# Hegel's Architecture

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"The first of the particular arts . . . is architecture." (A 13.116/1.83)[1] For Hegel, architecture stands at several beginnings. It is the art closest to raw nature. It is the beginning art in a progressive spiritualization that will culminate in poetry and music. The drive for art is spirit's drive to become fully itself by encountering itself; art makes spirit's essential reality present as an outer sensible work of its own powers.[2] (A 13.453/1.351) If Hegel's narrative of the arts creates a hierarchy, architecture stands lowest, yet it nonetheless plays a unique and necessary role in spirit's development. In this essay I first describe Hegel's views on the nature of architecture and its three stages (symbolic, classical, romantic). Then I indicate some problems with Hegel's narrative. Finally I raise the question whether Hegel's theories might be adapted to our present architectural situation.

## The External Art

As the external art (*die äusserliche Kunst* (A 13.123/1.89) architecture works toward its spiritual goal with what is in itself unspiritual: heavy sensible matter subject to the rule of gravity. "Architecture's matter is the material world itself in its immediate externality as mechanical heavy masses." (A 13.116/1.83) Architecture deals with matter in its most elemental mode, as occupying space, heavy and supporting weight. One chunk of matter is external to another. Stones and bricks have no inner guiding teleology to unite them or express itself in their being and actions.

Like all art, architecture makes of its sensible matter something whose being is no longer purely sensible. (A 13.57/1.36) Architecture takes up this material, not as an object of desire or theory, but as an appearing of spirit. (A 13.60/1.38)

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1 References in the text refer to Hegel's works according to the following abbreviations. I have occasionally modified the translations.

A: *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, *G.W.F. Hegel Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, volumes 13, 14, 15 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970). / English translation by T. M. Knox, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* , volumes 1 and 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). I have indicated the volume numbers for the English translation, though the pagination is continuous through the two volumes.

L: *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Friedrich Lasson (Hamburg: Meiner, 1963). / English translation by A. V. Miller, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969).

E: *Enzyclopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1830), edd. Friedhelm Nicolin and Otto Pöggeler (Hamburg: Meiner, 1959). / English translation by William Wallace, *Hegel's Logic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

HTL *Hegel: the Letters*, translated by Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

2 Hegel's "metaphysical" principles about the nature of spirit's process and being's self-coincidence are briefly invoked from his logic. Spirit must show itself for itself as actively thinking (A 13.50/1.31, see also A 13.411/1.317), so the work of art must show itself as the product of spirit's activity. Hegel demands that art possess a substantive content. (A 13.410/1.316) But architecture is not a representational art. Its content is its doing: its functioning embodies and enacts rather than denotes or imitates spirit's being in the world and its quest for its self. In the final analysis, Hegel would not claim that "representation" is the main function of any form of art.

> The vocation of architecture is build outer nature into a surroundings shaped to a beauty coming from spirit through art. This surrounding no longer carries its meaning in itself, but gives up its independence and finds meaning in another, in humanity's needs and the goals of family life, of the state, religion, etc. (A 14.270/2.633)

Architecture shapes stones and bricks and wood into a purposive world around us, but what distinguishes architecture from the other arts is that its purposes remain external to the objects it creates. Architecture forms matter (A 14.267/2.631) into an outer surrounding for spirit, a man-made environment that is especially "outer" because it will support purposes and activities and meanings that are quite literally "inside." These self-enclosed processes within the building enact forms and unity that transcend any shape heavy matter can have.

For Hegel, meaning cannot be embodied as directly in architectural form as it can be embodied in painting or poetry. This is partly because architecture is not representational, and partly because there are so many pragmatic constraints on architectural form. More importantly, if architecture were to be permeated with self-embodied meaning as are music or poetry, something would be lost to spirit's self-awareness. Architecture's task is to deal with heavy external matter *as such*, showing it forth in its foundational role as support and surrounding for spirit's activities. If spirit is to find itself fully, not only the unity of meaning and matter but also the recalcitrance of the material world and its difference from spiritual meaning must be posited artistically.

**The Three Stages of Architecture**

In his aesthetics Hegel examines the individual arts with a view to their necessary features, looking at their history with a view to their essences.[3] He seeks more than an insightful arrangement of historical data; he wants normative necessary relations.[4] Philosophy always seeks content that stands firm on its own conceptual structure.[5] His most general descriptive categories are therefore brought to art from his logic, but the particular divisions and transitions within these general structures are unique to art.

Hegel's lectures on art are arranged according to the logical sequence universal, particular,

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3 In Hegel's treatment of art many different notional and historical developments are going on at once: the gradual realization of the concept of art and its Ideal, the development of each of the three stages of art, the growth of the actual arts as they appear over time, the evolution within each art and within each stage of that art. These sequences do not always proceed neatly in step, nor do they follow the same logical transitions. When treating architecture Hegel explicitly denies that the conceptual order of his distinctions and developments coincides with the exact historical order in which various building forms developed. On the other hand he does see a general historical progression from abstract beginnings in symbolic art that parallels the logical development of the concept of art.

4 In a letter to his friend and patron Niethammer discussing the curriculum in Hegel's school, Hegel says: "It would be most useful if the gymnasium students received, besides a better concept of versification, more definite concepts of the nature of epic, tragedy, comedy, and the like. On the one hand aesthetics could offer better, more recent views on the nature and ends of art; on the other hand, it must of course not remain mere idle talk about art." (Hegel to Niethammer, Nuremberg, October 23, 1812, HTL 278)

5 In the Logic, Hegel says that he is concerned to examine the categories of thought in terms of "the sole question to which philosophic interest demands an answer, namely, which of the . . . principles possesses truth in and for itself." (L 389/739) In his aesthetics Hegel will derive the basic categories and divisions of art from his logical analysis of being and spirit, then use them to illuminate art's history.

individual. He first discusses the universal ideal of art in general. Then he discusses the ways in which that ideal particularizes itself into the three general forms of art: symbolic, classical, and romantic art. Finally he discuss the individual historical arts that actualize the general ideal.

Hegel argues that the classifications of the fine arts found in his contemporaries all fail because they lack a conceptually firm basis for the connections and distinctions they make among the arts. Interesting parallels and analogies are not enough, conceptual guidance is needed. That can be found by studying the different aspects and moments of the development of the notion of art itself, as it makes explicit all its conceptual aspects and movements. This will reveal a conceptual level that other discussions have ignored. That stage lies between the general notion of art and the individual arts, and it provides a framework for organizing the discussion of concrete artworks. This framework distinguishes three overall modes or stages of art (*Kunstformen* (A 13.124/1.90)) that arise because there are three possible relations of the overall Idea of art to its concrete embodied shape (*Gestaltung* (A 13.107/1.76)). These stages provide conceptual guidance for discussing the genres and works found in the history of art.[6]

Since architecture encloses and shelters meaningful activities that have their own internal dynamics and goals, Hegel organizes the three stages of architecture -- symbolic, classical, romantic -- around the relation of architectural form to meaningful function: symbolic architecture carries natural meanings that come before any posited separation of architectural form and function, classical architecture achieves a balanced distinction and communication between the two, and romantic architecture expresses a meaning that goes beyond the expression of function.

Architecture's external relation to its meaning keeps it in particular alignment with the symbolic stage of art. Even though architecture does progress through all three stages, Hegel says that its basic character remains a symbolic art. (A 14.271/2.634) Likewise, Hegel says that the symbolic stage of art is best exemplified in architectural works. Oddly enough, despite these claims, in his general discussion of symbolic art most of Hegel's examples come from pictorial or verbal arts; there Hegel does not discuss architecture except in one important sub-area.[7] However, in his treatment of architecture, he provides an extensive discussion of its symbolic stage.

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6 The three stages are never totally separate; we can find aspects of each in the others, but for any concrete art work or genre one stage will be the soul of the work and the others secondary notes or qualities. (A 13.393/1.303) Derrida's ideas of "the supplement" could apply here in interesting ways. While Hegel uses his categories and their implications to support normative judgments about the arts, those categories are flexible enough to include deviant or imperfect realizations, as well as intermediate forms. While treating some puzzling forms of symbolic art that don't fit well into his developmental scheme, Hegel remarks: "It is the same in aesthetics as it is in the natural sciences with certain classes of animals or other natural phenomena. In both spheres the difficulty lies in the fact that it is the very concept of nature and art which partitions itself and posits its differentiations. . . . The true classification, however, may proceed only out of the true concept, and hybrid productions can only find their place where the proper explicitly stable forms begin to dissolve and pass over into others." (A 13.491/1.382)

7 "Architecture . . . is the art of externality, so that here the essential differences depend on whether this external object has its meaning within itself or whether, treated as a means, it subserves an end other than itself, or whether in this subservience it appears at the same time as independent." (A 14.271/2.634)

**Symbolic Architecture**

Spirit expresses itself in ever more adequate, complex, and mediated activities. The shape of these movements is the deep content of works of art, overarching whatever particular content the artist or society chooses to work with. Artistic form expresses this doubled content; a painting may both represent a farm landscape and embody a certain shape of spirit's reflection upon itself. A building may be both a temple of Athena and an expression of a certain way of being an individual in society. As a result, a work may lack adequate form in two ways. The more familiar case is when an individual work of art is poorly executed, so that its form is not adequate to its content. The painting is vague, or the Greek temple is badly designed. More important for classifying the arts, there are situations where the deep content is such that it cannot be adequately embodied in any form. (A 13.105/1.74; A 13.390/1.300) In symbolic art this happens because there the motions of spirit's activities are too indeterminate and abstract.

Determinate content is the bridge to artistic appearance. (A 13.106/1.75) But there is more at stake than giving a definite outline to the mountain in a painting. The deeper content must be determinate as well. Spirit's self-relation develops gradually as spirit comes to know itself. In the beginning spirit's self-awareness of its own activity remains indefinite, positing large external powers instead of examining its own activity of positing and self-reflection. When this self-reflection is not yet self-aware and self-determining, the resulting artistic form will be determined by arbitrary outside influences.

Symbolic architecture brings before us a general self-conception that remains indeterminate and abstract. Its meanings, Hegel says, are unformed, general, and elementary, mixing together all sorts of concepts and natural associations. (A 14.274/2.637) As art, it must give such meanings an appropriate sensible presence (A 14.272/2.635), and for this symbolic architecture will use natural forms that have some resonance with the meanings it is trying to embody, but which could as well embody quite different meanings.

Hegel finds it difficult to arrange his discussion of symbolic architecture.[8] He attributes this to the lack of differentiation in its deep meaning, and the externality inherent in the symbolic mode of signification.)

> If we ask for a more detailed systematic arrangement of this chapter and the chief productions belonging here, we cannot in the case of this architecture, as we can in that of the classical and romantic kinds, start from specific [architectural] forms, for instance the house; for here there cannot be cited any explicitly fixed meaning, or,

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8 Hegel's discussions of classical and romantic architecture are divided as is his overall treatment of art: universal, particular, individual. The general character of the stage is first described, followed by a particularized division of the stage's features and necessary aspects, concluding with a discussion of individual works or categories of works. However, for symbolic architecture the general description, while it comes first, is not one of the three main sections, and all of the sections concern both particular types and individual works. When Hegel discusses symbolic art in general, as opposed to his discussion of symbolic architecture, he says that all the stages rework the same contradiction between meaning and form. There he first discusses art in which the disparity of content and form is not present in consciousness, then a sublime middle stage where meaning is consciously presented as transcending sensible form, then a third stage where the tension between form and meaning becomes self-conscious, and art works make explicit separations and comparisons between the two. These divisions of symbolic art do not map well onto Hegel's divisions of symbolic architecture. Most of his treatment of architecture coordinates with the subdivisions of the first stage of his treatment of symbolic art in general.

> therefore, any fixed mode of configuration, as a principle which then in its further development is applicable to the range of different works. (A 14.274/2.636-637)

While he will argue that symbolic architecture is the earliest form of architecture, Hegel puts aside the disputes about what precise forms of building came first in history. His treatment of symbolic art does not respect chronological order; his examples are temporally and spatially mixed. Later in discussing classical architecture, he will admit that some forms that he considers conceptually posterior may have originated earlier than the more conceptually basic forms. In discussing the symbolic stage, he does, however, criticize some theories about the historical beginning of architecture. He insists that controversies over the relative priority of wood versus stone, or of shelters versus temples, do not reach to the true beginnings because they presuppose already differentiated social functions. Such structures exist within a field of already separate ends and means. The true beginning will be prior to that split. (A 14.268/2.631) The conceptually immediate beginning of architecture should be found in independent structures that have no purpose outside their own being. This is a point, Hegel says, that he has found nowhere in the literature on the subject. (A 14.269/2.632)

So Hegel begins his discussion with constructed things that are not quite works of art or buildings. Symbolic architecture begins with the tower of Babel. This tower is not a building but an artificial mountain, a point of unity for a folk that is in the process of creating itself out of scattered tribes by means of this very act of building. The tower has no meaning except willed immediate undifferentiated social unity. It is not any particular political form or particular group, but an abstract social universal.[9] (A 14.276/2.638)

In his middle phase of symbolic architecture, Hegel treats objects that are intermediate between buildings and sculpture: Indian lingams and other phallic forms as affirmations of organic life, obelisks as symbols of the sun's radiance, and sphinxes and other free-standing components of Egyptian architecture. These can be grandiose and massive, and when coordinated in rows they can have stunning architectural effects (A 14.283/2.644), but they still only indicate a meaning that is attached to them externally, just as the Egyptian temple walls have writing added on their surface.[10]

Hegel was fascinated by Egyptian architecture, about which Napoleon's expedition and recent explorations had provided new information. Egyptian temple complexes are, he thinks, open constructions with an inner multiplicity of free-standing items that work independently of one another. There are sculptures, columns, gates, rooms, and so on, but they are combined in an uncontrolled multiplication of one-thing-next-to-another. This adjacency and addition create amazing effects but remain an undisciplined plurality. So Egyptian temples as assemblages lack strict architectural beauty and purposiveness. This is shown by their ability to go on adding item after item; they have no inner limits imposed by a unifying definite meaning. Their forms are in the service of meanings that remain vague and indeterminate. Naturalistic images, large abstract ideas, and unlimited addition of parts to parts make these temples impressive, but they are not yet the clear embodiment of self-defined meaning found in

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9 Hegel also cites the tower of Belus, as described by Herodotus. He sees this as more important than Babel because its cosmological symbolism introduces differentiated meaning rather than pure abstraction.

10 For more on writing in architecture, and Hegel's treatment of Egypt, see John Sallis, *Stone*, (Indiana University Press, 1994), especially chapter 3.

classical architecture.

This adding-on and lack of clear internal limits characterizes both the thinking and the construction in symbolic art.

> Symbolic modes of representation correlate to abstract modes of thought where general representations, concepts, and philosophical categories are all mixed together, treated (by the understanding, not reason) as separable and combinable in many permutations, without any necessary links or subordinations or developments. . . . The meanings taken as content here, as in symbolic art generally, are as it were vague and general representations, elemental, variously confused and sundered abstractions of the life of nature, intermingled with thoughts of the actuality of spirit, without being ideally collected together as moments within a single subjectivity. (A 14.274/2.637)

In its last stages symbolic architecture does build enclosures, though still serving a meaning that can only be indicated rather than fully embodied. In the final division of the symbolic Hegel treats caves, such Ellora in India, and then Egyptian pyramids that enclose the place of the absent dead. With the pyramids and similar structures we see architecture beginning to subordinate itself to a purpose it encloses, rather than standing independently as a complete symbol on its own.

It is striking that enclosed spaces as such have not entered Hegel's discussion until this third sub-stage of symbolic architecture, which is described as a transition to the classical. Hegel insists that architecture is not born as a built enclosure; the Tower of Babel is a solid sign establishing a pole for spiritual unity. Hollow buildings and enclosed spaces are conceptually posterior, coming about when spiritual unity frees itself from the immediate unity with nature symbolized in early architectural erections. Hegel is disagreeing with contemporary discussions in France about "the primitive hut" as the beginning of architecture. For the Abbé Laugier, the great theorist of the primitive hut, the primal architectural act involves erection, support, and enclosure. For Hegel the primal act is marking and assembling.[11] Hegel argues that the cave or hole comes conceptually before the hut. (A 14.288/2.649) Caves do not explicitly embody an act of support. Extending a natural cave into a subterranean room unites into one seamless action extending, surrounding, supporting, and the creation of limits, producing one undivided surface that plays all these roles at once. Only in classical architecture will these various functions be differentiated and expressed by their own separated architectural elements. So, for instance, the act of supporting a roof and resisting gravity does not become presented as such until the free-standing Egyptian column loses its independence and naturalistic imagery, and becomes the classical column that presents its own act of support.[12]

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11 This creation of a pure unity by externalizing the people's will in a monument that has no other content than that externalization echoes the externalization of the will in the act of marking-making property (*Philosophy of Right*, section 58).

12 Hegel's treatment of the pyramids was emphasized in Derrida's discussion of Hegel's doctrine of meaning in "Le Puits et la Pyramides" in*Marges de la philosophie* (Editions de Minuit, 1972). There Derrida deals with Hegel's discussion of symbolic art in general as a dawning awareness of spirits's negativity, and the role of absence in meaning. Hegel treats the pyramids more straightforwardly in his section on symbolic architecture, where he sees them as transitional forms. They stand between authentically symbolic architecture trying to express a meaning that is too indeterminate to be fully expressed, and classical architecture, where both form and meaning have become determinate and perfectly matched. The pyramids no longer are united with their natural meaning, since they refer to an absent central figure, the dead pharaoh, that is individualized, though not yet in the positive and present way offered by the Greek gods. (A 14.294/2.653)

## The Transition to Classical Architecture

Classical architecture develops out of symbolic architecture when the organic forms of nature are measured by their appropriateness to definite purposes, even as those purposes become more artistic through their combination with those natural forms in more limited and individuated meanings. At the stage of symbolic architecture

> Self-consciousness . . . is not yet ready for itself, but is working, seeking, yearning, producing more and more, without final satisfaction and so without rest. For the spirit that is ready for itself finds satisfaction in a form that is appropriate to spirit, and puts bound to its production of forms. Symbolic artworks however remain more or less without boundaries. (A 14.286/2.646)

Symbolic architecture "means" through add-on assemblages that embody powerful but indefinite ideas and that lack a strong organizing form that can both differentiate and unify the whole. Classical architecture works within more determined self-conceptions of spirit and so can achieve deeper unity in a balanced distinction of form and meanings.

Classical architecture brings function and beauty into harmonious unity. It is important to note, however, that unlike many theorists Hegel does not see architecture as developing from a primitive stage of mere function into an advanced stage of architectural beauty. Such a development is familiar from the textbook division between a building and a piece of architecture: a bicycle shed is a building, but a church is architecture, because it adds decoration and symbolizes its function. Hegel does think churches are more significant but he does not think that there are any non-architectural or pre-architectural buildings that have only function. Architecture does not start with functional buildings that get decorated and refined into beauty. At the beginning *neither* function *nor* beauty are explicitly present. Symbolic architecture is pre-function as well as pre-beauty. Both function and beauty are submerged in an immediate unity with natural meaning and activity. When function and beauty do become explicit in architecture, it is because a distinction has been introduced where none was before, and in that distinction both function and beauty appear as such for the first time. Beauty and function appear together, whether in opposition or harmony.

## Classical Architecture

Only in classical architecture are beauty and function clearly distinguished, even as they come together harmoniously. This means that only classical architecture is "beautiful." Symbolic architecture is impressive, overwhelming, exciting, inspiring, but does not have the inner division and consequent balanced perfection that allows beauty to emerge. Later, romantic architecture will transcend beauty. It is classical architecture's equilibrium of form and content that allows for that balanced bodying forth that is architectural beauty.

Classical temples enclose sculptures of definite individualized gods. For Hegel, the idealized human form is the outer shape most appropriate to classical self-awareness. Greek god figures are not symbolic art's personified natural forces; they are individual subjectivities. They do not belong to immediate nature, and so they need a place designed with imagination rather than immediate natural forms. (A 14.297/2.655) Surrounding these images with an ordered structure, classical architecture shows what architecture should be (its *begriffsmässige Stellung*). The Greek temple does not try to embody some indefinite whole of

meaning, but assumes the role of housing and supporting the image of the god, and the self-conscious activity of the community; this is a free-standing self-active meaning that goes beyond the architectural form.

Because it expresses an individualized definite meaning, a classical building can be more internally differentiated. The functions fulfilled in symbolic architecture remain globally identical with the whole structure or with one or another of its loosely agglomerated parts. Neither the function nor the structure is articulated into rational divisions. Only with classical architecture will functional roles be posited as separate, and assigned to separated units of the architectural form.[13] Hegel says that "the differences [of function]. . . must come into appearance *as* differences." (A 14.318/2.674) On the other hand, it is equally necessary to unite these expressed differences of function into an harmonious whole. In that whole, the architectural forms (for instance, the divisions of the column, the parts of the architrave, the roof profile) take their necessity from conceptual divisions posited by and within the overall function of supportive enclosure.

Classical architecture asserts the building's own act of standing and enclosing. The distinctions between parts of a classical Greek temple correspond to distinctions of function: bearing loads (columns as *die materielle Anschauung des Tragens* (A 14.314/2.670)), being borne (architrave), enclosing (walls, colonnades), and so on. The classical orders are connected not to anthropomorphic imagery but to particular aspects of the notion of a building that supports securely (Doric) and gracefully (Ionic) and receives ornament (Corinthian). (A 14.323-326/2.676-680)

Hegel's most developed example is the classical Greek column. A plain post can support a roof just as well as can an articulated, fluted column, but the column posits and displays this function of support in a way that the post does not. The articulations of the column display conceptual distinctions within the act of support: the base shows rising from the ground, the capital shows ending and spreading to support, the fluting and entasis show roundness and rising, and the overall proportions show that the column results from imagination and thought rather than natural contingency.

Classical architecture thus explicitly celebrates and also overcomes the heaviness and gravity of external matter. Natural forms are transformed according to conceptual necessities that go beyond the pragmatics of construction. This transformation shows in the adaptation of wooden structural features into stone buildings. Hegel acknowledges that the historical origin many of the features of classical temples lies in the details of wooden construction. But their historical origin does not explain the rational meaning that goes beyond their wooden past. That, for instance, the capitals of columns might originate in tree branchings is at best secondary and at worst excessive in relation to the "true" deduction of the parts from the basic ideas of supporting and enclosing. Hegel says that art in general has a right, but architecture in particular has a duty, to go against the immediate forms of nature. (A 14.301/2.659)

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13 Although Hegel rejects Laugier's narrative of origins and his claim conceptual priority for corner post, Hegel does ultimately agree with Laugier in the sense that he sees the distinction of enclosure (walls) from load-bearing (columns) as a conceptual key to classical architecture, which the most authentic, though not the earliest, stage of building.

It is crucial for classical beauty that construction bring rational necessity. Nothing should appear arbitrary or contingent. Proportions are carefully calculated; forms are disciplined and abstracted. In discussing the difference between posts and columns, Hegel remarks that for an undifferentiated straight post,

> its specific length, its beginning and end seem as it were to be a negative limitation imposed by something else, or to be determined accidentally in a way that does not emerge from the post itself.

Whereas, for a shaped column

> beginning and ending are determinations implicit in the very nature of a column as support and on this account *must* come into appearance on it as constituent features of its own. (A 14.310/2.666, my emphasis)

A column should be an explicit self-referential performance of the column's function. Therefore, although excessively thin or thick columns may be perfectly able to support a roof, such columns fail to present properly their own action of support, and should be avoided.[14]

Even though the classical devices are not strictly needed for the function they perform, in that performance they allow the column to achieve self-showing beauty. Need and fitness to function alone cannot decide beauty. (A 14.314/2.670) Art makes its own demands. In classical architecture, beauty lies in the self-showing of function separated from immediate organic form. This is brought together into a closed totality whose music of proportions lifts the needed functionality into beauty. Hegel elaborates on the characterization of architecture as "frozen music" (*gefrorene Musik* (A 14.305/2.662)[15]: both music and architecture achieve a mathematical harmony of relations that are in their basics easily graspable but in their accomplishment never reducible to exact numbers and masses.

Classical beauty posits the conceptual divisions of function, and only that. Anything else is excess. In the classical Hegel is most firm in his judgments about architectural form. There should be no excess beyond the proper determinations, so Hegel feels justified in criticizing deviations from the essential tasks and forms of classical architecture. For example, quoting Goethe, (A 14.316-317/2.672-673) half columns are "un-things," since it is the nature of a column to be free-standing. Half-columns are offensive because they mix two opposed functions that have no inner necessity for being together. A true column should be round and complete in itself as it gives visible expression to the act of support. Hegel grants that half-columns may be very ancient, and may even predate free-standing columns, but they are still unacceptable mixed forms. Similarly, karyatids may use human figures as columns, but are "a purely superfluous use of these figures, because their real purpose is not to carry a load." (A

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14 A similar logic applies to other parts of the temple form. Right angles and flat planes should predominate, because any other angle or surface will appear arbitrary or contingent. The divisions of the architrave, despite their wooden origins, speak of weight being borne--if the roof were put directly on the columns this would show naked need rather than free architectural beauty. The temple roof comes to a peak not because a Greek roof has to bear a snow load, but because a peaked roof shows itself as being supported and not itself supporting anything more. See A 14.314-318/2.670-673.

15 Hegel attributes this phrase to Friedrich von Schlegel . In a note to his translation (2.662), Knox says that he was unable to find the phrase in Schlegel's writings, and wonders if Hegel heard the phrase in conversation at Jena, or if Hegel is misremembering the phrase *erstarrte Musik* found in Schelling's lectures on the philosophy of art.

14.299/2.637)[16]

Such norms are most effective in classical architecture where differentiated functions are explicitly posited. In symbolic architecture form is not controlled because there is no rationally articulated content to provide a measure; symbolic architecture is all excess. In romantic architecture the detail of decoration and other particularizations will not be defined by the overarching unity of the building. Pillar heights in symbolic and romantic architecture are under no constraints comparable to the classical orders -- in symbolic architecture there is no measure, and in romantic architecture the pillars are part of a structure whose overall showing does not depend on clearly demarcated functions, so the ratio of length to width of a Gothic pillar can become, as Hegel says, visually incalculable.

In classical architecture, then, the temple shows forth its own performative essence. This should not be confused with the temple's "program." Hegel insists that programmatic function cannot be the final determinant of the form of the building. The temple's programmatic function is to house the gods and provide a point of assembly for the community. It could fill these functions in many ways. The temple should also look like something that is housing the gods, but this too could be done in many ways. What is needed for a classical temple is that its parts each show forth their own notionally determined role or action. A column should show forth load-bearing, a roof should show forth being borne and not itself bearing. In this self-reference, the building reveals its own inner activities of standing and surrounding.

This self-showing of architectural function is posited explicitly only in classical architecture. It is missing in symbolic architecture, whose underlying categories are too undifferentiated to provide notional control of its building parts, so its forms become fantastical and multiple. On the other hand, romantic architecture includes articulated notional control but leaves the particular parts freer than the classical. Hegel finds notional necessity in the cruciform plan of a romantic church, and in its spires, but he leaves without notional guidance the different kinds of vaulting and pillars that replace the classical orders. The romantic does not lack resources to make inner distinctions but it no longer measures its performance by the natural functions that predominate in classical architecture.

Architecture also shows forth a people's the basic categories and general representations, their vision of human life and cosmic form. This too is more than the program of the building, and also more than the self-showing of classical function. The classical temple keeps the rain off the statues and provides a place of assembly; it also shows forth its support and load and enclosure. In addition it makes a harmonious and adequate expression of differentiated inner individuality in differentiated outer form, and this enacts the classical ideal of life in a harmoniously formed cosmos.[17]

**Romantic Architecture**

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16 For other examples where Hegel censures excess in classical architecture, see (A 14.3102.666) on the thickness of columns, (A 14.319/2.674) on the proportions of the whole classical temple, or (A 14.322/2.677) on Roman orders and garlands on columns.

17 There is a further task for a building. Besides fulfilling its program, expressing its own functioning, presenting its people's basic conceptions, the work stands in that larger story that is not the narrative of a single people but the story of architecture and of art as a whole.

Hegel's third stage, romantic architecture, moves beyond classical harmony. Hegel applies the term "romantic" to art that comes after the Roman Empire, not just to the self-designated "romantic" art of the early nineteenth century. His use of the term is in keeping with its original meaning as designating works written in the "romance" languages descended from Latin. However, his analysis of this art does relate to the romantic movement that he knew well in Jena. Romantic art expresses a turning inward, a celebration of interiority that transcends while affirming the exterior details of life. This produces a new relation of art and artist, a new art and a new experience of nature, all shaped by the greater inner independence and self-sufficiency of post-classical subjectivity.

Romantic architecture is typified, for Hegel, by Gothic cathedrals. In a letter to his wife describing his impressions of the Cologne cathedral, whose construction had recently recommenced. Hegel wrote:

> I searched out the Cathedral right away. The majesty and gracefulness of it, or of what exists of it, the slender proportions, the elongation in them, which do not so much give the impression of a rise as of upward flight, are worth seeing and are wholly admirable as the conception of a single human being and the enterprise of a single city. In the Cathedral one vividly beholds in every sense a different dimension, a human world of a quite different sort, as also of another time. There is no question here of utility, enjoyment, pleasure, or satisfied need, but only a spacious ambling about enveloped by high halls that exist for themselves, and, as it were, simply do not care whether people use them for whatever purpose. An empty opera house, like an empty church, has something lacking in it. We encounter here a tall forest, though admittedly a spiritual forest full of art, standing for itself, existing there regardless of whether people crawl around down below or not. It could not care less. What it is, it is for itself. It is made for itself, and whatever ambles or parades about within its walls—or tours about in it with a green oilcloth knapsack and an admittedly still unlit pipe in the mouth—is, along with the caretaker, simply lost in it. All this—standing and walking around in it—simply vanishes in it. (Letter #436, September 28, 1822, HTL 585 )

The cathedral has "room for a whole folk" (A 14.340/2.692), and their activities take place inside the great space, not outside around the building as with classical temples, whose inside spaces were small and restricted. The limited functions of the interior of the classical temple change to the open independent space of a church that is generously indifferent to what goes on. Many different things can be going on at the same time as the people, in nomadic fashion, wander through the vast receptive space that nothing can fill because it transcends them all. This space embodies and expresses spirit's new self-conception, which is a self-awareness of its own self-recollective motion beyond any finite function. The classical temple gathers the surrounding people and their landscape around its central point, while the Gothic cathedral opens onto a new interior landscape.[18]

This new architecture goes beyond the classical harmony of structural elements and differentiated functional tasks. It creates a new totality that overreaches the explicit internal divisions of classical function.

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18 Hegel claims that it was French influence and taste that blinded the Germans to the validity of their Gothic tradition. (A 14.330/2.684) By so celebrating the Gothic Hegel was going against contemporary French and Italian tastes, but also downplaying native German Baroque/Rococo's church forms. See Karsten Harries, *The Bavarian Rococo Church* (Yale, 1983).

> [The romantic building] has and displays a definite purpose; but in its grandeur and sublime peace it is lifted above anything purely utilitarian into an infinity in itself. (A 14.331/2.685)

Such buildings are

> entirely suitable for [their functional goals], but their real character lies precisely in the fact that they transcend any specific end and, as perfect in themselves, stand there on their own account. Therefore no simple relation of the understanding determines the character of the whole. (A 14.331/2.684)

Romantic architecture unites the independent meaning of the symbolic with the serviceable subordination of the classical. It does not mix these indiscriminately; the romantic building serves but reaches beyond service, as its motion goes beyond any limited god-figure within. The classical is the realm of organic totality, where parts have a precise function in terms of the self-referential showing of the whole. The romantic expresses a unity that includes but goes beyond such functional divisions to embrace both the particularity of its individual parts (the statues, the arches, the decorations) and the life of a substantial whole which moves beyond them. This is a spirit whose turn inward is also a rising to the universal. Hegel says that the unity of such buildings escapes the standard concepts of part and whole, or means and end. (A 14.331/2.685) The calculable proportions of the classical give way to a whole beyond measure that expresses spatially the gathering into itself of a subjectivity that overcomes the division of inner and outer. This goes beyond all classical considerations of function and means, because spirit's process of self-recollection becomes its own end.

The romantic cathedral is closed in upon its own interiority and open to an inner infinite motion of self-recollection that transcends finite subjectivity. This differs from the classical temple that stands open to the finite surroundings while serving images of well-defined individual gods. As a consequence, the mediating architectural spaces and broad outlooks of the classical temple disappear. Columns move inside and become pillars. The colonnade of the classical temple opens outward toward the natural and social world, but the windows of the Gothic church rise up to the indeterminate openness of the sky and a light other than the Greek sun.[19]

Instead of restfully bearing weight, the romantic building rises upwards. Instead of the classical roof that bespeaks the labor of being supported by the columns, the romantic building reaches for the sky in with its spires and towers. Inside, what were classical columns now have a new vocation. Columns become pillars, rising upwards freely, bearing a load without visible effort within a movement that cannot be defined by the task of resisting gravity. (A 14.336/2.689) Their movement no longer carries one down to the supportive earth; one's glance is carried upward into the pointed arches and tracery. With this come other changes: capitals are reduced and the ratio of base to height is no longer subject to visible

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19 At the end of his discussion of romantic architecture Hegel briefly discusses the art of gardening. (A 14.349/2.699)He admits that the Italian and French do gardens best. Gardens should offer a second nature, a man made landscape surrounding the building. English garden may be painterly and picturesque, but they do not fulfill the function of a garden. A garden park that seems so natural is a great achievement. It brings design in what appears undesigned. Such parks are more like symbolic architecture, and they lack the proper subordinate function of a garden. Their fascination does not last; they become boring because in their lack of precise form their inner richness remains indefinite. They lack the Gothic combination of definite form and inner infinity. (A 14.350) The Italians and the French make gardens that are architectural, not painterly. They have lines, order, symmetry, rules. Yet they are not abstracted from the human; they change nature's expanse into a wider dwelling under an open sky. (A 14.350) Hegel's failure to appreciate the "soul" of English (and oriental) gardens shows the essential modernism of his conception of self-consciousness.

proportion.

The romantic harks back to the symbolic because it reintroduces explicit natural forms into architecture. A cathedral is more forest than fortress, a natural growth rather than a mechanical means-end combination. Its tracery resembles a canopy of trees. (A 14.335/2.688) Hegel is however skeptical about supposed deeper meanings some contemporaries found in this nature symbolism or in mathematical ratios of different parts of the structure. He disparages speculation about mystical correspondences and magic numbers. These do not provide anything deeper or more beautiful, and they overlook the clearly laid out depths (*klar dargestellt Tiefe*) found in the plan and overall structure.[20] (A 14.339/2.691)

Unlike the classical temple where outside articulations guide the placement of the plainer interior rooms, the Gothic cathedral's complex interior dominates its exterior surface, whose windows and divisions show the internal pillars and side walkways and balconies. But the outside also asserts itself too, in spires (A 14.343/2.694) and in the towers that concentrate the mass of the building into an incalculable height.

This architecture finds the inner in heavy massive matter. The Gothic dematerializes mass and turns the stubborn inertness of matter into ubiquitous decoration. Everything is broken into parts, into an incomprehensible infinity of particular shapes and forms that yet are held within an overall unity. (A 14.344/2.695)

> [In the Gothic cathedral] the substance of the whole is dismembered and shattered into the endless divisions of a world of individual variegations, but this incalculable multiplicity is divided in a simple way, articulated regularly, dispersed symmetrically, both moved and firmly set in the most satisfying eurhythmy, and this length and breadth of varied details is gripped together unhindered into the most secure unity and clearest independence. (A 14.331/2.685)

Hegel's describes romantic architecture as accomplishing a complex task with grace and transcendence. If the classical surrounds a usable interior and expresses that function with an articulation and harmony that symbolic architecture cannot achieve, the romantic does all this and more. It is not indifferent to function but overreaches it in a movement of recollection and inward transcendence. If the classical posits the essential divisions in its own concept in a way that the symbolic never could (because it had no unified concept), the romantic also posits its internal divisions, yet it affirms an intenser unity than the classical.

But if this is so, why does Hegel say that it is the classical that is the most authentic and proper stage of architecture? Hegel would admit that romantic architecture's deeper unity is more dialectically complete than is classical balance, which he describes as abstract and dry. But he would insist that the Ideal of art implies a perfect equilibrium of a self-articulated inner meaning and a proportioned outer form, which is best achieved in classical architecture. The symbolic lacks articulated meaning and the romantic weakens the harmony because the inner has begun to predominate. The classical does best among architectural forms what all art is to do, and the classical building best balances inner meaning with the distinctive marks

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20 Hegel claims a conceptual necessity for the cruciform plan of the Gothic cathedral. As the place of recollection it must have a closed outline, but as the mediation of finite and infinite, it must express the concrete unity of expressly distinct aspects. So it can't have a regular abstract shape without divisions. So it cannot continue the classical temple's rectanglar form.

of architecture, the externality of meaning and the act of juxtaposing unorganic materials. Hegel also asserts that architecture finds its proper concept at the classical stage precisely because at that state architecture is *not* able to bring the spiritual to a fully appropriate external existence. Romantic architecture is trying to be more than architecture; the classical puts spiritless matter into service of the spirit within, without denying the externality and heaviness of matter. (A 14.303/2.660)

But then, we might reply, since architecture always involves externality of purpose and juxtaposed elements, and since architecture cannot ever embody the differentiated innerness of spirit—which is why architecture remains low on the hierarchy of the arts—then should not the *symbolic* be the most authentic stage of architecture? Hegel would agree that architecture remains overall a symbolic art, and that symbolic architecture shows best the properly architectural mode of signification, tied to an external meaning. But symbolic architecture does not yet contain the necessary individuated and self-articulated totality of meaning found in the classical world-view.

Still, it remains striking that it is the middle of the three stages of architecture that is the most perfect. There is something about architecture that Hegel finds inappropriate for the third position of dialectical synthesis. Art of any kind can never be a full dialectical completion, since such completion involves a process of self-consciousness that for Hegel cannot be captured in art's external expressions.[21]

**Questions About Hegel's Narrative**

There are puzzling aspects to each of Hegel's three stages of architecture. The symbolic is something of a catch-all category and encloses too much architectural history under too few rubrics. It is also curious that while architecture is the symbolic art par excellence, it is in symbolic *verbal* art that Hegel finds an explicitly posited externality of image to meaning. There is no stage of symbolic architecture that expresses the externality of architectural meaning as such.[22]

There are also problems with Hegel's notion of the classical. Hegel maintains its purity only by a too rigorous exclusion of naturalistic and other "excesses" of meaning. Are the Greek temple forms really so purely dominated by self-showing functions? Naturalistic meaning may not be quite so transformed as Hegel would like, and Greek columns not so far from the naturalistic imagery dominating the shape of Egyptian building parts.[23] And is the Egyptian temple really as un-classical as Hegel says? To maintain the purity of the Greek, Hegel stresses the lack of organic unity in the Egyptian temple compound, It is important for him

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21 A deeper problem may lie behind this issue about the relative perfection of the different stages of architecture. There may be, despite what Hegel says, many non-parallel axes along which the developmental story could be ordered. This problem is evident, for example, in Hegel's treatment of the various historical religions. See Louis Dupré, "Transitions and Tensions in Hegel's Treatment of Determinate Religion," in *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (SUNY Press, 1992).

22 For more about this puzzling lack in Hegel's views, see my "The Spirit of Gravity: Architecture and Externality" (in *Hegel and Aesthetics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000, 83.96).

23 See, for example, George Hersey, *The Lost Meaning of Classical Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988).

that those temples not be true surroundings or housings for the god within, so he exaggerates their structural openness. A more accurate parallel to the Egyptian temple compound is not the individual Greek temple but the Greek acropolis with its assemblage of buildings of various types, its outside altars, free-standing statues, and twisty processional ways. If this is compared to the Egyptian temple compound, their differences are less decisive.

Romantic architecture is puzzling for other reasons. It covers a long history but culminates in the medieval Gothic. In his treatments of painting and verbal art Hegel insists on the difference between medieval art and modern secular art. But in his treatment of architecture there is no movement beyond the medieval, except for a brief and unsatisfactory reference to modern gardens. Much is left out: the Renaissance, the Baroque, the Neoclassical, and the proto-modern. Where is the secular world? In discussing the other arts, especially painting and fiction, Hegel does deal with the secular life of the modern bourgeois. But there is no architectural parallel to his discussion of novels and or of Dutch painting. What is odd, of course, is that such architecture was all around him as he wrote.

A partial excuse for Hegel's seeming blindness might be his deliberate focus on building types that are central monuments rather than everyday buildings. This fits his aiming at the central self-consciousness of a people. He says that vernacular architecture is under too many pragmatic constraints to fully express basic self-conceptions. It cannot have true beauty but only decoration. However, this argument with which Hegel excludes earlier domestic and industrial architecture fails when applied to modern bourgeois life. There it is precisely the day to day world and economic life that houses our central self-expression. We may build central monuments, but we no longer live in an age centered on heroic kings or temples. In the world of Hegel's rational state, where the king is a functionary, where one finds one's place by maturing into a secular role in the economy, cathedrals may still celebrate a religious self-consciousness of the whole, but spirit's concrete existence is no longer dependent on central displays; it will be found in ordinary buildings. Hegel is aware of this when he treats secular Dutch paintings, or modern novels, or Goethe's poetry--why not with architecture? I discuss below what might happen to his ideas if we revised the treatment of architecture in line with the treatment of other secular arts.

There are other historical lacks in Hegel's discussion of architecture. Compared to his treatment philosophy and literature, he gives minimal treatment of non-Western architecture. This seems due to a restricted diet of examples joined to an overall vision of the all non-western civilizations as expressing undifferentiated conceptual unities.

Within the west Hegel seriously downplays Roman architecture, which is for him a transitional form. The Romans added new building types and improved private architecture, but they lacked the Greek sense of fitness for purpose and artistic refinement. (A 14.329/2.682) Usefulness was their major concern, with beauty only as surface decoration. Even that key Roman architectural form, the arch, is for Hegel a transition away from the Greek beam toward the Gothic pointed arch. But at least Hegel mentions Roman architecture. He ignores the Renaissance and the Baroque, and French architecture in general. Perhaps he might argue that the Renaissance offers nothing new, since his theory is not equipped to deal with "neo" architectural styles; revivals do not fit well into his narrative.[24]

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24 In his political discussions he does not avoid discussing revivals of older political institutions in new transformed contexts.

Finally, we should note again how Hegel ignores his contemporary architecture, even as he is celebrating contemporary writers and some contemporary composers. Schinkel's dramatic buildings were refashioning the center of Berlin as Hegel wrote, but aside from a few mentions of Schinkel's new museum in a letter and lecture, Hegel ignores both the Neoclassical buildings and Schinkel's proto-modern office buildings for government ministries.

It is tempting to excuse Hegel by citing his lack of experience and his dependence on secondary sources.[25] He had not studied architecture directly and his travels never took him to Italy or Greece, so he had little direct experience of ancient and Renaissance architecture. For descriptions of buildings he was not personally familiar with, Hegel often relied on the work of his Berlin colleague Alois Hirt, whom he cites more than any other author on architecture, especially Hirt's *Die Geschichte der Baukunst bei den Alten* (Berlin: Reimer, 1821-27).[26] Hirt's volumes describe the ancient lands, then their buildings, divided according to peoples and ages, with many long citations from ancient authorities such as Herodotus and Strabo.[27] Hegel follows Hirt very closely in some descriptions, for instance in his discussion of the tower of Belus.

But reliance on Hirt is not a sufficient explanation of Hegel's choices about what to include and what to omit. Fur instance, Hirt starts his narrative with Egyptian temples, and begins his discussion of Greek architecture with forts and monuments, whereas Hegel develops quite different beginnings for his own discussion of symbolic and classical architecture. Also, Hirt ranges far more widely than Hegel, including chapters on Phoenician and Israelite architecture, Greek dwelling houses, and Hellenistic buildings, plus almost three hundred pages on Roman architecture. So Hegel's avoidance of such topics must be seen as intentional. And there is no doubt that Hegel did experience contemporary styles in Berlin and Paris and Vienna, so it is difficult to find a suitable rationale for their exclusion.

**Hegel's Concepts and Today's Architecture**

In this final section I examine how Hegel's theory of architecture might be modified to deal with the situation of architecture in our contemporary world, then I discuss some features of today's architecture that pose difficulties even for those updated Hegelian concepts.

Suppose that we wanted to fill in the gap in Hegel's theory concerning contemporary

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25 Hegel usually discusses building types (temples, cathedrals, tombs, etc.) rather than individual named buildings. Among named buildings, symbolic architecture mentions more than the other two stages put together (fourteen in the symbolic, five in the classical, and four in the romantic, plus two gardens). The symbolic also includes more citations of other writers (twelve in the symbolic, four in the classical, and one in the romantic). Of the fourteen separate books cited, six are ancient writers, four are French and English accounts of discoveries in Egypt, and four are contemporary Germans (Hirt, Goethe, Schlegel, and Creuzer).

26 Hegel's personal architectural experience was influenced by Hirt as well; in a letter written during a journey to Prague Hegel mentions that he is visiting the buildings that Hirt had recommended in conversation.

27 Hirt's work is not just descriptive; he seeks to discover the patterns and laws (*Gesetzen, Grundsatze, Einrichtungen*) that lie behind the forms of each type of ancient building. In the third volume of his history, Hirt implies that his goal was become the Winckelman of architecture.

architecture, his own and by extension ours as well. We might be tempted to look for a central building type. For Hegel, classical architecture and romantic architecture are each organized around a basic type: the classical house enclosure become a temple, and the Gothic cathedral rising from within. What building type now expresses the contemporary shape of spirit? Where are our modern bourgeois cathedrals?[28]

If we must pick a central building type, it might be a modernist office building such as Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building or Norman Foster's Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank.[29] More recently civic cultural centers and museums have taken on important symbolic roles, such as I. M. Pei's Louvre pyramid, Richard Meier's Getty acropolis and Frank Gehry's Bilbao museum, with their cousins in hundreds of cities.[30]

But should we be looking for a central building type? Symbolic architecture did not present one basic type; could that be true again today? It might seem that for Hegel that would be a regression, since spirit has now come to itself, and it needs some architectural expression for that coming together. But is that necessarily so?

Romantic art, Hegel says, ushers in the age of prose, when spirit is turned towards its own secular creativity. The age of the classic hero is over. Prose is varied and does not culminate in a central drama. Yet for Hegel the prosaic age of bourgeois and bureaucrats expresses a deeper inwardness than the classical heroes ever achieved. So we might argue that we do not need a central *architectural* expression of spirit's unity. Hegel said that in the romantic age spirit is not found in a perfect statue in a central temple but is the very movement between the finite and the infinite (*Gott als dieser Wechsel* (A 13.119/1.86)).[31] Spirit's movement works itself out in the prose of the modern state and economy, and in a philosophy that goes beyond embodied symbols. The self-consciously prosaic spirit should find itself in a spread of everyday buildings.

Romantic painting and literature, for Hegel, find spirit's depth in the details of ordinary

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*28* It is something of a cliché to label some building type "our modern cathedral": office buildings, suspension bridges, superhighway systems, skyscrapers, and spacecraft have all been so baptized. If we must seek such a central type, I would be tempted to suggest that we look to suburban mixed use developments. It might be useful to discuss these in the light of Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City polemic, which mixes Hegelian and anti-Hegelian themes.

*29* During Hegel's lifetime Schinkel was erecting not only Berlin's great central theater and museum but also a set of proto-modern office buildings derived from English mill architecture.

*30* See Karsten Harries' discussion of the multiplicity of building types that can now serve as symbolic gathering points for community, in the last chapter of his*The Ethical Function of Architecture*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997).

*31* "The compact unity in itself which the god has in sculpture disperses into the plurality of the inner lives of individuals whose unity is not sensuous but purely ideal. And so only here is God himself truly spirit, spirit in his community, God as this to-and-fro, as this exchange of his inherent unity with his actualization in subjective knowing and its individualization as well as in the universality and union of the multitude. In the community God is released alike from the abstraction of undeveloped self-identity and from his sculptural representation as immediately immersed in a bodily medium . . . . so now what becomes on its own account an object of artistic representation is the most manifold subjectivity in its living movement and activity as human passion, action, and adventure, and, in general, the wide range of human feeling, willing, and neglect." (A 13.119/1.85-86)

secular life. They no longer need grand mythological or religious content. Yet Hegel does not describe romantic architecture as prosaic, except for brief remarks on gardens and on Gothic city halls; he keeps the Gothic cathedral as a central focus. In our revision of his theory, we might apply to architecture that concentration on the ordinary that Hegel attributes to romantic painting and literature.

Hegel could be read as taking a step in this direction even in his treatment of classical art. Speaking of the walls and colonnades of Greek temples, he says that

> In these prostyles and amphiprostyles, these single and double colonnades, which led directly to the free open air, we see people wandering openly and freely, individually or in accidental groupings; for the colonnades as such enclose nothing but are the boundaries of open thoroughfares, so that people walking in them are half indoors and half outside and at least can always step directly into the free open air. In the same way the long walls behind the columns do not admit of any crowding to a central point to which the eye could turn when the passages were full; on the contrary, the eye is more likely to be turned away from such a central point, in every direction. Instead of having an idea of a gathering together with a goal, we see a direction outwards, and get the idea of people staying there cheerfully, without serious purpose, idle, and just chatting. (A 14.320/2.675)

Here Hegel describes a relaxed, loquacious, un-economical passing of communal time, enabled by an architecture that is turned outward rather than toward an inner focus. Hegel's Greek temple is acting somewhat like Heidegger's, opening a world. Such dwelling resembles the symbolic in not expressing a clearly defined central meaning, but it also resembles the romantic: like the Cologne cathedral, it offers a space not dominated by function, not even by the self-showing constructional function of classical architecture. Yet unlike the romantic it does not turn inward or upward in a motion beyond the agora.[32]

In such a world the architect need not be restrained to central styles and momuments. Architects could act as Hegel describes modern painters working with a historical repertory of themes and styles.

> The artist's attitude to his topic is on the whole much the same as the dramatist's who brings on the scene and delineates different characters who are strangers to him. . . . For this purpose he needs his supply of pictures, modes of configuration, earlier forms of art which, taken in themselves, are indifferent to him and only become important if they seem to him to be those most suitable for precisely this or that material. . . . However much he puts his heart into the given topic, that topic yet always remains to him a material which is not in itself directly the substance of his own consciousness. (Hegel 1975, 605-6)

The artist's relation to historical particulars would resemble the Gothic cathedral's relation to its riotous mass of detailed decoration. Just as no single statue captures the movement expressed by the cathedral as a whole, so the motion of the modern spirit gathering into a self-awareness of its own motion cannot be captured in a single historical style. Our

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*32* Such a postmodern passing of time (*Ver-weil-en*) could be self-conscious communal life in a stronger way than an agoraic life looking out from the columned porch. This dwelling could have become aware of itself as expressing itself in art. The building could publicly perform in a communal narrative about art and architecture's career. Then the perspective of the philosophical observer and that of the observed community could come together. This would perhaps be an artistic parallel to the achievement of self-consciousness in the modern state, or to the way the "we" and the observed consciousness come together at the end of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

community is beyond any one representation of itself, and can refuse grand central symbols. So there need be no single style or centralizing architectural monument for our fully prosaic world.

What I have just described draws from Hegel's account of the other romantic arts to update his discussion of romantic architecture. But there are aspects of architecture today that resist this prosaic Hegelian treatment.

The first difficulty is our denial of materiality. Hegel wanted architecture to show heavy masses subject to the law of gravity. (A 13.120/1.87) But our world is dispensing with the show of heaviness, and lessening the effect Hegel considered it necessary for architecture to express. New materials and complex mathematical manipulations create buildings that do not appear tied to gravity and weight. Some are inflated membranes held up by the air within them; some are supported by tension members rather than compression; some, such as recent Frank Gehry buildings, emphasize their materiality as spread and twist but not as heavy. Such buildings neither visibly support weight, as in the Greek temple, nor rise beyond it, as in the Gothic cathedral.

Someday, "buildings" in space habitats will not have to support weight at all. Generations might grow up where matter would be experienced as opaque and impermeable (to keep in the air and to separate interior spaces) but not as weighty or demanding support. Structural loads would be distributed differently, holding the structure together around one or more centers rather than holding it above a ground plane. If all or parts of the structure have to rotate in order to provide a healthful effect of weight, its structural loads will be holding the floor in rather than holding the roof up.

An even deeper dematerialization is coming sooner than space habitats. We already see the beginnings of an architecture of pure image. Buildings become screens for giant displays. And in theme parks and other emphatic environments, constructional and functional expression becomes completely subordinated to image and meaning. This dematerialization will increase with virtual reality. In a virtual world, the resistance of materiality becomes a planned effect. Not only the architecture but also the physics can be designed at will--frozen music indeed.

Whether in a virtual world or in Times Square and Disney World, the materiality of architecture disappears into meaning and intention. Hegel might say that such dematerialized buildings are no longer architecture but sculpture. But we might reply with his own claim, cited earlier, that while art in general has a *right* to go against natural form, architecture has the *duty* to do so, now even against the form of materiality itself. (A 14.301) Would Hegel then see this as the final triumph of spirit and romantic subjectivity over heavy matter? Perhaps, but he might better object that such dematerialization deprives spirit of one of its constitutive relationships. Blunt matter offers a kind of otherness that needs to be expressed, not transformed into more intimate relations. Spirit and subjectivity should be dialectical, not simply dominant, in relation to nature and otherness.[33] Architecture shows that side of the

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*33* Many buildings today also take an ironic stance toward their "official" meaning and function. Such designs pose no major problems for Hegel's theory, formed as it was in the era of ironic novelists and poets. Hegel has much to say about the self-conscious, self-deprecating or self-destructive irony and humor that form the later stages of romantic verbal art. For Hegel this showed art reaching its limits, almost unable to contain the movement of subjectivity. But when some buildings become conceptual art, and when philosophical or critical footnotes become essential to the experience of the building, is this a new kind of architecture or a new kind of

world that cannot be fully incorporated into spirit's meaning-giving activity. To deny that resistance would be to diminish spirit's awareness of its own nature and action.

The second difficulty with contemporary architecture, from a Hegelian point of view, is that as materiality becomes pliable and light, meaning becomes opaque and resistant. Aggressively arbitrary and anti-necessary works have appeared in architecture as in the other arts. Peter Eisenman's designs often offer too much or too little meaning. In Rem Koolhaas's "big" constructions, parts insist on themselves without fitting into a harmonious totality. The open assemblages of symbolic architecture return with a vengeance. At the other extreme, buildings by Tadao Ando or by Herzog and DeMeuron strive for a closedness that resists incorporation into narratives or reflections. They too resemble symbolic art, except that their resistance is more self-aware.

These two difficulties with contemporary architecture might seem to complement each other to Hegel's advantage. Could the non-self-transparency of meaning replace the lost heaviness of opaque materiality? Perhaps, but it would change the bearing of other Hegelian concepts. For Hegel, the enigmatic Egyptian temple assemblages are overcome when the Greek temple closes around a statue that presents individualized subjectivity as absolute. In romantic architecture, we know the subject as self-present meaning-activity.[34] To use current jargon, such subjectivity resembles a transcendental signified beyond the maze of inter-relating symbols. Much of current art and architecture strives to avoid such reference. If Hegelian concepts could be used at all in this artistic situation, they would need to emphasize the motion of spirit rather than any subjective center. The crucial issue then would become the self-coincidence of that motion as it comes to itself in art. Could that too have become prosaic and spread into the multiple and everyday, rather than being gathered at a central pinnacle? If so, our architecture could be described as showing the lack of coherence, the many-ness and opacity of symbolic art, along with the self-aware movements of romantic art, yet without any classical final embodiment or romantic pure self-presence. At this point, would such concepts still be Hegelian? Perhaps they would have been stretched beyond his limits. Or perhaps they could be taken as another example of his notion of the end of art, of a self-awareness that cannot have a final artistic locus. Then the debate about the adequacy of Hegel's ideas for our situation would turn to his concept of philosophy as the final coming together of spirit in and for itself, which is a topic that exceeds the architecture of this essay.

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hybrid verbal art, or is it leaving the confines of what Hegel understands as art?

*34* The subject is *Bedeuntende für sich* (A 13.406/1.313), *anundfürsichseienden Bedeutung* (A 13.465/1.361).