically indexed, conceptual layer he calls the “artworld.” Certain works were simply not “possible” at earlier times, even if their creation was not quite “necessitated” by their own times. When the artworld, something like a covering law of art, is not recognized implicitly, it must be referenced explicitly. For Danto (1964), “to see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld” (580).¹⁴ In his final work, *What Art Is*, Danto augments his historically indexed theory of embodied meaning “with another condition that captures the skill of the artist.” He defines art as “wakeful dreams” (WA 48). The last condition, which I will discuss later, has to do with the manner in which artistic metaphors, whatever the art form, represent an element of the waking world through an oblique but intelligible representation in the work: the internal perspective of the dream is externalized through “punning” references to “dreamlike” representations of conscious states (TC 205, BB 89). That the audience understands these reveals the public nature of what we hold to be our inner selves (WA 49).

The focus of Danto’s aesthetic theory is more on ‘art’ than on artists. Thus, the artworld, one might speculate, is what the subjective perspective of the Hegelian ‘spirit of art’, or *subjective Begriff*, might be, if

indeed it had a perspective. The “world,” as Danto defines it for subjects in their social and historical context, is an individual’s ‘internal’¹⁵ belief set. He uses this notion of *world*¹⁶ in his explanation of other minds. When we strive, in our time and in history past, to understand (not explain) the minds of others, we strive to understand their actions within a frame of reference grounded in their internal belief set—what they believe is rational based on the background presupposition of their historical place and time. We assess the interior of other minds as something external to us, but our own *world* is off limits to us. We simply refer to it as the truth of our *world*, with a rationale that is imperceptible to us. This notion of *world* is what the artist puts in the artwork through her style, manifesting the work, without being conscious of how, with the manner of the times (historical index). Agreeing with Brigitte Hilmer’s (1998) observation that Danto “tends to speak of art as the subject of self-knowledge” (73), I believe the artworld would, by some analogy, be the *world* of art. Thus, the artworld, reflecting the vagaries of history, provides the conceptual structure through which we interpret the art of any given time, including our own.

In our own time, which Danto refers to as “post-historical,” the artworld has internalized an infinitely pluralistic “style of using styles” (AA 10). Whereas the past era of art conformed first to a representational style, then one of abstraction, and finally an age of manifestos that stylistically embodied art’s striving for self-definition, in the post-historical *world* of art, no style is better than any other. Danto understands that, in our time, the story of art has closed, which leads to his claim that the “era of art” is over. This claim is better understood in terms of his narrative philosophy of history, which focuses on what Danto calls narrative sentences. Take the following example. In 1618, it could not have been stated that ‘The Thirty Years’ War has begun today.’ Only from the perspective of future historians, after the war’s completion in 1648, could one make reference to The Thirty Years’ War (NK 152). According to Danto, when narrative-historical models are employed, the narrative structure is useful only when looking back in time. Thus, any attempt to project on the future a historical model that assumes a specific account of history as a whole is not prediction, but “prophecy” (NK 9). Danto views the projects of substantive philosophers history¹⁷ as flawed insofar as they make statements about the future that utilize assumptions of history as a whole. This involves knowledge that does not exist (certainly not directly). These historical statements are not predictions, which are

just statements about the future; they are predicated as if they are statements made from the perspective of a future historian referring to the past. In these cases, philosophers of history use the narrative explanatory structure of a part of history to make unjustified statements to which no historical facts correspond. Thus, narrative sentences are justified only when applied to events in the past, when future knowledge of the past (present knowledge) is used to explain historical events. When narrative sentences are predicated as such, they are justified. The phenomena of art history, the actions of the artists, and the interpretations of the beholders, for Danto, are also explained using a narrative framework. Because Danto is committed to the notion that the subject of art's progress is covered by a narrative-historical framework, forward-looking claims that anticipate a truth value are not justifiable. (We cannot accurately predict the future of art, though in hindsight some stylistic advances are 'predictable'.) Understood in terms of historical narrative, with no more 'art' being made, with no single guiding style, philosophers can say with certainty what the past era of art-making stylistically entailed. With the styles of the era of art behind us, the culture of contemporary art allows that all styles be available to artists, though none can be inhabited as they were by artists of past eras. Because the style of each period is historically indexed, in Danto's view, artworks embody temporally unique metaphors. Though the meanings of the artistic metaphors shift in time, they are interpretable, because they are understood through the continuity afforded through the legacy of artworld theories.

4.2.2 *Narrative Philosophy of History and the Freedom of Art*

Thus far, what has been shown regarding the relation of Danto's theory of art to Hegel and *History* is well-known. With an understanding of these features of Danto's narrative philosophy of history, one can understand, given the morphological changes that art underwent in the twentieth century, how he can justify its essentialist definition with the claim that the narrative of art is over. Also, given his explanation for a plurality of subjective *worlds*, current and past, that are manifest in the artist's style, the notion that an artwork's meaning is linked to historically indexed meanings is quite plausible. But Danto's theory is significantly more complex than this, and a closer look at his non-aesthetic writings, *History* and *Body/Body* in particular, will allow for a more defensible reading of Danto's claims regarding the end of art. In the sections immediately

following, I examine Danto's account of other minds and other minds of other eras—a theme central to his attempt to resolve the problem of whether historians explain events with historical descriptions that include general laws—and why he refers to the dissolution of what in narrative terms amounts to the 'covering law' of art as freedom.¹⁸ I present the impact of Danto's account of representational materialism on his aesthetic theory, which comes together in his notion of style, in the next section.

4.2.3 *Other Minds*

Danto's description of *world* as an inner representation, for artists and non-artists alike, is found throughout his writings. In *Narration and Knowledge*, the notion of the subject's transparent *world* is discussed in terms of the implications it has for the creation of the historian's narrative.¹⁹ Danto's account resolves, or makes less relevant, two problems faced by historians: (1) attempts to understand the interiority of others fail because we are unable to penetrate the belief-set or *world* of the other,²⁰ and (2) the belief-sets of those of other eras are only understood from our perspective. For Danto, we cannot 'take the other's view' as Weberian *Verstehen* demands. Our beliefs cannot overlap because their interiority is unavailable, and our knowledge of their future is used to understand their positions. We would have to negate too much of what we currently accept, and accept too much that we may not believe, to step into the *world* of someone from a past era. We would negate ourselves, so to speak (APK 92). We can engage *Verstehen* (understanding) to estimate as well as possible what their belief-set, their point of view, entails. But the historian is in the same situation as those she attempts to understand. For her, she does not understand her 'belief-set' as a belief. It is her *world*.

In our own case, the distance between ourselves and the world which the concept of truth requires is automatically closed in our own perception of our situation, because we do not think of the representation of the world, to which truth is properly attached, but to *what* is represented, namely the world. In our own case we think of ourselves as within the world when in fact we are external to it, namely in the respect that we believe our representations true. (NK 339)

Nonetheless, Danto's postulation of *world* as beyond the grasp of its 'wearer' is useful for the history writer insofar as one who lived in the era

investigated does not have privileged access to historical explanation of their world. Having lived through the Fall of Rome does not include a privileged view of the interiority of this period. The historian's perspective is also non-overlapping, but the exterior perspective of this person's period, their *world*, their future past, is available to the historian. The internal choices people make, as Danto sees it, are without their awareness guided by the belief-set implanted by their *world* (NK 284).²¹ So for the historian, understanding their internal perspective is of little value. What is of value to the historian is an understanding of the *world* of peoples of eras past, which will not become intelligible until some point in their future.

4.2.4 *Covering Laws and Freedom*

Danto's solution to the problem of whether general explanation is included in historical explanation, which he demonstrates in an application of his narrative philosophy of history, sheds light on his claim that the narrative of art has ended in these three facets of his theory: (1) an event can be explained many ways, and it can be re-explained such that it shows the general rule covering it; (2) Danto uses class-types that can predict without being deterministic; and (3) his notion of freedom seems to mean, simply, unpredictable.

(1) In *Action*, Danto proposes a notion of necessity linked to intelligibility. It may be intelligible to hold that the world is unintelligible, but it is not intelligible to hold both that the world is intelligible and that the world's events be causally independent. Giving up on laws, in Danto's words, is "surrendering to unintelligibility" (APA 104). In this statement, Danto provides a provisional account of necessity.

To regard the world as intelligible is necessarily to regard it as covered by laws, and events as causally dependent. Some stronger sense of necessity may be desired, but for the moment no stronger concept need be entertained, for surely we have as much as we need to provide us with the concept we are seeking. Necessity is not a *descriptive* concept, it is not part of the content of any description of the world. Rather, it attaches to the mode of description itself through the concept of intelligibility. (APA 104)

This relation of holding some notion that events are causally connected to intelligibility is useful in understanding how Danto relates covering laws to explanation in *History*. Danto addresses four possible stances²² taken in

history writing in terms of the relation of historical explanation to general laws, noting that the theories he addresses are primarily concerned with the structure of the *explanans*. None of the positions look closely at the “anatomy” of the *explanandum*.²³ Danto contends that not all *explananda* (events) logically presupposing general laws. Those that do and those that do not, in his mind, are interchangeable. (This is a contested claim.) So the question of general laws is linked to how the event is described. A trivial point for Danto, “phenomena as *such*” are not explained (NK 218). Only phenomena as covered by description are capable of explanation, and this fits with Danto’s underlying assumption that perception has no rules; the rule that covers a phenomenon must be ‘discovered’. Phenomena may have multiple explanations. Phenomenon E may be explained with a description D, but it is always possible to find another description D that no longer explains E according to D. Danto uses the example of the American flag being flown next to the Monégasque flag on the national holiday. There is an event, an *explanandum*, that requires explanation. The explanation, to those familiar with the event’s context, is that the prince has married someone who is American by birth. Thus, on the national holiday, both the American and the Monégasque flags are flown. But is there a general law in this explanation?

One of the first points relative to his theory of art regards his account of “redescription.” An event can be covered with a general law only if it is explained with a general description. But there are multiple descriptions for events, and, contra Hempel,²⁴ they may not always fall under the covering law. It does not follow that these events are not explainable by a general law, only unexplainable by general law in terms of the description given. To explain them requires redescription, and the redescription entails a covering law (NK 220). Danto gives the following example:

- a. The Monégasques put out American flags side by side with Monégasque flags.
- b. The Monégasques were honouring a sovereign of American birth.
- c. The members of one nation were honouring a sovereign of a different national origin from their own (NK 221).

The first description, *a*, is of the event before explanation (*explanandum*). The second, *b*, is the same event after it has been explained (*explanans*). “We may regard *c*, indeed, as the result of eliminating terms

designating particular objects in favour of general designatory terms which include the originally designated objects amongst their extensions. I shall term *c* the *explanatum*" (NK 221). The *explanatum* yields a new version of the description of the flag event that contains a covering law. This is a higher level of generalization. For Danto, it is the move from *a* to *b*, which is difficult. The same perceptual event 'almost' undergoes a transformation of perception. Objects in the visual field remain constant, but with a new *explanatum* we see them in a completely different set of relationships (indiscernibles) (see APK 264–265). Danto argues that the step from *b* to *c*, the redescription, is easy, and strictly speaking, *b* is an *explanatum* as well. However, it is concrete, while *c* is abstract (NK 221). It is the abstract *explanatum* that puts the event under a covering law, which is redescrbed because the *explanans* does not illuminate the general law.²⁵ If the general law is not given, or implicitly known, a considerable amount of assumed knowledge is needed to find it. Lacking knowledge of, in this case, Monégasque customs and history, the law is opaque, and it must be referred to explicitly (NK 222–223). Thus, Danto concludes that implicit general concepts, of which we are unaware, are embedded in explanation. In cases where explicit knowledge of a general law is not needed, philosophers tend to say a general law does not exist or that one is not required. But when one cannot assimilate the phenomenon under a general concept, explanation is needed (NK 224). This aspect of Danto's theory, which by some accounts merges analytic philosophy with hermeneutics,²⁶ is helpful in understanding his claim that art has ended.

(2) A second facet of Danto's *History*, important to his argument that art's narrative no longer applies to contemporary art, is his discussion of class-types. A class-type is a category of event that can be predicted, but not specifically. For example, a kind person, it can be predicted, will behave kindly. But we may not know in exactly what way until after the kind act is performed. In this case, one can confirm that the act was kind and fits into that class. Though predictive, there are "creative opportunities" in imagining which acts could fit into such a class (NK 226–231). Likely with his recent article "The Artworld" in mind, Danto uses the example of art objects. "It is this sort of situation, for example, which allows us to class, as works of art, things which do not necessarily resemble objects already classed as such, and which permits artists to pursue

novelty which, should they succeed in finding it, does not automatically disqualify them from having produced a work of art” (NK 226–227). With redescription, a rule that explains an event can be replaced with a rule of higher generalization, thus accounting for a broader range of members in a given class. When “history-as-record” is lacking, class-types will be employed in narrative as explanatory mechanisms that fill the gaps (NK 226). I will argue later that the ‘redescription’ of art’s class-type led to Danto’s essentialist definition. The question I will eventually pose is whether the level of generalization given in his essentialist definition could be replaced with another definition, though not necessarily one of greater generality. The description of the virtue as the style of a person runs parallel to his account of the class-type. No list of ‘actions’ will completely satisfy the options one has under that virtue; “the having of the list is inconsistent with being that sort of person” (TC 202). For the person with that virtue, the options are not exhaustive, but one can always understand how the person’s action comports with the virtue, after the action has been done. This example leads into his discussion of the style as the person.

(3) A last point emerges as Danto addresses a matter of contention between the historical idealists (*Geisteswissenschaften*) and the proponents of the covering law model. Hempel noted (this idea received a great deal of criticism) that if we have historical explanation, and the past can be explained, then the future can also be explained because the same explanatory apparatus applies to future and past predications. The historical idealists adamantly disagreed. Freedom entailed human behavior not being explainable, thus, the inability to explain implied freedom (NK 225). One of the downsides of needing to fill in the gaps of historical record is that the *explanandum* can have multiple *explanantia*, and one *explanans* can potentially refer to multiple *explananda*. In light of this, if historical record is lacking, then an account of the past would be as general as an account of the future. Perhaps the end of the narrative of art, for Danto, was simply such a general account of art that it could account for almost any *explanandum*. With unpredictability comes freedom, but this would necessitate the concept of art being so general it could no longer sustain a master narrative.

This brings us to the question of freedom after the end of art and the end of history. What I bring out here is the difference between the end

of art and the end of history in terms of the process of reaching that end and what the end actually entails. Goehr (2008) writes that for the most part Danto “keeps his philosophy of history and art apart, despite their tracking similar paths” (153). The result is that in his philosophy of history there is no end of history that corresponds to the end of art. Nonetheless, Danto brings up Marx’s end of history thesis for comparison to his end-of-art theory, and despite handy similarities, they are very different. Danto of course would agree. However, his notion of art being free in the era after the end of art works better for Marx than for Danto, and it opens the door to parallel readings: both Marx and Danto are materialists of sorts, and the progress of history has material and cultural implications, even if the historical end only emerges in narrative. For Danto, the idea that the era of art had ended occurred to him when he witnessed the phenomenon of art indiscernible from its object. In his mind, this showed that the nature of art had become self-referential. When art’s self-referential essence follows its historical progression to its limit, it reaches the point at which art asks the question of what it is. Subsequently, art as a disciplined production that attempts to “get something right” within the constraints of a common practice exists no more. In the future, everything is possible; there are no longer historical mandates: “one thing is as good as another.” In an atmosphere in which only “total tolerance” is defensible, philosophy must come to the aid of art in providing it an explanation and justification. A quandary arises in that art no longer knows what it is supposed to be when the object it represents is identical with the object of art. Andy Warhol’s *Brillo Box* exemplified this puzzling state of affairs. With the advent of the ‘end of art,’ everyday objects qualify as suitable candidates for artistic portrayal, and the difference between the utopian realm of artistic creativity and the everyday world is flattened. The question of why a box is art and another indistinguishable object is not turns on the ontological question of its origin. According to Danto’s essentialist theory, Warhol created the *Brillo Box* with the intention that it be art. Therefore, it was art. For Danto, the act of recognizing the artistic intention within an object signifies the viewer’s acceptance that there is something beyond the material object to interpret. But interpretation of an artwork’s non-visual cues demands a theory of art, which, according to Danto, is prerequisite to an artwork’s acceptance within the post-historical artworld.

The set of art theoretical concepts, as Danto sometimes refers to it, which determines what the artworld accepts or rejects, is a matter of historical context. The insertion into the class-type of artworks of works such as Duchamp's *Fountain* and Warhol's *Brillo Box*,²⁷ which in prior eras could not have been perceived as art, signaled that a change had come in the spirit with which art is made. For Hegel, the spirit of art reaches a historical terminus, the point at which it is no longer able to articulate its truth in the material. While rejecting the metaphysical aspects of Hegel's epistemology, Danto sees the realization of a similarly structured phenomenon in contemporary art history. Without Hegelian idealism, Danto articulates what he sees as the historical parallels of art's journey through the internal drive of the artworld. The artworld becomes a structure through which the dualism of embodied meaning is straddled, an issue he addresses more fully in his later writings, employing the narrative structure he developed in *History* that enables the application of general theories within their specific context.

In "The End of Art," Danto compares the 'end of art' to the 'end of history'. Making it clear that the end of art does not correspond to the end of history (PA 11), the parallels he draws deserve attention. There are several features of Hegel's aesthetic theory that Danto holds are essential to any theory of art. These are the notions of historical context, embodied meaning, and a sense of knowing that is progressively manifest in the artworld. Hegel's theory of art is able to resolve both the failure of mimetic theory of art as a linear progression toward the perfect likeness of the depicted object and the relativism of expression theory that reduces all art to expression, thereby making all art a continuum of the incommensurable expression of artists' lives.

Hegel's theory meets all these demands. His thought requires that there be genuine historical continuity, and indeed a kind of progress. The progress in question is not that of an increasingly refined technology of perceptual equivalence. Rather there is a kind of *cognitive* progress, where it is understood that art progressively approaches that kind of cognition. When the cognition is achieved, there really is no longer any point to or need for art. (PD 107)

How Danto interprets the pivotal moment at which art is no longer needed, and the extent to which he adopts the Hegelian schema, is crucial for understanding Danto's position and assessing what his notion of

the artworld actually entails. In the first place, he does not view the end of history as apocalyptic, but as the end of humanity's struggles. Danto cites a prediction of Marx's from *The German Ideology* that "tells us, I can be a hunter in the morning and a fisher in the afternoon and a critical critic in the evening" (PD 112–113).²⁸ When the struggles of history are over, there will be nothing more to fight for; everything will be done. Humanity can enjoy the fruits of past generations' struggles and exist without alienation in commerce with fellow citizens. Danto, with a logic that could have been Marx's, argues that in its freedom, art can follow any style or take on any form. This defines the age of pluralism in art. "It does not matter any longer what you do, which is what pluralism means."

When one direction is as good as another direction, there is no concept of direction any longer to apply...There will always be a service for art to perform, if artists are content with that. Freedom ends in its own fulfillment....How happy happiness will make us is difficult to foretell, but just think of the difference the rage for gourmet cooking has made in common American life. On the other hand, it has been an immense privilege to have lived in history. (PD 114–115)

The Marxist notion of historical completion is associated with complete freedom of vocational choice. Likewise, Danto's notion of post-historical art is associated with complete freedom in the choice of artistic styles. In the post-historical era, anything goes. What ties art together is an essentialist theory: art must be about something, and its meaning must be materially manifest. At the same time, the artwork's meaning is historically indexed. Though any style can be used—past forms of art can be revived and made current—the meanings inherent in each historical style are unique and incommensurate across historical periods (AA 45). "Freedom ends in its own fulfillment," but with the freedom to choose anything, art loses the meaning of historic struggle.

In 1984, Danto seems to rue art's newfound freedom, asking 'How happy will happiness make us?' Later, Danto seems to accept art's state as optimal, also confessing that when he wrote the 1984 end-of-art essay, he hadn't really read that much Hegel. When Danto wrote *After the End of Art*, more than 10 years later, he had undertaken a serious study of Hegel's works (LLP 54, 63). Thus, the shift in attitude seems to reflect a 'redescription' of the end-of-art phenomenon.²⁹ But returning to

freedom, the freedom he describes in 1984 would seem to be less happy because it corresponds more closely with what he had written in *History*, that the class-type of art had been over-extended to the point at which it had no explanatory value; hence, it was free. But, as Danto in 1984 suggests, how happy is that? Of this happiness, Daniel Herwitz writes:

Is contemporary art now finally free from the avant-garde burden of philosophical self-exploration—free from the burden of philosophizing and thus free to be its playful and polyformulous self, in the manner of Marx’s post-revolutionary man? Or is it rather that serious art is now made over into a kind of philosophy, leaving only its lighthearted companions to playfully romp in Marx’s post-revolutionary garden? Is contemporary art to be thought under the metaphor of gravity, or under the metaphor of lightness? (DCR 220)

No longer having a history meant not being part of history’s struggle, and perhaps it is part of the definition of a struggle that we want it to end. Danto confessed that after “The End of Art” essay, he began to see the state of historical affairs as somewhat more happy. But no reason is given other than he was impressed by the happy utopian period that Kojève projected with the end of history (LLP 52, 479, BB 3–5, AA 32–33). Danto also makes it clear in his later writings that art made in post-history is still ‘in history’, and it still has meaning. But the struggle and meaning that accompanied this style, extant in ‘history’s’ narrative, is what made life, and art, in some sense predictable. Without history’s struggle directing what the possible future of art might look like, in a sense, art is free, but perhaps a bit like a dog who has been dispossessed is free. What exactly does this freedom mean? Does Danto see art in its freedom “surrendering to unintelligibility,” to use his epistemological example, leaving philosophy to formulate art’s law?

In the age after the end of art, art can exist in pluralism having unbounded freedom of choice; it can be whatever it wants to be. This is true for both Danto and Hegel, but in Hegel’s account, it is because spirit can no longer manifest itself in the material. Thus, spirit leaves art without its unified directive. For Danto, there are no longer limits on what can be art, but it is not out of lack of overarching directive; it is because of the lack of a need for such a directive. In Danto’s eyes, this is the nature of pluralism in its ‘ideal’ state.³⁰ On this point it is important to look at the differences in how freedom arrives at the end of history

and the end of art. Indeed, art in our time is pluralistic, and I do not judge this aspect of the world of art to be negative. But I do not consider it to be art's final form. In the case of Marx, the end-of-history narrative that emerges follows from changes that occur at the level of economic-social interaction. It is driven by production, and the narrative and theories that explain it are the part of the ideal superstructure that follow the productive-material interaction of the base. My point is not to argue for Marx, but there are two processes in play here; one follows the other. As Danto describes it, the post-historical style of making styles seems, to some extent, to be like a 'discompliant' class-type. For Marx, the proletariat worker doing the specific task for the capitalist is replaced, through the material dialectic, by the universal producer. This version of the human can perform any vocation she wishes, taking on many tasks as the day progresses. Analogously, as the class of objects allowed into the category of art increased, the level of generalization rose to the point at which what Danto understands to be art's essentialist definition of embodied meaning is disclosed through its self-reflective activity. When the class-type of art could no longer encompass the shifting forms of the late modern period, it seemed that Danto "re-describes" art's class-type for the post-historical period, replacing one general law covering the class of art objects with another one that is more general and more current. Art's changes occur in the material passage of history, but the re-description is something *he* does.

The account of art's progression afforded through Danto's narrative theory of history comports with the end described by Hegel in that the guiding principles of art's narrative have collapsed or been outdated and are no longer relevant or valid. But in rejecting Hegel's teleological overcoming of the material with consciousness, the nature of freedom becomes very different: freedom, for Hegel, does not consist in inexplicability. With art, Danto assumes that the development of art's concept is reflected in its narrative explanation: the *explanans* explains the *explanandum*. But the shift in art's aim to answering the question of 'why is this art?', through a representation of the narrative's end, is not quite the end he postulates. Indeed, the question as to why something does or does not belong in a class is the essential question asked when forming a rule for membership. To ask this question demands a level of self-reflection on the process of artistic creation that did not previously exist. Art's self-reflective capacity, which I hope to explain in the next section, does show that freedom for art and its class-type's inability to

explain are somewhat different, with the embodiment of meaning in art being the central difference between it and historical narrative sentences. Nonetheless, the freedom art attains in its state of inexplicability may be subject to another *explanatum*.

In his response to the mind/body problem, Danto proposes that there are really two bodies: one is a “system of synapses and electro-chemical interchanges,” the other is gendered, it determines the images we have of ourselves, in it we may be humiliated or proud (LLP 60–61). The latter lives in history and is the subject of literature and art. Our knowledge of this body changes little; its external representation has remained relatively stable over the eons. The former does not live in history, but our knowledge of it has changed drastically over time. Still, the one body can never be reduced to the other. I will discuss Danto’s theory of the human as a representational being later, but at this point I want to point out that one of these lives in history, and what they do can be recounted in a narrative. The neurophysiological body is nonetheless not living in history and is not representational. Our knowledge of our bodies has changed, but they have not (BB 155–157).

There must be a causal relation of some sort between the human body and the historical human. “As agents and knowers, indeed, we are within the world under the concept of causation, and external to it under the concept of truth. Within and without the world at once: that is the philosophical structure of man” (BB 80; see APK). Danto, in seeking to shift the locus of the mind/body problem to the body/body problem, postulates that two types of material exist. Danto’s materialism is certainly more nuanced than Marx’s, but there are streams of existence, one in history, one outside of history. It is not certain, however, that the non-historical body doesn’t also play a role the historical body’s ‘fit’ to its *world*. The material part of our existence may play a role in artistic creation that is not amenable to narrative; if this is the case, there may be another stream that Danto’s end-of-art narrative does not capture.

4.3 *STYLE IS THE MAN: THE BODY/BODY PROBLEM AND THE ANATOMY OF THE ARTWORK*

In the sections that follow, I briefly discuss how the basic action may have been used as an anti-dualistic tool; Danto’s account of the person as representation and text, to understand the relation of the human to the artworld and how it emerges without the ‘dialogue’ of an institutional

theory of art; and his account of inner and outer consciousness in representation, communication, and language, which spells out how art can transfigure an audience without the artist's self-reflection or a dialogue among artist and audience.³¹

Danto tells us that the basic action, in its early manifestations, was an attempt to overcome the mind/body problem. Statements like 'I am my hand, I am my body' went with the idea that the basic action could bridge the gap Descartes opened between the mind and body. Sartre (1992) wrote "The point of view of pure knowledge is contradictory; there is only the point of view of engaged knowledge. [Thus,] knowledge and action are only two abstract aspects of an original, concrete relation" (407). Sartre's anti-Cartesian claim was part of a broader movement that led thinkers to believe the body must hold properties common to the mind that evoked action in it. It was hoped that if the causal gap between the mind and the body could be filled, perhaps the "cognitive gap" would follow too. The basic action was one of the key threads of this search for unity of knowledge and action (BB 66–67): "knowledge- and action-ascriptions bridge the space between representations and objects" (APA 22). But the basic action could not fulfill this promise, and Danto lost interest in it, considering it a failure (BB 51, 80). The problem, as the locus of the mind/body problem shifted, did not go away. "By closing the gap between our minds and our bodies, we open a gap between our bodies, on the one side, and mere bodies on the other" (BB 64). Danto's solution was to rearticulate the mind/body problem as the body/body problem (LLP Auxier xxvii), not necessarily solving the problem, but doing away with philosophical issues bound to dual substances. This returns us to Danto's account of representational realism:

there are two kinds of matter in the universe, matter that is representational and matter that is not. It endorses a metaphysics that holds the world to be such that parts of it rise to represent itself, including, of course, the further fact that those parts not only represent the world but represent that they do so. Representational beings—ourselves and animals—are like openings in the darkness, like lights going on, illuminating the world and themselves at once. (CT 244)

Danto's approach, as I understand it, is unique. Danto always maintained that he remained within the fold of analytical philosophy. Working

broadly within the analytical framework of the philosophy of language, he recognized, with Nietzsche, that it is an illusion that language corresponds directly to the world.

I saw [Nietzsche's] work as anticipating Russell and Wittgenstein...Most of what appealed to me in Nietzsche was his essential insight that philosophers had tended to think that if language is to fit the world, it had to do so like a tight garment, matching the articulation of the human body. To every subject in a sentence, there must be a substance in the world to which it corresponds as if, he says in more [than] one place, the lightning is something separate from the flashing. This is grammatical superstition. (LLP 512)

Though Danto did not conclude with Nietzsche that there is no world to which language could correspond, his choice of representation as the basic orientation of his philosophy reflected this realization. In broad strokes, the argument Danto lays out in *Knowledge*, for the representation having an advantage over descriptively oriented linguistic philosophy, goes something like this. An example of a representation is 'x believes p'. A truth value cannot be ascribed to this if one does not know whether or not p corresponds to some state in the world. Danto circumvents the problem of knowing whether p is true or not by viewing the state of belief as itself true, the representation is true, insofar as 'x believes p is true', independent of its correspondence to anything in the world. Thus, the belief, as a representation, is intensional. Its truth as a belief does not rely on there being any extensional objects, or objects in the world that refer to it. For Danto, our entire *world*, as we understand it, is a representation, and its correspondence to something in the world is not guaranteed; because we believe our representation of the world, our *world*, to be true, we never question it. It still holds that our survival chances are increased as our representation of the world approaches the 'actual' world, but this will be discussed further in Chapter 5. The representation is not descriptive. Danto chose the representation as the focus of his philosophical system because it was prior to description, description being too closely tied to an inclination for truth (APK; LLP 29–30). The truth itself was not so much of a problem, but philosophical systems that strive for a strong correspondence theory of truth often become trapped in their inflexibility. Danto's choice allows for a more pliable antifoundationalist approach better suited to creating definitions,

which in many cases are prior to truth statements. Without determining which parts of language refer to which parts of the world, we can have no truth. Representations need not be true, insofar as they correspond to something in the world. This works well for art. But this does not mean representations are against truth; historical narratives are representations, which, unlike art, strive to convince us of their veracity (LLP Ankersmit 395–397, 415).

The sentential state is a state in which someone believes something. Representations are sentential states of sorts; hence, if we are representational beings, we are also sentential beings (BB 27, 87–88; APK ix, 86–97). Danto, recognizing that there is no knowledge outside of our frame of reference, inserts the subject, a sentential being, into the frame of his philosophical system. He must draw a line, though, between material that represents and material that does not represent—humans and animals being those that do.³² “As far as the mind-body problem goes, the view I am advancing is that the body is itself sententially structured. Perhaps, even probably, what is sententially structured is nervous tissue, which is perhaps all that neurophilosophy requires to vindicate its chief insight” (CT 243). He also makes clear that the sentential structure, which forms the representations that are our “essence” (BB 203), is not found simply in flesh. “It is the same proposition whether written or spoken or believed, whether it is made up of sound waves, layers of ink, or nervous tissue” (CT 243; see APK 95). Representations, as Danto refers to them, encompass a broad array of communicative devices. “Propositions, pictures, names, signs, ideas, appearances—for to be an appearance is to be an appearance of something, leaving it always open if the thing itself really appears or not—not to mention impressions, concepts, and images, are all vehicles of understanding as I mean for that expression to be used” (CT 50–51; see APK 160–161). Danto considers these vehicles to be representations and the “central components of philosophical thought,” irrespective of where they are “housed” (CT 51). So, the line between *ens representans* and things that represent is blurred at this point, since he sees no fundamental difference in regard to a representation’s content and how it is embodied (BB 91–92). Still, not all representations are as we are. A gas gauge represents some truth about the world if functioning properly, but “the representation must modify the *ens representans* in some way other than that which consists simply in having the representation” (CT 251).

According to Danto's account of representational materialism, there are two aspects to the human body, the basic biological mechanism and the part that lives in history and represents. "We are within the world under the laws of causation and outside the world under the laws of representation" (BB 93). The human that is the body is the human that is the person (I am my body), but the one cannot be reduced to the other. As sentient beings, we are, to use a metaphor he often employs, words made flesh (BB 143, 222). One consequence of the move away from Cartesian mind/body dualism, which posited an inner subjectivity such that the thinking subject had a special advantage when it came to knowing her own interiority, is that in its material orientation, the inner realm of *ens representans* loses much, if not all, of its significance. It is not so much that there is no interior; rather, we manifest our interiority externally because we are not aware of it as such. Because *ens representans* has no privileged access to its own inner states, more can be discerned from the outer perspective, for "we do not occupy our *own* interiors" (NK 339).

This leveling of inner and outer plays a role in Danto's theory (1) in that if one were to gain access to another's interior, one would gain little and (2) given (1) when the historian forms a narrative statement referring to a past era, 'understanding' other minds from an external perspective is not a problem. (1) Regarding the dualism of mind and body, Danto speculates that if we could actually monitor the neurochemical activity of our brain as we laugh, tell secrets, or philosophize, we would get little from this that we didn't get otherwise (BB 28). More than once, he discusses an example used by Leibniz, who asks, what if we created a machine that could "think, feel and have perception." If the machine were large enough, we could step into it witnessing thought, feeling, and perception as it happens. But, he supposes, it would likely just resemble the inner workings of a mill. Would this tell us more about the inner human side of what it is to think, feel, and perceive? We may learn more about how the mind functions, but little more about what it actually is to feel. If we could enter into another, as Leibniz's mill, Danto doesn't really think we'd get much more than we would from talking to a person, knowing them, reading their letters, or even perhaps following them on Facebook or twitter (CT 255–256, WA 93–94).

(2) In terms of other minds, and other minds of other times, the issue is somewhat more complex since it involves presuppositions concerning the structure of narrative sentences. Because our representation manifests

how we understand and causally interact with the world, we live in it unaware. We can be aware of another's representation of the world, especially if it differs from our own, but of our own, we cannot know it as we use it. We would have to become a new self, perhaps looking back at the self of another time, to apprehend it. So the outer perspective, again, is in some way superior to the inner. Danto wrote, in response to Lydia Goehr, that he did not rely as much as she thought on the artistic intention, though it is indeed important. He conceded that artistic intention was important for *Kunstwissenschaft* insofar as establishing the general aim of the artist is important because, though there is no limit to how many interpretations there can be for an artwork, not all interpretations are possible. Regarding narrative sentences, Danto's answer was couched in terms of the way he prioritizes the inner and the outer. Intention,

has little bearing in the philosophy of history when the apparatus of narrative sentences is introduced—Petrarch could not have intended to open *the* Renaissance, Erasmus did not aim to be the best pre-Kantian moral theorist in all of Europe. But neither does it arise in the interpretive redescrptions we give of artworks when we talk about them hermeneutically. (LLP 388)

What is significant about an action, whether an artistic creation or one that causes an event, is that what there is to know about it will not be known till later; thus, the immediate intention may not be what is most significant. The contours of an individual's *world* cannot be known to that individual, but only to those who observe the person. In terms of historical context, an individual's *world* is only graspable by a historian when that *world* is no longer lived.

It is important to understand what bearing a materialist *ens representans* with flattened inner and outer realms (at a minimum an inner realm of lessened significance) has on Danto's account of embodied meaning, especially in terms of how the artwork comes to be manifest with artistic intention. There are several important issues that I hope to clarify: (1) to provide a fuller explanation for how embodied meaning, what in Hegelian terms is a universal particular, is possible; (2) how Danto's frequent attributions of personhood can make sense within his system; (3) how the style of the artwork can take on rhetorical properties that were not formed explicitly in the intention of the artist; and (4)

given (1–3), I would like to make sense of Danto’s suggestion that artworks are in a dialogue with each other.

(1) Works of art, as *ens representans*, are “materially embodied representations” (BB x). By choosing the medium of representation, Danto saw a pre-descriptive way to handle epistemological issues in a more flexible manner. It also better reflects how we live in the world. Because one of the richest repositories of representations is found in the realm of art, Danto takes a special interest in it. To my surprise, the reasoning behind Danto’s assertion that art and philosophy are interconnected is not due to art’s expressive qualities or some unique property art has in manifesting the human condition. Rather, it is because we share properties with representations, insofar as we occupy the same space between language and the world (APK ix, 63). Frank Ankersmit contends that for Danto, “aesthetics is not merely an interesting offshoot of philosophy in general, to be addressed after a few more fundamental philosophical issues have been settled; on the contrary, aesthetics, because of its preoccupation with representation, is where all meaningful philosophy *originates*” (LLP 395). As a creature bound to representations, *ens representans* shares a common philosophical origin with works of art, which points to a common means of embodiment. Danto has made much of his somewhat tenuous belief that the mind is like a text, that it can be read as a text and that we are text embodied (CTW 248, 267; BB 144, 204, 222). “Why should we not suppose that some day sentences might serve to individuate neural states, so that we might read a man’s beliefs off the surfaces of his brain?” (APK 96). A sentence ‘*x* believes *p*’ can exist in print, on ink and paper, spoken or inscribed on our being. The content or meaning is fundamentally the same. A belief may be that ‘*x* is *p*’, when in fact ‘*x* is not *p*’. Like a picture, it need not be true, and at the pre-linguistic level, one can have such a state. Even a dog can have a belief, which is intentional, thereby being in a sentential state, perhaps believing it is taking a ride to the park, when in fact the vet is the destination. The medium of “vehicles of understanding,” representations, or sentential states are broad. Chart 4.1 is an attempt to show the relation of representing and non-representing to organic and inorganic things.

What should be noted, is that not all things that represent, or that are sentential, are organic. Pictures, texts, some machines, to mention a few, are inorganic.³³ As Danto stated, what he wrote in *Body/Body* was never fully integrated into a systematic text, but the references to the word

Type of 'entity' \ Capacity of 'entity'	Organic	Inorganic
Representing/sentential	Animalia	Art, texts, some machines
Non-representing	Human body, protozoa	Stones and bones
Personhood	Human person, animals?	Art, texts
Agency	Human person	Art and texts?

Chart 4.1 Type of Entity/Capacity of Entity

enfleshed and the mind as a text are found throughout his works. Thus, I believe the answer to the question of embodied meaning is found in the properties shared among living and non-living material that represents. There are at least some attributes of the representations making us human, and are part of our essence, that can exist in mediums that are not organic: art, as the embodiment of matter and form, is one of those mediums.

The representation is intensional, a state of belief about something that may or may not exist. It is what manifests our human meanings: our representations are our *world* inscribed upon us, and the representation that we more or less inherit from our place and time in history determines to a large extent the choices we will make, a point of view being something that “representational causes” take into consideration (CT 272–273; APA 188–189). The significance of Danto’s shift away from subjective interiority will become clearer here. If the representations that make us ‘who we are’ are external, then they can be externalized in other medium, such as art.

The mind, construed as embodied—as *enfleshed*—might perhaps stand to the body as a statue does to the bronze that is its material cause, or as a picture stands to the pigment it gives form to—or as signified stands to signifier, in the idiom of Saussure. And to the degree that “inside” and “outside” have application at all, it is the mind that is outside, in the sense that it is what is presented to the world. (BB 197)

Though Danto suggests that the metaphors we use to describe the connection of mind and body are not always helpful, we can perhaps understand here how the mind that is presented to others is embodied in the artwork, making it, as us, a representational ‘being’, much like the wood-block leaves the imprint on the paper.

(2) Danto notes, in discussing the essays in *Body/Body* “how frequently I drew upon analogies between human beings and artworks, preeminently paintings and photographs, to clarify issues in the metaphysics of embodiment and of truth” (BB ix). Indeed, these metaphoric references, found throughout his work, are too frequent to list here. The intensional relationship of the metaphoric reference of artworks to people brings to light a parallel in the common way that humans are related to art and to other persons. “There is something like a parallel between what one might call the metaphysics of persons and the metaphysics of artworks” (DCR 294). In “Personifying Art,” Brian Soucek discusses Danto’s personification of art, noting in particular his use of the analogy when discussing forgeries. In “Moving Pictures,” Danto asks if it would matter if a recently widowed woman, whose husband had died unexpectedly, were promised a clone of her husband, an exact replacement, in, let’s suppose, three weeks. Should she love the clone as the original? Danto argues that it would matter, and the relationship of the artwork to a mere object and the artwork to the forgery are parallel. Something like the soul of the work would be missing (PA 212–214). “An artwork is then a physical object with whatever in the philosophy of art corresponds to the soul in the philosophy of the person” (DCR 294).

Soucek (2008) examines two positions, one, like Danto’s, attributing something to the artwork that is also in the person, and the other, represented by those who argue that though personification is understandable, any attribution of “sentience, or self-reflection, or agency” to the artwork is something akin to a category mistake, and hence false (230). Ultimately, Soucek rejects both positions, opting for a third path that examines what kind of persons we are such that we personify art.

He concludes that “personification of art is not ultimately about art at all. It is rather about us—about persons” (238). Soucek poses a challenge to Danto’s notion of personhood in art, raising the question as to where the power of art—to speak to us, to transform us, even to evoke change in us—comes from, suggesting we look inward, not to art itself. If we were to use Hume’s law, which we might formulate as ‘there is nothing in the conclusion that is not in the premise’, it is hard to see how something could be added to the artwork which was not transferred from the artist, and if that is the case, do we have the Pygmalion-like power to produce a thing that entails personifying attributes through artistic means? Kant’s response to Hume’s laws was to recognize the active role the human mind plays in constructing the world we experience. And, in many senses, I’m very sympathetic to this approach. But this is not how Danto formulates the relation of the person to the artwork, and to dismiss his approach as a category error would be mistaken.

To defend Danto’s notion that a parallel between “the metaphysics of persons and the metaphysics of artworks” exists requires looking more closely at Danto’s comments on personhood. Thus far, we have noted that, (a) Danto sees little difference between inner and outer consciousness except for the individual not having privileged access to their own inner states (one can discern them about as well from an outside perspective); (b) humans are representational beings, and the representations we receive are historically situated; (c) the representations that are our essence, are in at least some cases akin to texts, vehicles of understanding, and can be embodied in mediums besides the flesh; and (d) the mind may be like a text, and along these lines, Danto speculates “if we are, so to speak, a text made flesh then a beginning might be made in addressing certain problems concerning the identity and unity of a person against the model of the unity and identity of a text” (BB 220).

To draw these together, I refer to how Danto may have been influenced by Nietzsche, who Goehr (2008) holds was his most significant predecessor (84, 152). As mentioned above, the influence of Hegel in Danto’s work is often overstated, and that of Nietzsche or Sartre is as often overlooked. I speculate that a mistake is made in reading Danto if it is assumed that humans give art agency or personification, that this is something *we* do and that *we are aware* that we do it. Artists do have skill and certain intangible attributes that are manifest through their style, but what gives the artwork personification, or perhaps even agency, is the sentential structure that gives us agency. It is fundamentally the

same structure. Danto's interpretation of Nietzsche cannot and should not be understood as his own system. Nonetheless, Danto tells us that he has "quarried" the works of thinkers on whom he has done studies, incorporating their thoughts into his own philosophy (S 12; LLP 480). I think this also holds true here.

Danto (1992) wrote that one task of philosophy is "to draw the boundary lines which divide the universe into the most fundamental kinds of things that exist. There may of course be no differences so fundamental as all that, in which case a task still remains for philosophy: namely, to show how lines believed to divide the universe in fundamental ways can be erased" (6). As Danto sought to erase and redraw the boundary between mind and body, inner and outer consciousness, I see in his writing moves toward redrawing the boundaries of agency. Before proceeding, I should try to better define what I mean by agency in this context. Certainly, Danto ascribes to humans a metaphysical agency, or freedom, that is not present in inorganic objects. But when he refers to representational causality, he implies that above our metaphysical freedom, we are directed by forces, sententially embodied, of which we are unaware. Of course, these inorganic structures have no activity in and of themselves, but if we step into them or, in the case of our own *worlds*, are born into them, knowingly or not, we activate in them something like agency insofar as our choices are constrained to the possibilities inherent within the representation's narrative, if it has a narrative form. "Representations, in the form of intentions and reasons, themselves cause action" (APA 189–190). By agency, I mean no more than this, but it is nonetheless significant for my reading of Danto.

Returning to Nietzsche, let us examine this passage, also discussed in the last chapter. Here, Danto explains how, for Nietzsche, inner and outer consciousness are not really different.

In part he was endeavoring to break the grip of a prejudice we are almost unaware that we are dominated by; namely, that we know what we are better than we know anything in the world. Each of us is convinced that however others may be mistaken about our feelings and sincerity, we ourselves cannot be in error, and that we exercise, in at least this one domain, an unimpeachable authority. This prejudice is underwritten by the common philosophical teaching that we have immediate access to the workings of our own minds. (NAP 98)

Nietzsche proposes that we do not have privileged access to our own minds. In 1965, Danto writes that Nietzsche presents “a remarkable and, to my knowledge, utterly original theory of consciousness” (NAP 98). I believe it is safe to say that this idea was incorporated into what was to become Danto’s own theory of consciousness, which as discussed above, reflects a parallel stance on other minds that he developed in *History*, written at the same time.³⁴ Nietzsche’s analysis of inner and outer consciousness, which he lays out in *The Gay Science* §354, posits that there is nothing in the inner consciousness that is unique to us because our inwardness is still constructed by a language used for external communication. Danto’s flattening of the difference between inner and outer consciousness is not far from this, even extending to the dream world (BB 142–143). There is another, less explicit, thread of Danto’s thought that I believe can be attributed to him via Nietzsche, which is his account of agency. Nietzsche, especially in his later writings, sees the idea of the self as a fiction. It is not so much that there is no persistent locus of our experience. Rather, it is the idea that humans do not possess anything like the transcendental self or a soul, something which in itself structures our being. Our self, and to some extent our agency, if not issuing from some a priori internal structure, comes from the formative power of language, implying that language is itself a form of thought (TI III §5; NAP 88). This somewhat Averroean account of thought and language implies that there is an agency attributing process that does not correspond to an individual entity. I cannot say that Danto explicitly holds this view. He attributed this idea to Nietzsche, but a number of passages indicate it may be part of his own thought. Irrespective of whether the idea came from Nietzsche, I don’t see how his philosophical system can come together without holding a view something like this. Consider the following passage, in which he recalls an experience with a friend, who is so adamant regarding the truth of her perspective that Danto realizes she is in fact *defined by her perspective*, in this case, that the aesthetic is essential to art. This pushes Danto to consider the point of view as an ontological category:

perspectivism in Nietzsche’s metaphysics requires points of view as centers of power, each seeking to impose itself on blank passive reality. But in general, I think, points of view are crucial in the explanation of behavior, especially when understood as action, and indeed I am not sure what behavior could be considered as an action that did not refer back to the horizon

within which the decision of what to do arose for the agent, and with it the issues of relevance. (BB 176–177)

Certainly, in his assessment of Nietzsche, Danto attributes this extra-individual agency to will-to-power (NAP 80, 88–91). But Danto writes elsewhere that the perspective of one's *world* does more to define our actions than the internal 'power' of what one might call our 'will'. We may be in some sense metaphysically free, but our actions are caused through representations. "There is, to begin with, the epistemic fact that in order to explain human conduct, we have to take into consideration the way humans represent the world, themselves included, so that what we are is very often inseparable from what we believe we are" (CT 272). As with his friend, the critic, our perspectives of our *world* inscribe on us our possible causal reactions. In this sense, Danto defines four sets of different causal relations, which I will not discuss here, that differentiate representational causality from the causality we associate with the objective sciences. Our actions, then, are in some soft sense determined by our representations. Thus, our agency is inscribed upon us through the representation of the world we inherit, placing us within a specific geographical and historical slot.

To understand a person's conduct is accordingly to identify the representations that explain the conduct, and then to interpret this against the dense background of beliefs that compose his picture of the world. Explanation in the case of human behavior may be—in fact I believe it is—just causal explanation. But the identification of the causes requires some separate operation, call it understanding if you will, which consists more or less in identifying the point of view of the agent in question. A point of view is something that causes [in the objective sense], other than representational causes, cannot be said to have. (CT 272)

Danto tells us that his plan to write a book on *ens representans* never came to fruition and that what was packed in the essays of *Body/Body* would have to suffice, though he assured readers that all the essential logic was there (BB 15). My conclusions may be an extrapolation of what Danto has left for us, but I hold that this position, which may have emerged as he wrote on Nietzsche, is present throughout his work.

This brings us back to Soucek's claims about personification and art. If our identity, and perhaps even agency, is attributed to us via the

representations that are essential to who we are, and the representations are inscribed on us in a way that could be inscribed on another medium, then it is possible to understand how, in Danto's system, artworks and humans share certain properties. It is not that we lend to, implant with, or create in them personification. That would require a subjective power, and likely a level of self-reflection, that Danto does not account for. But what he does account for is how representations of *world* and representations in art have a way of guiding us, perhaps in a predictive or 'conversational' sense, that amounts to agency, if even in a weak sense. The historically indexed representations, which leave an indelible stamp on the identities of artists, form a set of 'tools' that artists then use to create their artworks. Through the process of interpretation, artworks—imprinted with the *world* of the artist "by transitivity of identity" (TC 204)—bestow on the interpreter at least some of the agency mediating structures, points of view, that representations of the *world* had originally implanted in the artist. This explains how, when the beholder steps into the artwork, she is transformed into something "amazing" (TC 173).

If personhood in art is understood as something initiated not so much by the 'self' as by the same representational structures that also form the self, taking this view of 'agency' into account will provide an explanation for several other facets of Danto's philosophy that remain otherwise unexplained. The first, as noted above, is that Danto seems to give the artworld a point of view, perhaps even an internal perspective. In "Moving Pictures" Danto discusses film having become self-aware.

Film becomes in a way its own subject, the consciousness that it is film is what the consciousness is of, and in this move to self-consciousness cinema marches together with the other arts of the twentieth century in the respect that art itself becomes the ultimate subject of art, a movement of thought which parallels philosophy in the respect that philosophy in the end is what philosophy is about. (PA 230)

When Danto declares that the narrative of art has ended, the reason given is that art has become self-reflective. Certainly, without a notion of agency, this is not possible. If one assumes that it is the artists who have been self-reflective on the nature of art, a possibility it seems natural to entertain, we could encounter difficulty with Danto's claim that the artists cannot self-reflect on their *world*. I do not want to enter that discussion here. I have done that elsewhere (Snyder 2015), and think it

would be more fruitful to pursue the route opened through representational materialism. As living beings, “we are attached [to the world] by our sensory apparatus. The representation must modify the *ens representans* in some way other than that which consists simply in having the representation” (CT 251). So to have the property of agency that *ens representans* has, there must be some self-reflective capacity. When Danto discusses art, it clearly has this property, and in some references art seems to act independently. The best I can do to interpret this is to reiterate one of the basic tenets of Danto’s essentialist definition of art: “it is analytical to the concept of an artwork that there has to be an interpretation” (TC 124). If to be art, art is interpreted, then there must be a biological interpreter who ‘activates’ the work’s agency. Is self-reflection in art something that occurs through interpretation? Perhaps not in the beholders themselves, but as artists ‘engage’ with the artworld, they create other works.³⁵ This would allow for the type of dialogue he sees happening among artworks:

Warhol’s *Brillo Box* was enfranchised as a work of art when the boxes it exactly resembled languished in the limbo of mere objects, though they resembled his boxes exactly. ... The relationship between *Brillo Box* and the other members of “the world of art works” was more complex. They were “in dialogue” with one another, as curators like to say. (LLP reply to Ankersmit 429)

What would such a dialogue entail? If the artwork represents the style of the time, and the style of the time endows a person with a somewhat narrowly defined agency, an agency that makes an individual predictable without being determined, then the artworks could conceivably be in dialogue. In a response to Noël Carroll, Danto argued that the history of art had a “historical implicature” and that the creation of artworks, throughout the era of art, had obeyed a certain logic of conversations, insofar as what comes next in a conversation is something that makes sense in terms of what came before it. Though his point was to show that when this conversational structure had been “broken” there would be no more art of this style, he clearly states that there is a conversational structure in non-biological representations such that a dialogue can take place among them (LLP 456–457, 52).³⁶

The representative structure of the artwork mirrors the structure of the person, and in some way the artwork can enter into a conversation

that anticipates a certain kind of action. Goehr's (2008) essay on the musicality of violence recognizes the common organizational features of the artwork and acts of violence, each being born of historical representations. "The terrorist act and the artwork share certain structural or internal logical features because they draw on a common history of aesthetic, political, and religious assumption" (171). In her essay, she points out that even against the best of intentions, a musical composition aiming at commemoration can bring back the terror, precisely because the shared structures the artwork uses are evoked in performance.

Though the artwork can anticipate, as in a conversation, its ability to influence the action of a beholder outside of the artistic conversation should not be overstated. It may have little or no effect. But the representations of our world, which plot the field of likely human actions, also play a guiding role in the way artists create art insofar as artists are carrying on the conversation through their art. And the conversation is carried on as long as art is following a particular style, which, like its narrative cousin the class-type, is predictable without being deterministic.

(3) Throughout his writings, Danto, often citing Buffon, says "style is the man." Style, for Danto, is something immediate, like a basic action or concept; it refers directly to whatever it is that makes something *style* (TC 200). If the content is removed from the representation, style is all that remains. Nonetheless, in the creation of the artwork, style and substance issue from the same impulse (TC 197). Style, for Danto, encompasses the ability to apprehend directly what others see indirectly. Those not possessing their own style must imitate others. Imitators can acquire a manner by learning, but only by imitating those with style. Thus, when one has learned the manner of style, one 'knows' in a mediated fashion, whereas the one who manifests style, grasps it in an unmediated way (TC 200–201). Danto defines style as the unconscious self-representation of the way in which the *world* at a particular place and time is imprinted on the artist (TC 206–207, 214–215). Imperceptible to artists, this representation is nonetheless perceptible to the audience. This notion of style links the artist's work to its historical context, making it interpretable to present and future audiences.³⁷ When one paints in the style of Rembrandt, one can master the technique, the manner, but it is somehow separated from the style, because the style is bound to the person whose style it is.

So when someone paints in the style of Rembrandt, *he* has adopted a manner, and to at least that degree he is not immanent in the painting in the way Rembrandt is. The language of immanence is made licit by the identity of the man himself and his style—he is his style—and by transitivity of identity Rembrandt *is* his paintings considered in the perspective of style. (TC 204)

Toward the end of *Transfiguration*, Danto presents in a few pages a summation of the interconnections among the various parts of his philosophy, and how they tie his theory of art together (TC 204–208). Danto asks, “What, really, is ‘the man himself?’” His answer is found in the way that we embody our representations: “I have argued a theory to the effect that we are systems of representations, ways of seeing the world, representations incarnate” (TC 204). In the pages that follow this quote, he “alludes” to his speculations regarding how his theory of the material representation, basic action, historical narrative, other minds, and even Sartre’s theory of consciousness, come together in style, much as I have presented in detail above. As I read Danto, his entire system of philosophy is woven together in this section on style (TC 197–208). It is, perhaps, too dense for readers to fully appreciate if they are not familiar with his broader system, and especially, in 1981, if future knowledge of what was to be published in *Body/Body* in 1999 was not available.³⁸

I hope I have adequately discussed the notion of the person as embodied meaning. Let us now turn to the anatomy of an artwork, the core of what he later refers to as the necessary conditions of something being art (AA 195). Danto argues that the difference between representations that are artworks and those that are not might be found at the intersection of rhetoric, expression, and style. Though these elements are by no means identical, working outward from the two former components can lead to an understanding of the more comprehensive notion of style. This order is presumed because style is an overall quality of expression, and expression is an exemplification of metaphor, which Danto analyzes as a form of rhetoric (TC 165, 189).

Regarding the components of the artwork, rhetoric involves the relationship between the artwork and the audience. Style involves the relationship between artist and artwork. Style and rhetoric are what separate artworks from other representations. “Expression seems to lie midway between rhetoric and style,” and in the case of all three components, the ‘qualities’ of the representation never penetrate its content (TC

165, 175, 190, 198). It is important to note that the rhetorical relationship, the one that involves the historical context of the audience, exists between the audience and the artwork, not the artwork and the artist. Style is a relation that holds only between the representation and its creator. The inner style of the artist would be transformed, externalized in the artwork, to something that is no longer that inner representation, but this in itself does not explain the artwork having a rhetorical power not present in the artist's style.

Rhetoric, as Danto describes it, adds something to the issue that is intended to make the audience see the 'facts' in a certain way. In order to add to the 'representation' in a manner that will manipulate, there must be an awareness of what will arouse or incite; at a minimum this involves knowledge of the *world* of others (TC 166–167). Danto acknowledges the role of rhetorical manipulation in political/religious art, but sees in metaphor, one of the most 'familiar' rhetorical devices, a more fitting way to show the essential core of the artwork. Metaphor shares with the artwork that it is intensional, and with rhetoric that there is a middle term that must be found. A metaphor is a transformational device with the form: *a* is *b*. Achilles is a lion. Information is added. The metaphorical simile is implied that Achilles, still a man, in comparison to his human peers is more like a lion (no pacts between men and lions). One cannot substitute intensional terms, even if they are equivalent. Achilles is a "large tawny-colored cat that lives in prides" might fail as a metaphor. Nonetheless, the two propositions are technically equivalent, and with the substitution the proposition still retains its illocutionary power as a sort of warning. It is like the relation of the intensional terms evening star and morning star. Both refer to Venus, but information is added that puts the objects referenced in context. Still, the morning star and evening star are not the same. There is intensionality in the metaphor in that information is added; just as we are intensional beings, information is added to our very existence through the context of our *world* (TC 179–180). The metaphor is rhetorical, like the enthymeme, which Danto argues makes the metaphor function within the artwork. The enthymeme is like a syllogism with a missing step that allows the rhetorician to sway the audience, perhaps in a dubious manner, toward her aim (TC 169–170). But the aim of artistic interpretation is not, as Danto speculates, a manipulative endeavor: "to understand the artwork is to grasp the metaphor that is, I think, always there" (TC 172). Encountered through the artwork is a call for beholders to open and

interpret its metaphor within the horizon of their own life experiences. For Danto, “the greatest metaphors of art” are “those in which the spectator identifies himself with the attributes of the represented character: and sees his or her life in terms of the life depicted.” In these cases, “the artwork becomes a metaphor for life and life is transfigured” (TC 172). When one experiences such a work, the artistic illusion becomes “the enactment of a metaphoric transformation” through which the commonplace is transfigured into something “amazing” (TC 173).

Metaphor gains its transfigurative power through its expression: “what a work expresses is what it is a metaphor for.”³⁹ Thus, style is expressed rhetorically in the artwork. Through their style, artists craft the metaphor. Insofar as “metaphors have to be *made*” (TC 175), creation is a *technē*. Nonetheless, this process is not a conscious one, for artists’ style, the manifestation of the *world* in their works, is hidden from them. To provoke interpretation, the metaphor embodies rhetorical characteristics. Thus, the relationship between artists and audience is such that artists’ intentions, manifest in the artwork, evoke through something like rhetoric a response from beholders, completing the metaphorical ellipsis. The creation of the metaphor, in Danto’s schema, is intentional, yet not conscious: “‘intentional’ does not entail ‘consciously’” (TC 175). As with the woodcut, there has to be something “*that ‘wanted’ to emerge*” (LLP Bogusz-Boltuc 83). This leads to a gap of sorts in the process of artistic creation and interpretation. Rhetoric must be consciously crafted, yet the artist does not consciously create it. “The rhetoric of the work presupposes accessibility to the concepts out of which enthymemes, rhetorical questions, and the tropes themselves are completed, and without this the power of the work and hence the work cannot be felt” (TC 175). There is a ‘knowledge’, if I can use the term, of something only indirectly accessible, which becomes accessible at a later phase.

(4) Assuming ‘agency’ in Danto’s account of art becomes important here. How the artwork gains rhetorical powers through the artist’s style may seem like an oversight, but I believe his system, as I’ve reconstructed it, can account for it. Consider this statement on interpretation. Danto writes, “the interpretation is not something outside the work: work and interpretation arise together in aesthetic consciousness. As interpretation is inseparable from work, it is inseparable from the artist if it is the artist’s work” (PD 45). Interpretation is linked to the artist, as long as it is the artist’s work. Obviously, as the story of van Meegeren goes (TC 41–41), one can interpret a forgery in error, there being no

actual artistic intention, but with a real artistic intention there must be a connection to the artist. Danto holds it to be “an analytical truth that rhetoric itself is an intentional activity, and that beings only of a certain sort are capable of it” (TC 175). This sort of being would be identical with her style, and by transitivity “is” her artwork “from the perspective of style.” This being would be connected to an interpretation of an artwork that uses a rhetoric she unconsciously creates, and, because the rhetoric is not in the relation between her and the work, but a property of the artwork, in some sense, the style has agency in and of itself. As discussed above, the *world* representation, historically stamped, has a predictive effect that ‘causes’ how we act. Aesthetically applied, the imprint of *world* on style has an analogous effect in the artworld. So the gap between the relation of style that exists between the artist and the work and the rhetorical relation that exists between the work and the audience is filled insofar as the style that is the physiognomy of the self, which gives the artist agency, gives it also to the artwork. It is not ‘animate’, but when interpreted, the style of the artist, unconsciously endowed in the work through style, becomes apparent in the artwork, and the intentional properties give the original intention a point of view, evoking the response of the beholder. This addition to the artwork is significant.

“The structure of a style is like the structure of a personality” (TC 207). When the style is the person, and if, from the perspective of style, the person is the artwork (TC 204), then it follows that the structure of the personality is in the artwork. This makes clearer Danto’s statements that appear to give subjectivity to the artworld as well as his claim that the artwork can be self-reflective in a way that an artist, or any person for that matter, cannot be (CT 251).⁴⁰ The style of individual persons, their *world*, is not perceptible to them as they use or manifest it. Once the style is transferred to the artwork, when it is interpreted, the style or *world* can be grasped. (Strictly speaking, beholders could not grasp their own *world* embodied in art, but they can perceive the artist’s style.) When an interpretation is made, the work’s properties activate a sort of agency, which allows self-reflection on what Grice called the “conversational implicature” of the work to take place (TC 157). Again, the works are not animated by this; they of course lack metaphysical will, but the lexical properties of ordinary language are paralleled in the artworld, and a conversation, oriented to the artworld, can be carried forward when we step into those works (TC 150).

4.4 END OF ART: A CHANGING STYLE OF CONVERSATION

4.4.1 *Origin of Style*

Danto's notion of style reflects this account of a belief-set's incarnation in *world* insofar as the artist is unaware of the imperceptible situatedness of her *world*, and this overlap of the shared mode of *world* and the inner mode of style are linked through historical context. "In art particularly, it is this external physiognomy of an inner system of representation that I wish to claim style refers to. Of course we speak as well of the style of a period or a culture, but this will refer us ultimately to shared representational modes which define what it is to belong to a period" (TC 205). Style and *world*, nonetheless, are not equivalent. Though style entails *world*, not all self-presentations of *world* constitute style artistically applied. In style, an aesthetic presentation of *world* gives the artwork the meaning that differentiates it from the everyday object (TC 201). Without style's transmission through the intention of the artist, objects cannot be transformed into art.

Style entails the manner of a time that makes it imperceptible when represented in 'its own time', yet it becomes opaque, even unrecognizable as a style, when taken out of historical context. In *History*, Danto explains how general laws can be couched in narrative descriptions. When some piece is missing from the *explanandum* (something that needs explaining), implicit contextual information must be given or found. But if one does not have this implicit contextual information (customs), then the implicit general laws that might provide explanation are opaque (NK 223). In this context, opacity can indicate an awareness of how our belief-set differs from another's.

4.4.2 *Sartre and Style*

An early reference to style as the physiognomic self-representation of the artist is found in Danto's work on Sartre. Sartre's understanding of being for-itself and for-others, *être-pour-soi* and *être-pour-autrui*, was of particular interest to Danto, and he mentions it in the early pages of TC (10–12).⁴¹ The notion that one's *world*, inscribed upon one as truth, cannot be perceived as true or false is also found in Sartre's writings on consciousness. Danto uses Sartre's terminology to describe how the style of an artist may be invisible (transparent) to the audience of a given

time, because to them it is the style of their time, yet it becomes obvious (opaque) to those of another era. (He is speaking of Giotto, Proust, and Elliott Gould here.) Referring to the connection that exists between the style of an artist and the style of a period, he writes:

I am concerned by structural analogies between periods and persons. Each has a kind of interior and an exterior, a *pour soi* and a *pour autrui*. The interior is simply the way the world is given. The exterior is simply the way the former becomes an object to a later or another consciousness. While we see the world as we do, we do not see it as a way of seeing the world: we simply see the world. Our consciousness of the world is not part of what we are conscious of. Later perhaps, when we have changed, we come to see the way we saw the world as having an identity separate from what we saw, giving a kind of global coloration to the contents of consciousness. (TC 163)

Being for-itself was, for Sartre, a form of inner-consciousness off-limits to the subject. Danto's notion of inner-representation, that for him is the essence of the artist's style, mirrors Sartre's account of consciousness *pour-soi*.⁴² For Sartre, we could only become aware of our specific location in space and time through the gaze of the other. The other's look gives the subject self-awareness. "But in perceiving an eye as looking, I perceive myself as a possible object for that look: I lose my transparency, as it were, and become opaque even for myself" (S 117). For Sartre, the opacity of self begins the process of self-awareness. Through it, one can know oneself. But one is at the mercy of the other's look. "The structure of self-consciousness, then, is logically social, but since I finally am an object for myself only through the provenance of others' perception of me, what I am (as an object) depends upon others and not upon myself" (S 120). In Sartre's eyes, this is hell. Nonetheless, the dependency on the other, which evokes consciousness *pour-autrui*, is a step toward the awareness of one's *world*. The artwork, for Danto, evokes the interpretation of the other, "*esse is interpretari*," but the style directly manifested in it is an internal representation *pour-soi*.

In this chapter, I have attempted to explain how the parallel structures of Danto's theory of action, philosophy of history, and representational materialism are components of his philosophy of art. Referring to Danto's connection of a historically embedded style to an unmediated basic action, Ankersmit notes, "style is a profoundly historical notion—no

less so than that of the narrative sentence—in that the artist’s style can be recognized only after art has moved *beyond* his style and after the emergence of a new period in art’s history” (LLP 417). The passage below exhibits how these parallels come together. Here, Danto explicitly connects the notions of consciousness for-itself, *world* as the imprint of history on the inner-representation of the individual, the manner in which individuals becomes aware of their beliefs and those of others, and style.

Now if anything like this concept of style has merit, we can connect it to the kind of relationships entailing the absence of a mediating knowledge or art... [W]e refer through our practices to the world rather than to our beliefs, and feel as though it is reality itself we are describing rather than our-selves we are confessing...When I refer to another man’s beliefs I am referring to him, whereas he, when expressing his beliefs, is not referring to himself but to the world. The beliefs in question are transparent to the believer; he reads the world through them without reading them. But his beliefs are opaque to others: they do not read the world through those beliefs; they...read the beliefs. My beliefs in this respect are invisible to me until something makes them visible and I can see them from the outside. And this usually happens when the belief itself fails to fit the way the world is, and accident has forced me from my wont objects back onto myself. Thus the structure of my beliefs is something like the structure of consciousness itself, as viewed by the great phenomenologists, consciousness being a structure that is not an object for itself in the way in which the things of the world are objects for it. (TC 206)

Mediated and unmediated, transparent and opaque, world and its representation merge in Danto’s account of style and the body. Danto makes an early formulation of style, referring to Sartre’s notion of freedom. Of freedom, Sartre (1992) writes:

No factual state whatever it may be (the political and economic structure of society, the psychological “state,” etc.) is capable by itself of motivating any act whatsoever. For an act is a projection of the for-itself toward what is not, and what is can in no way determine by itself what is not. (562)

In this conception of freedom, choosing to choose, not the actual power of volition, is primary (567, 562–572). For Danto, this notion of freedom works (§ 130). Our choice is our character, insofar as it determines who we are in life; it is our being. “Our basic freedom, then, lies less

in our power to choose than to choose, in the respect that the primal and original choice determines a style of choosing, and the style is the man himself" (S 137). Our choice is our style, and our choices cannot be determined by events or facts in the world. They are beyond our capacity to revise or perceive. The past, for Danto, has bearing on the present insofar as one's past choices pervade the present, pointing to the future; the style of choosing colors every choice. "It is that in each choice I do more than choose a specific course of action; rather, I choose a style of choosing. So the original choice is made in every choice" (S 137). Danto conceives of style such that it projects into the future, not in a causal manner, not linked to future historical facts which are not available, but through the manifestation of character, a kind of class-type, which is predictable without being determinate. When speaking of Rembrandt's style, compared to the mediated mastery of it as a manner, he mentions Aristotle's discussion of the virtue of temperance. It is not simply a list of temperate things to do. It is a way of acting. To be kind is not selecting from a list of nice things to do; it is a creative spontaneity. There is no exhaustive list of kind things; it is infinite, so in this way, one is free in one's style, if one has made the original choice to be kind. That said, we will always know when an action is not a kind one (TC 202). So freedom is the coloring of one's way of living, not directly determined by events past or present, but by how one chooses to live one way and not another, much as historians choose how to interpret the narrative of history, and artists paint freely, according to some inner calling.⁴³ One reason why the choice is so inscrutable, for Danto, is that the whole concept of cause is "underanalyzed" (CT 271). We are basically our representation of *world*, largely determined by an inherited belief system. Trace the beliefs, and the causes become apparent; but as we are unaware of our representational system, our choices feel free (CT 272; APA 188–196). Inasmuch as our 'choices' amount to predictable patterns, they are our style.

To what extent does our world, our style, determine us? Not in any precise way. But the "conversational implicature" carries one forward in a certain manner, making some choices possible, and others not. Danto says as much in his reply to David Detmer's essay on his *Sartre*.

I have always felt that Sartre's life played out very much as if it illustrated his idea of "original choice"—that there was a consistent pattern in his choices, when faced with alternatives. To be Sartre meant that one was going to make certain kinds of decisions and not others, and though it is

difficult to imagine that there was a moment when little Jean-Paul made that momentous decision to be Sartre, there is a certain coherence in his biography—a unity one might even say—that ruled out certain decisions and entailed certain others. Living a life is something like creating a work of art, in the sense that any given decision raises the need for making unforeseen choices that have to be dealt with in ways one had not entirely anticipated. What may have convinced Sartre that there is an original choice is that the decisions tend to cohere. No one could have counted on Sartre winning the Nobel Prize, but being Sartre, we can understand how he would have turned it down. (LLP 533)

Regarding the rhetoric of the artwork, and the artist's style, it seems that the choice of the artist is in the artwork too. If the style is the artist, the artwork is that person, and the style can in some sense act on its own, then the rhetorical properties of the artwork need not come from the conscious effort of the artist as it coheres in a rhetorical conversation. Because the artist is not aware of her style, it is not rhetorical. But when the artwork is interpreted, the rhetorical relationship starts.

As Danto describes *world* and style, the original choice which seems to be what transforms the general *world* of a period into a personal style—an artistic style if aesthetically expressed—will lead one to act in a decidedly predictable way. Referring to the example of the art critic mentioned earlier, whose identity was formed through her aesthetic point of view, Danto writes,

that point of view defines my companion as a critic, and truly it identifies her as a person: 'the aesthetic point of view' as criterial of art comes close, I think, to what Sartre might identify as her original project, the basic choice which defines the horizon of relevance for all the choices one is going to make in following through one's plan of life. She was, I all at once realized, that point of view. (BB 176)

To change her view, per Danto, would have broken her *world*. On this notion, Danto cites a metaphor used by Al Ghazali: When "the glass of [one's] naive beliefs is broken', then 'This is a breakage which cannot be mended...The glass must be melted once again in the furnace for a new start, and out of it another fresh vessel formed'" (APK 92). In the essay in which Danto wrote of his critic friend, he also discusses Hempel's inability to let go of the *world* he had been born into. He could not let go of the covering-law model, and his philosophical views became less and

less relevant, even though, Danto concedes, he thinks his theories may still have been right. Thomas Kuhn, author of *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, born of Hempel's *world*, was able to see the relevance of his *world* change, and he shifted his point of view, something Hempel could not do. In the background of the Hempel/Kuhn tale are Greenberg and Danto. Danto refers to Greenberg as the critic of modernism. Because he could not let go of his style, he could not recognize Pop, or the revolution in art ushered in by Andy Warhol. Danto recognized that the artworld had to be 're-described' and he rode the wave into the next era of art. Reflection on our *world* is possible. In some ways akin to Hegel, spirit cannot grow by reflecting on itself; it only progresses through recognition of itself in the other. I don't think this quite maps to what Danto is saying, because the transfiguration that Danto tells us can occur when the beholder steps into the great artwork, is not through a dialogue with the artist, it is something that is added (TC 173). The artwork gains meaning as it moves from the creative impulse, to the work's embodiment, to the audience who interprets it. Danto has almost said as much of his own work in response to critics who reconstructed his work (WK 195–196). Indeed, truth is generated when a phenomenon is separated from its past (LLP Ankersmit 403). This account of style is consistent with what Danto (1991) wrote in "Narrative and Style," where he argues that the internal drive of artists' style will be "inscribed" in their beginning such that it will be manifest through the entire body of their work (206).

Getting back to the end of art, what happens when a 'style' becomes known? Ankersmit writes that of historical experience, "we always lose a world by gaining historical insight into it" (LLP 418). Our style, our own and that of our period, can guide us in a way that makes our actions coherent, and perhaps intelligibly predictable, while we remain unaware of this happening. But the *world* we live in and the *world* of art, the artworld, are not the same, despite that within each is an implicit conversational or historical implicature. There is a parallel structure: "the language of art stands to ordinary discourse in a relationship not unlike that in which artworks stand to real things" (TC 155). There are common expressive terms, and "members of the language community one may refer to as the artworld"⁴⁴ by and large agree on how these terms are used (TC 155). But the parallel ends when artworld predicates are applied to the real world objects. In our *world*, we are guided by our

representation of the world, which is transparent to us. When we make a mistake, and it becomes clear a part of our *world* is wrong, it becomes opaque. This might happen when one is not in one's own culture; one can go awry of the norms. "When a man smiles upon meeting a stranger, he expects the reaction to be a smile; and if the latter fails consistently to occur, it is often reasonable to suppose that one has entered into another atmosphere of rules" (APA 114). In France, the American looks like an idiot for smiling; to the American the French seem unfriendly. The conversational implicature does not flow so smoothly if one is new to the *world* of another culture. Regarding non-artworld representations, we must take into account another's *world* if we are to predict, or understand, their actions.

The content of our laws is in a curious way derivative upon the content of [a man's] own implicit theory of why he responds or reacts as he does. We are obliged, then, to invoke [a man's] conception of the world and of his relationship to it in order to explain the way the world moves him to act. And this is all the more marked when we take into consideration the fact that it can happen that he acts in the light of incorrect perceptions and often in the light of false beliefs and mad reasons. The laws of nature cover men only to the degree that men cover themselves by laws, and our explanations of human actions must take a man's *own* explanation into account, however wild and devious. His explanation is part of *the* explanation, and his representation, thus, gets woven into the fabric of the universe. History will go one way rather than another as a function of the way men perceive themselves and their world. (APA 114–115)

A person's style, their *world*, their beliefs, are "woven into the fabric of the universe" we live in; we cannot explain them otherwise. When one's *world*, or another's, becomes opaque, there are times when context is needed to explain an action or belief (see NK 223). When dealing with art, the artworld provides this context, whether the properties of art are invisible, or perhaps just unknown to a beholder: "to see something as art requires something the eye cannot [descry]—an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (Danto 1964, 580). An artist's style, then, if the style is the man, is woven into the fabric of the universe of art, the artworld. I've already laid out how, for Danto, art takes on a kind of personification, and in its conversational implicature has a kind of agency, though certainly no metaphysical

freedom. The agency of art comes into play both in creation and in interpretation. It seems counterintuitive to say the artworks are in conversation themselves, but as artists and interpreters step into the artworld, the conversation is directed by what has been created, and interpreted—the styles and rhetoric of art and artist. Danto has claimed that the conversation ended when art became self-reflective. This, in his eyes, brought philosophy and art together for just an instant before parting ways (PA 11–12). Once art realized its essential nature, it was free of philosophy’s “disenfranchising” tendency to direct the ‘style’ of art. On face value, this is difficult to swallow. But consider this from another perspective that Danto puts forward, which reveals a less ‘Hegelian’ *point of view*. In his reply to Carroll, Danto argued that the “conversation is irreparably broken.” That the “historical implicature,” the “conversation-like” flow of artistic creation that made some sense of what work came next in terms of practice of art creation, was irrecoverable (LLP 456–457). This ‘conversation’ leads to a variation on the theme of the end of art. In most texts, Danto suggests that art had become philosophical in its aim at self-definition. When art had realized its self-definition, its essential nature—historically indexed embodied meaning—had become clear, and no future unifying style would supplant this style of making styles. In this scenario, art is free to be whatever it wants, but the philosopher or critic will step into explain art’s meaning, because it is no longer visually apparent. Now that a defining principle has been revealed, the unseen theories of the artworld need only be made clear. This is one conversation. Returning to the context of his conversation with Carroll, Danto states, “we are in for a fairly sustained period like the present one in which the old quarrels about how art has to be will simply be a quaint residue of something long *Vorbei*. It is a period without movements, without ideology, without manifestos, in which anything goes. What I will say only is that no one now can describe what the next era will be like” (LLP 457). At this point, the post-historical artworld has become “a Babel of unconverging artistic conversations” (AA 148). In some way, both accounts work, and these *‘explanata’* can explain the same *‘explanandum.’* They both account for the morphological changes that art underwent in the twentieth century. If we return to the process that Carrier laid out for us, in which the indiscernibles presented a problem that only philosophy could resolve by looking for a rule beyond the visible, it fits. What doesn’t fit is that art’s internal drive was philosophical, that philosophical self-knowledge was somehow in the intention. I will elaborate on this

more in the next chapter, but it seems to me more that art was ‘in trouble’. The fit between the body and the sentential state art of the past has manifested no longer worked. To say it in terms of *History*, the covering-law of art had become opaque. The end of the conversation was art in a new shape, a new art for a new age. Danto in many respects would agree. But was the problem that drove the conversation to its end philosophy? Perhaps philosophy just swept into clean up the pieces, and if so, is this freedom? In some ways, if the conversation was guiding artists and interpreters in a way that no longer met their needs, if the conversation imposed by the art of realism no longer evoked the need to further it, such that we could or would no longer step into it, then I suppose there is some freedom. But in some ways, it seems like a pyrrhic victory. It seems more like a *world* lost, than a *world* we’re free from, regardless of whether we could have or would have stayed in that *world*. In one sense, if the ‘agency’ of the artworld was limiting the direction that artists and interpreters should go, now, artists are free to follow their ‘metaphysical’ freedom, now that their *world* has been unveiled and shattered. But when art is created, the process described above does not end, and part of what we love about art is that we step into it and it transforms us. In *Action*, referring to the connection of intelligibility to causal dependency, Danto suggests a pragmatic argument that it is better to misunderstand a process than to regard it as unintelligible because “misunderstanding might, through investigation, generate its own rectifications whereas surrendering to unintelligibility leaves us always where we were” (APA 104). So where does that leave us?

Carrier notes that Danto’s conclusions depend on how he constructs the narrative. And not every narrative explanation will set up the problem that he is able to resolve, showing the rule that previously was not seen (DCR 22). Danto, as mentioned before, states that his philosophy takes itself into account, and can be in some sense reinterpreted (NK xiv). Thus, it seems possible, that the shift in the morphology of art that took place in the twentieth century could be subject to an explanation that would yield a different covering law. Perhaps, the end of art is a misunderstanding that needs further investigation. After all, to use the metaphor of Al Ghazali, when the glass is broken, it must be reformed, but even if shaped anew, what comes forth is still a glass.

NOTES

1. Later, Danto (2001) makes a shift in emphasis regarding the is-art, is-not-art differentiation of the indiscernibles, stating that the difference between the Brillo box and *Brillo Box* lies more in the line between craft and fine art (xxiii).
2. The “artworld” is a term Danto coined in 1964. It should not be confused with the common usage of the ‘art world’ referring simply to artists, art historians, curators, etcetera who are involved with or make a profession in the ‘world of art’. Danto does not always use a single word to refer to the “artworld,” but in this chapter, when I use a single word, it refers to Danto’s conceptual structure; when I use two words, “art world,” I refer to the people involved in the arts.
3. Fred Rush writes that “the emphasis given to Hegel in Danto’s work might be overestimated, even by Danto himself” (LLP 473). In his reply to Rush, Danto stated that despite the admiration he has for Hegel’s work, he would have come to the same conclusion as Hegel, had he never read him. Danto states: “I am Hegelian only when my tongue is in my cheek” (LLP 480).
4. In *Iconoclasm in Aesthetics*, Michael Kelly (2003) argues that Danto’s essentialist definition of art entails an unstated third premise, beyond the two requirements that artworks have embodied meaning. According to Kelly, Danto isolates the universal meaning of the artwork by abstracting its meaning (in *Iconoclasm* he uses Sherman’s *Untitled Stills* to make his case) from the particularity of the historical context. If the artwork fails to yield a meaning, it cannot be art. The third unstated condition is demonstrated through the application of Danto’s definition of art. But more than this, Kelly argues, it shows “the priority of the universal over the particular and historical” which also implies the priority of philosophy over art. Carlin Romano, tongue in cheek, suggests there may be two Dantos out there, an analytical, born-again Hegelian and a pragmatist, presenting readers with a pair of “indiscernible” Dantos (DCR Romano). I have also examined the different versions of Danto that emerge in his writings. Sonia Sedivy noted an unresolved ‘dualism’ in Danto’s end-of-art claim in her presentation, “The End of Art and The Loss of Beauty: A Shared Premise,” American Society for Aesthetics Annual Meeting, October 2012. Also see Snyder (2010).
5. Henceforth these books will be referred to as *History*, *Action*, *Knowledge*, *Transfiguration*, and *Body/Body*.
6. As a student of Susan Langer, who was is an anti-reductionist materialist, Danto’s representational materialism is likely a continuation of Langer’s ontology.

7. Danto appears to use these terms interchangeably.
8. Danto's notion of the person seems to be influenced more by Eastern philosophy, perhaps drawing on Nietzsche, and according to Randall Auxier, Danto's early interest in Zen.
9. "Let me recklessly speak now of men as being in certain *sentential states*...I shall think of sentential states as *internal* to men ...in predicating 'believes-that-*s*' of [a man], we are asserting that [a man] is in a sentential state" (APK 89). What "we essentially are is a certain representation of the world: a person in a deep sense is the way he represents the world" (APA 22 n26 on 201).
10. Danto's representationalism is not without problems. In conversation with Randall Auxier, he pointed out that though Danto's disagreements with Rorty provide some of the best answers to Rorty's critique of representationalism ever made, Danto's representational theory may ultimately fail. A problem found in his core philosophy of history, knowledge and action, is that he often treats possibility both logically and ontologically. In his philosophy of history, this pushes him toward nominalism. But, like a Hegelian, Danto places the idea of necessity associated with universals as primarily ontological, and only secondarily logical. Danto, according to Auxier, tries to conceal this, but fails. Thus, he problematically straddles the two positions.
11. Thanks to Randall Auxier for clarifying this.
12. Danto makes reference to Quine's notion of knowledge-ascriptions, which are transparent or opaque to quantification (APA 19). Though the context of their usage is remotely similar, it would be difficult to say Danto borrowed the terms from Quine.
13. "The *Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, in its effort to lay down a definition, hence chart the essence of art, did little better than come up with conditions (i) and (ii) as necessary for something having the status of art. To be a work of art is to be (i) about something and (ii) to embody its meaning" (AA 195). This essentialist definition is so minimal that some critics interpreted it as an anti-essentialist claim (AA 193).
14. Lydia Goehr tells us that "decry" was a typo; Danto meant to type "descry" (DCR 96).
15. I discuss Danto's position on the difference between the inner and outer aspects of mind at a later point.
16. Danto does not necessarily use world in the same manner across all of his texts. Here, I will italicize *world* when it means a representation of the actual world. I will refer to the actual world as the world. Italicized, *world* will be a representation *of* world. A *world* representation, as I use it, will also refer to the representation *of* the (actual) world.

17. Hegel's universal philosophy of history would be among the theories at which Danto takes aim.
18. I refer here to the chapters "The Problem of General Laws" and "The Role of Narratives."
19. See Chapters 13 and 14. These chapters were not part of *History* (1965), but were added, along with a new final chapter, in the 1985 edition of *Narration and Knowledge*. These chapters, though, were presented as papers in 1966 and 1967 respectively, and the influence of his theory of other minds is seen later in his account of style. Ankersmit writes that the three additional chapters gave the book a new orientation that placed it within the "heart of his later philosophy," i.e. the positions presented in *Transfiguration* (LLP n4 422).
20. The relevant content of the inner-self can be expressed with no significant loss through external manifestations of *res representans*. "My ambition, as projected in these pages, is that we should enter the mill that is another person and learn to read the text of his mind. In one sense, we would know immeasurably more about ourselves if we could do that. In another, I think, we would know very little about one another beyond what we do know....The inside and the outside are one" (CT 256).
21. Danto argues that often the reasons for our creative actions are not known to us, again showing the interior may be of little value for historical explanation. "For we ourselves, when we behave creatively, often find that we have hit upon a certain thing without being clear how we did it, or what, if anything went on in our minds at the creative instant" (NK 232). We see an analogy to this in Ewa Bogusz-Boltuc's description of how Danto made his woodcuts, "he sought *something ... that 'wanted' to emerge*" (LLP 83).
22. To make my case, it is not necessary to understand the four positions. But here is a brief description of what he lays out.
There exists logical a tension among three propositions which some say adequate historical explanation entails.
 1. Historians sometimes explain events.
 2. Every explanation must include at least one general law.
 3. The explanations historians give do not include general laws (NK 203).
 While at some level we accept all of these propositions, logically, we cannot accept more than two. Four basic positions are found in the literature:
 - A. 2 is absolutely true and 1 is absolutely false.
 - B. 2 is absolutely true and 1 can be accepted if restated though it is false as stands.
 - C. 1 is absolutely true and 2 can be accepted if restated though it is false as stands.

- D. 1 is absolutely true and 2 is absolutely false (NK 204).
23. The *explanandum* is what needs to be explained. ‘Why is there smoke?’ The *explanans* is the explanation. “Because there is fire.” Multiple *explanans* can explain one *explanandum* when precise information on the event is lacking.
 24. Carl G. Hempel, 1905–1997, focused on philosophy of science and philosophy of history. He was known as one of the main proponents of the “covering law model” of explanation and his position as a “logical empiricist.”
 25. The covering law is, “whenever a nation has a sovereign of a different national origin than its own citizens, those citizens will, on the appropriate occasions, honor that sovereign in some acceptable fashion” (NK 221).
 26. This topic is discussed further in Chapter 5. See Habermas (1988, 33).
 27. Historicists such as Rosalind Krauss would find issue with Danto placing Duchamp’s *Fountain* and Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes* in the same category, the historical conditions in which each were produced being very different. Though Danto’s theory accounts for the historical differences, he still sees the essential philosophical notion they expressed as the same. See Carrier (2002, 60–61).
 28. The passage cited is from Marx’s (1988) “The German Ideology.” “For as soon as the distribution of labor comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticism after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic” (168). Danto cites this passage more than once. See (AA 37; WK 93).
 29. Danto does believe that one’s philosophy should be able to take itself into account, so re-description of his own theory falls within the scope of his theory (BB 168–169; NK xiv).
 30. In Danto’s early writings he seems to lament art’s end. Later, he upholds it as an ideal (LLP 54–55).
 31. The dialogue among artists, curators and audience (the art world) might be appropriate to what George Dickie referred to as the institutional theory of art. Danto considered the institutional theory of art incapable of

- providing a rule that differentiates visible from non-visible attributes of art.
32. Danto mentions with some frequency the idea that animals, like us, are representing beings. In other texts, he makes frequent references to the representational capacities of dogs. That said, humans are creatures that live in history, and animals do not (CT 273).
 33. It is not unequivocally clear that the set of representational beings is congruent with the set of sentential beings, but I think they are close enough to conclude that what he writes about sentential beings applies to *ens representans*. Tiziana Andina (2011) discusses “representations that human beings incorporate in a physical structure different from their body” (54–55, see 46–55).
 34. The chapters in *Narration and Knowledge* where other minds are discussed explicitly were written in 1966 and 1967, but the concept is present in the original publication of *Analytical Philosophy of History*.
 35. In “Outsider Art,” Danto (2001) conceded that outsider art might not be art in the sense he means here, since outsider artists do not engage the artworld; they are an artworld unto themselves. Though they may have talent, they are not part of the conversation of the artworld, and, for critics, are impossible to explain (242–249).
 36. In *Body/Body*, Danto speculates that there are interactive processes that are mediated as sentential states, implying a kind of inter-system information processing that could be common to machines and biological entities. “The laws of behavior for sententially characterized beings—animals, some machines, and us—must take account of the truth-relations between the world and us, as well as within us, as part of their own truth-conditions” (BB 90–92).
 37. To illustrate this, Danto uses the example of the forger Han van Meegeren. Van Meegeren wanted confirmation from his contemporaries, even if his success meant it could not be acknowledged that his paintings were as good as those of Vermeer, so he painted *Christ at Emmaus*, which was for some time accepted as a work of Vermeer’s. The evidence that eventually revealed its fraudulent identity was not the modern x-ray, but rather the manner used in painting. Van Meegeren’s brush strokes bore the manner of the 1930s, which could not have been used in the manner of a mid-seventeenth-century painting by Vermeer (TC 41–43). Van Meegeren is perhaps known as the most notorious forger in art history. His forgeries, made in the 1930s, were accepted by one of the most renowned art historians of the day, Abraham Bredius, who declared van Meegeren’s *Christ at Emmaus* to be a stunning find and, perhaps, the greatest Vermeer ever. Part of the reason these forgeries were not detected at the time, was due to the failure of the current artworld to

- recognize its own mannerisms. However, van Meegeren himself revealed his forgeries after the Second World War to avoid the charge of treason. Van Meegeren was accused of collaborating with the Nazis by aiding the enemy to acquire Dutch national treasures. His name was connected with the sale of *The Woman Taken in Adultery*, allegedly painted by Vermeer, to Nazi Field Marshal Goering, and for this he was imprisoned. The charge of treason resulted in the death penalty, so van Meegeren revealed his secret. To his defense, he claimed to be a national hero, having traded Goering two hundred original Dutch paintings for his forgery, thus saving them from Nazi confiscation. After a two-year trial, in which van Meegeren was compelled to demonstrate his forging technique, the charge was reduced to forgery, and he was sentenced to one year in prison. Van Meegeren died in prison before his term was served.
38. At the time when *Transfiguration* was published, Danto had already published five of the twelve essays presented in *Body/Body*.
 39. Danto writes that to derive his account of expression he has “insidiously” transformed Nelson Goodman’s notion of metaphorical exemplification (TC 194).
 40. On the self-reflective capacity that Danto sees in art itself, Hilmer (1998) writes: “The interesting idea Danto takes from Hegel is the cognitive function of art, namely its aiming at self-knowledge. Of course we can imagine each of the arts capable of self-knowledge, leaving open the historical date of the achievement. In doing this, though, a perhaps crucial shift in Danto’s use of “self-knowledge” surfaces: he tends to speak of art as the subject of self-knowledge, its historical task being to arrive at the knowledge of what art is (or what painting, sculpture, and so on are). This process can be paralleled to the narrative of a person’s gaining identity through self-knowledge, but it is not clear whether it actually contributes anything to the self-knowledge of a human being, whether finally being able to define the essence of art will be of any use for anybody” (73).
 41. Here, he is bringing to light the difference between imitation and representation, which ultimately ties into his notion of style.
 42. Though Danto’s notion of style and world seem to be influenced by Sartre’s notion of being-in-the-world, for Sartre, the subject is a component of the world, and the mediating layer of representation is absent. The subject is just a thing among things (CT xiv, 40).
 43. “Just as the future turns back upon the present and the past in order to elucidate them, so it is the ensemble of my projects which turns back in order to confer upon the motive its structure as a motive” (Sartre 1992, 564).
 44. I would guess that Danto means “art world” here, and not “artworld.”

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

- AA Danto, Arthur. *After the End of Art: Contemporary art and the Pale of History*.
- APA Danto, Arthur. *Analytical Philosophy of Action*.
- APK Danto, Arthur. *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*.
- BB Danto, Arthur. *The Body/Body Problem*.
- CT Danto, Arthur. *Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy*.
- DCR Rollins, Mark, ed. *Danto and His Critics*.*
- LLP Auxier, Randall E. and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. *The Philosophy of Arthur C. Danto*.*
- NAP Danto, Arthur. *Nietzsche as Philosopher*.
- NK Danto, Arthur. *Narration and Knowledge*.
- PA Danto, Arthur. *Philosophizing Art: Selected Essays*.
- PD Danto, Arthur. *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*.
- TC Danto, Arthur. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.
- S Danto, Arthur. *Sartre*.
- WA Danto, Arthur. *What Art Is*.
- WK Danto, Arthur. *The Wake of Art*.
- TI Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Twilight of the Idols and The Anti-Christ*.
Translated by R. J. Hollingdale.

*These volumes contain essays by multiple authors with responses from or an essay by Danto. When cited, if the authorial context is not clear, the author's name will be inserted after the abbreviation. Otherwise, assume that the reference is to Danto.

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Style of the Future

5.1 THE END OF ART?

After Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto surmise art's end, where does this leave art? Has it ended? Ostensibly not; the arts, broadly construed, seem more integrated into the fabric of our economic, political, and social fabric than ever before. It is not my aim to defend the specifics of this claim outside of saying that the value of art to collectors has hit record highs, the role of the fabricated image in our political discourse is highly significant, and the arts—perhaps not the high art of the academy, but in some form given the technological ease of digital reproduction—are ever-present in our daily lives. So were the philosophers in this study wrong? Not necessarily. It was the aim of this study to show what Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto meant by the end of art, and how their theories contribute to our understanding of art. In their approach, these three thinkers sought to overcome a subject/object, mind/body dualism, and they concluded that no 'true' perspective outside of this world was available. Each of their philosophies accounted for how we are in the world, and in the world with our art. What art is depends upon a different relationship to something already in the world, a transformation of sorts. Hegel's view, entailing a metaphysics that is likely not palatable to most contemporary thinkers, saw in art's trend toward conceptualization a move away from a pure representational form to an embodied form that demanded our judgment, moving it closer to the higher form of philosophy itself. The spirit of art, whatever that may be, still exists, albeit in a different form. Hegel's early nineteenth-century

claims about the future of art seem to come true, though not in exactly the way he predicted. Art has become conceptual, and in the case of the visual arts, the artwork's optical matching to the object it represented is no longer necessary. There is no need to rehash the details of Hegel's aesthetic theory, the topic of Chapter 2, but in some measure, Hegel's end-of-art claims are correct. Despite the controversial nature of Nietzsche's assertion that art has ended, his argument that a powerful myth manifested in art is needed for a significant transformation to occur also seems correct. This claim is certainly substantiated by Danto, whose system of philosophy shows that if a *world*, a spider's web of background presuppositions, is not implicitly understood, the representations that relate to that *world* will need some explanation. Hence, the artworld serves the purpose of providing the context for the "atmosphere of artistic theory" needed to transfigure *art*. Nietzsche's second, implicit end-of-art theme, which will be more relevant to the analysis of this chapter, simply underscores the difficulty of breaking out of a system of reference, one's language, when the only tools one has for this task *are that language* or system of reference from which one will escape. Danto's end-of-art thesis, as Hegel's, requires a deeper understanding of his systematic thought. Building on concepts similar to both Hegel's and Nietzsche's, Danto conceives of art such that it manifests a conversational structure, giving it some independence from the artist's will: it is unclear for Danto at what level the artist's 'metaphysical' will is ever actually intuited as far as artistic creation is concerned. In this sense, like Hegel, the artist is a vehicle of *Geist*. Danto is a materialist, the opposite pole of Hegel's idealism. But as Hegel saw that material was somehow a lower organization of mind, Danto sees two kinds of material, material that represents and material that does not. The material of art entailed an internal drive that led its conversation to an end, and the self-reflective realization of what art actually is—a concept only knowable when a phenomenon's essential period of activity has passed. In this sense, Danto too is right. But what does it all actually mean for art? After all, art has indeed changed. Danto maintains we are metaphysically free. However, like Leibniz, Danto argues that the causes of our actions are not always intelligible to us. Like Leibniz's monads, we are driven by inner developments; for Danto, our representations direct our actions. But when we are free from those representations, when they are no longer our *world* but a *world* past, the reasons why we acted might become intelligible. I hope it to be the case that in addressing the claims of art's end, a better understanding of what art is, and our relationship to it, will have been reached.

In this chapter, I examine the history of the changes that took place in art of the twentieth century, giving an alternative that does not show art to have ended. Danto, though incorporating history directly into his theory of art—art necessarily being historically indexed—is primarily concerned with art’s ontology and its essentialist definition and does not concern himself with the reasons why art changed, causality itself being a misunderstood concept. If Danto’s theory is internally coherent, then there is no reason why external factors should matter, other than knowing they are there in some form. But if his claims, and the story he tells, do not match the world of art, then his theory may need to be ‘reinterpreted’. After all, he does consider counterexamples to his theory a form of falsification: “if anything I write fails to apply throughout the world of art, I shall consider that a refutation” (TC viii).

In his narrative philosophy, Danto utilizes a class of intelligible ‘possibilities’ that are indirectly knowable in the present but not directly knowable until they have become part of ‘history’. This ‘structure’ is implicit in the class-type that, as Danto employs it, describes a sort of action. For example, one cannot know how kind persons will act until they have done so, but one can predict their actions will be kind. In the case of narrative statements, some claims made about a historical period are only justifiable when that period has come to a close. With style, a person cannot directly know what possibilities are opened through their *world* until that *world* is a thing of the past. Yet these possibilities still direct actions; there is still a general rule of action that is appealed to without one’s explicit knowledge. Danto’s category relies on an asymmetry of time, insofar as time reveals explicitly what was implicit before. There is a Janus-faced duality here. Style’s interiority is only ‘knowable’ from the exterior. Danto never fully developed the logic of this peculiar class of possibilities. He sees our actions, monad-like, as driven by the inner dynamic of our world, through a kind of representational causality. Certainly, Danto is not a rationalist; he recognizes objective causality, but objective causality has no point of view (CT 272–273; APA 188–196). A point of view, though, would entail interests, and even if they are channeled through possibilities implicitly manifest through our *world*, they still originate in our non-representational self—our human organism, which in itself is outside of history. Habermas recognizes that Danto is silent on this point and sees in the attempt to articulate the interests behind our implicit background presuppositions the possibility for humans to direct their future, even if these “anticipations” are not legitimate narrative descriptions. Habermas also notes that the

judgments that recognize the implicit ‘knowledge’ of the past as directly knowable employ the implicit possibilities of those making the judgments, meaning implicit claims still shape their justification of what is now deemed knowable. Without mention of interest, Danto acknowledges this. “To believe that there are actions is to believe that what we at last can know will have come about in part because of what we have done: that the shape of the past is contingent upon the shapes we project into the future” (APA 26). My approach aims to show at least that our interests, implicit or otherwise, affect our style. Between the threshold of past and future—implicit possibility and knowability—I hope to show that in the art of ‘our time’, the striving after implicit possibilities is neither art’s end nor arbitrariness, but a process of transformation.

In what follows, I examine two broader views, each encompassing some aspects of the views previously presented. One view, which could be called pre-Kantian, will for the most part be represented by Danto.¹ This view will stand in for aspects of Nietzsche’s thought, which would fall into that category, and though my instincts tell me this does not exist, if there is a pre-Kantian Hegelianism, it would be found in Danto’s writings. The other, which would be post-Kantian, presents a view of the changes that have occurred in the twentieth century from both the artistic and the social-political perspective. The alternative corroborates the history of the pictorial image described by Ernst Gombrich with the social philosophy of Jürgen Habermas—who has written much on the modern/postmodern debate—and my own observations on the creative interaction of artist and audience in ‘our time’. Danto and Habermas have an interest in overcoming the mind/body problem, or, as the post-Kantians referred to it, the subject/object divide, but each takes a different approach. For Danto, the solution is representational materialism. Habermas sees the subject/object divide being overcome by moving the locus of reason away from the individual subject to an intersubjective communicative process. Using this approach, Habermas positions himself as the next of the Kantian thinkers in line after Hegel, and he sees his philosophy as resolving problems of the “subjective principle” left in Hegel’s philosophy.² He has no aesthetic theory to speak of, but having integrated the aesthetic judgment into the core of his communicative philosophy, his approach provides an avenue for applying a form of Hegel’s aesthetic thought to contemporary art. This corroborating account will by and large support Danto’s narrative of art’s end. Gombrich’s history of art’s quest to trick the eye is well documented in *Art and Illusion*, and the end of this progression, as Danto notes, comes with the end of representational realism in art. Gombrich’s

trial-and-error methodology is empirical, and though broadly interdisciplinary, focuses on the psychology of pictorial depiction. It would be what Danto refers to as outside of the purview of philosophy, and the reasons Gombrich provides for the shift from the eye to the mind, though often the same as Danto's, might matter little to Danto's account of the internally unfolding style of modern art as it moves through the representational, expressive, and manifesto writing phases. Danto's account of art is ontological and essentialist. Without explicitly rejecting historicist accounts that show fundamental differences in artistic movements (Krauss), in Danto's view, the causes that differentiate historical movements don't affect the internal drive that for him is the philosophical agent of change (Carrier 2002, 60–61). Recall that his notion of style is modeled after a Sartrean view that does not see events as changing the direction of an action; rather, it is the original choice—whatever that might be for art—that guides the style. Nonetheless, Gombrich's account provides an analysis rooted in the more materialistic stream of art historic development that, as we mentioned in the last chapter, is alluded to, but not fully accounted for, in Danto's theory (LLP 456–457).

Habermas' interests lie mostly in social theory and critique. Critique, Habermas (1984) argues, is rational and universal, but at the same time, he strives to show how it can be grounded socially, not transcendently (xlii). What Habermas offers is an account of historical change that is grounded in the history of culture but still draws on certain universal claims inherent in the progressive-development process used for acquisition of knowledge (see Postone 1990). Habermas' communicative/hermeneutical approach, taking a more pragmatic stance toward knowledge, is in many ways at odds with Danto's ontological approach. But Habermas recognizes the paradoxical nature of Danto's use of categories of 'knowing', which are implicit until historically realized, and his approach provides a useful alternative. I will discuss Habermas' interest in Danto's philosophy later, but for now, he offers an account of history, in particular modern history, that examines the paradoxical actualization of the philosophical principle of modernity in history: the problem of modernity could only be solved by a break with the past, while at the same time retaining the unifying aspect of rationality that evolves out of modernity itself. Habermas provides an alternative non-aesthetic reading of problems of modernity that see modernity's self-understanding coming to a problematic realization in society. Habermas' own aesthetic theory is underdeveloped, and I will not attempt to construct what a fuller version might look like here.³ He does, however, build aesthetics,

in the form of aesthetic validity claims and world-disclosive discourse, into the core of his philosophical system. I will draw on what few references Habermas has made to literature and art to suggest ways of supporting Danto's claims of a "self-reflexive" change in how art is created and viewed, and that the narrative of art as representational has ended. But where Danto sees art ending as the representational narrative closes, I argue that art continues, but is no longer amenable to narrative. Art ends when its narrative ends only if its sole aim was to solve the problem of representation; but I aim to show the problem-solving aspect of art's "conversation" is still quite active and it is not really free or exempt from future development.

5.1.1 *Habermas and Danto*

Danto considered Habermas a friend. It was Habermas who introduced Danto's writings to the German-speaking world, and after this, Danto's works were often included in the curriculum of German universities. In some ways, the response his early analytical writings received in Germany was of greater depth than that of his Anglo-Saxon counterparts (Ankersmit 2007, 365–366). Despite this, Danto said that he was never quite sure what Habermas' interest in his work was. Speaking of *Analytical Philosophy of History*,⁴ Habermas told Danto that "by applying analytic pressure to the questions it discussed, the book overcame the difference between analytical philosophy and hermeneutics" (429 n1). Indeed, Habermas (1988) writes that Danto's "twist" on the interpretation of general laws within a historical context "brings analytic philosophy to the edge of hermeneutics" (33). Habermas' interest in Danto's work may have extended beyond his interest in his narrative philosophy of history. It was the consensus of a number of students who attended Habermas' lectures on aesthetics in the late 80s that he planned to use Danto's analytic and narrative theory as the basis to further develop his own aesthetic theory. But this never happened.

There are commonalities in the philosophical systems of Danto and Habermas. Habermas' interests in Danto's *History* stemmed from his broader interests in theory and critique and the need to place hermeneutics within the analytic framework of empiricist philosophies of science (Habermas 1988, 21; see Giddens 1977, 199–200). Insofar as the historical point of view was inserted into the narrative statements which entailed covering laws, Danto's analytical narrative approach was

amenable to these interests. Habermas was also interested in the structure of Danto's narrative philosophy of history. Both theories recognized the need for scientific inquiry to account for a form of language or representation that existed outside of its practice, the practice itself relying on historical or sociological elements not directly addressed through the practice. Empirical-analytical inquiry, as Habermas defines it, "is the systematic continuation of a cumulative learning process that proceeds on the pre-scientific level within the behavioral system of instrumental action" (Habermas 1972, 191; see McCarthy 1981, 60–75). It is an approach to knowledge aimed at the control of nature. The framework that presupposes this form of inquiry is confirmed insofar as theory can connect to experience through experimentation. In this form of action, the subject interacts with the objective world through measurements that yield rules of interaction that mirror 'reality'. Habermas understands hermeneutical inquiry to lie within the realm of what he refers to as communicative action. The hermeneutical framework, according to Habermas (1972), is not actually a different framework, as many theorists presume. It presupposes the same framework as the empirical-analytical, but the focus is human interaction. This form of inquiry still applies to 'reality', but an intersubjective one. It simply employs a different hermeneutical starting point (191–195). One conclusion Habermas draws from this is that empirical-analytic inquiry itself employs the resources of hermeneutics, that is, the community of scientists cannot communicate and carry on the practice of science while remaining within the empirical-analytic framework (Habermas 1988, 167; McCarthy 1981, 69). Danto shared similar concerns, though they were more fully developed in his later philosophy. Critiquing what he calls the eliminativist position, Danto argues that in their zeal to rid science of folk-psychology and history—the aspects of our existence that make us human—eliminativists would technically 'eliminate' their own science.⁵ Collapsing the difference between our bodies and ourselves would do away with the differences that are our representation. By eliminating the 'representations' of our world, we eliminate science, which itself is a representation of our world (BB 75, 152–156, 215). In his early writings, Habermas (1987b) saw the need for a philosophical framework capable of resolving the tension between the hermeneutical and analytic-empirical approaches, and he felt that Danto's "methodologically promising" (136) narrative philosophy of history could do this. Danto, as discussed in the last chapter, showed that statements about the future employ the general narrative structure of the

past, projecting it into the future, where no historical events exist to be explained by these future predicated sentences. Habermas (1988) did not dispute this, but from a hermeneutic perspective, he recognized the value of using the narrative framework in making future predications. “If...we examine the validity of hermeneutic statements in the appropriate framework of practically effective knowledge, what Danto considers a deficiency proves to be the transcendental condition of possible knowledge” (162).

It was in the way that general laws and perspectival interests were integrated into the narrative framework in Danto’s work that Habermas saw the possibility of resolving the tension between theoretical universal claims and their application in context. The theoretical statement, in Danto’s narrative schema, is employed in such a way that it is not context-free; the narrative perspective always links the subject to the historical explanation, even if implicitly (Habermas 1988, 33). As discussed in Chapter 4, because an event can have multiple descriptions—some entailing a general law, some not—it can be redescribed such that it does entail one. This places the explanation at a higher level of generalization (NK 220–221). Through this generalization, statements about the past are organized according to the interest of the framer, and this aspect of Danto’s theory, for Habermas, shows the unity of knowledge and human interest. Habermas (1972) aims to recover the concept of an “emancipatory power of reflection” not present in philosophy since Hegel, “which the subject experiences in itself to the extent that it becomes transparent [visible] to itself in the history of its genesis. The experience of reflection articulates itself substantially in the concept of a self-formative process” (197). Recognizing reflexively the interest in our actions is a move toward understanding the interests tied up in our knowledge, and this, for Habermas, is emancipatory (Giddens 1977, 202). Danto (1987) recognizes the liberating power of knowledge that frees one from false belief (14, 19). As well, he couples the unity of knowledge and interest in his account of narrative statements, insofar as the past is organized according to the historian’s interest. But he does not connect reflection on interest of the historian to an emancipatory power. Rather, he sees it as arbitrary, an “inexpungible” subjective and creative step imposed on the structure of history (NK 142). Habermas (1988) is interested in a philosophical system that can unify knowledge with self-reflection on interests, and following this approach, he argues that Gadamer’s self-reflective hermeneutics would benefit from the analytic structure of Danto’s philosophy, which could provide it with a critical sense of

time-consciousness (see McCarthy 1981, 181–185). But self-reflection, if viewed synchronously, is not possible, given the basic structure of Danto’s philosophy. Though Danto makes room for asynchronous self-reflection, reflection on one’s past *world* being possible, I doubt that it would satisfy the sort of subjective self-reflection Habermas’ theory demands.⁶ As well, Danto’s interests were in ontology, not in the social interactions of the self-reflective subject.

In Habermas’ mature writings, though he seems to accept the structure of Danto’s narrative philosophy, insofar as his account of world provides individuals with a “cognitive reference system” (Habermas 1987b, 136), he eschews Danto’s theory of action, calling it “misleading” (Habermas 1984, 97). Habermas (1984) makes it clear that his theory of communicative action is not based on the Anglo-Saxon action theory.⁷ The analytic action theory is too atomistic and does not provide structures that account for coordination of actions that would lead to formation of interpersonal relationships. “Analytic action theory treats the venerable problems of the pre-Kantian philosophy of consciousness in a new perspective, and without pushing through to the basic questions of a sociological theory of action” (273–274). At this point, Habermas seems to part ways, his interests being primarily social and political. Lydia Goehr also notes that Danto’s emphasis on ontology leads him to overlook matters of deeper social significance (DCR 88–90).

It is tempting to read Danto in terms of evolving cultural capacities. The structure he utilizes seems to lead one there. But his philosophy is concerned with essential definitions, higher levels of generalization, not in the emergence of species-capacities. The transfiguration of the commonplace in art, as Goehr phrases it, is seen better as “horizontal” than “vertical.” There is no ascension.

Differently put, although inspired by Hegel to draw on Christian themes and examples of transfiguration, Danto aims, with Nietzsche, to borrow the transfigurative language yet to leave Christianity as a condition of art behind. Like Nietzsche, he uses a language that looks sacred, aesthetic, and moral to expose especially the value-prejudices it has encouraged when philosophers have wanted to determine the nature of history or art. (DCR Goehr 89)

This does not mean that Habermas’ ideas on art will not be useful. His notion of the power of rhetoric in art is not so far from Danto’s, and

his own account of the ‘indiscernible’ (Habermas examines Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*) supports Danto’s claims while also putting them in a different light. This does mean, however, that Habermas’ account of modernity’s paradox, in which culture lifts itself up ‘by its own bootstraps’, so to speak, will not directly apply to Danto’s end-of-art claims insofar as they focus on changes in the developmental capacities of western society. Still, Gombrich’s account is not normative in this sense, and despite Danto’s arguments that art is not a language, there are parallels insofar as Danto claims that we, as is art, are sentential and representational beings.

An analysis of Gombrich’s empirically and cultural-historically oriented theory of art helps to clarify whether or not the morphological changes art has undergone in the late twentieth century are fundamental by shedding light on the following questions: Isn’t art doing many of the same things it has always done, just not in such a unified format? Is philosophy still connected to art, just in a different, less singular way? In the broader sense, what is philosophy? Clearly, Danto wants a more modest account of philosophy that does not overextend its reach, as substantive philosophers of history, such as Hegel, have done. But in his claim that art and philosophy are separate, I suggest that he may shrink philosophy’s role so much that it does not account for *all* of his own uses of it. The structure of his narrative explanations may not capture the problem-solving aspects of art that continue ‘after the era of art’ in the same way they did ‘in the era of art’ because it only focuses on the possibilities that are no longer implicit. Philosophy, for Danto, steps into solve problems, as it did when Warhol’s *Brillo Boxes*, indiscernible from Harvey’s Brillo cartons, appeared on the art scene. Why should philosophy and art meet for just an instant, then part ways (PA 11–12)? They are not, after all, “discontinuous fragments of a divided subject, but facets of a single unitary philosophy, which thinks of art philosophically and of philosophy from the perspectives of art” (BB ix–x).

Philosophical inquiry has a problem-solving structure. In the age of manifestos, art adopted a descriptive mode that strove after its own definition, evoking the problem-solving nature of philosophical discourse. Art’s drive for singularity, as Danto sees it, conflicted with the conversation that art is no longer just mimesis, which is what brought on the move to description in the first place. The logic of this ‘conversation’ led to art’s self-definition, and with that, for Danto, the end of art. This matches his narrative philosophy; when art’s era is done, we can see what art was. But it does not map to his notion of embodied meaning, which, as I hope to have shown in Chapter 4, has a conversational agency of its

own. This has not stopped because the narrative of history itself has not stopped, and it is the narrative of history, the *world* it imprints on us, that is in part responsible for the ‘conversation’. The narrative I present illustrates how art still manifests the problem-solving structure that it did when it sought to descriptively define itself in the era of manifestos. The only difference, as Danto notes, is that art is now self-aware of its pluralistic nature. Danto’s account of style—the incarnation of a kind of class-type—representationally embodies a way of being predictable without being determinate. Given that style reveals itself through action, it is arguable that style’s implicit rule can be developed or clarified through its application.⁸ As he uses it, a style is not affected by external reasons; whether or not we accept that it has its own impetus. Nevertheless, he argues that the style of the era of art was a problem-solving style, insofar as it sought to solve the problems of optical fidelity, and ultimately its own identity. Regardless of whether we accept that there are no external influences on style, it is evident that art is still solving problems, albeit different ones. In this sense, art has not changed, and Danto’s narrative explanation has not captured this. This topic will be visited again later, in the context of reinterpreting his account of style as the embodiment of a sort of “orientational narrative.”

5.2 ANOTHER NARRATIVE: GOMBRICH’S STORY OF ART

5.2.1 *Moving from the Eye to the Mind*

As Danto describes it, art, in its essential state of pluralism, is in its ‘ideal’ state. I call this into question, especially since Danto’s transfiguration of the commonplace is a “horizontal” move, using Goehr’s description, showing how art belongs in a category different from other objects, not a vertical or developmental category. The art of our time is pluralistic, and I do not judge this as a negative. But I cannot agree that this is art’s final form, though it may be a more highly developed one. In the following sections, I present a narrative of twentieth-century art that allows for another description of the state of pluralism in art that maintains Danto’s narrative account of history and his theory of embodied meaning.⁹ To be clear, it is not my aim to push Danto toward an institutional account of the artworld; thus, I agree with Danto that a rule differentiating art from non-art needs to be found that goes beyond the mere context of a work being in a museum or gallery. Nonetheless, I feel that Danto’s conclusions regarding how this definition emerged as the era of art completed

itself deserve more attention. I examine below the schematic theory of art presented by Gombrich and the explanation that his theory provides for representational art's move toward abstraction, even though he himself did not seem to apply it past the style of verisimilitude. Next I assess what ramifications a different reading would have on the claim that the narrative of art had ended. I will argue that though the narrative of representational art ended, the progress of art is not complete; the disruption that the form of art underwent, nonetheless, did not conform to a narrative explanation. Art at this point is more amenable to philosophical explanation. In the future, art's form may change such that the body of work presented as art through the artworld would once more be amenable to narrative. The story of the era of art may pick up again, albeit in a different chapter.

5.2.2 Gombrich

In *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, Gombrich presents the history of pictorial image-making as the development of representational art in terms of a progression of trial-and-error attempts to perfect the mimetic image. Gombrich's approach draws on the epistemological theories of his colleague, Karl Popper. Popper held that there are no such things as proven scientific theories; rather, there are only theories that have not yet been disproved. According to this fallibilistic epistemology, any discipline that claims to fall under the umbrella of science must, along with its core theories, present cases that, should they occur, would show its central thesis to be incorrect. Loosely following Popper's method, Gombrich's theory provides an alternative to Danto's, one that shows philosophy and art to have a different relationship. The story of art Gombrich tells is one that recognizes and explains the historical development of art and its shift away from representationalism in the twentieth century, which, in this context, is the *explanandum*, presenting an *explanans*, or *explanatum*, that is different from Danto's. One of Gombrich's central aims is to demonstrate that art must have a history and that the history comes from the communication of visual images appropriated and changed over time, apparently making and matching. Gombrich also documents the development of the language of art, or "schemata" as he refers to it, used for communication and expression of the ideas of the artists to their audience. In *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich

(1960) holds that he is providing evidence for the hypothesis he presented in his historical work, *The Story of Art*, in which he tells us,

I had sketched the development of representation from the conceptual methods of the primitives and the Egyptians, who relied on ‘what they knew’, to the achievements of the impressionists, who succeeded in recording ‘what they saw’. While thus making use of the traditional distinction between ‘knowing’ and ‘seeing’, I ventured to suggest in my last chapter that the self-contradictory nature of the impressionist programme contributed to the collapse of the representation of twentieth-century art. (xxvii)

It is the ‘conceptual’ distinction between ‘knowing’ and ‘seeing’, between our judgment and our perception, that Gombrich addresses in his history of art and theory of pictorial representation.

The changes that take place in art history, from the impressionists to the expressionists to the cubists to the abstract impressionists, occur, according to Gombrich (1995), because the artistic forms, the schemata of the times, could no longer express what the artists wanted to ‘say’ (538–539). So they abandoned the schemata of tradition, but they still sought to express what they felt the artists of the past had been expressing with a new set of schemata. The point at which Danto and Gombrich may find reluctant commonality is in the relation of the schemata to what is expressed and how implicit laws guide our everyday actions.¹⁰ When the implicit rules are ‘unavailable’, a problem emerges, and they may become explicitly known. At this point, their use in historical narrative sentences is justified. There is a difference between narrative description and schemata, but both are representations, to use Danto’s language, that are linked to background presuppositions, what for Danto is one’s *world* and what Gombrich refers to as the “mental set.” Gombrich defines the mental set from the standpoint of psychology: it is a “level of expectations.” Though Danto’s account of *world* is ontological—showing how one is connected to the world—it functions in a parallel manner. “All culture and all communication depend on the interplay between expectation and observation” (Gombrich 1960, 60). The example Gombrich gives of expectation is the exact one Danto uses for *world*.¹¹ If one greets another appropriately, it is not noticed, it is transparent, as Danto uses the word. But if one does not, it is noticed. Expectations are not fulfilled. The psychological and ontological ultimately imply a different set of outcomes, Gombrich’s account of the

mental set implying more interactive opportunities than Danto's ontological, but in each case, when an implicit expectation is not fulfilled, the mind registers that something is missing. "A style, like a culture or climate of opinion, sets up a horizon of expectations, a mental set, which registers deviations and modifications with exaggerated sensitivity. In noticing relationships the mind registers tendencies" (Gombrich 1960, 60). With these differences in mind, from the perspective of narrative theory, what is relative to the change in how art is understood and received is this: the general law must be explicitly stated if an event's explanation relies on implicit general laws and customs with which one is unfamiliar. This is also the case with the schemata. If they are not connected to a form of expression that speaks to one's mental set, one's *world*, then they will not be effective as art.

In *Art and Illusion*, Gombrich uses artistic depiction as his locus, but he draws on many mediums to define the pictorial development of the schemata, from scientific sources, news sources, and even caricature. Danto is critical of Gombrich's focus on pictorial representation, noting that he misses the appeal to judgment. This is correct, but what Gombrich does not miss is that art is attempting to transmit a message from the artist to the beholder. Though the viewer need not interpret art in the exact sense it was created, it still must be interpreted within an understandable framework. It is in this understandable framework, a *cognitive reference system*,¹² that the progressive transmission of cultural images takes place. Gombrich's opposition to theories like Hegel's makes his approach one of the few viable alternatives to systems that present transmission of culture through "cultural totalities."¹³

Danto argues, perhaps correctly, that Gombrich's theory of making and matching, based on Popper's model of trial-and-error hypotheses testing, does not correspond adequately to visual representation because our scientific theories need not match our visual perception. In fact, tested scientific hypotheses may, in accord with Plato's criticism of the illusionist painters, run counter to what we see (AA 49–50). If we concede this point to Danto, though we may do damage to parts of Gombrich's theory that could apply only to visual art, we gain insofar as Gombrich's theory is not fundamentally committed to representational art. His theory could be interpreted as supporting a notion of artistic creation in which art is matched to something, but perhaps not the world of visual representation (see Woodfield 2011). This would disrupt the balance of seeing and knowing, but Gombrich writes that some artistic periods, such as the medieval, were more committed to making than matching.

The theories of both Popper and Gombrich, in Danto's words, "are concerned with the 'growth' of knowledge, and hence with a historical process representable via a narrative" (AA 50). But drawing on Habermas' analysis of historical writing, which addresses Danto's work directly, the structure of narrative-historical explanation might not apply to a practical process. When a phenomenon is completed, such as a technological innovation or an epoch in history, it can be written about as history. But if a process is still in play, such as the development of evolutionary functions, it can't have a history as such (Habermas 1979, 17). If Gombrich focuses on the process of artistic creation, described within a historical context as a specific process or competency, it might not be amenable to narrative description. The process of creation may exhibit different developmental levels that emerge regardless of the precise historical circumstance. In this sense, the continuity with the past is not irreparably broken. Rather, Gombrich's theoretical account of artistic development revolves, in the case of explaining the shift of art from modernism to that of post-history, around an explanation of how artists *react* in terms of the practice of art. Regarding the study of the "relation between objective 'iconicity' and psychological projection," Gombrich speculates that "what has been called the history of 'seeing' is really the history of a learning process through which a socially coherent public was trained by the artist to respond in a given manner to certain abbreviated signs."¹⁴ The reaction to the erosion of the narrative structures associated with representation referred to by Danto is, in Habermas' terminology, "the articulation of an action-orienting self-understanding" (1988, 162). Viewed so, the dissipation of the narrative structures of modernism can be understood as challenges to the narrative presentation of the *world's* system of cognitive reference brought on through twentieth-century societal changes. (Given our distance from this 'event', we can safely refer to it as the modern/post-modern shift.) This, in turn, causes a disruption in the artist/audience interaction insofar as an artist's *world*, or mental set, is integral to the artwork's 'rhetoric'. This pushes artists to adjust their style.

Gombrich observes that traditional visual schemata were discarded in order to better match what artists were expressing (1995, 538–539, 563). But artists persist in a form of making and matching to develop the new schemata that are vehicles of historical-cultural expression. Artists still appropriate material from the images and icons of contemporary life. This material is then matched to a symbolic medium through which artists hope to effectively convey their message. When representation fails to transmit, as was the case in the late modern period, the medium and syntax of art

may shift, but the fundamental process, which utilizes the *world's* preunderstandings as resources in the play of artistic creation, has not changed.

5.2.3 *Sprezzatura*

Vasari, Gombrich notes, showed an awareness of a new type of art being made in the sixteenth century, which was intended to challenge the imagination of the beholder. He describes how two friezes in a Florentine singing gallery, created at approximately the same time, each appear differently depending on the perspective. One frieze by Donatello, when viewed close up, looks unfinished and rough. The other, by della Robbia, is refined, clearly made with great effort and well-finished. Nonetheless, the work by Donatello, when seen from a distance (the friezes could not be seen by the public close up) looks far more beautiful and embodied a more forceful expression (Figs. 5.1 and 5.2). Gombrich holds that



Fig. 5.1 Luca della Robbia, *Singing Gallery*, 1431–1438, Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

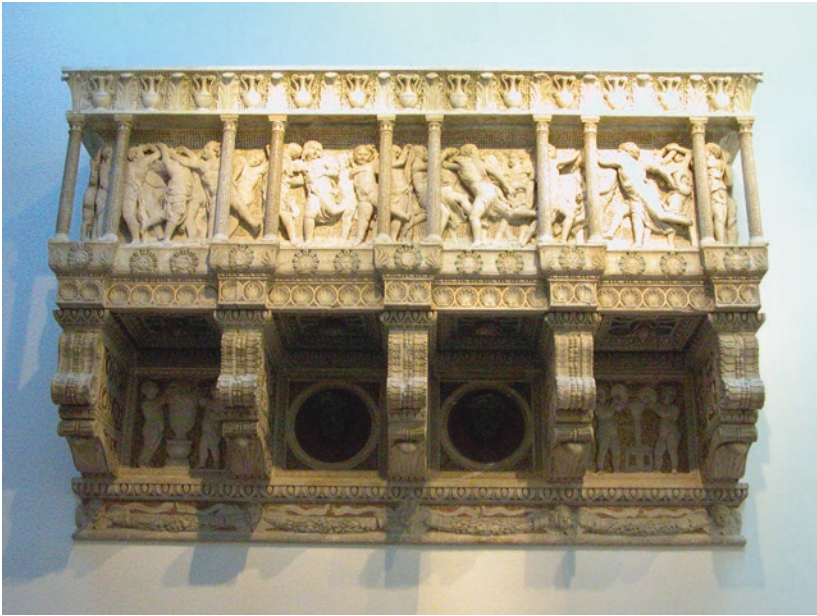


Fig. 5.2 Donatello, *Singing Gallery*, 1433–1440, Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

Castiglione’s notion of *sprezzatura* is manifest in Vasari’s observation. In *The Book of the Courtier*, Castiglione describes the nonchalance with which an artist should perform (Gombrich 1960, 193). If the work of art appears belabored, it will seem as if the artisan is following the craft of the guild. The artist should not give the viewers this impression, for artists should seem to follow only the standards of their own. Castiglione refers to the story of Protogenes, who scolded Apelles for taking too long in painting a picture, showing that he did not know when he was finished. This gave the appearance of too much effort. Besides being graceful, according to Castiglione (2003), performing an act with nonchalance shows not just the performer’s knowledge “but often leads us to rate his knowledge as much greater than in fact it is; because it impresses upon the minds of the bystanders the idea that he who does well so easily, knows much more than he does, and that if he were to use care and effort in what he did, he could do it far better” (37).

Sprezzatura, in Gombrich's view, opened the door for the participation of the beholder. If artists use better judgment in presentation, they can affect the appearance of the work in the viewer's imagination. This shows the emergence of a new formulation in the creation of art. "It is an art in which the painter's skill in suggesting must be matched by the public's skill in taking hints" (Gombrich 1960, 195). Out of this movement came a second manner of painting. Besides the meticulously finished painting, the rough, unfinished style emerged as an accepted mode. Connoisseurs must understand the style of the master and allow the artist's brush to evoke their imagination. This movement closes the circle of artistic viewing, and the circumference of the art world tightens with the interplay of the master and the connoisseur.

The literal-minded Philistine is excluded from this closed circle. He does not understand the magic of *sprezzatura* because he has not learned to use his own imagination to project. He lacks the appropriate mental set to recognize in the loose brushstrokes of a "careless work" the images intended by the artist; least of all is he able to appreciate the secret skill and cunning which hide behind his lack of finish. (195)

So the relationship between the artist and viewers develops, with the artist supplying viewers just enough to evoke their imaginative capacity, inviting them into the creative process. "The artist gives the beholder increasingly 'more to do', he draws him into the magic circle of creation and allows him to experience something of the thrill of 'making' which had once been the privilege of the artist" (202). The demands of the impressionists pushed viewers even further. This, in Gombrich's eyes, was a turning point, which led to the "conundrums" of the twentieth-century art. The viewer's intellect is increasingly challenged, and the artists lured the audience to search their imagination for the artwork's unexpressed message. *Sprezzatura*, in this way, shifted the implicit rules of the artworld.

5.2.4 *The Artistic Revolution*

For Danto, changes in the conditions of artistic creation and appreciation are mediated through the artworld. Similarly, Gombrich explains the transformation of late modern art in terms of the mental set. For Gombrich (1960), the use of the mental set in artistic creation

presupposes that “the beholders’ identification with the artist must find its counterpart in the artist’s identification with the beholder” (234). However, technological progress and expansion of global trade that occurred during the industrial revolution undermined this relationship. A rejection of the traditional values that differentiated art from craft, based on the rules of the academy, disrupted the link between the non-conformist artist and the patrons who wished to see ‘official art’. “The break in tradition had thrown open to them an unlimited field of choice” (Gombrich 1995, 501). In the nineteenth century, many artists wanted to create unique works in accordance with their own will; to do otherwise was to lose their self-respect. Yet this made it much less likely that they would please their public. Prior to this age, “artists and their public shared certain assumptions and therefore also agreed on standards of excellence” (503). After this, a split developed between the official art of the academy and the works of the nonconformist. In this atmosphere, the notion arose that the purpose of art was to express personality, and this, as Gombrich notes, “could only gain ground when art has lost every other purpose” (503).

Along with the mass production that displaced artists and craftsmen, the historical events that most affected art’s transition from the eye to the mind were, according to Gombrich, the invention of the camera and the introduction of the Japanese color print. The camera, needless to say, took from the painter the tasks of reproducing nature for record. The painting of portraits became rarer, and photography served as a better recorder for scientific purposes. “So it came about that artists were increasingly compelled to explore regions where photography could not follow them” (Gombrich 1995, 525).¹⁵ The second element, the Japanese color print, was introduced to the West when trade relations opened with Japan in the middle of the nineteenth century. The French painters in impressionist circles were able to acquire them cheaply, and these colorful and innovative prints inspired the impressionists by showing how much the knowledge of the academic tradition was still in their painting. Most striking to them was the Japanese artist’s willingness to cut an object from vision, supplying the viewer with only a partial picture (525). These two factors were instrumental in pushing artists to defy the rules of illusion, built up for centuries, which sought to create images that merely appeared as natural. In order to transcend convention, to be more than a photograph, it was crucial to leave the art object unfinished by omitting something from the representation so that the imagination

of the beholder is evoked. Thus, the artistic formulation devised by the followers of *sprezzatura* appeared to have come to completion.

Though the impressionists had been called the first modern artists, they had not strayed from the aims of their predecessors; they too sought to create a more realistic image. They simply disagreed as to the means of how this should be done. Now, a painter must choose between motion and clarity; both cannot be portrayed. The impressionists reject their knowledge of the world's composure and choose motion as the truer picture, representing images as a fleeting blur of color and activity, replicating in the hazy mix of colors what the beholders actually interpret, rather than how their vision is cognitively rendered (Gombrich 1995, 504–517). At this point in the history of art, the momentum of art seemed to change, shifting away from reproduction by using the traditional illusionistic schemata. “It seemed, for a moment, as if all the problems of an art aiming at the imitation of the visual impression had been solved, and as if nothing was to be gained by pursuing these aims any further” (536). It may have appeared that the perfection of art's methods led to their own rejection, but for the next artistic movement, the problems solved by the impressionists yielded a host of other problems. Refusing to return to the illusory tricks of the masters of the past, the post-impressionists¹⁶ attempted to return order to the painting without rolling back the progress they had made. Though the realistic painting of the Renaissance contained a self-contradiction—insofar as to make something look real the painter had to depict in a manner that did not reflect nature—the solutions the post-impressionists sought were also not without flaws. The question arose as to how one remained true to the image of nature. They sought to give the depiction of solidity without compromising what the eye sees, while at the same time not resorting to the fleeting patterns of the impressionists. The artists of this period continued to experiment, but many felt that something had been lost from art in the process of searching. They tried to retrieve what had been lost, but were ultimately dissatisfied (554–555).

Based on what they had learned from post-impressionists, the artists of successive movements realized that there is no reality without interpretation, and their interpretations were based on what they knew. For Danto, the emergence of theory in artistic creation becomes explicit at this point. But in Gombrich's terms, given changes in the mental set, the schemata are not sufficient to maintain the dialogue between artist and beholder. Thus, the artists of this time rejected all that was Western

in their art. With no way to resolve the dilemma, they turned to what they called ‘primitive’ art. “Neither that ‘truth to nature’ nor that ‘ideal beauty’ that were the twin themes of European art seemed to have troubled the minds of these craftsmen, but their works possessed precisely what European art seemed to have lost in that pursuit—intense expressiveness, clarity of structure and a forthright simplicity of technique” (Gombrich 1995, 563). Despite their misunderstanding of the true complexity of ‘primitive’ art, the artists of the first half of the twentieth century used the style of non-Western art as a focus for their search, a search that sought truth through experimentation with formal re-creation. They had to become inventors, resolutely seeking what is original, rather than seeking to emulate the masters of the past (563).

The three major movements that followed out of the post-impressionists, Primitivism, Expressionism, and Cubism, all attempted to start their movements outside of the realm of traditional form and perspective. These early movements of modern art continued to struggle with issues inherent within their methods. The painted images of the primitivists became problematic because the ‘primitive’ feel they sought to capture could not be conjured with originality; it could only be forced. The non-objective expressionist painters continued to make and match to the modern environment. Though they refused to provide the viewer with anything obviously identifiable, the intuitive viewer could see the tangle of modern industry reflected in the snarled imagery of their paintings (Gombrich 1960, 287). The message that artists wanted to implant in art was still poignant; Cézanne had mentioned that he still wanted to express in his art the “grandeur” of prior masters. The methods that artists once had available were no longer viable (Gombrich 1995, 583). But as the means of communication became more specific to the artists, so the message that the artists wanted to express became one that, though perceived as universal, lacked the symbolism for expression—the schemata—that artists of prior ages possessed. As Cubism’s structural problems attracted more architectural minds, abstract painters such as Piet Mondrian and Ben Nicholson attempted to express the ordered precepts of universal law. Alexander Calder’s sculptural mobiles sought to reflect the mysterious equilibratory balance and motion of the universe (581–583).¹⁷

Gombrich writes that the task of the serious artist has become very difficult in abstract painting. How does one arrange two squares on a canvas with no precedent? Though the painter of the Madonna may

have been as serious, the task was clear. “For the painter of the Madonna knew what he was aiming at. He had tradition as his guide and the number of decisions with which he was confronted was limited” (Gombrich 1995, 583). Modern artists still used the language of art to suggest, but the changing parameters of the mental set, the limits of style, meant that what they sought to convey in the twentieth century is far removed from what they suggested in the age of Vasari. How does an artist intuitively communicate the existence of enduring entities beyond the realm of the visual that hint to the beholder the laws holding the universe in balance? The artist suggests images, but they are new forms of the artist’s creation, not the familiar forms of the everyday or symbols of ideal beauty. The task of the new art of the modern age, according to Mondrian, is “the pure expression of that incomprehensible force that is universally active” (Mondrian 1986, 80; see Lipsey 1988, 67, 71). Despite lacking other means for expression, what for Mondrian was a “law of life” was still realized most clearly through art.

5.3 FREEDOM IN SEEKING THE NEW

5.3.1 *Communication Breakdown*

Gombrich’s *Story of Art* presents a narrative account of the progression of twentieth-century art from striving to achieve verisimilitude, to abstraction, to finally what Mondrian called the articulation of the “law of life.” Mondrian’s views do not represent all artists, but this thread of thought was there, perhaps no less prevalent than the trend toward monochromes or *Brillo Boxes*. A covering rule for this form of art might include a communicative structure, one in which artists utilize the current mental set in an effort to form an interactive connection with the audience in a representational or non-representational manner. Of course, as Danto writes in *History*, the narrative can be rewritten to reveal a different rule. “Had Modernism not occurred,” Danto makes clear, “there would have been little to fault in Gombrich’s analysis; but the operations of ‘making and matching’ do not easily capture the shift from the impressionists to the postimpressionists, or from Cézanne to the cubists to the fauves” (PD 3). Gombrich goes to great lengths to show that artists in the high modern period really were making and matching in some sense, and I agree with Danto that, at this point, Gombrich’s theory appears to drop precipitously in its ability to explain

the preamble to post-historical art. In fact, according to Danto, the whole quandary of perceptually making and matching disappears when the indiscernible art objects of Duchamp and Warhol arrive in the art-world. There is no illusion; you see what you see. In the end, according to Danto, Gombrich's framework does not allow him to take Duchamp seriously, one of the twentieth century's most important artists (AA 198; see Danto 1983).

Though Gombrich's taste, and perhaps his perception of art's boundaries, prevented him from taking Duchamp seriously, his theory brings to the table a stronger explanatory capability than Danto's. One could make the case that it accounts better for the empirical progressive development of the communicability of what Danto calls artworld 'concepts.' Danto is adamant, nonetheless, that these develop internally as part of art's stylistic unfolding. Even if we grant this, Gombrich's account still describes better the shift to post-history, which in Danto's analysis conflates freedom with lack of coherence. In the last chapter, Danto draws out a contrast between Hempel and Kuhn; the difference described is analogous to Gombrich's affinity for representational art, and his theory which in some ways goes beyond it. Hempel, as Danto said, could not let go of his *world*, and the relevance of his theory, though perhaps correct, diminished. Kuhn saw the world changing, and he changed with it (BB 176–182). Gombrich's theory anticipates very well the reasons why the visual arts fall into a state of incommunicability. And to some extent, his theory shows signs of being able to address post-representational art, but he, like Greenberg, stays in the modern *world*; thus, his theory stays with him.

To better understand my defense of Gombrich, Noël Carroll's critique of Danto's end-of-art thesis is helpful. In "Danto, the End of Art, and the Orientational Narrative" (LLP 433–452) and "The End of Art?," Carroll (1998) argues that the progression of art does not stop, as Danto claims, after what he refers to as the end of art. Even if art does strive philosophically for self-definition, and the form of art changes, the claim that art is no longer philosophical, or that art no longer progresses, even in a non-philosophical way, is never convincingly argued by Danto. In "Orientational Narrative," Carroll argues further that Danto's assertion of the narrative of art having ended necessarily contradicts the claim he made in *History* that what is essential of a period cannot be known until the period has closed. If a period is still 'in play', then general statements referring to the period as a whole, based on implicit possibilities that are

not available, will necessarily be incomplete. So, if art is still being made, the narrative period of art is still open, and Danto's claim that art will no longer develop either contradicts the claims he made in *History* (LLP Carroll 444–446), or it would make Danto's end-of-art thesis mere "prophecy," an illegitimate historical exercise (449–450). Carroll suggests a reinterpretation of Danto's argument that could give him room to wiggle free of these contradictory claims. He postulates that there are different types of narratives. There are, of course, the narrative sentences Danto describes in *History*, which as he defines them, yield historically justifiable descriptions in reference to a period or event when it has passed. Danto's narrative sentences, when justified in this way, refer to historical narratives of the past organized according to the historian's perspective. Carroll also presents what he calls "orientational narratives," narratives that are "deliberative" or "instrumental" and oriented to the future. Danto's narrative theory focuses only on the narrative sentence, to individual change events. To apply them to the narrative as a whole was something Danto would not allow (Habermas 1987b, 136–137; see Ankersmit 2007, 390–391). Danto rightly argues that the narrative structure cannot explain a future for which no events exist, and if future projections did utilize the existing narrative structure, they would simply look like the present or past (NK 225). But, if we want to criticize our past traditions, or simply create a narrative vision different from our past that is "intended to orient action in the future" (LLC Carroll 450), we must articulate a future narrative that does not look like the past. Danto seems to think that we cannot form a justifiable narrative description based on fragments of unavailable and implicit knowledge of our time. But, though Danto does not acknowledge this, his observation regarding what he sees as an illegitimate use of the narrative framework is very valuable from a critical hermeneutic perspective. Responding to Danto's argument that the future predication of the narrative framework of the past is "inexpugnably" subjective, Habermas argues that these hermeneutic anticipations are not capricious. They are not prophecy because they entail goals; at the same time, they are not statements that anticipate a truth value. "These goals that are posited, that is, the hermeneutic anticipations rooted in the interests of life-practice, are not arbitrary" (Habermas 1988, 161).

Narratives that answer the question of "what is to be done" are in some senses deliberative, placing the past in relation to a possible plan for the future. An instrumental narrative more directly uses the past

to orient an audience to a future path, emphasizing how what one does should conform to the past. Danto's end-of-art narrative, Carroll argues, could be viewed as an orientational narrative, perhaps maneuvering around the need to call it a substantive historical narrative (LLP 448–450). Besides supporting the argument that art is philosophical after its alleged end, this points to Gombrich's theory fitting multiple narrative paths, depending on how the narrative is constructed. On one path, it fails; on the other, it still has some future-orienting value. Oddly—and Danto's criticisms of Gombrich seem to be contradictory here—Gombrich's theory fails only if it is applied to the art of post-history, after the end of art. Looking back on the era of art as representational art, it succeeds. It simply fails as an essentialist theory that applies to all future art. But, and Carroll appears to agree on this point, Danto holds that his theory can only be applied to the past. In this case, it raises the question, 'against what notion of art does Gombrich's theory fail?' On the other hand, if Gombrich's theory is seen as a deliberative narrative, it could succeed, albeit only if the condition that representationality be seen as non-essential. I will examine this point again later, but for now, given the conflict that Carroll points out, a reinterpretation of Gombrich's theory could give it firmer empirical footing.

Danto's end-of-art theory may be seen as little more than the end of modernism, a *world* that is fading away, the last vestiges of an epoch to which Greenberg—and Danto would say Gombrich—cling. If Danto's end-of-art claim amounts to little more than the modern/postmodern shift, it is uncontroversial, and Carroll thinks, for some perhaps a "yawn." Carroll speculates that the temporal distance between the end-of-art events Danto describes and the early aughts (when Carroll wrote this essay) should be enough for Danto to have connected the end of art with the closing of modernism. But Danto persists in his claim that they are not mere equivalents (LLP 450). Carroll thus speculates that Danto's end-of-art thesis is his own orientational narrative for art *after the era of art*, a narrative that Danto has inserted himself into. Here, per Danto's own theory, the orientational narrative, if we can use Carroll's term this way, is his style, and "the style is the man himself." I'll return to this later, but for now a comment on the modern/postmodern shift.

Habermas has written much on the modern/postmodern debates. His writings, which focus mostly on political, moral, and sociological issues, are well-documented and it goes beyond the scope of this book to discuss them. What is relevant here, however, is his argument that the

postulation of a postmodern era, separate from the modern, is an error. Postmodernism has no grounding principles of its own, so the argument goes, save a corrosive form of critique that the theories of its adherents also cannot withstand. The conclusion, in a nutshell, is that postmodernism is just a ‘rebellion’ against the principles of modernism because modernism itself is an unfinished project; claims of those speaking from the postmodern perspective are merely “anti-Enlightenment” revolts disguised as “post-Enlightenment” (Habermas 1990, 5). A simple observation supporting his claim is that in this ‘postmodern’ world, most of the advantages brought on by modernism, technological advances, medicine, development in the political, legal and educational systems, etcetera, are, by and large, beneficial and would not be rolled back by modernism’s proponents. Habermas does acknowledge a change in how these advantages are viewed, especially in light of legitimate concerns with oppressive use of technology and the pluralistic value system that emerged after the Second World War, but these do not amount to the end of modernism as such. The malaises of modernism are manifested in an imbalance of the communicative structures of the lifeworld, something Habermas believes can be corrected.

Gombrich’s theory of art, to my mind, has certain advantages that enable it to account for changes in the way art is made and understood. Perhaps, as Danto claims, there has been an end to the *representational* narrative of art, but granted that, art itself has not fundamentally changed. As Gombrich noted, art may have undergone a communication breakdown. In order to support Gombrich’s claim, it is important—in the spirit of Habermas’ assertion that the postmodern be viewed as a rebellious version of the modern—to scrutinize Danto’s claim that post-historical art is made in a fundamentally different way than art of the era of art. Clearly, there is a shift from the eye to the mind, from a representational format, which up to the nineteenth century at least adhered to aesthetic standards of beauty and taste, to a less aesthetically oriented, more conceptually oriented form of art. The standard of taste, the gatekeeper of what could be art, was collapsed, so that in some sense, as Danto claimed, art could be anything. But is art fundamentally different? If we return to the anatomy of the artwork discussed in Chapter 4, what Danto holds to be the essential components of art are the same before and after the era of art. Artists create works intended to be art. The style of artists, without artists being aware of their own style, embodies their stylistically manifested artistic intentions in their

artworks. The artwork, now taking on a rhetorical relationship with the audience, evokes the audience's interpretation of the artwork, potentially transfiguring them, even if just for a moment. There have been two changes which make the process of artistic creation and reception different. In post-history, there are an unlimited number of styles, and the standard of taste—which defined for a given culture and a given era what would be art—is 'demoted' to the point at which it no longer plays a dominant guiding role. The brilliant, and I think correct, recognition on Danto's part is that with the fragmentation of conversations and *worlds*, artworld theories of what art is understood to be are referred to directly, since they are no longer implicitly understood within the background of an overarching style, or mental set, as Gombrich would describe it. The expectations needed to visually process the artistic image were no longer fulfilled, and questions referring to rules no longer implicit were evoked that appealed to the beholder's judgment. The difference, then, has to do not with how art is essentially made, as much as what is needed to interpret it. Now, the critic plays a greater role. Danto's referral of artworld interpretation to the critic is confusing because it is different from the claim that philosophers should now handle the task of art's definition. The task of the critic is not philosophy per se but it is theoretical, in that recourse to theory, the covering laws of art, are needed to interpret them. In some ways, to use a metaphor that Danto uses in regard to Ion, it is as if another iron ring is attached to the load stone, to transmit the style of the work to the audience (TC 198). Art has changed, but is it fundamentally different? If Danto is right that art no longer develops, and that it is now forever dirempt from the problem-solving structure of philosophical conversations, then his end-of art claim stands. Art has fundamentally changed. But if not, and Carroll agrees here, and art can still develop and engage the problem-solving structure of philosophy, I think Danto's claim is wrong. He does a great service to art theory by introducing his theory of embodied meaning and clarifying the role of the artworld in artistic creation and interpretation, but I think he is wrong in his stronger claim that art's progress has ended and that it has fundamentally changed.

Responding to Danto's claim that post-historical art no longer entails structural parallels to philosophical discourse, Carroll asserts, "I surmise that the visual arts in general are not wanting for a voice—even a philosophical voice—at the end of the day" (LLP 443). Though I agree with Carroll that Danto has not convincingly demonstrated that

art is no longer philosophical, having freed itself of its structural drive for self-definition, Danto is right that artists in general lack the means to articulate what their metaphors express in philosophical or theoretical terms (apologies to my artist friends). In contemporary art, the critic frequently plays an important role in mediating the intention of the artist. This is especially important if the style transfers the intentions expressed, and artists convey artworld concepts of which they are unaware. If the advent of indiscernibles did not explicitly give artists a voice, it created a context in which the artist's voice was needed, and in many cases, the artist's (perhaps mediated) voice is there on the wall text, very often as what I see to be an essential part of the work.

It is a fault of Gombrich's theory that he never conceives of art as communicating in the conceptual manner Danto's theory does. This is odd, though, because his theory describes art in terms of a process of making and matching images such that a visual language emerges, and how the artist will communicate using the schemata is one of Gombrich's crucial insights. But communicability of artistic intentions, minimally that there is an interpretable artistic intention, is also essential to the artwork as Danto understands it (DCR Fodor 62–63). In fact, the lack of communicability in art caused Danto to reject expression theory; the “incommensurability in which one thing just comes after another thing” is what makes it unviable (PD 107). Art must have continuity because, for Danto, “art is a transitional stage in the coming of a certain kind of knowledge” (107). Danto sees this certain kind of knowledge leading to freedom when the shift away from the old form of art is completed. It is also leads to inexplicability, as the style of a unified system of arts, the embodiment of a kind of class-type, comes to the end of its viability. At this point, when art is free to do as it ‘damn well pleases’, the task of its definition is left to the philosophy of art and of explanation to the critics.

5.3.2 *Seeking a New Schematic*

For Danto, the internal drive of art's need for self-definition led art to its point of self-realization; external factors played no role. Accepting at some level Danto's arguments regarding the conversations that art carries on through its interpreters, it is hard to concede that external factors played no role: first, because empirical accounts of the same set of events allow for somewhat different explanations; second, empirical

factors—external circumstances—were instrumental in setting up the narrative Danto uses to show the problem philosophy solves. As mentioned before, Danto’s theory is ontologically driven and Gombrich’s, though broadly interdisciplinary, focuses on the psychology of perception. Still, Gombrich’s claim that the rejection of the schemata leads to loss of communicability is commensurate with much of Danto’s aesthetic theory. The trial-and-error process of making and matching, insofar as it entails a problem-solving structure, is extant in the generation of novelty in the artistic medium, and it is still a useful explanatory tool for the analysis of artistic production. This moves beyond the narrow ontological aims of Danto’s aesthetic theory, but I aim to show that the trial-and-error process of art’s schematic development, when taken out of the visual context of likeness and put into the context of art’s need to communicate the intention of the artist in a rhetorical manner, is not necessarily in contradiction with Danto’s theory of embodied meaning.

The notion that there is only an inner style, independent of external factors, is challenged in the writing of art historian Ernst Kitzinger. In *Byzantine Art in the Making* (1977), Kitzinger proposes two ways in which the creative process is driven: “inner-directed” and “other-directed” (13).¹⁸ Inner-directed refers to art creation influenced by the worldview of the artist or the inner logic of aesthetic progress. This would comport with Danto’s account of the inner drive of a style. Other-directed indicates that the work’s form has been directed by deliberate factors external to the inner logic of aesthetic development, such as the stylistic wishes of a patron, political direction, or a theological program. Inner-directed art, Kitzinger argues, takes its form solely from the logic of style’s advance and the worldview of the artist (79).¹⁹ While Danto’s narratives acknowledge external factors, like photography, he does not acknowledge how they influence the drive of style. Kitzinger also sees room for changes in the inner-logic of stylistic development that run parallel to the stylistic progression articulating an artist’s worldview. Consciously or unconsciously, visible changes in individual style can be attributable to a broader cultural understanding of the cosmos. This would be recognized in Danto’s theory insofar as the style of the individual and the style of the time are indexed to the same historical world. Danto, however, does not seem to account for both inner- and other-directed influences in the process of artistic creation.

Along the lines that Kitzinger suggests, Danto's theory of embodied meaning could be 'redescribed' to accept other-directed influences. Though the role of philosophy may need to be more broadly construed, his account of representational materialism, upon which his notion of embodied meaning relies, would still support what has thus far been suggested. As well, the trial-and-error process is not merely the mechanism behind the artist's striving for optical fidelity. It can also be used to create orientational narratives. Danto notes that a future narrative will look like the present if, with no actual corresponding events, the present narrative is projected into the future unchanged (NK 225). The realization that the structure of the present and the past give shape to the future has been put to good use by propagandists. Clifford Ando's research shows that for the Romans, history was a trial-and-error process. They actually had little use for history as an account of the past striving for accuracy. They used history to justify their current social and political needs, changing it as required to project the future 'idea' of Rome (Ando 2008, xiv, 15). This tactic, unfortunately, is still with us today. The point is that creation of an orientational narrative may require a trial-and-error process, perhaps what Carroll referred to as deliberative, to settle on the right narrative. Regarding art and the direction of its future style, it was, as Gombrich describes it, a trial-and-error process of inner- and other-directed factors.

"All artistic discoveries," Gombrich writes, "are discoveries not of likenesses but of equivalences which enable us to see reality in terms of an image and an image in terms of reality" (1995, 345). The artists of the high modern epoch strove to achieve their aims through depiction of equivalences. They sought equivalences reflected in their social order, and, as the efficacy of the equivalence they used faded, the building blocks of their depiction appeared to be stepping beyond the traditional forms of mimetic art. The representational forms of tradition had provided art with metaphysically charged icons that sufficed to endow the viewing world with unified images for almost a millennium. With the decline in the West of the great religious and mythical narratives that drove the early modern period, the artists who sought to express issues of metaphysical significance took on the very difficult task of depicting an absolute for which no clear concept existed. But even artists who strove to articulate issues of current social significance, without venturing into the realm of the transcendent, found the language of early modern art lacking in its expressive capability. Having rejected universal symbols of

the past and the narrative that supported them, artists set out to create a new set of schemata. Gombrich wanted to show that in periods of making and matching there is no difference between perception and illusion; people merely hypothesize what they see, and these visual hypotheses are accepted until otherwise disproved.

The immediate problem Gombrich's paradigm of making and matching faces when optical fidelity is no longer the aim is that the *technē* of modern artistic representation is abandoned. In the sense that Gombrich charts the history of the schemata and the psychology of perception in and of itself, perhaps Danto is correct. But this is a very narrow view of Gombrich's theory of art, and to view it so narrowly is incorrect. Gombrich tracks a practice, and the practice of art that he tracks employs the 'technology' of tricking the eye. Nevertheless, the internal drive or practice of the artist crafting a medium through which an intention is communicated is extant in Gombrich's theory, as it is in art. With the 'technology' of pictorial representation obsolete, it is perhaps forgotten, but the artistic practice is not. The power of art is shown when the craft employed to depict 'illusions' is still used in an attempt to match an ideal or concept that is not in the visible world.

This period of transition proved difficult for art. The power of art and metaphor to create new myths and dissolve old categories is considerable, but with the failure of traditional schemata to express an emerging or unknowable ideal, the search for new forms of expression—new schemata—outstripped the artist's ability to communicate, as Mondrian put it, "the new art" for the new age. In this case, the world of modernity was changing, and the schemata, along with the *technē* that employed them, became obsolete. But the practice of art, striving to articulate a future oriented message, continued; this aspect of the internal practice of art had not ended, only the tools it used were no longer of use. Given the fragmentation of modern self-understanding a new kind of orientational narrative was needed.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche held that there could be no art without myth, the structure which gave great art its capacity to create an illusion. Realizing the need for a revived mythology, he thought that the genius of Wagner could create for Germany a new myth through which its spirit could be reborn. He ultimately rejected this embarrassing notion and gave up on the notion of new myth. With it, he abandoned the idea that myth, the collectively developed schematic template for relevant aesthetic experience, is the language that

makes art real, and communicable, to the audience. Along similar lines, the artists of the modern period despaired of the tools with which they strove to communicate, and they added more. Gombrich holds that if our schemata and their categories become too flexible, they will not serve their purpose: “the artist, no less than the writer, needs vocabulary before he can embark on a ‘copy’ of reality” (1960, 88). Indeed, some starting point is needed in order to grasp the “flux of experience.” Hegel noted that the beat of music is what takes us out of the flux of infinitude and evokes spirit’s capacity to differentiate the moments, allowing spirit to reflect back on itself before reengaging in the dialectic. The artists of the post-historical era had to create a new vocabulary, make a new beat, in order to grasp the flux of the new age. Gombrich recognizes this shift away from the representational image. “The growing awareness that art offers a key to the mind as well as to the outer world has led to a radical change of interest on the part of the artist. It is a legitimate shift, I believe, but it would be a pity if these fresh explorations failed to profit from the lessons of tradition” (360). Gombrich notes that when a new word is added to a language, it is understood within the context of an already developed language. But language made up of only new words and new syntax would be unintelligible (324).²⁰ The downside of the vast array of choices that the artist had at this time was that the language of art comes close to being unintelligible. Limits, according to Gombrich, do serve a purpose in achieving communicability because “where everything is possible and nothing unexpected, communication must break down. It is because art operates with a structured style governed by technique and the schemata of tradition that representation could become the instrument not only of information but also expression” (376). In this last statement, Gombrich seems to contradict what I see as the strength of a theory that incorporates a problem-solving capacity. He, like Danto, saw the class-type of art being overwhelmed. But Gombrich the man stayed in the modern world. He, like Zarathustra, saw the need for the new tablets, but he remains in the *world* of the old tablets. Danto the man adopted the style of the end of art into his ‘orientational narrative’. But if Gombrich could have seen it through, perhaps his theory could have remained relevant. Danto argues that critics should step in to interpret the meaning of post-historical art due to art’s freedom from stylistic necessity, putting little emphasis on the external causes of art’s unconverging conversations, and he is still relevant today.

5.3.3 *Freedom in Art: Inexplicability Explained*

It is not my aim to convince the reader, as Gombrich held, that art is like a language. Danto stood firmly against this, and though I do not support the claim that art is a language, I felt his arguments against Fry and Kahnweiler fell short (AA 54–57). Still, I do hope to have presented a convincing argument that art is at some level a communicative, even hermeneutical, practice. Art is not a language in and of itself, but insofar as it has rhetorical properties, and entails a conversational structure, it shares some features with language. Certainly, in his insistence that a theory of art recognize art's historical commensurability, Danto also implies that art is at some level communicable.

To summarize the narrative I presented above, Gombrich's account of the incomprehensibility of a system of artistic schemata that has taken on too many new artistic terms is consistent with Danto's account of the class of art-objects reaching a tipping point, as too many new styles are added. Art's freedom is based on the fact that it can no longer be explained by its class-type. If Hempel's claim, 'if you can explain the past, you can explain the future', holds true, it follows that freedom lies in inexplicability. The inexplicability of the form of art, the inability of a class-type to reliably explain what might be next, despite the fact that this category is open-ended, came about through a change in artistic vocabulary. This change resulted in a collapse of the narrative of art, due perhaps to the need of a new aesthetic vocabulary that was more responsive to the viewers of art at the end of the modern era. The division relied on here to explain historical eras may be used just for organizational purposes, but they can still be valuable, perhaps even essential for historians. They are, however, subject to revision. Danto's account of the era of art is subject to revision; the progress of art has yet to be concluded. The normative claim that art's pluralism is ideal—the utopian end that Danto suggests—can be rejected as an aesthetic ideal without rejecting the notion that a pluralistic approach represents an improvement in the broader normative understanding of the human condition. This 'increased capacity' for stylistic expression corresponds to a process that may not be amenable to narrative explanation. Thus, the world of art enters into a period of 'incomprehensibility'. The narrative of art is imploded by this change, and can no longer be explained in light of the narrative of the past. Danto's theory explains this, and this could be interpreted as the end of the era of art. Art's separation from its narrative also invites the aid of

theorists, who are better equipped to interpret a process of development from a theoretical perspective. The era that entails a style of making styles may well be the path of art in the future, but I suggest that when the shift of *world* or mental set and schemata have caught up with the changes they are undergoing, the world of art may once again be amenable to narrative explanation. I don't think plurality prevents this, but the merging of narratives can indeed produce a chaos that will take time for art historians to organize, and artists to depict.

5.4 SOMETHING THE NARRATIVE CANNOT DESCRIBE: A PROBLEM-SOLVING STRUCTURE

The problems I pointed out, relating to Danto's claim that art is free, indicate freedom in different senses. There is the sunny version of freedom, which corresponds to Kojève's end of history, and then the more technical notion of freedom indicating that art is no longer subject to the narrative of art *as representative*, or the directing structure of philosophy. As discussed in Chapter 4 and above, I see two streams at work in the phenomenon of art in the human world, and I hold that only one of them conforms to narrative as Danto describes it. Joseph Margolis (2001) concurs on this point, arguing "the real history of art *is not a narrative* at all... but an open process *on which we impose one narrative or another*" (94). Thus, as argued above, Danto is correct that the end of art has occurred insofar as the narrative of art as a representational form is over. Despite Danto's recognition of the tight relationship of body as mechanism to body as historical entity, the process that the narrative describes may not be synchronized with the historical narrative description he proposes. "The fatal error," Margolis writes, "lies in Danto's having conflated the two senses of 'history': that of the actual Intentional life of a society or of some strand within it and that of the story that we say represents it accurately" (94).

The alternate history presented by Gombrich supports Margolis' observations on the dual histories of art. And on terms comports with Danto's *History*, we could choose another explanation for the collapse of the narrative of art in our time, because we impose one narrative or another, on the process of art 'history'. This is justified because Danto's philosophy of history does not provide strong criteria for choosing one explanation over another. Werner Jocks points critically to the

arbitrariness Danto sees in historical writing, arguing that he never gives good reasons for why a historian might prefer one explanation over another. Regarding this criticism, Ankersmit (2007) concedes that had Danto not focused so narrowly on narrative sentences, instead addressing the issue of narratives as a whole, he would have had grounds for assessing the adequacy of historical accounts of the past (387–388). A second criticism is seen in how Danto defines his “subject of change.” A narrative must have a subject that undergoes a change; otherwise, there is nothing that is explained, such as a change in attitude or status. These must be linked to actual subjects, like Napoleon or Caesar. Nonetheless, Danto employs his narrative sentences, from time to time, on subjects that do not correspond to a specific historical entity. In the statement, “Petrarch opened the Renaissance,” there is no actual subject for the Renaissance. These are periods that historians postulate to help organize our historical understanding. But statements employing such terms must refer to the historian’s narrative frame of reference—her hermeneutic of the past. Though this may be an oversight of Danto’s theory, it shows how the historian adds order to the chaos of history, perhaps one of the transcendental conditions for historical knowledge in general (390–392). “Complete description then presupposes a narrative organization, and the narrative organization is something *we* do” (NK 142). These categories are our creation, and, for Danto, in some sense arbitrary.

These points underscore that some representation of the narrative as a whole, implicit or explicit, is needed for the historian to organize the past in a narrative sentence. Danto argues the organizations are subjective and arbitrary because explicit knowledge of a shape-projecting whole that would allow the historian to assess the explanations of the past is not available to the historian. The historian can only know explicitly what now belongs to history. Because representations of ‘active’ narratives as a whole entail a projection of the future state that is non-existent, Danto’s philosophy does not justify the philosopher’s using the background presuppositions or possibilities related to the current time period, which are only implicitly knowable. Habermas, recognizing Danto’s limited use of the implicit assumptions of an era, nonetheless argues that like “interpretations of parts, which can be deciphered as fragments in relation to an anticipated totality, interpretations of events can be organized backward from the projected end point into a story. Only because we can thus project the provisional closure of a frame of reference from within

the horizon of a life-practice can interpretations of events have any informational content at all for that life-practice” (Habermas 1988, 162).

In *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*, Danto made the case that while we live in the world, truth is outside of it. We are simultaneously inside and outside of the world. What is true, as a proposition, stands outside of the world that makes it true. Humans, as do the sentential states of the representations, exist in the gap between language and world (APK ix, 86–97). But when that *world*, the gap in which representations exist, is no more, what is true of something can be known outside of what it was in the world that made it true. So with the world of art no more, the definition, outside of art’s world, is what remains. But that definition itself was postulated by a man in the world, and Danto had been part of the *world* that he was at the same time defining, though he insisted that what had passed was no longer of his *world*. Danto did recognize that truth of art’s essentialist definition was “at right angles” to the world of art that he argued made it true. But, and this is perhaps what Carroll and Habermas point to, the *world* that Danto still lived in when he declared art’s end shaped his claim regarding what was true of art past. His *world* of the art of his day shaped the truth of his claim that art’s world had passed. But how can we know the truth of this *world* while we are still in it? Are we using the implicit unreachable knowledge of our *world*, part of our style, or even our interest?

The point, beyond showing how Danto’s theory does not adequately support one choice of explanation over another, is to show that our activity, artistic included, employs these implicit background presuppositions insofar as some projection of the shape of the future is needed to guide action. As Danto recognizes in *Analytical Philosophy of Action*, the shape of the past is dependent on “shapes we project into the future” (APA 26). Such a projection would have a practical orientation, and its formation would involve some form of deliberative or trial-and-error process, an adaption or assimilation of the implicit internal drive to external circumstance. Danto recognizes the importance of the pragmatic process needed to bring a truth claim into being. But that process itself, for Danto, may mean little in the analysis of truth. In a comment regarding the extent to which his theory overlaps with the pragmatic view of Dewey, Danto writes,

I am not convinced Dewey would count me an ally, however, inasmuch as the theory of truth I develop here is at odds with Dewey’s. But this is because he must have felt that any comparable theory of truth must have

consequences of a sort I think I am able to show they need not have. And the consideration which Dewey felt essential, viz., practical manipulation of the world is irrelevant to an analysis of truth, however indispensable it may be for *determining* the truth (APK 159 n1).

Even if we allow Danto this ‘conceptual’ separation, as we analyze truth, we are still situated in the pragmatic realm which determines truth; implicit and explicit aspects of knowing are always in play. Piecing together the fragments of a shattered artworld conversation would, it seems, necessarily involve reference to both internal and external influences on art, which include the self-understanding of a practice, the technical tools employed in the practices, and the aims of a changing epoch. This process, which is “determining the truth” for what was Danto’s post-historical *world* of art when he claimed art had ended, was used in his analysis of the ‘truth’ of his essentialist definition. Thus, Danto’s claim that art no longer entails an overarching internal drive implicitly referenced the structure of post-historical art. His claim that philosophy and art separated as a result of representational art’s losing pride of place among the artistic forms is actually an illegitimate historical claim. His understanding of philosophy’s role in post-historical art referenced the implicit problem-solving structure of art that continues, regardless of the tools used or the singularity of a narrative.

Carroll’s claims coincide with the argument that there are two streams in ‘history’. “Historical accounts may be divided into two sorts: narratives and chronicles. A chronicle of events is a list of time-ordered happenings” (1998, 18). The former are organized in such a way as to leave out some information; too much detail will not allow a coherent understanding (NK 131). Thus, some comprehensibility, and perhaps meaning, is given to history with the narrative. But it is just picking out one strain of development, one process. Danto’s narrative of art organizes the “chronical of events” according to one narrative, with a process, as Carroll describes it, that aims for self-definition. But when that chapter is closed, Carroll asks why Danto thinks there won’t be another chapter with another aim. Even if the chapter on self-definition is closed, what would prevent the artist from pursuing another goal that would entail a developmental process?

They might rededicate themselves to discovering the most effective means for delivering visual pleasure. And, with the promise of evolutionary psychology, who is to say that there may not be some fairly determinate strategies to this end that artists can approximate successively as they did the

rendering of visual appearances? There is no a priori argument to show that there are no projects like this one to be embraced and, therefore, no reason to suppose that there can be no more developmental histories of the sort that the projects of representation and self-definition entailed. (Carroll 1998, 27)

If we accept that there is something upon which a narrative is placed that is not necessarily equivalent with the narrative, we can see there is room for another narrative. Certainly, Danto is aware of this. Above, I have argued that there is an alternative view of art's end (there are many and Gombrich's is simply another), which has some explanatory power and accounts for an artistic creative process that moves forward, even after the collapse of the narrative of representational art. In *Body/Body*, Danto describes the difficulty of defining a being that is at once inside and outside of history, a creature simultaneously subject to objective and representational causality. Our being in history means our knowledge of ourselves, and our *world*, is subject to constant change. Our knowledge of our body as a mechanism has itself changed, but the mechanism itself has not, creating a paradox of sorts.

One part of this paradox could be that Danto sees more relevance in the externally discernible direction of the individual's *world* than in the influence of the 'internal' interest of the individual. This *world* channels persons' interests in ways of which they are unaware; historians, organizing history according to their interests, are able to make sense of the *worlds* of past epochs, explaining individuals' *worlds* from perspectives in their future. (Because the historian cannot discern her own interest in a coherent manner, they are arbitrary). But are interests, even led unconsciously by the causality of a representation, arbitrary? In his early writings, Habermas recognized the role of natural capacities in human development. The 'interest' of instrumentalizing nature is shared by all humans; these interests drive capacities for learning, which develop an attitude essential for their interaction with the physical environment (Habermas 1972, 312–314). These species-capacities are also necessary for humans in understanding social modes of action and interaction.

Even the interest in self-preservation, natural as it seems, is represented by a social system that compensates for the lacks in man's organic equipment and secures his historical existence against the force of nature threatening from without. But society is not only a system of self-preservation.

An enticing natural force, present in the individual as libido, has detached itself from the behavioral system of self-preservation and urges toward Utopian fulfillment. (312)

Our social system, part of the representation of the world, is driven by hidden interests. Our interests are unified in our knowledge and Habermas holds that discovering the hidden interests in our knowledge claims is emancipating. As mentioned earlier, Danto does not share this interest in disclosure, but he does not have to be interested in disclosing them. He does need to recognize they are there. If he fails to do this, his ontological approach, when looking back on historical trends—artistic or otherwise—gives priority to the internal drive of a *world*, of representational causality over objective causality (CT 272; APA 189–190), as the guiding principle of artistic creation or human action. This method will falter when the internal drive of representational causality cannot account for external influences, in this case our interests, bodily or otherwise. This returns us to Kitzinger’s point; artistic creation is both inner- and other-directed. If a rich patron pays, the artist will create art in whatever style is demanded.²¹

Carroll’s argument, that the narrative is placed over the chronical of events, supports this. But this is just one story laid over those events, and Danto may have left out external factors that cannot be ignored (Carroll 1998, 28; Margolis 2001, 96). As an essentialist, he is not concerned with reasons for change; the essentialism of his definition of art acknowledges historical change but not historical causes. Still, as Danto states in *Transfiguration*, he considers counterexamples a refutation of his theory (TC viii). Below, I provide examples that uphold Danto’s claims that the narrative of representational art has ended, and that there was a philosophical drive for self-definition. They will also show that there were external influences and that the problem-solving structure of philosophy is not completely absent in the art. The examples will include: (a) art still seeking its own definition; (b) what Gombrich refers to as “sham” art; (c) artworks still in conversation, after the old conversation is broken; (d) the problem of the rejection of quality; (e) art and social change; (f) unmediated art; and (g) art outside of the museum. On the one hand, all of these examples support Danto’s claim that with post-historical art, anything goes. On the other hand, it is critical to see that the wide array of artistic styles available is not in itself complete freedom of choice; the unlimited field of possibilities opens up a whole new set of problems that artists struggle to resolve.

These examples confirm that the philosopher critic is needed to interpret the meaning of works that rely on artworld concepts unfamiliar to most. But some works entail a problem-solving structure insofar as they are reacting to problems posed by the end of art's representational narrative. It is possible that this process could lead to lessened reliance on the philosopher critic for artistic interpretation.²² The loss, or rejection, of the traditional schemata of pictorial representation draws the art world, as the examples I discuss in the following pages show, to two extremes. On the one hand, with the 'language' of art born anew, there are few who can understand it, making art a game for the elite. Not necessarily the elite of the aristocracy, against whom the artists rebelled in the early part of the twentieth century, but the elite of the art world, for regardless of one's provenance, to understand this subtle language takes a great deal of education in the realm of the arts. On the other hand, in abandoning their traditional schemata, artists also put distance between their work and their traditional audience. These two extremes, and there are many positions between them, give the appearance of an art world that lacks cohesion, indicating that "anything goes." In many cases, artists today are struggling to formulate a new artistic vernacular, one with broader appeal, while at the same time rejecting any formal restrictions that would return art to the traditions of the academy. The process, however, is in its nascent phase. At this point, agreeing with Danto, the philosopher provides a service to art, mediating its message by helping out where the medium itself struggles to articulate. But it seems to me that rather than being free from philosophy, or the kind of structured problem-solving expression associated with it, art is bound even more to it as the critic becomes an extension of the work or even part of the work's struggle to solve an expansive array of new problems.

(a) **Adding to the concept of art, still.** Joseph Kosuth explores the relationship between philosophy and art through his conceptual art. Kosuth, concerned with matters of the word and sign, struggled to convey the artistic idea by pointing directly to the source of what art attempts to express. This effort to articulate the sign by moving beyond the image led him to use dictionary definitions to convey what he 'thought' was the artwork's essential meaning (Kosuth 1991, 47). An example of this is seen in Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs*, which represents Plato's claim that art objects are three removes from the real.²³ Regardless of whether or not Kosuth had found the essence of art in words, at the very least, it shows that some "post-historical" artists are

still actively engaged in the process of seeking art's essence. Unwilling to cede this task to philosophy, Kosuth strives to define the relationship between form and concept, image and sign, within the sphere of art. Kosuth's art shows, at a minimum, the intention of artists to extend the concept of art. They are not expressing this with *the traditional language*, but by seeking a new approach to understanding the activity of art.

The 'value' of particular artists after Duchamp can be weighed according to how much they questioned the nature of art; which is another way of saying "what they added to the conception of art" or what wasn't there before they started. Artists question the nature of art by presenting new propositions as to art's nature. And to do this one cannot concern oneself with the handed-down 'language' of traditional art, since this activity is based on the assumption that there is only one way for framing art propositions. But the very stuff of art is indeed greatly related to 'creating' new propositions. (18–19)

The ongoing task of the artist, according to Kosuth, is to expand the artistic language and find new ways to rearticulate art's idea. Kosuth's art is certainly conceptual in the manner Danto argues typifies the art of post-history. But Kosuth's work does not indicate that process of artistic development, or art's history, is over.

(b) **Sham art: Failed conversation starters.** Gombrich (1995), very aware that artistic dialogue is a process of successes and failures, senses only the downside of moving away from the visual model of creativity. How is the testing to proceed if art is modeled on what is intuited rather than seen? "The answer is more easily felt than given, for such explanations so easily deteriorate into sham profundity or downright nonsense" (584). Here are two ways to look at the notion of "sham" art. The first is that the floodgates are open as to what art can be. With no constraints, art devolves into a discipline that to some extent makes an authentic work of art indistinguishable from an ill-conceived and inauthentic "sham." This assessment is commonly held by critics intolerant of changes they find distasteful in the art world. Gombrich notes, with some trepidation, that freedom is a good thing, especially if it is in a political forum: freedom from tyranny for example. But in conceding to the whims of the new—to the latest concept—a false race is created, in which artists and critics fear falling behind. There is no such

race, according to Gombrich (617). This constant seeking of the new, which Jon Elster (1983) compares to hyperinflation, leads to a loss of equilibrium (82–83). This results in the perception that artistic production becomes a series of witty one-liners, which, though perhaps clever to those in the know, are not worth, or not capable, of being repeated.

Though I see some merit to the analogy of hyperinflation, there is another way to view this. Gombrich (1960) understands that art is exploring a new realm. “In turning away from the visible world, art may really have found an uncharted region which waits to be discovered and articulated” (358).²⁴ In striving for what is new, artists’ articulations amount to attempts at extending the artistic vocabulary. In terms of making and matching, when a practice is at its peak, as art was at the end of the Vasarian age, then there will be fewer mistakes; the message is clearly defined and the job of matching has been mastered by the tradition. With the rejection of the restrictions of tradition, failed attempts must no doubt be encountered within a trial-and-error process aiming to communicate visually the not-yet-visually-articulated intuitions of a quickly changing culture. Following this logic, one could explain some of what appear to be shams as mistaken trials of the artworld, falsified by incommunicability.

(c) **New conversations.** Danto argued that the “conversational implicature” of the era of art was irreparably broken (LLP 457). This claim is not unsound, but the assertion that the philosophical drive that took the conversation to its logical end was also the end of any future conversations is ostensibly false. Certainly the conversation is different, but there is evidence that new conversations are emerging among artists through their artworks. Through appropriating the rebellious traditions of the twentieth century, a conversation among works of different stylistic origins is emerging. Robert Gober creates conceptual works of art that appropriate both the traditional mastery of illusion, adding what appear to be *trompe l’œil* windows to his installations, as well as industry standard fixtures that nod to Duchamp’s *Fountain* and his readymades.²⁵ Gober appears to be critically appropriating icons of the twentieth century’s new schemata while placing them in a context that still acknowledges the themes of the early modern. The appropriationist artist expands the artistic ‘language’ by rehabilitating old and new artistic metaphors in a manner that resonates with the contemporary audience.

Danto’s favorite example, Warhol’s *Brillo Box*, has been co-opted as part of a new artworld conversation. The appropriationist artist Mike

Bidlo, in a 1995 Zurich gallery, reproduced the eighty-five *Brillo Boxes* that Warhol had copied as Pop art in the 1968 Pasadena exhibit. Bidlo's exhibit was titled *Not Andy Warhol* (Fig. 5.3). Danto interprets this in the context of three indiscernible objects. That of Harvey, who created the original commercial Brillo box, Warhol, who created the original *Brillo Boxes* as works of art, and Bidlo, whose *Brillo Boxes* in *Not Andy Warhol* were a reference to Warhol, and not Harvey. According to Danto's schema, they are indiscernible objects, whose meanings are clearly different, based on their reference pointers and their art-historical context, or in the case of Harvey, the lack thereof. Harvey's box was part of popular culture, but not Pop art (WA 147–148). But there are more *Brillo Boxes* that have entered the artworld (Fig. 5.4). Franco Mondini-Ruiz created sets of *Brillo Box* piñatas that referenced Warhol's *Brillo Boxes*. Growing up in a segment of society in which his ethnicity and sexual orientation left him marginalized, he saw in Warhol's work a



Fig. 5.3 Mike Bidlo, *Not Andy Warhol* (Brillo Boxes) 1995, Courtesy of Francis M. Naumann Fine Arts, New York



Fig. 5.4 Franco Mondini-Ruiz, *Brillo Box Piñatas*, San Antonio, Texas, Photograph courtesy of the artist

refuge. In the world opened up by Warhol, Mondini-Ruiz found a means of self-expression that bridged the gap he perceived between his roots and culture and the contemporary art scene. Mondini-Ruiz felt that the culture of his ‘Tex-Mex’ heritage was rejected as too base and saw in Warhol’s work an icon of the rejection of high art in favor of the everyday. Mondini-Ruiz used the icons of Warhol to bring elements of his own culture and his sexual identity into the art scene. His piñatas were introduced via Warhol’s symbolic message, which he saw as the rejection of high art, but also, Warhol’s Pop art allowed a punning introduction of the ‘pop art’ of Mondini-Ruiz’s culture, i.e., the piñata. This shows that the *Brillo Box*, though perhaps not the Brillo box, has become a part of the artistic conversation of the post-historical artworld, and it is a repeatable image that artists can use, alter, and make puns with as a part of their artistic vocabulary. Mondini-Ruiz’s ‘pop art’ piñatas ended up in collections all over the world. It is arguable that Danto’s appropriation of *Brillo Box* as the emblem of art history’s sea change has further added to the power of its symbolism, showing that far from being separate from

art, philosophy actively interacts with art, aiding with its articulation, rather than speaking for it.²⁶

(d) **Quality and the expert: The gatekeeper of taste.** In his book *The End of the Art World*, skeptical critic Robert Morgan (1999) suggests that in their rush to reject the precepts of bourgeois sensibilities, the generation of artists who lived during the American cultural revolution of the 60s and 70s were inclined to discard the valuable notion of quality in art (12). Artists saw in the standards of the academy a restrictive form of oppression. The museums upheld these standards, which, perhaps quite rightly, were seen as tools for restricting access. Thus, minorities and other outsider groups felt they were barred admission under the pretext of the standards of the academy (Cahan 2016, 5, see Chapter 3). One of these standards was quality, and when the standards of the perceived oppression were torn down, the standard of quality was also rejected.

Though the sea of artistic expression may be tumultuous, and lacking in comparative precedents, the critics and curators who can see the ‘real artist’ will say that it is obvious when quality appears. Artists genuinely engaged with their craft emerge no matter what their medium, solving the problem of there being no standard.²⁷ This suggests that despite the likelihood that much mediocre art was created merely out of the spirit of rebellion, the great artist shines whether following tradition or expressing revolt. In his essay “Of the Standard of Taste,” Hume (1979), while showing support for the necessities of rules in art, nonetheless claims, “if some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions” (279–280). If an artwork still pleases, Hume concludes, despite what the critics claim to be flaws, it is not because artistic flaws or the transgression of rules pleases us; rather, it is an indictment of the rules.²⁸ The artist who creates quality will not adhere to the *standards* of quality because such limits would be an obstacle to their productive drive. This does not mean that anything goes. Curator Hamza Walker stated it this way: the rules are there for “people who paint,” not for “painters.” For those who have mastered their discipline, the rules are there to be broken, thus invalidating them as standards.

Walker pointed to *The McCormick Tribune Campus Center* on the Chicago IIT campus, designed by Rem Koolhaas, as an example of problem solving in the work of the creative artist. The plot of land the center was built on is shared with a Chicago Transit Authority elevated track. Koolhaas playfully built the campus center into the environment of the

elevated tracks, rather than allowing the tracks and the rules of conventional architecture to constrain the structure. The campus center had no exalted use; it would likely house a 7-11 and a game room, and would certainly be a distribution point for fast food. Nonetheless, Koolhaas articulates a structure that matches the physical context to the architectural vision of IIT, without compromising the quality of the architecture. The existence of ingenuity in the face of apparent limitation is the sign of art's excellence. The lack of constraints does allow art to be what it wants to be, as Danto's notion of art affirms. Nonetheless, the excellence of art may only be apparent to a somewhat smaller group of critics and experts of the 'curatoriate'.

(e) **Non-aesthetic art as force for social change.** Coinciding with the counter-culture revolution, artists' attempted to break their connection to the bourgeoisie and the elites of the academy, and there was a strong inclination for artists to establish an audience within the non-elite. As artists rebelled against art as a plaything of the rich and powerful, they attempted to use the art system as a locus for social change.²⁹ If the traditional mediums and places of art were not the temples of spirit's expression, to use a Hegelian expression, then where were the artists to turn? Many artists felt that they were being squeezed into a corner by commercialism and economic forces that could not quantify the value of art.³⁰ Some who felt pressured in this way chose to take a stance by representing a force in the modern world that was anti-commercial, anti-capitalist, and, in general, the voice from outside of the system. This perspective, from outside of the totality, is where Hegel saw the *Pöbel*, the rabble who fell through the cracks.³¹ Marcuse postulated that if there were a way to break the totality of the military industrial complex's grip on society, it would come from those who could not be co-opted by the system. Many artists do in some way see themselves as reflecting the voices of those who are outside of the system. But Schopenhauer and the Romantics had said something very similar centuries before. Even if the message comes from 'without', the artist still needs to communicate to the audience. In order to present to the viewer an image that provides a reflective distance from the 'real' world—or even the 'system' that represents the dominant form of social reality—the artist must nonetheless remain conversant in the 'rhetoric' and 'metaphor' of art. Rejecting their place and their medium, artists had no option but to search for a new artistic vernacular that could reach what they would hope to be a new audience.³²

According to Greenberg (1986a), “the true and most important function of the avant-garde was not to ‘experiment’ but to keep culture *moving* in the midst of ideological confusion and violence” (8). Though art has changed drastically since 1939, this modern drive to “keep culture *moving*” appears often in the art of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The artists’ aim to keep culture moving is complicated without an established symbolic medium, but it was the symbolic medium itself which was perceived as an obstacle. The reason that compelled artists to abandon their artistic language is the same reason that they sought a new audience. This aesthetic ‘language’ of art at the height of modernism appeared, correctly or incorrectly, to be the language of the oppressor. It was incapable of mediating the expression of the avant-garde, or simply not able to provide a vision articulating the future of the ‘new era’ (an orientational narrative perhaps), so they sought forms of expression that had previously been far from art. At modernity’s peak, Greenberg believed that in their artistic expression the “poet or artist tries in effect to imitate God by creating something valid solely on its own terms” (8). Greenberg’s claim, seeming to echo the problem of subjectivity Hegel recognizes in his notion of modernity, envisions the replacement of the early modern absolute with artists’ own relative values. But these relative values cannot fulfill the promise of modernity, and the message of modernity was demonized as a false universal by ‘postmodern’ critics. With the exhaustion of modernity’s aesthetic schemata, artists in the late twentieth century borrowed from politics, philosophy, or wherever they thought they could gain traction with the audience who most needed their transfiguring message. Danto was correct in his assessment that the aesthetic was no longer a required artistic value; thus, Greenberg—and most likely Greenberg’s taste—could not appreciate the turn that art had taken after modernism. Despite the collapse of the modern schemata, the artist still struggled with the problem of how to employ the schematic substructure (the mental set or cognitive reference system) that makes artistic communication possible. This problem has not been solved for the broader art community. Danto is right that the voice of art is “a Babel of unconverging artistic conversations.” But some conversations attempt convergence.

(f) **Unmediated art.** In the conceptual movement, artists sought to articulate directly the message of art, bypassing the material altogether. Kosuth’s conceptual art attempted to show the linguistic essence of art’s meaning by removing the mediated layer of artistic communication,

thus, showing “art as idea as idea.” His method sought to remove the critic—the middleman—from the equation, thus effecting an unmitigated exposure to the essence of art. He writes,

At its most strict and radical extreme the art I call conceptual is such because it is based on an inquiry into the nature of art. Thus, it is not just the activity of constructing art propositions, but a working out, a thinking out, of all the implication of all aspects of the concept “art.” Because of the implied duality of perception and conception in earlier art, a middleman (critic) appeared useful. This art both annexes the functions of the critic, and makes a middleman unnecessary. The other system—artist-critic audience—existed because the visual elements of the “how” construction gave art an aspect of entertainment, thus it had an audience. The audience of conceptual art is composed primarily of artists—which is to say that an audience separate from the participants doesn’t exist. (Kosuth 1973, 148)

Eliminating the non-participating audience, Kosuth sets up ‘information rooms’, classroom-like installations inviting the public to peruse bound volumes of multi-disciplinary texts.³³ This direct summons to intellectual engagement was to place the artistic experience in the square of judgment, rather than the aesthetic, which evoked an involuntary reaction (146–147).

The notion of conceptual art as the direct intellectual engagement of the reader, which Kosuth advocated, is found often in contemporary installations (Fig. 5.5). Losing the old vernacular, artists often resorted to explicit expression, and as Danto notes, explicitness is the enemy of the seductive measures needed for rhetoric to function in art (TC 170). Whether in paint or print, the power of rhetoric in artistic metaphors often disappears when replaced by everyday prose. The direct intellectual engagement endorsed by Kosuth is presented as art in the forum of art, yet it may belong in the forum of philosophy or politics, which is a dialogical forum more directly descriptive.³⁴ Habermas’ analysis of the how different forms of discourse function is instructive here. Later, I will discuss his account of art’s rhetorical content in detail, but briefly, according to his model of communicative action, the ‘rationality’ underlying artistic expression, especially in the forum of art, demands a different critical response than the value claims of the theoretical or political sphere, or for that matter, the communicative rationality of the lifeworld. The theoretical realm demands a rational response integrated into a discourse oriented toward demonstrations by the appropriately

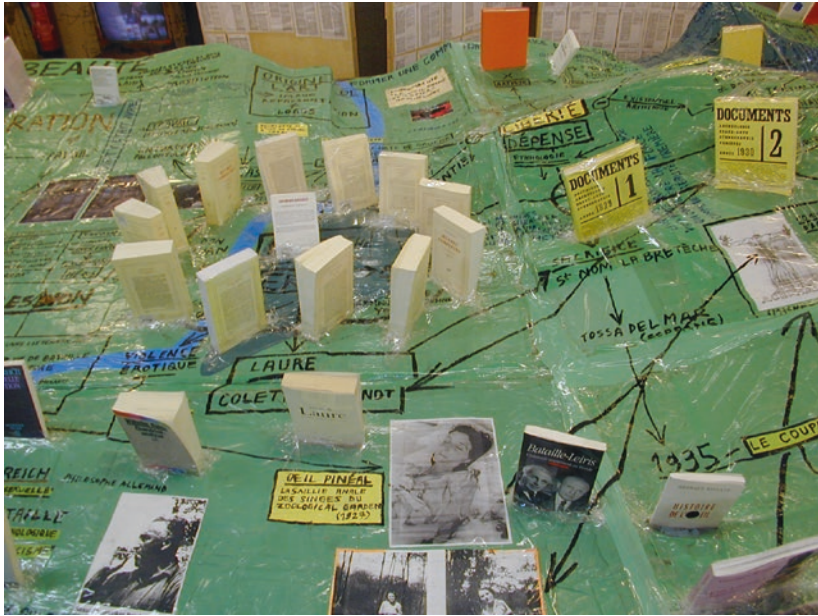


Fig. 5.5 Thomas Hirschhorn «Bataille Monument» (Detail: Bataille exhibition), 2002, Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany, Photograph by Stephen Snyder. In this installation, the artist literally bonds the durable medium of philosophy into the work. This work, intended to honor Bataille and encourage the engagement of his philosophy, was integrated into a neighborhood project designed to foster the participation of the disenfranchised youth of Kassel

qualified theorists. A social or political engagement, one located outside the realm of art, though not subject to theoretical proof, is subject to counterpoint with the aim of resolving practical matters. The forum of art puts forth an idea for a manifold of interpretations, which does not allow counter-evidence. A work of documentary prose can be recontextualized to be art: if the work is taken out of the context of its normal usage, it keeps its rhetorical power, and for Habermas, this opens up the opportunity for the critique of preunderstandings and formation of new options for self-understanding. But the use of that rhetorical power is altered in the artwork, and its effectiveness requires some transformation on the part of the artist. The point is that the transformed work still

includes the rhetorical structure that entails the problem-solving structure of philosophical reflection. The transformed artwork does not hold the same illocutionary force that it would in proper context, but it is that force in the world-disclosive context that makes it effective. On this point, Danto and Gombrich are in agreement with Habermas, insofar as they hold art is a form of expression that uses the structure of the underlying reference system employed for everyday language, but nonetheless does not refer to its objects in the same way. Thus, to reject the language of art altogether—of metaphor and artistic rhetoric—as Kosuth does by moving theoretical engagement in an unmediated fashion to the context of an artistic forum, reduces its rhetorical power into that of unreflective and non-disclosive forms of prose.

Elimination of the critic as middleman, Kosuth believes, would bring about direct participation in the artwork. This would co-opt the role of the critic into the activity of art, which would directly engage artist and audience, resulting in a hermetic practice limited to the elites of artistic creation and those who comprehend it. Oddly, Kosuth's elitist sentiments find an analogue in the popular participatory art found at the opposite extreme of the artistic spectrum. Community-based art also attempts to remove the middleman from the experience of art, but, it would appear, for the purpose of broadening the base of the art world's audience through direct participation (see Fig. 5.5). The actions conjured by artists seeking increased participation are interesting and if they do anything, to borrow Greenberg's phrase, it might be to "keep culture *moving*." The genuine interest artists have in bringing art to their public is understandable; after all, public money often subsidizes art, so the public should be involved. Danto uses the example of *We Got It!* as a form of participatory community-based art. When a local confectionary union was asked to get involved with the 1993 *Culture in Action* exhibition in Chicago and create what to them was a work of art, they came up with the perfect candy bar called *We Got It!* There is a transforming aspect of art that no one should be denied. Thus, the artistic experience is brought to the community so that they too can feel its transformative effect. In Danto's estimation, it is not the artworld that creates community-based projects like *We Got It!*, but it is the post-historical artworld that makes it possible for community-based projects to be art (AA 180–189).

Community-based art projects are usually temporary engagements, often geared toward the direct participation of neighborhood residents

who are not part of the arts community. Though these events are often documented with the results presented as art in museums or in publications, I would follow Kosuth's sentiments that if the artistic claim of these engagements lies in the act of participation, then the artistic moment does not carry over well in its documentation. The art of community participation, which often seeks to overcome the ills extant in society through empowerment of the participants, has laudable goals. But community-based art, such as *Culture in Action*, has two distinct goals. On the one hand, the curators appear to be casting a broad net, attempting to create a new audience for art without regard for whether the activity falls within the previously known scope of art. On the other hand, they attempt to use art as a tool to directly confront the societal problems that face the community of participants. Regarding the latter claim, though I believe that art is of benefit to society, it is not of benefit as a direct force that can bring about the sort of change expected from such public projects. Overly explicit aims will likely cause it to fail *as art*. Regarding the former, though agreeing with Danto that anything can be art in the post-historical artworld, in order to generate a new audience, the curators encourage participants to engage in activities that do not refer to any of the schematic structures of the artworld, new or old. Thus, these projects have no point of reference outside of the aesthetic activity or their practical social and political goals.³⁵ The curator of *Culture in Action*, Mary Jane Jacob, asserted that one of the project's goals was to take the focus away from Western self-expression and emphasize collective interaction (Heartney 1995). But much of the *Culture in Action*'s draw was due to its large budget for both the community projects and invitation of critics who, after being 'reeducated' on the ideal function of community-based art, were urged to recognize the artistic merit of the project after it was experienced.

Habermas (1987a) argues that the emergence of "countermovements" in the aesthetic sphere, such as artistic movements committed to political change, indicates the attempt to "mitigate" a compartmentalized form of reason through the adoption of cultural forms that belong to other spheres (312–313).³⁶ For Habermas, this represents a societal imbalance. *Culture in Action* aims to achieve political goals through artistic expression, and this overburdens the task of art. Critic Harriet Senie (2003), discussing the wave of public art, which the *Culture in Action* project was part of, argues that,

public art is not a substitute for urban renewal or social work, although projects may address or include such functions. Public art ideally creates better places and provides enjoyment, insight, and maybe even hope to its participants, viewers, and users. But it cannot correct deeper problems stemming from widespread unemployment and poverty, the neglect of public education and healthcare, and all the other social ills so glaringly ignored at the moment. Yet these unreasonable expectations are often implicit or imbedded in the commissioning of public art. (49)

In the situations described above, moral or political claims are applied in the aesthetic context, with the result being the ineffective employment of both moral-political and aesthetic aims. If art is to provide beneficial insights into the structure of the social and political world, the rhetoric of art is less effective if applied explicitly as practical-political claims. The change of context alone is not adequate. When the 'aesthetic net' is cast, the lure of art that borrows from another realm does not necessarily maintain the same rhetorical and communicative effectiveness. The seemingly heavy-handed attempt on the part of the curatoriate to rekindle art as a means to communicate to a broader social segment through community-based projects stands in stark contrast to the notion of art as the realm of the expert, in which it is the purview of the critic to recognize and explain artistic talent. The broad spectrum of contrasting artistic practices that compete in the artworld point not to a freedom found in finality, as Danto taking the seat of the last historian of the era of art claims, but to an artworld critically struggling to reengage the broader community within an evolving artistic medium standing in need of an interpreter. What Danto says of style seems to contradict what he says of the unbound freedom of art in the era after art. Style, he says, includes elements implicit within it that cannot be known before it has come to fruition, but when the style is 'complete', and part of the past, its contours can be traced. In "Narrative and Style," Danto (1991) develops the idea that the internal drive of artists' style is "inscribed" in their early development such that it will be manifest through the entire body of their work (206).

Perhaps we see this in the style of Sculpture Chicago, the organization that sponsored *Culture in Action*, also influential in the building of Millennium Park. If audience interaction and participation is the standard used, one need merely visit this park to witness its success as public art. Anish Kapoor's *Cloud Gate*, 110 tons patterned after a mercury

drop, reflects the work's beholders within the background of the city's skyline and the section of the park in which they stand. People swarm to it, enthralled by their reflections seen within the convex image of the city (Fig. 5.6). *Crown Fountain*, designed by conceptual artist Jaume Plensa, incorporated the faces of thousands of Chicago citizens into a video sculpture that attracts tourists and citizens alike, engaging them without their needing to be told how they are *in* the art. This was the completion of the process, and if there were shortcomings in *Culture in Action*, they were resolved in Millennium Park. The progressive application of a style, in this case, was in some sense the fulfilment of Sculpture Chicago's orientational narrative.

(g) **Alternative forms of mediation.** When public art strives to overcome the gap between artists and their public, it might not, as Danto asserts, be attributable to the independence of art from philosophy. When museums identify themselves as a hub for social activity, they often



Fig. 5.6 Anish Kapoor, *Cloud Gate*, 2004. Millennium Park, Chicago, Photograph by Stephen Snyder



Fig. 5.7 Simparch, *Spec*, installation with musical track by Kevin Drum, 2002, Documenta 11, Kassel, Germany, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

aim to bring the artist and the public back together. This implicitly recognizes that there is such a gap, but also that the gap can be bridged. More and more museum curators are seeking to aid in the rebuilding of an ‘artistic climate’ that can bring the audience back to art (Cahan 2016, 257).

Certainly, Danto would not relegate post-historical art to the confines of the museum. His account of the artworld allows art to be defined independently of the institution. But the freedom to move beyond the walls of the academy also represents a process of discovery on the part of those of the art world who address the problem of reaching a broader audience. The choice of which medium best communicates the artists’ sentiments presents a problem that artists seek to resolve while generating a ‘new schematic’ for the art of the post-historic age. The works of artist collective *Simparch* aim to overcome the split between audience and artist by crafting works of art that are participatory, evoking art as an



Fig. 5.8 Simparch, *El Tubo Completo*, exterior view of installation in sculpture court, 2004, Whitney Biennial, Photograph by Stephen Snyder

activity; at the same time, their installations are constructed with the permanence of sculptural works. Though there is room for conceptual interpretation, there is also an immediate participatory channel that allows for a transforming moment (Fig. 5.7). These works, being free-standing architectural sculptures that invite the audience inside, can be part of a museum or can be exhibited as independent installations in parks, forests, urban spaces, or even border areas (Figs. 5.8 and 5.9) (Bonansinga 2014, Chapter 3).

5.4.1 *Style as a Problem-Solving Orientational Narrative*

These counterexamples challenge three of Danto's claims: (1) that art is no longer philosophically engaged; (2) that there are no external influences on the internal drive of style; and (3) that when the narrative of art as a discipline striving for optical fidelity ends, the development of art



Fig. 5.9 Simparch, *Silvas Capitalis*, front view of two-story wooden sculpture with internal staircase, 2009, Kielder Forest, Northumberland, UK, Photograph by Steven Rowell © 2010

also stops. The examples show that though the representational narrative may have ended, art as a phenomenon entailing an underlying process continues; this process might not be amenable to narrative explanation, but if another narrative could describe it, it would be pluralistic. These points are interrelated, and they leave Danto's narrative, and account of embodied meaning, largely intact. External factors, perhaps as simple as the invention of the camera and moving pictures, pushed art to engage the problem of its own self-definition, which then resolved itself through an internal progression. But other external factors push art to new problems,³⁷ the freedom of art, utopian in some sense, presents open choice. But the myriad forms art can now take come with a proliferation of problems regarding how new issues encountered in artistic production are technically resolved. There is still a problem solving mode, no longer tied to the mandate of representational accuracy, which in its kernel is not so far from what Danto calls the "post-positivistic epistemology" of making and matching (1983, 121). Gombrich's assertion that there is a trial-and-error process in which artists attempt to achieve some

effect that goes beyond the everyday experience is found in the interplay among the artists and the beholders, a conversational process, which in his words exhibits the self-regulating adjustments implicit in the adaptation and adjustment of artistic communication. For Danto, art's aims have been opened; they are no longer implicit. In assessing the state of the arts though, it is difficult to say whether the sky is cloudy or clear. With the transparency of art's representational aims in question, art's current aims become opaque. Opacity does not so much equate with explicit knowledge of rules as the awareness that there are implicit rules, which, in regard to the artworld, require some help from theorists to discern. The mental sets, or styles of the era of art need to be made clear, but explicit awareness of the concepts of the historical artworld does not indicate that implicit concepts of the present artworld are not still employed.

While rejecting Gombrich's idea that art is driven in a trial-and-error problem-solving manner, Danto (1999b) recognizes something not so far from a trial-and-error process in his own defense of the indiscernible.

We bring to our perception of anything, but particularly of art, a rich com-
 post of cultural beliefs, which penetrates the way we think about what we
 see—until, for some reason, we make a mistake, and thereby discover that
 one or another of our background beliefs fails in the given case. (327)

When enough errors are made in what is perceived as art, Danto continues, the viewer realizes it is not a matter of what is perceived, but what one perceives as art. This must be seen as an external factor. The causal collision of one's *world*, with the world, such that a change in one's *world* is effected, for the most part occurs below the level of consciousness. We don't direct that process, our *world* does. Still, an interaction takes place such that our *world* is fitted to our world. Our chances for survival depend on this (CT xxi, 152). But when something in our *world* fails, if there is a problem with our past, then a problem emerges in the present (NK 341). A problem, or crisis, with *world* will bring a question mark. This could make one's *world* opaque.

I think, it may be said that to the degree that our past is in doubt, our present—the way we live in the world—is no less in question. And indeed, our very actions inherit these margins of incertitude, for what we do can only have the meanings we suppose it to have if it is located in a history

we believe real. If our beliefs in that history are shattered, our actions lose their point and, in dramatic cases, our lives their purpose. (NK 341)

As Carrier noted, Danto's narratives set up the problem which he will philosophically solve. The problems though, are externally induced, and philosophy shows the rule that explains what was not seen before. Collisions with the world that make our background presuppositions opaque seem to happen arbitrarily, just as the reasoning for individual actions are in some sense seen by Danto as capricious. Habermas argues that human interest is at the core of what we call knowledge because he sees our interests hidden in our social structure. For Habermas, to reveal these hidden, sometimes primeval, interests is emancipating. Danto has no interest in such disclosures, but the lack of interest, or perhaps what he sees as the impossibility of ever understanding such interests, does not discount that they can influence our world, or our history. Without trying to pinpoint what those interests may be, the chronicle of events that narrative may not capture is still in play, perhaps without our explicit knowledge, forming our *world*, our social structure. Because Danto's narrative theory relies on implicit knowledge that is unavailable until subsumed into history, it passes over this point. Nonetheless, the "style is the man," and the style is linked to some kind of original choice. That original choice must in some way be an individual's interest, and that is woven into the individual's *world* as her style.

5.4.2 *Rhetoric in Post-History*

On the power of rhetoric to aid rationality, Hans Blumenberg (1987) writes that rhetoric is only a lesser option when it is used in place of a truth that is available. "The antithesis of truth and effect is superficial, because the rhetorical effect is not an alternative that one can choose instead of an insight that one could *also* have, but an alternative to a definitive evidence that one *cannot* have, or cannot have yet, or at any rate cannot have here and now" (436). The use of rhetoric that Blumenberg suggests, as a stand-in for truth, reflects in some sense Danto's choice of representation as the uniting principle of philosophy. If the descriptive tendency for logical truth hinders the formation of a definition, then it does little good. A more flexible representation, or piece of rhetoric, can help to form a system that is not trapped by its truth conditions; "representation (i.e., definition) precedes truth

and cannot be reduced to it” (LLP Ankersmit 397).³⁸ In the essay “Excursus on Leveling the Genre Distinction between Philosophy and Literature,” Habermas (1990) analyzes the implications of Derrida placing rhetoric over logic, a move that puts philosophy and literature at odds. Habermas ultimately wants to show that in leveling philosophy into literature, the aestheticization of language will actually take away literature’s power. This is because the power of the aestheticized language relies on the structure of ordinary language. The artwork and the non-artwork each have a rhetoric, though a different effect follows from their contextual uses. Fodor says much the same of Danto’s use of rhetoric. The *Brillo Box* as art has a rhetoric different from the Brillo box as commercial packaging, but the artwork still refers to its non-art counterpart (DCR Fodor 62–63). Alexander Nehamas (1987) discusses the rhetorical prioritization that Nietzsche gives language in his paradoxical account of the will to power. “Part of the will to power is precisely the view that there is no general structure of the world to which any linguistic system can ever be accurate” (93). Nehamas notes that while Derrida sees it as a paradox to be embraced, Danto, recognizing the problem, thinks it should be overcome (92–93). Certainly, Danto’s choice of representation as the organizing basis of his philosophy positions him closer to Habermas than to Derrida. I will not enter into Habermas’ dispute with Derrida here, and though his argument refers to literature, within the context of what Danto has written on literature and metaphor, I believe what Habermas argues in regard to rhetoric applies as well to Danto’s account of rhetoric in the visual arts. Habermas (1990) takes up the case of a literary ‘indiscernible’, analyzing the documentary fiction of Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*. The sentence, as it relates to social action or ritual, is context dependent. The context determines whether or not it is binding. For example, the illocutionary power of language is not binding or serious if it is part of a game or a theater piece, but the illocutionary force is still recognized. With this in mind, Habermas addresses the argument that natural narratives, or stories, employ the same rhetorical laws of construction as literary narratives (202). Narrative rhetoric is not exclusively literary; it is in fact used throughout our everyday language. But Habermas argues that this does not flatten the difference between the role of rhetoric in everyday speech and in literary art. In literary art, the ‘world-disclosive’, or aesthetic, function is dominant over the other functions of language (regulative and informative).

In a certain respect, it is the refraction and partial elimination of illocutionary validity claims that distinguishes the story from the statement of the eyewitness, teasing from insulting, being ironic from misleading, the hypothesis from the assertion, wish-fantasy from perception, a training maneuver from an act of warfare, and a scenario from a report of an actual catastrophe. (202–203)

Nonetheless, the power of the rhetoric that is present in the everyday language is not lost. Though the world-disclosive (expressive and aesthetic) functions of language are predominant, they are not fully independent. In the case of Capote's account of a brutal killing spree, it was not a deviation from the documentary format that gave the work its poetic structure. Rather, it was "the exemplary elaboration that takes the case out of its context and makes it the occasion for an innovative, world-disclosive, and eye-opening representation in which the rhetorical means of representation depart from communicative routines and take on a life of their own" (203). A story may lose its assertive capacity, but there is a *conversational* structure—and Habermas also cites Grice here—that must remain insofar as the story is still "tellable."³⁹

Returning to Derrida, there is a problem-solving capacity in the ordinary use of language that disappears when language is aestheticized and given only world-creative powers. Rather than enabling the independent realm of fiction, according to Habermas, Derrida denies it. There is an aesthetic function that is an essential part of ordinary language's progressive learning capacity. If the non-creative capacities of language are denied, then the power of the rhetoric that comes from everyday language will have no compelling structural function when applied 'independently' in art. Literature could never tell stories without it.

Habermas' argument, if we accept it, is relevant to our argument in two ways. One, there is of necessity a philosophical problem-solving structure in the rhetoric of literary art, even if it is employed aesthetically. It is the problem-solving structure that makes it conversational, and as Danto defines it, this structure would apply to the rhetoric used in the visual arts. Two, for Habermas, the distance that an aesthetically employed linguistic structure gives those who experience it allows them the opportunity to reevaluate the imperatives present but not employed in the literary work in a way that can make them aware of problems in their current frame of reference, thereby allowing them to somehow consider an alternative. This provides a valuable tool in forming an

orientational narrative. This is a capacity that Danto does not acknowledge in the artistic experience.

Still, Danto suggests a way in which the interest of the artist can be expressed in a sense that moves closer to the orientational narrative. In what he refers to as symbolic expression he recognizes the communicative capacity of the symbol, which can only be read in a context aware of the social codes that make it a symbol. In “Symbolic Expression and the Self,” Danto writes that the symbolic expression is endowed with an internal connection to its meaning, as opposed to a sign, which is merely a placeholder for some message (WK 104–105). The symbolic expression when manifest in the object of art must be communicable. “Symbolic expressions, as I have been constructing their concept, are communications; and they presuppose a code that is supposed accessible to those to whom the communication is addressed.” These symbolic expressions serve “as ways of saying what cannot be said” (WK 111). The meta-language of the symbolic expression, of meaning embodied within the symbol, is at the same time dependent on and helps in creating a community of those who understand and find currency in such expressions. Outside of these communities, however, there is a need for the interpretation of the expressive symbol (WK 112–113).

To live in a specific community is to manifest that community. One expresses this without saying anything about it, it is just who one is, it is part of one’s *world*. A manifestation may need explanation, but it does not demand it. A symbolic expression demands explanation because it is an expression of what the manifestation should be. The symbolic expression wills a *world* in which it *is* the manifestation, knowing that the *world* is *not* now a manifestation. “The symbol represents this world as unjust by embodying that other just world as if it were here and now. It brings into this world another world through something which I am saying *embodies* it” (WK 101). The symbolic expression has an analogue in art. What might differentiate works of art that embody symbolic expressions and those that do not are the narrow bounds of the audience in the former.

What is important for my argument is that Danto, in recognizing how the person is formed by their symbolic world—the specific representation of their community—acknowledges that to some extent change can occur through the symbolic expression of how that *world* should be, though it isn’t (WK 103). The point which I will return to is this: style is in some ways an orientational narrative, and a style can change

things. For the author of the symbolic expression, the community is the self, but internalized (WK 113). This fits with what Danto has said about individuals and their *world*. Remaining within the bounds of his analytical ontology, for Danto this does not seem to be a dialogue, though communication is entailed. If Carroll is right, that the end-of-art thesis is Danto's orientational narrative, it is perhaps also his symbolic expression—expressing how he believes art after the end of art ought to be. Just as Hegel urged his audience to accept the unified infinite over the bad infinite, and Nietzsche called for new tablets over the old, their orientational narratives may have represented more their style than how the end of the narrative of representation *is*.

The 'redescription' of Danto's philosophical account of art's narrative, if I can use that term in this way, would change it little. But I would add to his definition of art where his broader system lacks clarity. As discussed in Chapter 4, Danto's use of a class of concepts or possibilities that are implicitly knowable, but yet unavailable until they somehow become externalized, in history or in style, involves a process that he does not fully account for. Gombrich's theory of making and matching, in my estimation, has much to offer, explaining well art's slide up to the moment when art became 'post-historical'. It does not explain how the artwork embodies meaning, as Danto's does, and this is a significant drawback. It does show very well the process, or practice, of how the artist and beholder interact within the framework of their mental set, pushing the conversation of art forward, till, as Danto shows, the era of representational art ends. I do not think that Danto's notion of embodied meaning relies on art no longer being philosophical. This aspect of his theory is tied up with his account of the emergence of art's definition through self-reflection. And though I don't do it here, I think we could derive it another way, even borrowing from Hegel again, but no account of its emergence will be as clever as Danto's. What I could add, in a reinterpretation of Danto's definition of art as embodied meaning, is that art also embodies a problem-solving process. For Danto, what tied art's representational history together was a conversational implicature. It seems that as Danto defines it, this is part of its interpretable meaning, and I add that art will always have it; art's conversations involve a potentially problem-solving structure, a flow of one thing coming after the next. They work within a set of mutual expectations (even when undermining them), which is brought to bear to solve all manner of artistic problems, not just to find essentialist definitions.

And there are now an infinite number of problems for art to solve for an infinite number of styles. It will continue to solve them and it does not end. The artistic conversation is moving on.

5.4.3 *Overcoming Dualism in Style*

Perhaps one reason why Danto did not see the second stream of art that Carroll, Margolis, and I have noted, is that he really did view the mind as a text. Though he never fully developed the philosophical implications, if the mind is like a text, there is little outside of a narrative to explain it. But beyond that, Danto proposes in *Body/Body* that people, being text-like, are subject to the kinds of unity that criticism can bring to a text. If we are structured as texts, Danto speculates “strategies evolved for addressing literary texts have application to us” (BB 221). The cohesion that binds together a text or a proposition, is also what binds us. “What binds the self into a unity is of a piece with what binds histories and essays into unities” (BB 224). For Danto, our unity may have little to do with the chaos that it binds together, but it is something that *we* do.

These chapters have focused on the end of art from the perspective of the philosophies that strive to overcome a dualistic perspective, seeing all substance, if not unitary, at least as a single type. Each transition between the aspects that bind our world together is Janus-faced and will appear different, depending on how we perceive it. As Heller (1965) describes the different spheres of imagination and reason and the artist’s journey to the interior, “we seem to get to know one thing at the price of losing sight of another; and however wide our interests, the sharper edge of our perception in one sphere is but in contrast to the bluntness of our sensibility in another” (94). The higher and lower orders of Geist will appear to be different, depending on one’s perspective. Nietzsche, trapped in a single world, still saw Dionysus returning, waiting beyond the threshold. For Danto, the perspective of inner and outer, though reduced to one world, still entailed implicit and explicit representations that would show style on the inside as rhetoric on the outside. The artistic transformations, of matter to spirit, of despair to joy, of the commonplace to the sublime, involved a transition that showed a different face on either side. For Nietzsche, the mercurial property of language itself manifested a tragic duality. There is a struggle of the suprasensible over the sensible, of freedom over fate, of truth over lies. Language is always deceiving;

nonetheless, it is what keeps things moving. One must have the wings of Hermes to break out, to stay above this shifting duality.

What I think is common to all of these is the change not so much in the matter as in the mind, however mind is defined. The creative power of art is in the power of the mind to see something differently. The saying of Ch'ing-yüan seems relevant here. "Before I had studied Zen for thirty years, I saw mountains as mountains, and waters as waters. When I arrived at a more intimate knowledge, I came to the point where I saw that mountains are not mountains, and waters are not waters. But now that I have got its very substance I am at rest. For it's just that I see mountains once again as mountains, and waters once again as waters" (*Ch'uan Teng Lu*, 22).⁴⁰ The extraordinary power to transform the sensible is what also led to a state in which art was thought to have ended. It is a transformation of thought which created art: see something as art, and it is art. It doesn't even have to be something that you *do* (PD 205). The end of art is an end of a way of thinking, a transformation of thought. The perception does not change at all. In some sense we re-describe it, but that would be like the conscious act of a historian. The end of art is compelled, Danto says, because of a crisis of the modern era.

In Sartre's beautiful ontology, there is a moment when the *pour soi*, as he terms it, which up to then had been invisible to itself, a pure nothingness, becomes, abruptly, an object for itself, at which point it enters a new stage of being. Less climactically, there is a stage in the history of each of us when we become objects for ourselves, when we realize we have an identity to inquire into: when we see ourselves rather than merely see the world. But we also recognize that becoming conscious of ourselves as objects is not like becoming conscious of just another object: it is a new kind of object, a whole new set of relationships, and indeed all the old relationships and objects are redefined. In modern art, art became an object for itself in this sense or something like it. (PD 205)

Modern art became aware of itself and fell into a new set of relationships as a new kind of object. For art, this is the moment when it becomes self-aware of its style, and the style ends. As for us too, when we become aware of our style, it is no longer a style. We see what was our *pour soi*, as *pour autrui*, and our new style, once again, becomes *pour soi*. So the style of art goes on in a different set of relationships and as a different kind of object, but still as art. It is still a transformation of thought that

makes it art. Nothing has really changed but art's form and how we interpret it. So the resolution of the problem of dualism, which plays out in the theories of art in Hegel, Nietzsche, and Danto is a transformation. In a way, the issue of the relation of form and content changing becomes moot if the inner and outer difference goes away, transformed by a different way of thinking about ourselves and art. If the difference is just rearticulated in a new perspective, if we can see mountains as mountains and water as water, perhaps we can say that the ancient quarrel between philosophy and art was never really there. But does the difference ever really go away?

NOTES

1. Carrier argues that Danto's view of philosophy of history is Cartesian (DCR 26).
2. According to Hegel, modernity is typified by a relationship to the self manifest in what he calls subjectivity. The power of subjective reason is one-dimensional; it possesses the capacity to foster notions of subjective freedom and reflection, coupled with the critical ability to undermine religion, a previously unifying force. Nonetheless, the principle that empowered modernity's escape from the enchantment of religion is not able, under the power of critical reason alone, to replace religion's unifying potential (Habermas 1990, 17–20).
3. For a comprehensive account of Habermas' writings on aesthetics, see (Duvenage 2003). Habermas said that his one-time student Albrecht Wellmer would articulate an aesthetic theory better than he could.
4. Henceforth referred to as *History*.
5. Danto seems to address this problems, with some humor, in response to Carlin Romano's observation that there may be dual philosophical authorship in Danto's work—two Dantos. Danto writes, “no wonder the philosopher who takes these responsibilities seriously begins to look schizophrenic.” In fact, he is attempting to synthesize a theory that is described from two different but sound perspectives. “Danto I and Danto II are not in truth different mes so much as the same me living in the world and at the same time seeking to fit it into a box” (DCR 311). This paradox lies at the heart of his attempt to overcome dualism.
6. Ankersmit writes that how Danto handles one's own beliefs and the representations of others is superior to Gadamer's (LLP 410–411).
7. Habermas (1984) refers specifically to a volume wherein Danto's “Action, Knowledge, and Representation” is the lead essay (273, n1). The essay was reprinted in *Body/Body*.

8. "Narrative explanations differ from strictly deductive ones in that the events or states of which they assert a causal relation is further defined by their application. Therefore general interpretations do not make possible context-free explanations" (Habermas 1972, 272–273).
9. Martin Seel (1998) concurs on this account.
10. Horowitz (1998) writes, "Nowhere are Gombrich's cultural-historical concerns more vivid than in *Art and Illusion*, where he takes up the question of why different cultures, periods, and artists have mimetically represented the world in different and even in compatible ways that nonetheless can be organized into cohesive and explanatory historical sequences" (316). Outside of the cultural-historical concerns and the mimetic reference, this could be Danto.
11. "When a man smiles upon meeting a stranger, he expects the reaction to be a smile; and if the latter fails consistently to occur, it is often reasonable to suppose that one has entered into another atmosphere of rules" (APA 114).
12. Habermas (1987b) uses this term to refer to how narrative theories, like Danto's, could "grammatically" force an analysis to treat the "totality of sociocultural facts" that a *world* representation is as a "cognitive reference system" (136). Danto's *world* is such a system, though Habermas would see it as something that could be used as the starting point of a sociological study. The fact that people of given times are unaware of their *world* would likely make this a less than ideal starting point if one were to employ the system as Danto conceived it. Nonetheless, for our purposes, we can understand the individual as inhabiting such a framework, whether they are aware of it or not.
13. Gombrich's "model of the learning process offers the possibility of understanding cultural transmission, hence tradition, and cultural closure, hence discontinuities, without invoking the nonexplanatory metaphysical entities, such as 'the spirit of the age'" (Horowitz 1998, 318).
14. Gombrich's Review of Charles Morris, *Signs, Language and Behavior*, cited in (Woodfield, 2011, 12).
15. Though Danto (1983) views art's development in isolation from external factors, in his *Grand Street* essay on Gombrich (130), he states that photography, as a historical phenomenon external to artistic practice of the time, may have forced art to reveal its internal drive by compelling art to show it did something photography did not. But this was because of a challenge that came from without, putting pressure on those who practice art to demonstrate art's higher level competencies. This was an interactive developmental process, not a narrative completion or a teleological fulfillment. It entailed both internal and external factors.

16. Though Gombrich does not use this term, the artists that he refers to in this category, between the movements of Impressionism and Expressionism are, in the taxonomy of art history, referred to as post-impressionists. In his discussion of this phase, Gombrich (1995) refers mostly to Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Gauguin as the precursors to Expressionism. These artists, in Gombrich's view, were the greatest rebels, but it was unintentional, since they had no critics and no audience. They merely painted as they had to, effecting a revolution that was not realized until after their deaths (548, 563).
17. Gombrich refers here to the English abstract artist Ben Nicholson (1894–1982) when discussing the arrangement of squares. From the formalist perspective, the artist Kasimir Malevich (1878–1935), a Ukrainian painter who was a cubist early in his career and later became a pioneer of abstract art, is better known for the arrangement of squares on canvas. However, given the aims of the artists, Ben Nicholson is better paired with Calder.
18. Kitzinger borrows these terms from sociologist David Riesman.
19. Kitzinger points to the emergence of the sixth-century Byzantine acanthus style capital from the second-century Hellenistic as an example of an inner-directed unfolding of style. The change was driven, according to Kitzinger, solely by the “irresistible inner logic” of stylistic progression.
20. Geoffrey Lewis (2002) gives an account of how the reform of the Turkish language in the early part of the twentieth century encountered problems related to expression because of the influx of too many novel terms. For my analysis of this phenomenon using Habermas' communication theory see (Snyder 2009).
21. Kitzinger (1977) is referring here to the fact that even though the dominant style of late antiquity was the frontal style associated with Byzantine art, as late as the eighth-century artists were creating works in the high classical realist style if patrons wanted it (35).
22. Danto (2003) notes the preference modern artists had for sublimity over beauty, which could be viewed as the rejection of a bourgeois notion of beauty overly reliant on classical ideals. The expression of sublimity collided with the standards of taste, since sublimity relied on an ecstatic moment and not the refining of tradition (146–148). Though Danto is certainly correct in this assessment, one should note that the ecstatic experience of sublimity in art does not require the communication of an artistic message, merely an ephemeral shock.
23. Kosuth's photograph, *One and Three Chairs* 1965–1967, is of a folding wooden chair placed in front of a white wall. Attached to the wall behind the chair are a photograph of the same chair, and the enlarged definition of ‘chair’ stenciled on a placard.

24. Though perhaps not representative of all artists, Kosuth (1991) would agree with this speculation. "What is called 'Novelty Art' by the formalists is often the attempt to find new languages, although a new language doesn't necessarily mean the framing of new propositions" (20).
25. The work described is Robert Gober, *Untitled*, exhibited at the Dia Center for the Arts, New York, 1992.
26. See Russell Connor's *The Pundits and the Whatsit*, 1991, on the cover of Danto's *Beyond the Brillo Box*. A similar dialogue has emerged with Duchamp's *Fountain*. With each new rendition, the work acquires new meaning, going beyond what was manifest in the original. See Sherri Levine's *Fountain/After Marcel Duchamp* and Robert Gober's *Two Urinals*. These works play on Duchamp's readymade icon, using the themes of masculinity and uniqueness vs. mass production. While Levine's version of Duchamp's readymade gives the urinal a feminine identity with its fine polished bronze finish, Gober's work plays on issues of male bonding and references the notion of uniqueness by creating two. These two works also make a move toward re-aestheticizing Duchamp's original anti-aesthetic work. By bringing the readymades into an artistic dialogue, they remove them from the realm of mass-produced objects, making them into unique expressions (Hopkins 2000, 62–64).
27. In May of 2003, the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago hosted a performance which was written by Michael Maierhof. This performance, a symphony played on and written for balloons, was originally called *Shopping*. This piece is a highly formal work, which includes a video projection and was composed for a group of sixteen Hamburg high school students. Balloon size and color are important components of the piece. For the Chicago recital, called *Shopping 2*, the audience was seated among the performers who were arranged in a grid pattern. The sound traveled in rows and diminishing balloon size and speed of rubbing changed the pitch. The work was performed by professional musicians, and the conductor, Rei Hotoda, was also a professional. The curator of the Renaissance Society, Hamza Walker, noted the intensity with which the musicians played the piece, even though they were simply playing balloons. The instrument didn't really matter; the true musician plays well, given any medium.
28. Regarding the possibility of criteria for assessing quality in the post-historical art world, Hamza Walker suggests that such criteria could not be formulated.
29. Interventions employing the medium of art and the institutions of the museum did not always yield the desired result. Cahan (2016) investigates how during the civil rights era, some curators attempted to bring members of the minority community into the museum. Cahan shows, by examining three exhibitions that took place during the civil rights

- era, which despite the best intentions of the curatorial faculty, served to underscore cultural hierarchies rather than ameliorate them.
30. Greenberg noted in his 1939 article “Avant-Garde and Kitsch” that “Capitalism in decline finds that whatever of quality it is still capable of producing becomes invariably a threat to its own existence.” See (Greenberg 1986a, 22).
 31. According to Hegel, society has an obligation to prevent a *Pöbel* from forming, but its emergence may be unavoidable (PR 264; HW 7:387).
 32. Morgan (1999) refers to the “re-formation” of the artistic language as “ground zero.” “The absence of experiential signification in art reduces the aesthetic to ground zero....Ground zero was the re-formation of language in art, a new semiotics, and a new contextualization as to how to read art as an active agent within culture” (38).
 33. See Kosuth’s *The Eighth Investigation, Proposition 3 [A.A.I.A.I.]*, 1971. Installations such as Kosuth’s *Eighth Investigation* were exhibited in the 2002 *Documenta 11* in Kassel.
 34. Morgan (1999) noted that when the conceptual artists attempted to remove the critic from the equation of the artworld, they placed the task of criticism on the artist. “The problem with this position, however, is that the criticism is never really directed at the art, only at the culture that the artwork attempts to underscore.” This led to critical judgments of an artwork being based on the affinity to the underlying concept, not of the artwork itself (13).
 35. Though Danto does not mention this in his discussion of the *Culture in Action* project, it moves close to his definition of outsider art in terms of how it engages artworld concepts.
 36. This is done in the attempt to bring a form of unity to the separate spheres of rationality. If countermovements attempt to collapse the contents of just one of the independent spheres of rationality into the lifeworld, without at the same time infusing the sublimated rationalities of the other two, then the result is not a “false negation,” which will be incapable of achieving the aims of the countermovement. Habermas (1983) argues that the Surrealist revolt was an example of a false negation.
 37. Margolis (2001) argues “Danto’s thesis is that the present ‘post-historical’ period of art follows, by historical necessity, the ‘internal’ necessity of the history of art that has brought itself to an end. It is now part of the same ‘narrative’ of art that art has turned ‘post-historical’! The new necessity is ‘externally’ linked to the other—but also Internally” (96).
 38. Danto’s antifoundationalist philosophy “can best be elucidated by insisting on the distinction between (1) the issue of truth and (2) the quite different issue of what chunk of language had best be linked to what chunk of the world, hence the problem of how best to define the

- meaning of the words we shall use for making sense of the world” (LLP Ankersmit 397).
39. Questioning the Romantic push for creative self-expression, Gombrich (1960) notes that the language of art’s structure is similar to that of rhetoric, insofar as “in this tradition the hierarchy of modes, the language of art, exists independent of the individual” (381).
 40. See (LLP Feagin).

The following abbreviations are used in this chapter:

- AA Danto, Arthur. *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History*.
- APA Danto, Arthur. *Analytical Philosophy of Action*.
- APK Danto, Arthur. *Analytical Philosophy of Knowledge*.
- BB Danto, Arthur. *The Body/Body Problem*.
- CT Danto, Arthur. *Connections to the World: The Basic Concepts of Philosophy*.
- DCR Rollins, Mark, ed. *Danto and His Critics*. 2nd ed.*
- LLP Auxier, Randall E. and Lewis Edwin Hahn, eds. *The Philosophy of Arthur C. Danto*.*
- NK Danto, Arthur. *Narration and Knowledge*.
- PA Danto, Arthur. *Philosophizing Art*.
- PD Danto, Arthur. *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art*.
- TC Danto, Arthur. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*.
- WA Danto, Arthur. *What Art Is*.
- WK Danto, Arthur. *The Wake of Art*.
- HW Hegel, G. W. F. *Werke in 20 Bänden*.
- PR Hegel, G. W. F. *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbet.

*These volumes contain essays by multiple authors with responses from or an essay by Danto. When cited, if the authorial context is not clear, the author’s name will be inserted after the abbreviation. Otherwise, assume that the reference is to Danto.

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