



RE-WORLDING THE WORLD SCHELLING'S PHILOSOPHY OF ART

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«True mythology is a [metaphor] of the ideas, which is only possible through forms of nature; it represents an absolute and complete rendering finite (Verendlicbung) of infiniteness. This would not take place in a religion that relates directly to the infinite and conceives of a unification of the divine and the natural only as an abolition of the latter, as is the case in the concept of the miracle. The miracle is the exoteric matter of such a religion: its forms are not essential but merely historical, not categorical but merely individual, not eternally lasting and undying but merely transient apparitions. If one seeks a universal mythology, then one ought to seize upon the [metaphoric] view of nature and let the gods again take possession of it and imbue it...»¹.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854)

F.W. Schelling understood that the origin of all nurturing or corrupting human needs and desires lies in Nature. And hence the source of all human made conflicts and problems is in fact our alienation from Nature; since it is this which must create the aesthetic privation driving any misunderstanding of what naturally benefits us. Our ethics are obtained logically from this,

¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *Philosophy and Religion*. Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Klaus Ottmann. (Spring Publications, Inc. Putnam, Connecticut, 2010), p.52. Note «Symbolic» is commonly used archaically by Schelling and others to mean «metaphoric», because the archaic meaning of metaphor in rhetoric was exclusively literal, and «symbolic» came to express its non-literal meaning (see §2). But «symbolic» today strictly refers to «likeness», completely different to «metaphor». To avoid confusion, I have where necessary, as above, replaced «symbolic» with «[metaphoric]» in the author's text. Otherwise «the symbolic» in single quotation marks always means metaphoric (specifically, proper metaphor), and without these takes the modern meaning. («Symbol»/ «metaphor» are treated similarly).

in an intuitive grasp of «good» or «bad»; the same intuition which other species possess². But, being human (as Max Scheler says, «the understanding animal»), we produce morals while striving to reconcile our intuition with what is occurring around us. Individually and collectively, we become acculturated and habituated to what nurtures or corrupts us; and we shape and pursue our quest in the world according to how we convert these habits into «laws». These laws merge how we understand the world with how we come to believe we must act in it. This «normativity» embodies our Mythology.

Our alienation from Nature and coinciding aesthetic privation produces poor judgements based on defective logic. Though few judgements are usually regarded today as «aesthetic» in origin, many philosophers have made this connection since Aristotle. Whereas once «the gods» were ultimately responsible, in modernity we consign situations that it appears we alone have created, warranting often compromising political or technological remedies, to «natural» human fallibilities (appetites and aversions). Circular reasoning, justifying the latter, became «normative» in the modern mythology (as we will see, for good reason). Take, for example, wastefully mass-producing food for rampant profiteering («freedom»), creating agricultural monocultures making once unneeded technological remedies a «necessity». Or making our «interplanetary quest», and territorial resource wars here and in space, an impending necessity on the pretext it is humanity's «nature» to use up and move on. The ideal of space exploration, gaining knowledge to augment life on earth, is thus not «plan A» for which «plan B» (finding another home) is the, scarcely realistic, alternative «necessity». Rather, it adheres to a mythology underwriting the self-fulfilling prophesy of over-extension. We appear to have set in stone the «natural» tendency to foul our own nest and simply accepting «collateral damage» as its self-sustaining, self-justifying (but self-defeating) *raison d'être*.

In this defective reasoning one can identify a common characteristic: the pattern of not understanding how to balance necessities with freedoms. Instead of constraining ourselves when necessary, giving way to freedoms creates certain problems. While, in other circumstances, not giving way to freedoms when necessary, unreasonable constraints create others. Being unable to recognise this as *prima facie* an ethical question (rather than an experimental scientific one) blinds us to the essential link between logic and aesthetics, and the reason the three normative sciences combined drive our entire «worlding» of reality. Our domi-

² Only living creatures possess such 'drives'. No matter what deep learning potential «artificial intelligence» might develop, anthropological philosophy explains why it will always be a copy - a simulation - and very different to primordially evolved intuition.

nant «mytho-logical» approach to co-existence thus continues to create worlds to fight over, while temporary «remedies» merely serve to remove doubts about this «necessity». Technological advances accordingly mark out «territories» in our material and immaterial realities, signifying our dominance and unbridled growth as the necessary «proofs» of freedom and progress. All the while keeping faith in the possibility of some (as yet undiscoverable) means of side-stepping associated difficult ethical problems in some mythical future where machines will make them vanish. Modern «ethics», being thus unavoidably consequentialist, are often as syllogistic and transient as the logic creating them.

We appear collectively capable of imagining myriad future technologies, but not a future where we can balance human necessity and freedom to harmonise our existence with Nature and each other. Now more than ever, high-tech methods of producing, moving, and manipulating information (the new global «capital»), convince us of idealistic but essentially illusory ways to effect meaningful collective change that can realistically address our circumstances. Handing over all communicating and communalising habits, and our politics, to Big Tech high priests and ruling elites, has galvanised the mind control industries; fixing us in the present while imploring us to place all hope in a rapidly souring future.

The saving collective ethical logic which - after two thousand years of philosophical, theological, and scientific argument - still appears to elude us, does not however lie in some future discovery. It lies in our past. The main problem is not that «right thinking», as Aristotle called this «ethical intuition» derived from our conditioned aesthetic, has completely abandoned us in modernity. But that we have come to accept collectivising it as a lost cause. The failure to develop mature political communities overshadows the benefits of any new discovery, so much so that we resign ourselves to putting all our eggs in the scientific basket. And, as popular as modern religions still are, they no longer hold the «totalising» moral authority that might compete with the power vested in techno-science. We have hence mostly learned to combine these 'gods' in our mythology, making laws to try and compensate for whichever mis-step we make in their overlapping domains.

My aim in this paper is to show how Schelling found a way, perhaps the only way, to retrieve a genuinely collectivising possibility – via a philosophy of art which naturalises our aesthetic judgement, returning it to ethical and logical normativity. But his «dialectical aesthetics» was subsequently lost in the rise of theoretical aesthetics, and the ontology of art became submerged in neo-Kantian deliberations. Rediscovering it could rescue humanity, or at least return us to the necessary path toward the ethical and logical frontiers we must clearly conquer before any other

«world», in order to flourish as humans³. Here I will argue why Schelling's philosophy of art both «in general» and «in the particular» bears renewed attention. (The latter will be elaborated in a subsequent paper, explaining how his categorical framework could be applied today - see Appendix for a synopsis).

The existential problem associated with any schism between how we «world» reality and what we must take as humanity's real cosmology (our relation to Nature and History), is phenomenological. This «problem» essentially revolves around two long standing interrelated questions in philosophy, the becoming-being problem, and the part-whole problem which, it should come as no surprise to art lovers, are also the key «problems» involved in art-making and its appreciation. (Like the human nature-Nature relation, these are only «problems» if we believe they present a paradox; but in fact they are natural phenomena). To highlight the underestimated importance of metaphor in resolving such «paradoxes», I will dwell on why Schelling's unified Principle of Art necessarily raises the status of this fundamental way of making meaning. Not just any meaning, but most importantly, higher meaning. And why building a more widespread serious respect for it - reclaiming «Naturalism» from aesthetic theoretical misappropriation in the process - is precisely how we must begin meeting the main ethical challenges facing humanity.

What emerges from obscurity, in studying the rise and decline of art in various epochs, is the historical transformation of our uses of «symbol», «allegory», and «metaphor». Schelling, Paul Ricoeur, and others recognised this was pivotal. But it has largely been disregarded by scholars of art, whose interest was diverted from such ontological properties of art toward historical analyses focused essentially on describing stylistic trends and tastes (effects/affects). Theoretical aesthetics after Kant hence grew toward attending exclusively to art's «materiality», even though it is its «immateriality» which is of most benefit to humanity. I have elsewhere argued this essentially renders it useless (being both unscientific, and incapable of assessing meaning-value), and we should abandon it in favour of reconnecting Art to the normative science of aesthetics⁴. Reducing Art to sensual «theories of beauty », as our mythologising essentially has, ignores the fact that art is our most profound way of understanding the meaning of beauty, and so our most valuable way of approaching truth.

³ «Post-humanism» has been argued by many as a regression toward mechanism, not an advance on humanism (see Gare 2013).

⁴ See Trimarchi 2022, 2023.

Any genuinely great art thus involves an immaterial metaphoric «metamorphosis»; which in fact combines various modalities (including narrative, metonymy, and synecdoche) in what Schelling better showed as a progression through 'mythological categories' of meaningmaking. Contra Kant and Hegel, Schelling maintained it is in fact the merger of Truth and Beauty – not their separation - which defines art's domain. This process involves the inversion of lower to higher values, as form and non-form interact, and has since been supported by Max Scheler's «ethical phenomenology».

As I will show, these transitions are embodied in a single unifying principle of art, which Schelling's system revives, but which unfortunately became «historised» and fragmented into oblivion in modernity. §1 addresses why this occurred, arguing the merits of Schelling's radical paradigm shift and major advance on Kant's and Hegel's aesthetics. §2 then shows how this single Principle (the Object, defining «art in general») is mythologically constructed and defines its relative art objects («the particular»). How it produces higher meaning is revealed as we proceed, undergirding my argument throughout for what may be our only means of returning to an ethical 'standpoint of production' and redirecting humanity's current trajectory. I will in future advance that argument further by detailing Schelling's construction of artforms and artworks, demonstrating the Principle's applicability to understanding and ameliorating art's modern disconnection from normative aesthetics.

To make an argument for naturalising art according to Schelling's paradigm, it is first necessary to address why normally problematic terms like «materiality» and «immateriality» should not present a challenge. They only do, after all, in an exclusively utilitarian view of the world (offering no means of distinguishing Aristotle's «internal» from «external» goods). On the other hand, suggesting we change our entire collective mythology to remedy humanity's «behavioural crisis» sounds altogether far-fetched⁵. Understanding why these are related, and why there really is no other lasting and meaningful redress for the latter, will mean returning to Schelling's words above on the relation between mythology and religion, and how to define them. To begin with, it will help to broach both challenges together with an outline of how early philosophers approached notions of Being and Unbeing. Which are key to the idea of «worlding», and the long-standing relation

⁵ See Merz JJ, Barnard P, Rees WE, et al (2023) viz defining this now widely accepted «behavioural crisis».

between religion, science, and philosophy.

Anyone concerned with what must be considered «sacred» will hopefully grant that the significance of Art's higher meaning value, to individuals or humanity at large, stretches beyond the art object itself. Art «as principle» has a unique Self-actualising potential to produce higher meaning in the person-Person relation. Not, as many imagine, merely by an artwork's «sensual» fascination or populist connectivity (its materialistic or empathic attraction); but rather by virtue of one key factor alone. That at the core of its true spiritual value to humanity – aspiring to the highest possible meaning value (which Max Scheler designated as «Holy») - is the optimum employment of metaphor making higher meaning possible. Metaphor is in fact life itself personified; but proper metaphor elevates «general aesthetic» meaning in Art. And this is why it is most important that we can distinguish it from 'improper' metaphor⁶. If we cannot, human life itself (and art) remains impoverished at best. And, at worst, threatened by our own devices to be reduced to mechanism.

Metaphor is our primary defence against over-dominant mechanistic, utilitarian, symbolic thinking, because it originates in Nature. But it is how we have learned to apply it optimally which is key to securing that defence, equally in terms of the sacredness of human unpredictability (freedom) and our pursuit of Reason (necessity). This is evident in how humans are most beneficially bound together in a «totality» (the part-whole relation defining Humanity) which equally benefits the individual and collective. That is, put simply, by a mythology which can draw the meaningfulness of the Whole into that of the Part.

The Ancient Idea of Wholeness

The early Greek diaspora was in many ways first bound together by the poetry of Hesiod and Homer and what has been called a «pantheistic» religious world view. This dominance of «poesy» in fact meant that their worship of «gods» really equated to the worship of «ideas». The «gods» were metaphoric emergences of ideas; they were as such conflicted, each had an opposing trait, so they could never be seen as perfect in and of themselves. They only reached their heights in Reason, which was the ultimate expression of their forms when combined. Negotiating these forms toward reason was the realm of philosophy. But since such negotiation must be by its own limitations at first a personal quest, the relationship

⁶ See Ricoeur 2003, also Taylor 2006. This distinction is absent in the important work of Lakoff and Johnson 1980, also Johnson 1987 and 2008.

between learning and teaching how to pursue it comes into Art's domain (given its naturally subjective potences).

Art «as principle» (poesy) thus bound the political community's «quest» into the entire fabric of their heroic society, via the individual. The art object itself was only the subject of «criticism» inasmuch as it pertained to «the ideas». Thus, art's principle was inseparable from philosophy. Aristotle, in the Ethics, thus distinguished the special kind of «making» (poiesis) associated with art from that of artefacts by differentiating the prudence involved. Art was a normative «science»; whose «religious» normativity embodied the art of making Reason⁷.

In the sixth century (BC), when the Jews had been banished to Babylon, the early flourishing of philosophers began with the likes of Pythagoras who emigrated from Samos to the now Calabrian coastal town of Croton. He is regarded as the first Greek philosopher in antiquity and was a «geometer» - but he combined his systematic study in geometry with religious, ascetic, ritualistic rules and ideals that led him to believe in the mystical transmigration of souls (in Greek, «metempsychosis»). This stands in contrast to another notion of the soul which emerges from his contemporaries in Miletus (modern Turkey): Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. Each saw the structure of nature and the cosmos as a whole, yet whose main essence was characterised by the «substance» of water, fire, or air. The ethereal nature of these elements was key to their philosophies explaining the course of creation and destruction they witnessed in the cosmos.

These were the first philosophers of science. Thales was an engineer concerned with technological innovation but, by proposing all beings are generated by water, whole new lines of inquiry opened up, (implicating art in the search for truth). Though fire played a role in Anaximander's philosophy, it was not as the elemental constituent of the cosmos; rather its formlessness rendered a notion of «the Absolute» or the nature of 'infinity' which bound all worlds together in «the One»⁸. The concept of «the whole»(the etymological root of «holy») became highly significant for obvious reasons. Xenophanes (from near nowadays Izmir) was the first philosopher of religion. Moreover, he was the first monotheist, in a society that worshiped «many gods». He took «earth» to be the ultimate element, which passed through a cycle of terrestrial and marine phases reaching down to infinity. Though the Hebrew bible, via the prophet Jerimiah, had earlier proclaimed the «One God», based on an oracle, Xenophanes tried to prove this scientifically,

⁷ Trimarchi 2022.

⁸ Anthony Kenny, *An illustrated brief history of western philosophy*, (Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006). The «One», in ancient philosophy, is not thought of as numerical but rather as encompassing the «Whole» or «All».

by rational argument centred on natural phenomena, making him a «natural theologian». He used fossil evidence to support his creation theories.

When Heraclitus appears (c. 540 BC) in the nearby region of Ionia - in the same city (Ephesus) where St Paul would later begin preaching for a One God - he denounces worship entirely. Heraclitus thought praying to statues was like «whispering gossip to an empty house» and «offering sacrifices to purify oneself from sin was like trying to wash mud off with mud»⁹. He derided the company of statesmen and refused to take part in the city's politics; preferring to play dice with children in the temple where his complex treatise on philosophy and politics, now lost, was deposited. Socrates thought his treatise excellent, though difficult to fathom. But Heraclitus did not try to teach, only impart learning in the spirit of the Apollonian oracle which «neither tells, nor conceals, but gestures»¹⁰. The spirit in which art renders truth.

Though he appeared to write in paradoxes, Heraclitus' cosmology was centred on the element of fire because fire's ephemeral qualities are useful in binding Thales' cosmology of water and Anaximenes' earth with Anaximander's infinite notion of the ever-changing, though whole, world. There is a single world (made neither by god nor man) which always existed and always will exist, in which life and death intermingle. The elements, which are genuine essences, are nevertheless exchangeable. Going down, fire turns into water and water into earth; going up, earth turns into water and water into air.

Heraclitus' transmutation of the elements in an ever-burning fire, as many later philosophers will attest, is actually a way of bridging the apparent divide between what we understand as «religion» and «science»¹¹. A divide arguably often causing us to misconceive «progress», and our collective quest, through all manner of injustices. Colonisation, ecological destruction, and other bi-products of rampant capitalism/totalitarianism; either through religious/territorial conflicts, or the scientific propulsion of positivistic materialism (via the Hobbesian «machine metaphor» of life) inspiring a thirst for dominance, and separation from Nature toward some ill-conceived posthumanist «utopia»¹².

At the core of this «bridge» is some notion of Spirit (or «soul»). While Pythagoras and later Socrates too believed in an individual transmigration of the soul – essentially, reincarnation of our individual selves into various other forms in other epochs – the Heraclitean notion reenvisioned it as truly cosmological. It connects

⁹ Kenny *WP*, p.6-7.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.7

¹¹ Segovia 2021; McGilchrist 2010, 2021 (Vol I & II).

¹² Gare 2013.

humanity to the cosmos in a way that returns us to a «pantheistic» worldview capable of linking humanity together with the world as «One». But this title is arguably unsuitable, because it is important to note the «gods» are «ideas». They do not embody the same «will to power» theism that will later transform «Spirit» into the symbols of worship, mysticism, and miracle in modern religions (or indeed the emotivist «secular religiosity» of personality and fetish).

Near the end of the sixth century a probable pupil of Xenophanes, Parmenides, appears seventy miles south of Naples where the ruins of his school can still be found near Agropoli. He was the first philosopher whose substantial writings remain; and concerned himself not with the theology of Xenophanes nor the cosmology of the Milesians, but with «ontology». This, put simply, is the study of «being», of the existence of things; but Parmenides took «Being» to mean whatever is engaged in being – the participle form ie., «the living», or «the dead». Which must be distinguished from «being» as a verbal noun – ie., the meaning of «to be». In Parmenides' time both the poetic and archaic meanings were in use, so «existence» is not simply what he intended. However, his philosophical explorations on its relation to truth combine meanings of «being» and «becoming» in ways that will henceforth create problems for the meaning of existence.

To correspond with Being, Parmenides creates the notion of Unbeing. The philosophical origin of nominalism's self-justification lies here; vesting the power of creation in the act of naming, while relegating what we may be unconscious of to supposed non-existence. «What you can call and think must Being be, for Being can, and nothing cannot, be» he writes¹³. Descartes would later rephrase this notion of what is and is not in the existentialist separation of humanity from nature via the aphorism: «I think therefore I am».

Whereas Heraclitus understood the transmutation of elements (ie., boiling water becoming air) as the cycle of death and birth, Parmenides thought them changes within Being, not from being to not-being. «Being» is thus everlasting; but also undivided and unlimited. This extends to meanings and truths: «All things are names, Which the credulity of mortals frames...»¹⁴. Later, this will translate into the Word of God, as the origin of the cosmos and, simultaneously, all meaning. But the clear separation between Heraclitus' cosmology and that of Parmenides can be finely drawn. Parmenides' friend Zeno developed a series of paradoxes (eg., Achilles and the tortoise) which would vex future scientists and philosophers seemingly at odds over this «becoming-being» relation. Zeno's «paradoxes» esse

¹³ Kenny *WP*, p.10. See also Prawat 2003.

¹⁴ Parmenides cited in *Ibid*, p.12.

tially presume distances are infinitely divisible, which – though Aristotle helped to disentangle them – took centuries of arguments between mathematicians and philosophers to resolve.

Earlier, a great inspiration to Aristotle, Empedocles in mid-fifth century Agrigento (Sicily), developed a philosophy of nature that reflected the intermingling and interweaving of the elements akin to Heraclitus' cosmology. He characterised the tensions in the universe as caused by two forces, Love and Strife. The former influences elements to unite into a homogenous sphere, the latter to disperse into beings of different kinds. In Empedocles the element of fire returns to prominence. Today we think of solid, liquid, and gas as fundamental states, but studies in thermodynamics and the discipline of plasma physics have shown that properties of matter at high temperatures restore fire to a fourth elemental status.

The «material» and «immaterial» in art can, through this prism, now be seen as far from abstract interrelations. Especially when we attend to the earlier mentioned transitional «movements» of meanings and values. Though Empedocles only developed a crude theory of evolution based on the forces of Love and Strife, these same forces of attraction and repulsion appear later in C. S. Peirce's evolutionary theory, inspiring Biosemiotics. (Peirce produced explanations Darwin's theory lacked, eg., why mutations could skip a generation). Empedocles agreed with Pythagoras on the transmigration of souls, but saw that «the gods» (or «ideas») were also products of these forces of attraction and repulsion; and that the human soul is somehow itself connected to these and composed of the transmutational elements making up the cosmos.

The ancient idea of an «afterlife» is different to that later construed in Christian doctrine (and other 'revealed religions') through association with the invention of «sin» - in particular «original sin»¹⁵. Where these different mythological orientations converge nominally as «religion» is clearly in the prosocial binding together of generations of peoples under a single project or «quest». But where they differ profoundly, as we will see, is critical to our modes of thinking. In the ancient mythology, as Schelling claims, Religion is formed in a single poesy whose «gods» or «ideas» embody the one Spirit of humanity bound to Nature and History. The «One» is drawn into particularity (ie., metaphorically). In modern religion, history takes precedence over nature, the particular becomes universalised, and hence symbol must be preferred over metaphor. Diversity can never truly be resolved

¹⁵ 'Revealed' religions obscure «the mystery» inwardly in the individual, only to be able to reveal it publicly via the institution through symbolism. Until the Christian gospels reconciled a «scientific» merging of «objective reality» with religious ideals, art was banished from the public sphere except as a tool of the Church because of its metaphorical power to, as Schelling says, «become objective».

in such an orientation of thinking about the whole, which is why the modern mythology is marked by fragmentation.

Spirit can today equally be understood in genuinely scientific terms, as something we have yet not fully grasped but great art opens a window into. Something more essential than what apparently only emotionally binds us together. Most scientists recognise that the «atomistic» deliberations of Democritus, while explaining some things, caution us to realise that the divisibility of matter is meaningful only up to a point, since movement is equally critical to its essence. Atoms and void are not the only two realities; but equally, reality cannot be understood without consideration of relations produced by more than just forces of attraction and repulsion. Democritus' «philosophical atomism» stands in contrast to the later Moderate Enlightenment's «scientific atomism» because it still maintained a relational unity between philosophy and science. Even Aristotle, its firm critic, praised Democritus' approach for being consistent with natural philosophy.

Though Democritus wrote on ethics as well as physics it was not until the height of Athenian democracy, with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, that natural philosophy could help explain human Spirit as consistent with both scientific inquiry and what Schelling calls the ancient «Religion» – which is best understood as «civic humanism». With the pre-Socratic Anaxagoras (c. 500 BC), natural philosophy and its explanation of the development of the universe is connected to Mind. But Aristotle argues he conflates soul and mind. «Mind» (nous), according to Anaxagoras, is «infinite» and separate from «the matter over whose history it presides». And because it does not evolve, it is able to control the elements¹⁶.

Later philosophers, like Schelling and Peirce however, returned to Aristotle arguing why Mind is itself an evolutionary process and soul or spirit are under the evolutionary influence of human development within nature.

As we will now see, Schelling's «process metaphysics» returns art to its rightful place in this ancient way of thinking about Wholeness. We might from his perspective call it a «science of Mind»; functioning in concert with philosophy's role of developing a binding human Spirit connected by Nature's relation to History. The pre-Socratics above, from whom Schelling drew inspiration, may be considered «unscientific» because they lacked experimental methodology. But this would only reflect a limited way of defining science. As in the modern tendency to deny

¹⁶ Kenny *WP*, p.24.

philosophy and art's original joint «Spiritual» purpose: to balance experiences of a world over-simplistically divided by existentialist notions of Being and Unbeing.

Schelling's «Process Metaphysics» Paradigm for Art

«The history of art will show us most revealingly its immediate connections to the universe and thereby to that absolute identity in which art is preordained. ...[T]he essential and inner unity of all works of art... [reveal] ...all poetry is of the same spirit, a spirit that even in the antitheses of ancient and modern art is merely showing us two different faces»¹⁷.

Schelling argues Art's Ideal identity was, and has always been, a singular unified principle, not a theoretical construction. With Art and Nature tied to History in the real world, the Person is connected as a perfect sign double-unity with Art, embodied in the indifference between «the real» and «the ideal»¹⁸. However, art could only create ideals in modernity through an artificial historical transformation of «its divine manifestation» in this «simultaneity». «In nature», says Schelling, we find «absolute identity of nature and history». But in modern history this «is characterized by sequence»¹⁹. Art and Humanity's dual crisis of meaning has its origins in this «idealistic» mythologising, but Schelling's paradigm reconceives Art according to the ancient «realistic» mythology. And why this offers better hope for reviving a humanist approach to art-making/appreciation today soon becomes clear. Essentially, what has been lost is an «archetypal world» intuiting Nature's reality, which can «possess universal reality for all time». This is something that reason alone cannot bring into being, because the «immediately and universally valid element of mythology», operating as a «type or model», needs to be cultivated. And it cannot be comprehended as «succession» (ie., historically).

Therefore, «a stable norm, a model generated from within reason itself», Schelling suggests, is what we need to comprehend the recurrence of antitheses that create «laws» from Nature apt to produce paradoxes and division in human nature. In what follows, I will propose that neither what is commonly understood as the

17 Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, *The Philosophy of Art*. Volume 58 *Theory and History of Literature*, Edited, translated and introduced by Douglas W Stott. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p.19.

18 Trimarchi 2022. Note: capitalisation throughout usually refers to «the ideal» whereas lower case indicates «the real». «Art» capitalised refers to «art as principle». Lower case denotes either «art» categorically as a whole, or the «art object» (i.e., «artwork»). «Object» refers to «Art»/ «the Person»; «object» to its related artwork (or intentional proposition). «Person»/ «person» = humanity/individual... etc.,

19 Schelling, PA, p.82.

«paradigms of tradition», nor Kant's «corrective mechanism for taste» (to use Kai Hammermeister's phrases), can recreate this naturalised normative aesthetic required to produce a sustainable future via a Human Ecology. A new mythology is needed, and only a paradigm of art as process metaphysics such as Schelling's can hope to construct one matching the realistic world of the ancients. How it can be made practicable in today's milieu is for future examination, but outlining its core features is where we must begin.

Firstly, mythology, in Schelling's view, is «the necessary condition and first content of art»²⁰. Hence art both embodies and produces our mythology. The art of our hypothetical «new mythology» then must implicitly characterise the archetypal world of the universe in itself «for all time», and prefigure the human species as undivided. This requires instilling a habit of seeing the infinite taken up in the finite (metaphor) to produce a futurising imaginary grounded in a cultivated polyphony of human Spirit. Therefore, art can't merely represent the present or past, but must «encompass the future... [being]... commensurate with or adequate for future relationships and the infinite developments of time»²¹. Its infinitude, to be real, must be «wedded directly to material existence»; and yet, to fulfil its humanity, must «manifest itself on a higher level» just as in «organism».

True mythology thus shuns mechanism. It can only emerge organically by integrating the potences of freedom and necessity, to embody life's «proto-narratives»; like filling a vacuum, just as meaning arises in Nature. «Whenever mythology degenerates into an object for use», says Schelling, it becomes «precisely because it is only usage, a mere formality» – just like art²². But as later discussed, their higher «use» is evident in another critically important feature of Schelling's philosophy, contradicting Kant. That is, that there is no «divinity» without reason. The artworks of antiquity were «naturalised» by archetypally inhabiting a mythology grounded in reality. Their art did not elevate «the familiar» idealistically to pure fantasy, as does the modern mythology - which Schelling shows constrains the imagination. Rather it is the ancient mythology's orientation toward Reason that allows the imagination to expand reproductively.

The reason Schelling's process metaphysics paradigm for art can best attend to such seemingly inscrutable, apparently conflicting, but critical features is because it can account for complexity. This self-evidently coincides with why his «meta-

20 Ibid, p.45.

21 Ibid, p.50.

22 Ibid, p.73. My argument, like Schelling's, is therefore for considering the ancient mythology in modernity only as a model. Instrumentalising it (eg., as in modern mythological marketing of art) would be self-defeating.

physical empiricism» provides the foundation for the Complexity Science revolution. The most important aspect of this for redirecting our collective mythology, relates to our «actantial» modes of meaning and valuing. Which essentially rely upon the person-Person «double-unity». Restoring art's relation to normative aesthetics, and opening the potential of reconnecting the three normative sciences, is therefore made possible primarily because Schelling puts the individual in relational context with humanity without historicising art's principle.

Hence, Schelling's point above that History claims a preordained principle of Art, albeit revealed in mythological antitheses, is a recurring theme in my examination. Heidegger says, in modernity «we are too late for the gods and too early for Being»²³. But, as Schelling argues, Greek mythology managed to transform the «gods of nature» into «gods of history». And though he speculated these antithetical mythological «worlds» would one day merge (in true epic fashion), returning the gods of history to nature, he realised «the phenomenon of modern poesy» in his time was «not yet the consummate antithesis»²⁴. As humanity inches toward irreversible tipping points, we have however arguably reached this; making a sustainable alternative totalising mythology now a very real moral challenge for Aesthetes²⁵.

This makes Schelling's confrontation of the modern disjuncture between Art and Philosophy an all the more significant rebuttal of contemporary deconstructive postmodernist attempts to reject any such association. Art, says Schelling, is «the real» expression of «the ideal» of philosophy. Like art, philosophy also has «in all its objects only one object». And because they correspond precisely like this, Art merely being «the latter's complete objective reflex», it proceeds «through all the potences within the real as does philosophy in the ideal»²⁶. They are thus each «philosophical unities» inhered in «the one» philosophy - of art, history, and nature. And though separated as «forms» (or potences, without essentiality), they together follow the same natural laws of Reason.

Schelling's aesthetics has however been dismissed as «romantic idealist», whereas it is in fact radically «realist». Kai Hammermeister, in *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (2002), for instance downplays its social significance in deference to

23 Martin Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art* Translated by Roger Berkowitz and Philippe Nonet. Draft, (December 2006). PN revised. https://www.academia.edu/2083177/The_Origin_of_the_Work_of_Art_by_Martin_Heidegger p. 4, accessed May 21, 2023.

24 Schelling, PA, p.79.

25 Trimarchi 2022.

26 Schelling, PA, p.15-17. His explanation (corroborated in Aristotle, Peirce and Ricoeur, among others) is key to understanding the precise semiotic relation between art and philosophy.

Hegel's, suggesting that while Schelling regards aesthetic intuition «a merely private affair», he incorporates it into a mythology as an afterthought «to guarantee the social aspect of art»²⁷. This underestimates Schelling's insistent embedding of the productivity of Nature in the reciprocal relation between the «one poet» and «generation living as one poet».

Such misrepresentations must be addressed below since they undermine the key significance Schelling places on the relation of the Person to mythology - «the universe in its higher manifestation» - which generates higher meaning via social totality. Related major difficulties in Kant, which Schelling resolves, include: the becoming/being problem, the beauty/truth nexus, and notions of infinity/sublimity promoting self-legitimizing over self-actualising 'worlding' (via Kant's doctrines of «agreement», «disinterestedness», etc.). In §1 my examination centres on the fundamentally opposing ancient/modern mythologising tendencies in the «productive» vs «reflective» standpoints (developing Schelling's «re-productive» vs Hegel's «productive» imagination respectively). And shows why the latter mistakenly casts art's profound immaterial claim on humanity as a materialised «demand». Schelling's naturalised conception reveals our mythology's now dominant standpoint of reflection, fortified post-Kant, to be severely deficient. How Schelling's system defies Hegelianism, and Martin Heidegger's belief metaphysics is incapable of explaining art (culminating in the absurd suggestion the ideal art object is «contentless») is elaborated in §2.

The reality is, Art has always been only one Ideal. And Art's «purpose», pursued in opposite directions in ancient and modern mythologies, has always been self-actualisation (ie., via the Person->person metaphor). A search for higher meaning in the merger of truth and beauty, undertaken purposelessly.

1. From the Standpoint of «Reflection» to «Production»

In Schelling, knowledge of the absolute through art is realised as a unification of the subject and object, via the merger of beauty and truth. Hegel instead transforms this «truth» into an appeal for unifying humanity with Spirit as an historical progression, connected to beauty conceptually but leaving art no access to it. Comparing these two different developments of Kant highlights why Kant's aesthetic paradigm was an unfinished project, contributing great individual insights that were overall unresolvable²⁸. The significance of these different «standpoints» for

²⁷ Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.77.

²⁸ As Hammermeister notes, it was riddled with difficulties and he was often unhappy with various aspects of it, oscillating on some fundamentally indefensible premises.

the future of art, and the superiority of Schelling's approach, are argued below.

I will firstly examine difficulties with Hegel's and Kant's «standpoint of reflection», contrasting Heidegger's «ontology» of art with Schelling's. Then compare Kant's and Schelling's dialectics, pointing to misrepresentations which may help explain underestimation of the latter's aesthetics while elucidating it. Schelling's system can also be understood as reframing the problems instead of a finished project, but he presents a complete and radical alternative to Kant. Linking art to the Person, as he does, reveals the crucial difference between «self-actualisation» and other ways of attending to selfhood.

Hegel's transcendentalism (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, 1806) was a modification of Kant's, with nature becoming understood as a reflex of spirit. Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), however, characterises spirit in a completely different way – from the standpoint of productivity. By understanding the evolutionary processes of nature as the source of all consciousness - realising that natural reality is created by the indifference of the ideal and the real in emergent organisms, and that states of «being» only represent stages in any life/non-lifeform's continuum - Schelling brings nature and history together, rejecting the separation of matter and spirit. This proves critical for understanding the transformation of both meaning and valuing in art.

Hegelianism

In Hegel self- «realisation» is more a self- legislating/legitimizing conception of «being». As Arran Gare notes, Hegel's integration of Fichte and Herder's philosophies portrayed the ego as resulting from the development of the self-identical «I»; which Kant argued formed the basis for upholding the reality of freedom as the foundation for ethics²⁹. Aligning the ego with Spirit, which was then cast in opposition to nature, placed the human «I» in constant struggle to control nature. Schelling challenged this in opposition to Fichte.

Hegel's standpoint inured aesthetics with a «fixity» unsuited to describing its normative autopoietic teleology as connected to a natural conception of selfhood (as «becoming»), where Art's potences can be better understood (ontologically). Modern philosophies of art were henceforth unable to escape ties to an historical

²⁹ Arran Gare, "The Centrality of Philosophical Anthropology to (A Future) Environmental Ethics." *Cuadernos de bioética: revista oficial de la Asociación Española de Bioética y Ética Médica* 27, 91, September (2016): 299-317, p.310-11. Hegel's idealism, making him initially more aligned with Schelling, unfortunately outshone his anthropology, according to Gare. Honneth and Joas describe his later work as an «abstraction from all human subjectivity» to a theory of recognition, forced «back into the mentalistic framework» to reach a position on nature as «posited by Spirit» (p.311).

framework (opposed by Herder) privileging fragmenting, subjectivised, deterioration of a once unified conception of art and selfhood (revived in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*). Post-Marxist, neoliberal interpretations of human freedom and self-determination understandably then sit more comfortably with Hegelianism.

Heidegger too understood art as «ontology». But his development of Hegel, b coming narrowly focused on the «ontology of the artwork» (ie., Art in «the particular»), struggled under Kant's dialectics. Aligning with Hegel's view of Art's historicity being entwined with human history, the artwork becomes a means of «revealing content» in which «metaphysical truth» (defined as the «unconditional» absolute) is about «being». Heidegger then exempts Kant of the charge of «subjectivising», claiming aesthetic judgement is ontologically fundamental to shared socio-cultural (and for Kant, «natural») purposiveness. This confirms his view that art makes a demand on us, to which we are called upon to respond³⁰. But what kind of demand?

Ingvild Torsen describes it as cathartically «self-realising». Heidegger's artistic «truth» is revealed Daesin - letting the work «be». And beauty's «symbolic function» displaces the self³¹. This prompts reflection on the «subjectively purposive feature of our constitution» (via terms of «existence» or «judgement»); questioning our identity, but more importantly, «what human freedom amounts to». No «metaphysical truth» is revealed here; rather one «ultimately, about ourselves» obtained in «reflective judgement»³². While Kant's «demand» rests in a reality of «pure forms» precipitating «human laws» (ie., theorisations); Heidegger's derivation via Hegel grounds the artwork in the fixed socio-historical reality of the audience.

Contrast this with Schelling's insistence Art is «not universal effect, but rather universality both internally and externally»³³. Art's real «claim» on humanity is thereby grounded in the Person (and «the other») via History and Nature. Whereas both Heidegger and Kant's «demand» is attenuated to a «subjective thesis» of otherness, diverting us toward «personality».

As Torsen points out, this ultimately proves Heidegger's «metaphysical thesis» incapable of explaining art, forcing him to downplay philosophy's role. He es-

30 Ingvild Torsen, "Disinterest and Truth: On Heidegger's Interpretation of Kant's Aesthetics." *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 56, 1, (2016):15-32, p.25 and p.29.

31 Ibid, p.30. Heidegger accurately interpreted Kant's notion of 'disinterestedness' (ie., art becomes dysfunctional once 'interest', or self-consciousness, is applied); but as Torsen shows subsequently derives a new false conception of art as grounded in 'content', and ultimately technology. Without interest, what is activated when encountering the artwork is 'not the faculties of the subject, but rather the relation between the subject and object itself' – which removes the standard for beauty from the subject.

32 Ibid, p.27.

33 Schelling, PA, p.73.

establishes art's «normativity» instead in the «event», which «functions as a first concrete manifestation of a certain historical being» (following the later Hegel's historical model)³⁴. From here Heidegger suggests abstract art's claim to normativity follows, without apparent difficulty, from Hegel's idea of beauty - which essentially returns us to Kant's paradigm. This provides further justification for abandoning any role for philosophy to explain art³⁵.

Kant's dialectics (examined below) have thus – due at least in part to misinterpretation - produced a legacy of fragmented historicity incapable of accommodating the ontological and teleological properties of Art. His «liberation of art as art», as Gadamer called it, in fact eventually stripped art of its mediating role independent of all historical developments. A role it retains in Schelling's conception, albeit quite differently to Hegel's. Heidegger's aesthetics then merely upholds Hegel's transcendental 'standpoint of reflection'.

De-coupling art and nature, claiming what art presents is really the reflection of «spirit» in nature (not nature itself), excludes both representation and beauty as defining qualities of art. This, says Torsen, 'also rules out that art has an «other»'. Nature's «spirit» is materialised through art, only in the expression of characteristics of a human community. Heidegger joins this «indifference toward natural beauty» with his notions of content and truth to conclude that «an art that is both non-representational and, possibly, not beautiful at all» must be admitted³⁶.

By contrast, in Schelling's process metaphysics the Art-Person perfect sign interrelationship is mediated by both Nature and History. This makes «sense» the driving force binding truth and beauty in Spirit, in identical processes of self-actualisation. Art's «material» productivity can now be understood as «speculative naturalism», as opposed to the theoretical «naturalism» assumed in representational «mimesis» - which cannot account for its immateriality. But for these above relations to be meaningful, Art also needs to be understood as ahistorical.

Hegel's prevailing advance on Kant instead casts it as «developmental», in three successive periods: «symbolic», «classic», and «romantic». Two major problems arise.

Firstly, this arrangement places his apotheotic «symbolic» period in the ancient oriental cultures of Persia, India, and Egypt. Where (both Schelling and Hegel

34 Ingvild Torsen, "What was Abstract Art? (From the Point of View of Heidegger)." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 72, (3), (2014): 291-302, p.293.

35 *Ibid*, p.301 n.32. See also, Pippen 2002; Sassen 2001. Robert Pippen (aligning with art historian Michael Fried) suggests Heidegger's defence of abstract art echoes common poststructuralist defences of the failures of modernism as merely «evasions» and temporary regressions, rather than a neo-Kantian capitulation or a regression of culture.

36 *Ibid*, p.293. This ultimately sanctions nihilistic «art».

agree) no apotheosis emerges, but rather art's «beginning» - manifesting inferior artworks. Schelling's apotheosis of art instead lies in ancient Greece, which both agree upon though for different reasons. (ie., Hegel's estimation of «the symbolic» is completely different to Schelling's). Secondly, as Hammermeister notes, Hegel's organisation of the arts is «along two axes: one indicating the historical development from symbolic over classical to romantic art, the other denoting the materiality of the arts»³⁷. This latter axis presupposes art's material foundation must go hand in hand with an historical progression. But, according to Hegel's periodic arrangement, that means art's «materiality» - including, clearly, its material value in the «real» world - must decrease as time goes by.

This problem deepens in Hegel's construction of art categories (loading further burden on the meaning of 'materiality')³⁸. Being based on Kant's questionable notion of conceptual aesthetic truth (see below), strongly opposed by Schelling, they advance the unsettling suggestion art becomes more useful to humanity as its materiality decreases and conceptual nature increases - while its value decreases over time. Furthermore, Hegel (again, contrary to Schelling) casts art as «thesis», religion as «antithesis», and philosophy as their «synthesis» (resolution) - rendering philosophy superior. Which, all together, ultimately manifests in the claimed superiority of both philosophy and «concept» over art; a mistaken conflation which will fuel theoretical aesthetics (and indeed its eventual demise)³⁹. This in the end leads Heidegger to disavow metaphysics, and defend questionable definitions of art⁴⁰.

However, the main problem with Hegel's transcendentalism is that it leads him to characterise art as «the striving for, the achievement of and the abandoning of the ideal as the true idea of beauty»⁴¹. This also makes art's end (purpose) one which appears, and can only be justified, historically. Hence, his more or less direct adoption of Kant's problematic account of beauty produces «a narrative [which] inevitably leads to the classification of aesthetic truth as that of a bygone

37 Hammermeister, GT, p.101.

38 Ibid, p.101. In Hegel, thus, «architecture depends most on the material world, sculpture less so; painting represents it merely two-dimensionally, music abandons it almost entirely, and poetry marks the transition from sensuality to conceptual thought». (cf. Schelling's far more cogent explanation of architecture).

39 For this argument see Trimarchi 2022 and 2023.

40 Heidegger posits art as simply a means of «revealing content», where its «metaphysical truth» (defined as the unconditional absolute) is about «being» (revealed in the art event). His «metaphysical thesis», says Torsen, confirms art as an historicised entity only useful in modernity as means to find this truth. But at the same time this purpose is circumvented by «metaphysics» itself (since modern philosophy rules out art being able to reveal any such truth).

41 Hegel cited in Hammermeister, GT, p.99.

historical period»⁴². But, as we can see above, his «classical» apotheosis of art is cast into difficulty by the fact that his historical narrative peaks in the middle period, forfeiting the dialectical movement upward, and completely undermining any such «historical» justifications. As a result, his students were later prompted to revise this, reinstalling the Renaissance as Hegel's true «triadic third»⁴³.

Relegating «aesthetic truth» to a unretrievable bygone era (as a true «classical» might), put him at odds with those philosophers like Schelling, Schiller, and others who foresaw a New Mythology, a third stage of art for the future. There is under Hegelianism thus no philosophical possibility of rescuing art at all; though, as Hammermeister reads this, it could be argued as just recognising the impossibility of art history to return it to its former glory. Nevertheless, in many who followed, like Heidegger, this becomes a reason for abandoning both art's «utopian» ideals, and any possibility for philosophy to meaningfully justify them, besides via a materially historical method grounding art's «Spirit» in the social sphere.

Though Hegel is pre-eminently the main philosopher to have taken up Aristotle's social project and translated it into an ethics and politics for modern times, and his early efforts to overcome Hobbes' mechanistic view of humans are well recognised, it is Schelling's reconception of how art directs a path for human history which I therefore propose is the real, unrecognised philosophical turning point for art in modernity.

Most difficulties in Hegel's aesthetics, remaining prevalent in much of modern philosophy's subsequent problematisation of art, are found in his development of Kant's.

Kant's Aesthetics

The gaps between Kant's principles of «pure reason» and Aristotle's «practical reason» are evident in the Critique of Judgement. This is widely credited as the most influential text in the history of philosophical aesthetics; however, it is seminally beholden to Plato's ideal of perfection. Between the first and second Critiques Kant moves from consecrating aesthetics as a theory of sensual perception to designating it a theory of taste, clearly to try to resolve many associated problems in each. Beauty and truth can never be merged, aesthetic judgement never moves from imagination to understanding, and natural beauty is rendered «eternally»-

⁴² Hammermeister, GT, p.104.

⁴³ Ibid, p.99 - referencing Höslé (in Hegel's System, vol. 2, pp.620 ff).

tied to purpose (as utility). «The beautiful» becomes «that which, without any concept, is cognized as an object of a necessary pleasure»⁴⁴. Whereupon we arrive at the prevailing mythology of artworks as symbolically fortified constructions of the sensible realm. (And indeed art's «Spirit» artificially grounded in the social sphere).

Given Kant does not refer to any qualities of «the object», only feelings of pleasure or displeasure «within the subject», it is unsurprising that modern aesthetics thereafter became entirely subjective and theoretical. It was bound to tacitly reinforce the idea that Art itself can teach us nothing about reality because beauty and pleasure have no relation to insight and cognition. Thus, only interpretations of it can; and a false modern notion of art's «objectivity» arose from Kant's reduction of aesthetic judgement to merely an idea which several people hold in common. Combine this with the double-edged Kantian prescription that «the only kind of pleasure that does not take an interest in the existence of its object is therefore the aesthetic pleasure», and we have a conception of aesthetics prone to fragment reality (and humanity). This is achieved, in keeping with Plato's doctrine of «the ideas», via a series of manoeuvres designed to solve several difficulties; which however ultimately result in reinforcing the false material/immaterial disjuncture in 'Being'.

First, the Person is notionally separated from Art, by privileging humanity's relation to nature. But this diminishes their perfect-sign unity, further disconnecting Art from normative aesthetics by simultaneously aligning it suprasensibly with Nature via «sublime» intuition. This completes Art's real separation from nature, initiated in Christianity. Kant's notion of how we experience the sublime, combined with the fact he pays little attention to the artwork itself, further raises its symbolic significance above its actual phenomenology, while making Art prone to be confused with the «general aesthetic»⁴⁵. After Kant, all this allows the («immaterial») ideal of the Person to be separated permanently from Art and Nature; while the artwork's real ('material') sensual «demand» on the individual grows (hence not necessarily meaningfully)⁴⁶. Aesthetic normativity is subdued, replaced by «material» norms. The Self's identity is fragmented along with Art's principled unity, and by each now being «ideally» historicised, they are both permanently

44 Ibid, p.28. The «aesthetic idea» being a means «by which we attempt to subsume the unity of the manifold under a concept, but fail to do so», makes the artwork conceptual, unfathomable, and «infinitely» interpretable (p. 30).

45 Ibid, p.21. See Trimarchi 2022 on the «general aesthetic» vs Art.

46 Hegel would thus be right to suggest art becomes more «useful» to humanity as its materiality decreases and conceptuality increases, if what he means is higher «spiritual» usefulness. But he transfers this to «material value» in trying to resolve the problem Kant unleashes here.

disassociated from the Nature-History nexus.

Keeping aesthetic judgement simultaneously on a par with cognitive and moral judgements, as Kant then does however, creates added repercussions for both ethics and logic. Kant's «sublime» represents a triumph of the individual self, of «self-realisation» (as domination of nature). By securing art's separation from nature, this renders it a means for overcoming both Nature and the nature in ourselves. But, moreover, for ideally facilitating our efforts to do this artificially (re-positioning art's «utility»). As noted, Schelling's idea of sublimity is, on the contrary, essentially a merging with nature. However, Kant was notoriously inconsistent and difficult to interpret. As Gare argues, Schelling «charged Kant with unintentionally defending the metaphysics he purported to oppose», ultimately producing a form of positivism «which gave no place to metaphysics»⁴⁷. Later developments of Kant's dialectics understandably then produced conflicting positions among neo-Kantians on how to characterise Mind in the noumenal realm.

What contributed to art being considered a faulty means to understand reality, though useful for rearranging it, was the wedge Kant's aesthetics then drove between philosophy and art. As Hammermeister notes this centred on three main insoluble arguments. The philosopher's ontological discussion of art, the epistemic role it is attributed, and the practical function located in artworks. These, as we shall see, are resolved in Schelling's system. But the emphasis they have placed on art's false «objective» (ie., purely 'formal') characteristics arises in what is summarised below under five key interrelated problems: Judgement, Imagination, Purpose, Beauty-Truth separation, and Conceptual utility. Kant dissociated art from history to the extent that concrete developments were marked as those which «have received applause for the longest time in the course of culture» (giving a place to tradition)⁴⁸. But then art's only possible unifying resolution could be found in the subjectification of aesthetics, divorcing cognition of this experience from the object and firmly rooting it in the subject⁴⁹. Hence gaping dialectical inconsistencies emerged.

Firstly, separating art from cognition meant emphasising cognitive aspects of criteria for establishing aesthetic Judgement. These, taken from Kant's first critique as the structure upon which he bases his investigations, are: quality, quantity,

⁴⁷ Gare, "Natural Philosophy and the Sciences", p.15. Importantly, Kant's metaphysics separates «the "negative" (the study of concepts as the conditions for knowing) from the "positive" (investigation of the facts of existence and the contingencies of historical emergence)».

⁴⁸ Hammermeister, GT, p.36. Kant's reference to ancient Greek art here reveals his general deferment on matters of art to the orthodoxies of his time (another key difference with Schelling).

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.41.

relation, and modality. Yet most of his theoretical conclusions - associated with types of beauty, purposiveness, taste, and pleasure relative to aesthetic judgement - rely on his wavering belief that precognition is the operative means to make such judgements. This inconsistency is never resolved. Next Kant places limitations on Imagination to synthesise elements of the sensual manifold. One such «unfathomable» element is sublimity, argued to be not a quality of an object, but a response of the subject «much like the pleasure that we call beauty». Such subjectivising limitations extend to almost every aspect of his aesthetics⁵⁰.

Thirdly, while subjectivity (ie., the ego) subsequently governs art's «imaginary» purpose and interpretation, the artwork is purportedly (though clearly not as Kant intended) placed in the same category as the beautiful object in nature. Like natural «objects», according to Hammermeister, having no end outside itself art thus serves no Purpose and is «free from all finality». But Kant's so-called «purposeless purposefulness» has been misinterpreted to render art's connection with humanity similarly purposeless⁵¹. The connection between Art and the Person (says Hammermeister) must either be split, or both must be objectifiable⁵². Thereafter, with the rise of logical positivism, both are essentially permanently «materialised», via Hobbesian mechanism. (The already cast adrift Self can only tenuously be related to Art experientially, via psychologism - which Kant rejected. And Art, with the Imagination disabled, becomes further fragmented and defuturised).

Fourthly, because according to Kant beauty can never be conceptualised and «seems to exist for our pleasure», its only purpose becomes pleasure. And this is universalizable. However, aesthetic judgement can only lay claim to this via what is «agreeable», which can only be determined by the mode of discourse. Many types of aesthetic discourse ('theories') arise, which are then of course entirely centred on «beauty» ideals and the pleasure to be obtained from them. Kant's division of beauty into «free beauty», which is pure and exists independently; and «adherent beauty», which is applied and «impure»; puts both beauty and Art in the service of appetites and aversions, forever separating Beauty and Truth (and freedom from necessity). Hence the rise of «ugly ideals».

50 Ibid, p.30.

51 NB: Hammermeister's problematic, though not uncommon, interpretation (p.36-37). Kant uses this expression in the Critique of Judgement likening art to nature which, though he is clear that art is strictly «purposeless» in the art object but «purposeful in itself», implies a likeness with nature and a teleology that has been misconstrued (p.130, p.292). Elsewhere he says art is «purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the mental powers for sociable communication» (p.185), which I suggest is more accurately expressed as purposeful purposelessness.

52 This misunderstanding of Kant is critical since, importantly, according to Max Scheler, there are two ways to objectify something; which answers this conundrum viz the Art-Person «objectification». See Trimarchi 2022.

Finally, with aesthetic beauty judgement now grounded subjectively in theory, more problems emerge. «Free beauty» is associated with nature; but «adherent beauty» is a classification associated with objects like art, which must be connected to its object as «a concept of its purpose in the world, its telos, and hence a sense of its usefulness»⁵³. Art is thus (after Kant) «legitimately» instrumentalised; a utilitarian concept born (or re-born) into a mythology primed to shun its natural objectivity by predicating its «universal» agreeability on «the familiar». Its formalist beauty/utility governed by «types of discourse» flourishes, reflectively energising mass-production of, and markets for, what are now mostly cultural artefacts.

Notably, pre-Kantian philosophers kept notions of art and natural beauty strictly separate. Kant's continuation of this is significant for two reasons. Firstly, confirming this philosophical presupposition (originating in Plato's ideal of divinely ordained beauty) underwrites Art's devaluation pre-Kant. Secondly, subsequent historicising de-emphasis of natural beauty as a feature of art (eg., Heidegger's, with Hegel's tacit agreement) now had a firmer foundation. Furthermore, since Kant subsequently elevates «adherent» beauty above all others, the positivistic manipulation of natural beauty is encouraged as an ideal⁵⁴. Utilitarian, mechanistic attributions of artistic «beauty» via purely technological fabrication (absenting truth) becomes normalised, and formalised in theories of «effect» and «affect» (ie., «efficient causes»)⁵⁵.

Art being the prime product of human «innovation» and manifestation of purpose manipulating adherent beauty, means any fetishised materialisation of the artwork (or indeed the Person) can ultimately be justified in any culture or epoch. So too the intentionality and identity of the artist as «creator» of novelties, paradoxes, and illusions; elevating the «artist as hero» to engineering genius. A status marked, contrary to Kant's stated intentions, by the capacity to conjure passive, «miraculous», reception of experiences in «sublime» infinity, with «purposeless purposefulness». All consecrated by a concept of «progress» favouring pursuit of efficient over «final» cause, and therefore external over internal goods.

53 Hammermeister, GT, p.26.

54 Ibid, p.26: «While everything in this paragraph [Critique of Judgement, §16] seems to indicate a superiority of the pure aesthetic judgement, all the following discussions surprisingly rank adherent beauty as higher».

55 See Trimarchi 2022. The conflict between «efficient» and «final» causes has a critical effect on modern narratology. In the ancient mythology destiny does not appear as fate, but as Schelling describes it: «in the mildness of a quiet necessity against which there is as yet no rebellion» (ie., «natural final cause»). The modern mythology, under Christianity's reversal, replaced this with «fate» linked to «original sin», and hence God's judgement. Shakespeare converted this again to «fate» as «nemesis» (Schelling PA, p.213). In the process, the modern mythology abandoned natural «final» causes (ie., as defined by Nature's predictability: the sun going down in the evening, etc.), for efficient causes (ie., «mechanical» succession, consequentialism, etc.).

With Kant's attribution of the beauty of purposiveness without purpose to the human body, via the highest form (adherent beauty) – obtained through manifestation of purpose - the symbolic objectification of the Person re-joined artificially with Art was complete. Fashion became art. And since «agreeability» is associated with the condition of the very existence of the subject of art, mediated by appetites/aversions, the theory of «taste» providing any aesthetic judgement its ground was consecrated in practice. By advancing the idea art has no real relation to truth (which is only obtained through cognition, not intuition) this theory appears easily vindicated.

But, as Hammermeister points out, Kant had very limited firsthand experience of art, using «wallpaper patterns, porcelain, paper cutouts, and carved handles of walking sticks as prime artistic examples»⁵⁶. By contrast, Schelling accessed the great works available in the museums of Jena and Dresden under the tutelage of friends like Goethe, and Schiller whose *Aesthetic Education of Man* offered sustained attention to a wide range of individual artworks. While Hegel's focus was subsequently heralded as a «veritable world history of art», Kant's was centred on the bigger questions of truth and reason⁵⁷. Being clearly uninterested in the construction of the artwork (making almost no reference to any) and directing his attention entirely at the theoretical in favour of the practical, his paradigm thus unravels under the inherent impossibility of integrating his two types of beauty in aesthetic judgement. How Pleasure, Beauty, and Truth are conceptually prised apart, denying the artwork's phenomenological meaning-value, requires some explanation. Because making taste the requirement for aesthetic judgement, subordinating qualities of the object to subjective reception of pleasure/displeasure, will have major consequences for both art and morality.

First, with taste affording no cognitive judgement, Kant claims it is «not logical, but aesthetic», condemning aesthetics to both subjectivity and illogicality⁵⁸. Then his two categories of pleasure («the agreeable» and «encountering good») are distinguished from both types of beauty as being interested in the existence of the object. And though entirely subjective, their cognition is deemed to hold true universally. Art could therefore be completely dissociated from any objective «good», purely subjectively. Since beauty and pleasure have no sustainable relation to insight and cognition, aesthetic judgement rendered no rational purpose or universality. With its higher usefulness to humanity disabled, Art's then miscon-

⁵⁶ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.24.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.24. Kant's aesthetics is thus distinguished as «formal», Hegel as one of «content» and art's historicisation.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.28.

trued «infinite interpretability» disarms both its meaningfulness and purpose via «disinterestedness».

Precisely how this re-engineered Art's role in modernity, permanently unmooring its ancient unified Principle from its normative scientific aesthetic, ethical, and logical intuition is worth noting. If only subjective taste judges the experiencing of art, based on appetite/aversion, and without «interest», then the field for art's individual/collective external good usefulness expands while its internal good higher use-value is marginalised, disappearing into pure symbolism. The same occurs to morality. False universalising, disinterest, and «moralising» underscore the conversion of Art's ontological claim into an instrumental «demand». Firstly, a beautiful object being pleasurable «for its own sake» leads to its «exterior purpose» being replaced by an «inner purpose» (beauty/pleasure «in itself»)⁵⁹. Associating purpose with «inner perfection» means beauty's «universal delight» can only be claimed by rational judgement (ruling out normative aesthetic logic)⁶⁰. Aesthetic pleasure then – only «by means of concepts» - becomes the «subjective universality» via three faculties (i) sensibility (passive reception), (ii) imagination (ordering of the sensory manifold into a unity), and (iii) understanding (the provision of a concept)⁶¹. But since concepts cannot move aesthetic meaning from imagination to understanding, aesthetic judgement must rely on another claim to «transcend its subjectivity»⁶². This is the constructed «demand» art makes on us, which Kant argues occurs via «commonality of pleasure», repetition, and «infinite interpretation».

This fabrication has been benignly attributed, as Hammermeister does, to explaining why great art presents renewed pleasure of endless re-conceptualisation. Though Schelling does subscribe to art's replenishing pleasure, it is on completely different terms to Kant. Kant's account is nevertheless more suited to endless repetition of familiar concepts in the continual search for «the new » (via modern art's exploitable materiality in the marketplace). This makes «permanent revolution» the mother of invention and signifier of progress. Hence renewable symbolic idealising, replacing metaphor with concept, became increasingly endemic in the modern mythology of art, limiting its higher meaning and understanding, and narrowing its focus on «experientialism». Art's real «claim», and artistic intention, are thus curtailed. Kant's artificially collectivising aesthetic idea, lacking me-

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.29.

⁶⁰ Schelling, following Aristotle, instead marks this «inner purpose» as «identity» - with completely different consequences.

⁶¹ Hammermeister, GT, p.29.

⁶² Ibid, p.30.

aningfulness, yet subjectively universalizable via an object's «necessary pleasure», shows why turning any «found object» or «readymade» idea into «art» (in any artform) has been institutionalised.

The fundamental problem with Kant's logic was that cognition, normally associated with reason, was subsequently associated with intuitive thinking – via symbolic conceptualisation - contradicting his original claim. In this complete reversal, aesthetic judgement becomes a manipulable «cognised» function entirely dependent on reflective sensibility/imagination. The imagination is «free» to subsume any object under a concept, with the faculty of understanding providing «logic» irrespective of any real Beauty-Truth relation. With incitement of pleasure in us being purpose enough, matters for serious artistic inquiry in praxis become subject now to the separation of actions from matters of knowledge. Art's adherent beauty can be rationalised as meaningful, rather than felt intuitively as natural (free) beauty⁶³.

What price such «freedom»? Even though subjectivising aesthetic judgement is at odds with Kant's own claim that taste is no science at all, by symbolic transference of his logic morality too is entirely subjectivised⁶⁴. Though beauty is determined by the senses and imagination, taste prepares the habit for this to become the rule⁶⁵. And, being humanity's only means to communalise meaning, it not only habitually rationalises aesthetic judgement, but morals too. Good aesthetic judgement produces moral virtue; and its regular exercise pointing «beyond the sensory pleasure toward a moral interest» habituates individuals in «finding delight more in moral ideas than in sensuality»⁶⁶. So Kant was not advocating a poor conception of morality or pleasure; he argued pleasure we feel in beauty «should ultimately be directed toward morality, because only moral ideas may be contemplated as ends in themselves»⁶⁷. It is just that his aesthetics falls foul of a series of contradictions which sever the ontological connection between beauty and morality, through faulty attempts to tie them together by other means. Therefore, his aesthetic dialectics could only support a debasement of ethics to subjective

63 Ibid, p.40: «There are no beautiful objects, only those that incite in us a response of aesthetic pleasure».

64 Ibid, p.39. Kant also called the aesthetic idea «nonconceptualizable» because «it perpetually escapes its representation by means of a concept that understanding would supply». Concept is the only means to understand art, but art's real meaning is resistant to conceptual understanding. The corollary of this for morality is that: «the rational idea (like the morally good) is inostensible... because it can never be exemplified by means of a sensory instance». Thus, though separated, morality becomes as infinitely interpretable as art.

65 Ibid, p.36-37. Kant's inferences about art's «communality», its social role and purpose, are akin to Peirce or Schelling's. As Hammermeister points out, Schiller and Fichte and others take up this same idea from Kant. The problem is that Kant's conception is derived from the faculty of taste.

66 Ibid, p.39.

67 Ibid, p.38.

moralising.

Given the Art-Person perfect sign relation, the door was thrust open for virtue-less and manipulable characteristics like frailty, weakness, etc., (not least, poor judgement) to be considered naturally human. In contrast Schelling and Peirce's Aristotelian argument that «habit-taking» in this science of admiring, via ethics and logic, guides judgement of what is both beautiful and meaningful back to the natural world. Our admiring is a synthesis of sense and imagination with reason, preparing the habit for what is to become normative. This repositions human nature within Nature, making a naturalised conception of art ethically, morally, and socially collectivising.

The main difficulty with Kant's aesthetics however lies in his Platonic notion of «infinity» being unable to support this more beneficial self-actualising conception of the Person. This, I suggest, is a key point of difference with Schelling evident in the latter's «Sublimity». In Kant there are two «sublimities», essentially defining man's relation to nature: mathematical sublimity (ie., the idea of infinity) and dynamic sublimity. He argues being able to think the former «indicates that a faculty exists in man that transcends experience». This is a telling departure, given every other facet of his aesthetic paradigm involves experience. But he makes this exception because such thinking «bestows a unique dignity upon man»: the capacity of mind to detect the suprasensible by abandoning imagination (ie., in religious rapture), ushering in «a renewed sense of worthiness and elevation»⁶⁸.

When we encounter the dynamical sublime, however, we are faced with «a moment of anxiety»; the intense displeasure of being confronted by the mighty power of nature, making us feel vulnerable and inferior. But the mathematical sublime - abandoning imagination - gives us the rational tools to deal with this. It provides the next very important step in which we overcome nature: «self-realisation». The «displeasure of inferiority» is turned into «a sense of independence and even human superiority». Achieving this involves «a process of reflection», however, whereby «the encounter with the forces of nature lets us discover in ourselves a «power of resistance»» reconfirming human freedom «is not subject to natural destruction, but transcends the sensory realm». This is the ultimate pleasure of art, arising from «our insight into the indestructibility of human na-

68 Ibid, p.33.

ture»⁶⁹.

If an argument for humanity's separation from nature needed justifying, constructing sublimity as an exalting independence swaddled in «moral purpose» fits the bill. Beauty may calm us, but Kant's sublimity is «an expression of moral energy»; an experience of «the supersensory part of the self» trumping «the material and finite part»⁷⁰. Art's «reflection» of this becomes a triumph of the self; of «self-realisation» as a self- legitimating/legislating affirmation (of our indomitable reign over the natural world, and «the Other»). Kant's aesthetic paradigm can thus easily be construed as underwriting a morally sanctioned, conceptually driven ideal of Art which overrules Nature and human nature. Using any artificial means necessary. Art reconceived as «process metaphysics» reverses this ideal to reconnect humanity and Nature in the real world, by taking a completely different view of «the sublime».

Contrasting Schelling's dialectical aesthetics with Hegel's reaction to Kant reveals why it posits art as fundamental to civic humanism, rather than instrumentally applicable. Hegel's and Kant's dialectics (for different reasons and despite their respective merits) have instead underwritten a more than just historiographic, but in fact deontological, materialist paradigm securing both Art and the Self's fragmentation⁷¹. Schelling's paradigm however reverses key aspects of Kant's «standpoint of reflection» which fuels the modern mythology. Essentially, Art's very particular kind of imaging is shown as not representation of objects, but «a representation of the absolute within limitation», without suspending «the absolute» (Object).

Furthermore, Reason is not an added historicism. As I will show in future, the construction of art in the particular (artforms/artworks) is subject only to the reason inherent in the potences (or consequences) of the affirmation of the whole unity (the Principle). Though illegitimately historicised in modern mythology, the artwork is like an organism, which can never have its essence separated from the subsistence of its form because its 'being' immediately constitutes the activity within it⁷². Being and becoming produce the condition of indifference in the organism, and hence the condition of indifference between ideality and reality in

69 Ibid, p.33-34. Cf. Aristotle or Schelling's quite different ultimate Pleasure, and hence Purpose of art.

70 Ibid, p.34.

71 Arran Gare, "Natural Philosophy and the Sciences: Challenging Science's Tunnel Vision." *Philosophies* 3, 4, (2018) p.41. n.59. This provides necessary background on the comparative dialectics of Schelling, Hegel, and Kant, which space here prevents fuller examination of. According to Gare, Schelling «explained the transformations in the concept of metaphysics that led to Kant's... then characterised his own as «metaphysical empiricism»».

72 See Trimarchi 2022 to distinguish «legitimate» from «illegitimate» historicization processes.

the artwork.

This naturalised conception of Art therefore models an individual's inner identity/essential nature's dependence on the totality of which it is a part and vice versa. In the person-Person relation, this claims knowledge of the individual for humanity; and is an entirely different proposition to Hegel's standpoint, from which to attend to our relation to the world. Understood thus, cosmologically, Art's unified principle is a preordained identity with Nature and History, possessing the unique power to unite humanity in Reason, as an order-related inquiry.

Schelling's «process metaphysics» of art has been casually dismissed as «romantic idealist» by some and too radical by others⁷³. Perhaps because his underpinning of the principle of Art in Nature appears deceptively simple. Art's «highest identity», says Schelling, «is at once the highest objectivity». Its «absolute reality» (universal) can only be found in indifference with its «absolute ideality». And since the ideal real «is much more real than the so-called real itself», it requires the cultivation of determining laws which hold «pure limitation» and «undivided absoluteness» in the same purview. The principle of Art's absolute (whole) thus productively relates to the construction of the artwork (part) - from the unity to the multiplicity of art (in the social sphere) - in the transition from the infinite to the finite. Though this may seem merely conceptual at present, this Principle's application proves far more realistic than the Kantian paradigm for art in practice.

The whole question of art's autonomy and status, according to Schelling, depends on what we can learn through it about reality. The artwork, as a «theory of life» and paradigm for humanity's relation to world, requires we negotiate the indifference between the real and ideal (in 'all human conduct') to reveal its dialectical production of reason. Art's orientation to meaning is ideally realistic (not symbolically idealistic) because it is not mediated by symbols yet points toward natural ideals. It seeks a merger of Beauty and Truth in the poiesis-praxis nexus (the merger of knowledge with action), marking a fundamental difference in standpoint from Kant and Hegel's separation of these.

Kant's synthesis of mental representations, while rejecting Humean associationism's argument that objects of experience are formed only by perceptions, is surpassed by Schelling's synthesis of the subject with nature. His rejection of Fichte's attempt to impose the subject (or self) on Kant's synthesis led to his re-definition of metaphysics as «process metaphysics». A new emphasis on how «intellectual

⁷³ Alberto Toscano, "Fanaticism and Production: On Schelling's Philosophy of Indifference." *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, 8, (1999), 46-70, p.62: «To a certain degree the Schellingian project foundered precisely because of its radical character'. He argues Schelling was not able to completely 'escape the teleological tyranny of the actual... without eventually absolving it into the indifference-as-unity».

intuition» itself and all meaning emerges in nature then becomes central to his philosophy of art. «God» as Nature - as All or Absolute – thus equals the indifference of consciousness and unconsciousness. This posits cognition as a process of semiotic productivity, which nature produces in the real world.

Nature is the immediate cause and final possibility of all art because our place in nature is the immediate cause of all art. And since Reason is the dissolution of all individual forms into the absolute identity, genuine art seeks reason.

While Kant's sublime extracts beauty and truth from the realm of the suprasensible, out of the realm of the senses entirely to a purely subjective ground, Schelling's merger of them provides objectivity for this search. Cognition, in Schelling the merger of feeling and thinking, synthesises aesthetic intuition, which he argues is «precisely the intellectual intuition gone objective»⁷⁴. We could consider Art a «science of Mind» (more than psychology or neuroscience, for instance) given the uniquely normative aesthetic standpoint it produces in consciousness itself. As Schelling says, «that absolute identity that had already divided itself in the self» is simply not available in anything besides art. It is an «identity» which «the philosopher regards as already divided», but which «in the first act of consciousness» is only accessible in art's morphogenic meaning-productivity and no other intuition⁷⁵.

This is why the posited nature of the world of objects is made meaningful in art on a new, higher level via the limits imposed by other individuals. The self's «moral universe» manifests as law only by such engagement, where constraints on its freedom are mediated by the «other». Only now, by the Self seeing itself in the Other, can this be realised as selfactualising. Art is thus reconnected with morality because insights formed in these relations, by this process, create the self's habits. Not just personal habits, but the Self's (person<->Person) entire habitus and how it is constructed, all originate here. History writ large is formed out of the 'ongoing gradual revelation of the absolute', through an endless process rendering it therefore never to be known in history⁷⁶.

Schelling's Naturphilosophen (nature as «productivity and product») uniquely posits Art's purpose to be associated with thought in action directed toward semiotic productivity (Aristotle's poiesis/praxis nexus). Hence his system of art tracks meaning's progress in the resolution of becoming and being. Kant's various separations, artificially prising open the interrelation between an active subject and its object, are thus replaced by a more realistic perspective on constructing new

74 Schelling in Hammermeister, GT, p.73-74.

75 Schelling in Ibid, p.74.

76 Schelling in Ibid, p.70.

subjectivities. However, it is Kant's notion of «community of causation» which elucidates why Art's objectivity must be understood as ontologically and teleologically normative, since how it reconnects Nature and History is via distinctive propositions. Kant introduced this idea in the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason and, as Gare says, «defended functionalist or teleological explanations of living processes in the Critique of Judgement (although here he specifically ruled out a theory of emergence)», thus contributing to «a new conception of nature»⁷⁷. Herder then developed Kant's original idea of human consciousness, but importantly, conceived this «as social rather than individual and active rather than contemplative». Art's perplexing consciousness-expanding capability was, with Herder's radical rethinking of the naturehuman history nexus, no longer seen as derivative of and reducible to an historical epic narrative.

Schelling subsequently constructed a metaphysics of genuinely social aesthetic inquiry, in which productivity and product are developed in a «community of causation» with ethics at its foundation. His «absolute» is consciousness itself, manifest in its original formlessness as «intellectual intuition» in an ever-becoming state of being. But, importantly, it precedes the subject-object split, and this establishes the primacy of the self, in radical opposition to Kant's and Hegel's transcendentalism. Art's natural connection to the Person is revived, exposing why Art's Principle transcends art as a product of historical narrative.

This reunification of History and the Person in Nature made «proposition», as Schelling's friend Friedrich Hölderlin argued, the key to understanding «being». Hölderlin realised the opposition between being and proposition originates in natural semiosis. As Hammermeister notes «being» marks subject/object indifference «whereas proposition is the principle of separation»⁷⁸. Thus, propositional thinking «disables the appearance of being that precedes all relation of the subject and object and, therefore, cannot become the object of cognition». In Hölderlin's words: «Proposition [Urtheil] is in the highest and strictest sense the original separation of subject and object which were intimately united in the intellectual intuition... which makes possible subject and object in the first place». It is the nature of propositions then, in directing meaning-values toward this implicit subject-object relation, which ultimately defines art's unifying principle.

«Being», so described (as «suspended»), is neither appearance nor identity, since identity too precedes subject-object separation. Both need an instance (in Alfred North Whitehead's terminology, an «occasion») to bring subject and ob-

77 Gare, "Process philosophy and the Emergent Theory of Mind", p.5-6.

78 Hammermeister, GT, p.68. For contemporary support of this claim, see Meltzoff 2021.

ject together, and so «being» as either appearance or identity is always a liminal concept of cognition. This is why the art object's absolute is inaccessible to conceptual knowledge, and only grasped in the intellectual intuition unmediated by concepts. Kant restricted this kind of access to God, but Schelling recast it (following Fichte) as a form of certainty - as the act of the self positing itself. The 'empirical self freely posited' in which occasion «the self acquires a certainty of itself without reaching knowledge of itself since the certainty remains unconceptualized»⁷⁹.

Thus, the relationship of being to becoming is reconciled in praxis. Schelling realised art's unique ability to achieve this reconciliation elevates it above philosophy and science for accessing certainty of understanding and knowledge about humanity's self-actualisation. Since objectivity and knowledge of the absolute cannot be achieved philosophically, using concepts, only metaphorically in the artwork, Art's unique optimum usefulness to humanity is self-evident. It situates aesthetics before logic and ethics, as C. S. Peirce's later revival of metaphysics also concluded. Though both owe a debt to Kant, it is Schelling's rejection of his notions of «infinity», «sublimity», and the beauty/truth nexus, situating the absolute outside of nature in the suprasensible realm (circumventing the nature-history nexus), which returns art to aesthetic normativity.

To understand the significance of this (and perhaps why Schelling's Philosophy of Art deserves closer attention than it may have received), it is helpful to consider how his aesthetics has been misrepresented, in context with his opposition to Kant.

Aspiration vs Reflection

Kai Hammermeister (2002) praises Hegel's earlier described historical approach to aesthetics as privileging philosophy; while casting doubt on Schelling's. But he apparently favours a definition of aesthetics as essentially theoretical, having no ontological bearing; thereby underestimating Schelling's system of art and its foundation in process metaphysics. Characterising a collection of Schelling's works (from different periods, culminating with the Philosophy of Art) as returning to the Kantian notion of 'art as representation of the absolute by divine means' is thus clearly mistaken. Without discriminating among Schelling's «Neoplatonic tendencies» blamed for his difficulties, Hammermeister overlooks important de-

⁷⁹ Ibid. p.69. Fichte's «I»-«no-I» opposition provides an ethical and social dimension, which Schelling developed as an ontological dialectical struggle in art accounting for its claim on us (because this opposition is felt as a resistance to our will).

tails underscoring the essence of «reflection» which Schelling rejects. For instance, Schelling's mimesis is construed as closer to the Platonic mimesis adopted by Kant and Hegel when in fact it accords with Aristotle's. Also, Schelling's development of Kant's «community of causation», and adoption of Herder's Nature-History nexus over «empirical» history, putting the social ramifications of his system in strong competition with Hegel's triumphant historicisation of art, are neglected.

Hammermeister claims Schelling later retreated from elevating art's status above philosophy, but this is not evident in his *Philosophy of Art* and more likely a misreading of his intentions. Nevertheless, in deference to Hegel, he situates Schelling's System as «the grandfather of today's tendencies in philosophy to abort metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology all in favour of aesthetics»⁸⁰. When in fact Schelling's revival of metaphysics succeeded in bringing it together with ontology and epistemology under the auspices of aesthetics. Both Schelling and Hegel demonstrably gave a place to art and philosophy as separate modes of inquiry, though for admittedly very different reasons based on different approaches to the «absolute». To avoid such oversights, it is necessary to take full account of this, and why Schelling's ideas of «infinity», «sublimity», and «religion» are not in any way associated with modern religiosity, but steeped in the ancient cosmology.

For instance, Schelling's inherently synthetic approach to infinity contrasts sharply with Kant's «mathematical» infinity (in particular) adopted in Hegel and Heidegger's «absolutes». Unlike Kant, Schelling's «Absolute» is the unconditioned totality, the self-organising universe within which intellectual intuition arises, reproducing itself in imagination. Like Peirce's evolution of thought originating 'out there', it is thus also simultaneously absolutely internal.

His idea of «transcendence» is in the world, embodied in reproductive «communities of causation», wherein parts and wholes interact autonomously within certain constraints (ie., the art->Art/person->Person double-unity = «Religion»). And when he argues, as Hammermeister says, that «no poetic world can exist outside religion», and that «no objective representation of religion is possible without art», he does not mean the revealed religion of Christianity, Islam, etc., whose «infinities» are beyond the world. He means the ancient «religion» of civic humanism.

Thus, in no way does Schelling relinquish art's power in the social sphere as Hammermeister suggests. Despite recognising Herder's influence on Schelling, and the social implications in both Kant's and Schelling's aesthetics, several di-

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.86.

fficulties arise. For example, Hammermeister misinterprets the role of the individual in artmaking. Schelling's idea of «genius», he says, displays the standard «parallelization of the work of the artist with the divine creation» being a «painful event of individualization and materialization... [because]... «the artist must negate himself and descend into the singular, not shying away from isolation, nor from agony and the pain of form»»⁸¹. However, the artist descending «into the singular» is simply the process of the self glimpsing itself in the mirror before recognising the other. It does not entail any «individualization» necessarily setting genius apart from society. Neither does the «materialization» of the artwork necessarily entail a physical materialisation (as divine creation implies), because Schelling's «empirical object» (becoming metaphoric «truth») is in fact the «materialisation» of thought in natural semiosis.

Yet Hammermeister weaves this argument into a suggestion that «Romantic irony» is Schelling's ideal object representing the «absolute» where the Object of art resides. Karl Solger's «sublime» notion of «enduring the terrible» (recalling Kant's) is invoked, wherein «the incorporation of the absolute... in an object of art» destroys its eternal nature, causing sadness⁸². Solger calls this «embodiment of the idea» in a material object a moment of «tragic irony», leading Hammermeister to mistakenly declare on Schelling's behalf that the artwork «is not identical with the idea», but its reflection. When, clearly, for Schelling the absolute in art is the idea («the gods»). It is in fact an ideal aspiration, in the same way Aristotle's «golden mean» is the ideal «mark» to aim for in balancing the virtues. However, this is added to a list of other apparent inconsistencies and reasons to defer to Hegel's aesthetics. Ideas selectively drawn from Schelling's friend August Schlegel, R. M. Rilke (who questionably interprets Aristotle's «katharsis»), Schopenhauer, Lessing, Solger, and others are enlisted to propose equally contestable counterclaims to Schelling's differences with Kant on «genius», «the eternal», the function of mimesis, etc.

What emerges is an underlying apparent misunderstanding of Schelling's «empirical object», and its significance for distinguishing the modern and ancient mythologies (see below). There is no «tragic irony» in the «materialisation» of the absolute. It represents merely an apparent «paradox» - that «being» is never permanent but always remains in the real world «becoming». What this transition lays bare, as Hammermeister himself well describes it, is that «while the intellectual intuition encounters the absolute in its transcendent state and sensual per-

⁸¹ Ibid, p.80.

⁸² Ibid, p.80

ception only considers the transient nature of objects, art hovers in between these two spheres»⁸³. In other words, as the «materiality» of the object of aesthetic intuition approaches the ideal (beauty-truth nexus) its possibility of «being» renders it as real. This, as we will see, is Schelling's two ontologically connected different perspectives of the same absolute merging: «An object is beautiful when it is so adequate to its idea that the infinite (the concept) enters the real. In fewer words, in beauty the real becomes ideal»⁸⁴.

The Standpoint of Production (Naturalising vs «Naturalism»)

The phenomenology of perception helps to clarify Schelling's standpoint of production from that of reflection, and how we understand what is «natural». Ernst Cassirer for instance developed a philosophy of symbolic forms along the lines that the «knowing subject» was the point of departure of their perception rather than the «objective world». Husserl on the other hand embraced Brentano's «science of the spirit», arguing Nature belonged to the sphere of the spirit. His attempt to understand reality was thus formulated in transcendental phenomenology and, as Gare argues, this «overcame naturalist objectivism, and for that matter any form of objectivism, in the only possible way, by beginning one's philosophising from one's own ego; and that purely as the author of all one accepts, becoming in this regard a purely theoretical spectator»⁸⁵. Schelling's standpoint of production, originating in Herder, melds these perspectives.

«Expressionism» was for Herder the belief that all human activity (especially art) was about expressing the whole personality of the individual or the group. And such activities are intelligible only to the extent they do so successfully. Thus, without striving for a higher purpose of «self-realisation», they lose their value. It is only from this standpoint that selfexpression can be said to be essential to human beings. The artwork, accordingly, cannot be an object detached from its maker. It is a living process of communication between persons; a polyphony of «voices». Not an independently existing entity «beautiful or ugly, interesting or boring, upon which external observers may direct the cool and dispassionate gaze with which... scientists look on objects in nature»⁸⁶.

83 Ibid, p.80.

84 Ibid, p.81. See Nassar 2014 regarding Schelling's absolute.

85 Arran Gare, «Science, process philosophy and the image of man: the metaphysical foundations for a critical social science.» PhD thesis., Murdoch University, 1981. Libraries Australia ID 2512950, p.166-172. Though Dilthey, who strongly influenced Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology (and others such as Cassirer, Gadamer, and Ricoeur), opposed Husserl's tendency to relativism they held much in common (Walczevska 1991).

86 Isaiah Berlin, Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas (New York: Viking Press, 1976), p. 153.

Schelling's philosophy of identity ensures the societal discourse of values is communicated like this and from the «bottom up». An idea later taken up by process metaphysicians from Peirce to Bergson, Bogdanov, Whitehead, Mead, Bertalanffy, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Lucien Goldmann, and combined with the best aspects of Hegelian social and political philosophy. It was, as Gare says, «revised and defended against various forms of reductionism, including Hegelian Marxist reductionism which reduced people to and legitimated their treatment as instruments of the world-historical process»⁸⁷. As Douglass Stott says, the artwork thus «discloses in actuality that identity of the conscious and the unconscious, of spirit and nature, of freedom and necessity... as the principle of the absolute grounding all knowledge» that defines a community⁸⁸.

Artistic engagement, characterising spirit from this standpoint of «productivity», allows possibility to flourish as «semiotic freedom». For both Hölderlin and Hegel the union of beauty and truth is only mirrored in the realm of the senses. This could not overcome the split between thought and reality, which Schelling resolved by reconceiving consciousness as the productivity and product of Nature itself. The reason beauty and truth are integrally interrelated is because the two together produce a conscious and unconscious recognition of normativity evident only in Art (not the general aesthetic) - as Schelling shows here⁸⁹:

The organic product of nature will therefore not necessarily be beautiful, and if it is beautiful, its beauty, because the necessity for its existence cannot be thought of as existing in nature, will appear as utterly arbitrary... This clarifies what ought to be thought of imitation of nature as the principle of art, since by no means does nature – which is only accidentally beautiful – prescribe the rule of art. Instead, that which art produces in its perfection is the principle and norm for the judgement of natural beauty.

Kant's thesis, in which «genius» inspired by «divine» supra-sensibility prescribes the rule of art, is upturned here by linking the principle of art integrally to Nature. This is what makes the Aristotelian concept of mimesis normative. The «mimesis» of art is not an imitation of objects, as he was often misinterpreted. Rather, a binding of the subject-object relation in the realisation of the whole. This essentially defines Art's «standpoint of production», and how we should unders-

87 Arran Gare, "From Kant to Schelling to Process Metaphysics: On the Way to Ecological Civilization." *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy*, 7, 2, November (2011): 26-69, p.64.

88 Schelling, PA, Stott, D. Translator's Introduction, p.xxxix.

89 In Hammermeister, GT, p.73 (System, 466 f). Emphasis added.

tand its «expressionism» (whereupon «the explicit» must always point toward «the implicit»).

Art's normative power is thus revealed in the fact human self-actualisation is reflexively bound to nature and the evolution of consciousness itself. Nature's productivity «begins unconsciously and ends in consciousness» (ie., humanity's), but artistic productivity begins consciously and «reverses this process... continuing without consciousness»⁹⁰. Art is therefore indispensable for understanding both consciousness and the Self. Because it is only in Art's praxis - in how it socially binds humanity to Nature - that the beauty-truth nexus is revealed via the process of unravelling 'the ideal' in relation to «the real».

Artistic «genius» is better described then as prudently harnessing possibility and melding it with reason (applying judgement about meaning and technical proficiency); than as a portal to supranatural «sublimity». While an artist holds certain intentions in producing a work, involving all manner of processes, the additional force beyond their control needed to bring it into «being» or «disclosure» (though this disclosure is itself only another stage of «being») is not found outside Nature, in Kant's sublime suprasensible realm. What Kant called «genius», Aristotle characterised as «prudence». A virtue - reliant more on chance than what is implied by «divine intervention» or «genius» - yet not completely beholden to accidentality, nor independent of a collective «spirit». Following is an example of how the Kantian «experientialist» tendency to merit the suprasensible has invaded the most unsuspecting areas of our mythologising of art.

Schelling's standpoint of production can be distinguished in praxis from, for instance, the socialist theatre of Bertolt Brecht - which provides a good example of the Hegelian standpoint of reflection (and the artwork's illegitimate historicisation in Theatre)⁹¹. This «theater of the scientific age» is characterised by David Roberts as a rebellion against artistic traditions that «demands a level of self-reflection which can be attained only through the union of art and science»⁹². However Brecht's aim was simply to bind social observations to entertainments, which was not at all «revolutionary», though stylistically new⁹³. Like other modern expressionism, it drew upon contemporaneous effects on the human condition for its material (eg., industrialisation); but encouraged actors to determine the «true»

90 Hammermeister, GT, p.71.

91 The example is also used in Trimarchi 2022, but here my point relates to 'experientialism'.

92 David Roberts, *Art and Enlightenment- Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*. (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p.194.

93 Eg., *Commedia Dell'Arte*, Shakespeare, etc., back to early Greek theatre all employed various methods to achieve Brecht's aims. Cf. Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* – a comparatively «legitimate» historicization approach more akin with Schelling's standpoint of production.

nature of the object being represented, from observational experience. Similarly, his productions employed means for creating «necessary distance», allowing the audience to have this truth revealed via a «free favouring» experience afforded by «disinterest» (cf. Kant).

Achieving «disinterestedness» was intended to promote «objectivity», but this method relied on prevailing illusions of experimental science at the time for its truth-telling (ie., observation = truth). Logical positivism however presupposes no clear distinction between observation and interpretation in what are assumed «controlled observations». The theatrical «principle of historicisation» Brecht invented (based on the «interrogative gaze») requires actors to adopt an interpretative attitude (*grund-gestus*) and «master the act of observation»⁹⁴. Observation, however, can never really be considered «controlled»; there is always an active subject present⁹⁵. Therefore our interpretation of what appears familiar becomes our understanding. And interpretations, over time, turn into accepted beliefs which become habitual ways of preconceiving, pre-valuing, and even imagining new experiences⁹⁶.

Prudence, however, begs heeding the important lesson which Gestalts teach us: «We observe holistically and analysis of the whole into its constituent parts is a secondary activity»⁹⁷. What an observer reports is often described in terms of the experience of sensations. Therefore, as well as constituting our reality as a relation between the whole and parts, we are always deciphering the confusion between what we think we are seeing if we are not knowing what we are looking at and what we are feeling sensationally⁹⁸. Hermeneutics, how we «bring to understanding» anything in experience, is thus further complicated by preconceived ideas of how the «motion» of meanings can be corralled for effect (recalling the Hobbesian reduction of mind to inert matter)⁹⁹. However, as Schelling and others have revealed, it is not meaning that moves, but its affordances.

Brecht was, perhaps unconsciously, under the Hegelian spell of historical validation and belief in the familiar world of mechanical causes. Despite his best intentions (truth-telling), his «aesthetic method» was beholden to a prevailing

94 Speech to Danish Working-class Actors on the Art of Observation. Brecht, Bertolt, *Poems: 1913–1956*. Ed. John Willett and Ralph Manheim. Bertolt Brecht: *Plays, Poetry, Prose* (Ser. London: Methuen, 2000), p.235.

95 Gare, «Science, process philosophy», p.194.

96 *Ibid* p.202, p.267.

97 *Ibid*, p.196. Emphasis added.

98 *Ibid*, p.196.

99 Hobbes 1999.

philosophical framework, undergirded by a debased form of science, which was a reaction against any privileging of intuition and innate ideas sourced from Nature. Adorno's assessment of his «merger» of art with science then only has merit if we accept the Lockean belief that all truth and meaning is derived from experience. Brecht's rebellious «anti-naturalism» was however not «realist» but purely symbolist. The difference between «realism» and «naturalism», from this standpoint of reflection, can only be framed as one of style not reality. (Another historicised style memorialised in Roberts' postmodern musee imaginaire; now a «museum piece» for bourgeois audiences craving «new» theatrical experiences, or just consecrated historical ones re-played).

Did Brechtian alienation devices let the audience peel away the fourth wall and peer into the «real world»? Or was that «world» yet another version of «naturalism»? Unhelpful aesthetic dualisms, in most artforms, surround questions about «naturalism» that arise from a classical empiricist assumption that all events have some cause. However, as this example demonstrates, artistic intentionality is arguably better explained phenomenologically in terms of the standpoints of «reflection» or «production» and their underlying mythological presuppositions.

All modern aesthetic theories fragment Art's Principle from a standpoint of reflection, via the illegitimate historicisation of artforms/works. Being incapable of dealing with experiential complexity (phenomenology), modern aesthetics produces nominalist accounts (eg., naturalism, realism, emotionalism, formalism, imitationalism, etc.) which are essentially false beauty/truth-paradigm «principles»¹⁰⁰. As Kierkegaard remarked, «science» (in this debased form) has its own way of validating the world but nothing important to say about life.

100 For instance, as Fred Polak argues: Cubism expresses «the supersensual in the mathematical essence», resulting in «an imitation not of nature but of science» (See Trimarchi 2022 and 2023).

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