European Romantic Review
Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713642184

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Online publication date: 16 June 2010

To cite this Article Pinkard, Terry(2010) 'How to Move from Romanticism to Post-Romanticism: Schelling, Hegel, and Heine', European Romantic Review, 21: 3, 391 — 407
To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/10509585.2010.484642
URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2010.484642

European Romantic Review
Vol. 21, No. 3, June 2010, 391–407

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

How to Move from Romanticism to Post-Romanticism: Schelling, Hegel, and Heine

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Kant's conception of nature's having a "purposiveness without a purpose" was quickly picked by the Romantics and made into a theory of art as revealing the otherwise hidden unity of nature and freedom. Other responses (such as Hegel's) turned instead to Kant's concept of judgment and used this to develop a theory that, instead of the Romantics' conception of the non-discursive manifestation of the absolute, argued for the discursively articulable realization of conceptual truths. Although Hegel did not argue for the "end of art" (although it is widely held that he did just that), he did, curiously enough, claim that it is art and not philosophy which tells us about the "life" of agents. To see how he reconciles that claim with his otherwise entirely discursively oriented philosophy, it is necessary to look at his thesis of the end of art's "absolute" importance. Hegel's worries have to do with the impossibility of fully exhibiting the "inner" in the "outer" in modern art and with the newly emerging problem of "fraudulence" in the poet's voice. This is illustrated by examples drawn from the history of music and the problems besetting the lyric poet in modern life. Because of these problems, we are, Hegel says, now "amphibious animals" having to live in different and seemingly incompatible worlds. Hegel's student, Heinrich Heine, found that the only satisfactory way of responding to this was for the modern artist to adopt a distinctive type of irony in response to the Hegel's worries about modern art. This form of irony, it is argued, is itself Hegelian in spirit.

Kant claimed that we could make no theoretical sense of freedom, but – both since we had to presuppose it in all practical deliberation and since he took himself to have shown that we have no knowledge of things in themselves – Kant concluded that we could get along just fine with that theoretical impasse. Yet, in one almost throwaway line in his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant spoke of the aesthetic experience of natural beauty as nonetheless providing us with the "indeterminate concept of the supersensible substrate of appearances" that itself would be "neither nature nor freedom and yet [would be] linked with the basis of freedom" (213, 229).[1] In doing so, he thus practically invited some of his immediate successors to imagine that in his Prussian heart perhaps even Kant himself was some kind of Spinozist. In particular, to the young Schelling, Kant's proposal suggested a way of taking up Kant's own claim that, in addition to theoretical and practical judgments, there was a different and distinct form of judgment, namely, the aesthetic, which, so Schelling hypothesized, would be somehow more fundamental than the other two.[2] If so, this would have the implication that the traditional task to be accomplished by pure reason – to provide meaningful metaphysical judgments – could be shifted over to aesthetic judgment, or, even better,

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ISSN 1050-9585 print/ISSN 1740-4657 online

DOI: 10.1080/10509585.2010.484642
http://www.informaworld.com

to aesthetic *experience*, instead of being handed over to practical reason (and its moralistic tendencies) as Kant himself had proposed. It took a lot of steps, but it was a relatively short distance from that shift to aesthetic judgment to the conclusion that if one really wanted to complete the Kantian program, one would need to turn to the embodied, aesthetic experience of *art* to get at what was neither nature nor freedom but the supersensible substrate of both.[3]

Why art? One possible answer lies in a concept that, as far as I can tell, the early Schelling never mentions but which could not have been far from his mind, namely, Kant's idea in the third *Critique* of "purposiveness without a purpose." Reason can demonstrate no teleological order to the world, but in making aesthetic judgments *we* seem to be presupposing that there is indeed a purpose satisfied by natural beauty which nonetheless cannot be stated, just as in conducting scientific research we operate as if the world has been made so as to harmonize with our attempts to know it, even though we know (thanks to the critical philosophy) that we cannot demonstrate such purposiveness. Moreover, the fact that we continually find organisms in nature (including ourselves) for which such purposiveness seems to be in play without there being any further purpose to the organisms themselves – there is no purpose to the earthworm's or the songbird's life, even though their distinct organs function purposively – suggested to Schelling that a comprehension of nature that did not have a place for *life* in it had to be distorted, and, following Kant, that we could neither assume nor conclude that a "creator" had constructed the world so as to make this possible. Since as self-conscious creatures subject to normative constraint, we seek a purpose for our lives, and since the grip of norms on us is as basic as anything else, we seek a grasp of ourselves as living creatures in a delicately balanced whole that would convey to us our sense of ourselves as having a direction in life that nonetheless was not a direction taken in light of fulfilling an already set purpose.

Nonetheless, even if life has no purpose set in advance, it does have purposiveness; hence, if one puts all those thoughts together, one arrives at the early Schelling's key idea, namely, that the key concept in that life must be that of freedom, of (somehow) giving oneself a purpose. Now, since one cannot simply give oneself a purpose from out of the blue, one must instead construct one's purpose from one's sense of how one is embedded in the larger scheme of things. This was exactly what philosophy as traditional metaphysics could not fully provide even though it could articulate the conditions for the apprehension of this purposiveness. Thus, even if there was no set purpose to life, as there supposedly had been for the premoderns (for example, that of living a duly Christian life), life was not therefore without purpose. To know that purpose meant to be able to situate oneself within the world as a whole such that one could take on the purpose most suited to oneself, given one's own idiosyncratic talents, and so on. To set oneself in the greater whole, the "one and all," was itself an act of freedom, and this, according to Schelling, was the purposiveness giving us a purpose as we constructed it. Since the grasp of freedom itself could not be theoretical – Kant had shown, or so the young Schelling seemed to assume, that pure reason in its theoretical employment simply ends up in antinomies and that the practical realm only gave an assurance but not the proof of freedom – the reality of freedom had to come thorough an intellectual intuition, namely, that of seeing how both nature and freedom come together in the "indeterminate supersensible substrate" of appearances. Schelling came to call that supersensible substrate "the absolute," the "pure identity" out of which both freedom and nature emerged. When in his 1798 poem, "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth spoke of feeling "[a] motion and a spirit, that impels / All

thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things" (*Selected Poems* 68), it is not unfair to see this more or less as Schelling set to music.

We can put the young Schelling's program into a slogan: Modernity and the metaphysical without metaphysics, but with art instead.[4] This way of responding to the incoherence of metaphysics also suggested another, non-Schellingian avenue for responding to Kant: Perhaps we should simply accept the deeply discursive incoherence of our grasp of the "one and all," and accept that our lives must therefore be lived in fragments; the desire for a "big story" about how the fragments fit together, on that view, is, like traditional metaphysics itself, a recognizably human but a nonetheless futile wish.[5] Novalis comes closest to establishing explicitly how to carry out that idea of post-philosophical life when he notes that "the philosopher lives on problems as the human being does on food. An insoluble problem is an indigestible food … A problem is truly solved when it is destroyed as such" (68).[6] Thus, rather than looking to metaphysics or to Schelling's emerging *Naturphilosophie* for illumination, on that view of the fragmentary life, we should look in some other direction. But where? Novalis himself actually suggests two different answers to that question in one paragraph of his *Logological Fragments* – namely, in his well known remark about "making the world Romantic." Only if we make the world Romantic, he claims, can we uncover the "original meaning" of the world itself (60).[7] That cuts two ways. On the one hand, perhaps we are supposed to transform our dull, bourgeois, prosaic world into something deeper and more meaningful; on the other hand, perhaps what is required is not transforming the world but coming to terms with its original, but now concealed, meaning. But which? Do we learn to live with "the everyday" instead of trying to flee it, or do we transform "the everyday" to make it more Romantic? Or both? Or do we just live with the contradiction and look to poetry to provide a non-discursive balance between the two?

Yet another response came from Schelling's former Tübingen roommate, Hegel, and it had to do with the dissatisfaction all three seminarians (Hölderlin included) had with the way they thought Kant had not shown how concepts (or more generally, the intellect, or even "thought" itself) are to be linked, using the broad rubric of the time, to "life." In particular, this became expressed as discontent with the idea that the paradigm of linking thought to life could consist merely of the quasi-legal application of a rule to a determinate content. This supposed that prior to all applications (or "life"), one could set forth a rule possessing a determinate meaning, and that, having done so, the only issue remaining would be how one linked the determinate meaning (or "rule") with its application. To be sure, everybody (Kant included) knew that this model of rule/application also required an act of judgment – that there could not, on pain of regress, be a rule for applying the rule – but that still presupposed the rule/application model itself. In confronting his own dissatisfaction with this model, Hegel articulated an alternative, to which we can give a general rubric of a "meaning/use" model: The meaning of concepts cannot be determined outside of an understanding of the role that they play – the use that they have – in "life," but the meaning is nonetheless not identical with that use (nor can it be completely reduced to it). Hegel's core idea was that the way a concept is put to use – its particularization (or, in his terms, its "actualization") – makes a difference to the content of a concept. Or, to put it another way: One does not so much apply concepts to practice; one works them out in practice. The rule/application model seemed, if nothing else, too mechanical, too inattentive to distinctiveness of the particular.[8] Thus, what was called for was not an intuition of how universals and particulars come together, but a logic, as it were, of meaning and use (that is, of concepts and their realization).

Hegel's remark on Schelling in his Berlin lectures on the history of philosophy sums up his view of where Schelling got it right and where he got it wrong:

> One side [of Schelling's views] leads nature up to the subject, and the other leads the "I" up to the object. However, [Schelling's program] could only be carried out in a logical manner, for the latter contains pure thoughts; it is the logical approach that Schelling never achieves in the presentation of his views and in his own development. (*Werke* 435)[9]

That is, on Hegel's reading, the "dynamic" of self-conscious life and nature that has its purposiveness without any pre-given purpose does not imply that one must therefore intellectually intuit the unity of the two without being able to give any further discursive account.[10] What Hegel proposes is that another way of reading "purposiveness without a purpose" is to see it in terms of a "logic" that propels itself from one position to another such that it eventually exhausts all of its moves and comes to a grasp of itself as what has been propelling the movement all along. Strikingly, this is not a teleological system in the ordinary sense; there is no purpose that is there beforehand such that one can say that such and such move was made in order to achieve that purpose. (Standard teleological explanation explains an action or a movement in terms of the purpose which was actually aimed at.) In this way, Hegel thought that even history itself was to be understood as having purposiveness without a purpose; spirit progresses, but it does not aim at anything in its progression, even though, as he also thought, by 1807 it had actually exhausted the logic of its development and had come to realize what the last stage of the dialectic, at least abstractly, looks like. Unlike Schelling's view of "absolute identity," and unlike the Novalis/Schlegel "Fragments" view, Hegel's alternative made a strong case for the discursive grasp of the "absolute." That has strong implications for how we might think that art can exhibit the grasp of the absolute that Romantics demanded of it.

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It is no accident that both Hegel's and Romanticism's contentions about this coincided with the rise of music coming to be viewed as the "deepest" of the arts because it is the "most subjective." As E.T.A. Hoffmann put it in his 1813 essay on Beethoven, of all the arts, music alone takes "the infinite" – that is, the unconditioned – as the only standard against it which it can measured (1193).[11] It is a commonplace to note that European music after the Renaissance had begun to use harmony to capture a sense of purposive, forward movement within itself. To take off from a point originally made by Adorno and which has been picked up recently by Karol Berger: Prior to the age of Bach, much of Western music had used techniques of harmony to capture a sense of God's time; the temporal linearity of music propelled by harmonic progression produced a contrasting sense of the non-temporal nature of God.[12] For example, think of a Gregorian chant: It has forward movement but no clear direction; it can end at any number of places; it continually cycles us back to its beginnings.

Both Adorno and Berger argue that what we call the Viennese classical style (Haydn, Mozart) represents a break with that understanding of temporality, a break that mirrors the development in philosophy (with Rousseau and Kant) of an emphasis on freedom as self-direction. If earlier music had enacted a way of our finding our purposes in God's eternity (and thus used its harmonic techniques to create a sense of cyclical time, of continuous return with no definitive end in view), the new music

enacted our new sense of our giving ourselves a purpose and then striving to attain it. (For example, in a Mozart or early Beethoven piece, we get an indeterminate sense almost immediately of where, in the abstract, the piece is heading and how it will resolve, even if – of course – we cannot state that purpose on, say, our first hearing of it.) But just as quickly as it had done that, the new music also began inventing techniques for stopping the onward flow of time within the piece, establishing within the otherwise forward-moving composition a space for contemplation and reverie, only to break the spell and rush forward again. (Think of Beethoven's late piano sonatas and quartets.)

Much of "Romantic" music, so I would argue, was engaged in a project similar to that of Romantic thought; both were striving to articulate what it is like to see oneself within a larger whole that resists full articulation and within which one is, or can come to be, at one with oneself – *bei sich selbst*, to use Hegel's term of art. For example, we get a sense of such articulation in Beethoven's ninth symphony, in particular in its well-known fourth movement, which shifts, sometimes rather abruptly, between an intense forward propulsion and states of pure choral reverie. One example is the section that begins with "*Seid umschlungen, Millionen*," where there is a sustained passage of contemplative reverie followed by an ending where the orchestra and the chorus rapidly rejoin in purely forward movement and conclusion.[13] The piece at least attempts to achieve a kind of reflective distance from itself – as is witnessed by bringing in a chorus, which itself enters only after the solo singer has declared (notoriously ambiguously), "*nicht diese Töne*" – while at the same time fully absorbing the listeners or performers in the music.

One particularly striking realization of that particular strain of thought can be found only 40 to 50 years later, in *Tristan und Isolde*, where Wagner exploits the potential ambiguity of tonality to express one sense of what purposiveness without a purpose would feel like. As is well known, *Tristan* begins with a stretch whose tonal resolution is fully ambiguous: As the listener hears it, his or her experience is that of "feeling" how it might go this way or another way, but the "logic," as it were, of the piece emerges only at the end, as it finally resolves itself. Although Wagner's libretto may indeed be Schopenhauerian, the content of the music is at once both more Schellingian, in the sense that we "intuit" at the end what fulfills the ambiguous forward movement of the beginning, and more "Hegelian," in that it follows out a logic that can only be specified at the end.

The logic of much of that type of harmony from Hayden to Wagner – to put it in the broadest of brushstrokes – involves absorbing us into itself, taking us into its flow, while at the same time holding us back, and thus maintaining our reflective distance from it (which occurs to greater and lesser degrees in each of those composers and in each of their works). Thus, when such a musical maneuver works, we feel both carried along – transported – while at the same time feeling what it would be like to be directing ourselves within that movement – or, as Hegel puts it, we often find in listening that "we beat time to it without being aware of the fact" (*Aesthetics* 249; *Werke* 13: 322).[14] It thus puts into subjective form the experience of what it *would be like* to be a modern, free subject, to be directing oneself within the "one and all." Such freedom, as Hegel states repeatedly throughout his work, is a matter of being at one with oneself, *Beisichsein* (sometimes, *Beisichselbstsein*), or, as he at one time expanded on that idea, being at one with oneself in an other ("*in diesem Anderen bei sich selbst*") (*Werke* 7: 57).[15] Rather than repeating Kant's conception of a free will as one *legislating* for itself (of submitting itself to law), Hegel consistently maintains that in free

action and in living a free life, the "inner" and the "outer" are, in the ideal case, each at one with the other – that is, the "outer" is the full expression of the "inner," and the "inner" finds its complete realization in the "outer." (Submission to law, even self-legislated law, can be only one moment of such freedom, not the whole.)

Music is the one art that seems, at least at first, to show what such a "being at one with oneself" would be like; or, to use Hegel's own voice,

> The self is in time, and time is the being of the subject himself … This is what can be advanced as the essential reason for the elemental might of music … Now if this subjective experience is likewise to gain its full due in music, then music must free itself from a given text and draw entirely out of itself its content … and in doing all this it must limit itself to purely musical means, because the meaning of the whole is not expressed in words. (*Aesthetics* 908; *Werke* 15: 156)[16]

Especially in Beethoven's early period, his music uses such harmonic means to express both the temporal sense of forward motion, of purposiveness without a purpose, and of "stopping" time in moments of reverie. In that way, his music gives us a timeless grasp of the temporal that practically calls out for comparison with the final paragraph of Hegel's Jena *Phenomenology*, where he too notes that what *Geist* achieves in its historical development is something like a timeless grasp of its own temporality, a timeless conceptual grasp of its own deep historicity (*Werke* 3: 591).[17] For Hegel, *Geist*, our own mindedness, thus achieves in drawing that conclusion a resolution with itself – it comes to be at one with itself and therefore fully free.

That of course might sound as if it endorses Schelling's proposal that it is art, not philosophy, that provides us with a full grasp of what it is to be free. And, as we all know, that was certainly not Hegel's view.

To be sure, whereas being fully at one with oneself constitutes for Hegel the ideal case of being a free agent, the ideal case, so he also held, has been systematically achieved at best only once in history, and that was long ago in the ancient Greek *Polis*. However, that solitary achievement – even discounting the fact that the Greek *Polis* so described is a wildly glorified idealization of the real thing – was itself burdened with the inherent tensions implicit in all self-consciousness; in Hegel's narration of its breakdown, those tensions eventually provoked both Greek life and its successors into a more explicit split of the "inner" subjective life and its outer trappings and realizations. That kind of rift cannot be overcome (except perhaps in the most eccentric of circumstances), and thus even if it had once been mitigated, it was no longer possible to resolve. One of Hegel's major theses is that this impossibility is especially at issue in modern life, particularly in its art and philosophy.

Why so? In Hegelian terms, all consciousness is projected beyond itself; it takes its bearing, its orientation, from something which it can internally, within its own awareness, distinguish from its awareness of it, something which is therefore "other" to it (*Werke* 3: 74).[18] For a conscious agent to achieve the kind of success that is part and parcel of what it means to be a conscious agent is for it to be successful in that orientation to its "other"; such an aim commits such agents to limitation by the "other" towards which they project themselves. Often, this kind of limitation can meet with very ordinary, mundane success; for example, one might want to know something limited (such as how many kinds of cheeses are for sale at the market), and one successfully satisfies that desire when one comes to know the facts of the matter.[19] Hegel's language for the experience of this kind of success in projecting toward such an "other" is satisfaction.[20] More importantly, our projection out of ourselves can only

be satisfied, can only meet with full success, when we are related to other agents who limit us while we limit them, such that (to use Rousseauian and Kantian language) within such a relation, each would be both sovereign and subject – or, to put it in Hegel's own terms, the relation itself would be that of "absolute negativity" (*Werke* 3: 153).[21] In Hegel's often-cited summarization of this in his *Phenomenology*: "Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness."[22] The estrangement present in all self-consciousness lies in the gap between self-consciousness and consciousness, that is, in what can count as success in achieving that kind of self-consciousness. Part of Hegel's diagnosis of modern life was that what comes to be a central part of its own self-reflection is that such successes, and thus such satisfactions, are, when they occur, themselves merely contingent – for us moderns, it is a happy accident that an individual consciousness achieves its satisfaction at all. At any given moment, the success one has achieved in one's self-consciousness can fall apart, or, for that matter, turn out never to have been a success at all (as in the familiar poetic lament about how, after all, the poet has come to understand that the beloved never really loved back in return). Modern life just is skepticism about itself, and with skepticism comes both a type of anxiety and the attraction of various fantasies about putting an end to it once and for all.

Now, part of the appeal of Beethoven's music is that it gives us a sense of what it would be like in modern times to live in the ideal case – as Adorno once phrased it, in listening to the music of the early Beethoven, we understand it as holding out "the possibility that all might be well" (*Negative Dialectics* 306).[23] However, on Hegel's diagnosis, the rift that has come to expression in modern, self-conscious life is such that modern art itself has on its own terms come to a realization of the basic impossibility of its own project: Insofar as art attempts not merely to entertain but to present truths about the lifeworld, about *Geist* itself, and insofar as it aims at a reconciliation for us as embodied agents, it must exhibit in sensuous, "outer" form what is an essentially subjective, "inner" content. But this is impossible to do fully, and the development of all art from the Christian era to the present can be summed up, to give it its Hegelian epigram, as art's gradually coming to a full awareness of that impossibility. The authority which the "inner" life – subjectivity – has acquired since the collapse of the ancient world into the Christian polity means that what art inherently aims at is no longer, and certainly can never again be, possible. That is, in modern life, subjectivity has come to possess – to appropriate a term from Frankfurt critical theory – a "normative surplus" that can never be fully sensuously embodied; its "negativity" (what counts as its normative limits) can never be fully absorbed into any kind of "positivity," sensuous or otherwise. Furthermore, this latter point can be fully grasped only conceptually and not aesthetically.

The latter point expresses the way that Hegel thinks that for "us moderns" philosophy is the "sublation" (*Aufhebung*) of art. Oddly enough, from Hegel's day until our own, his point has often been glossed as an idea of the "end of art," as the view that art has now been "overcome" by philosophy and thus that no new meaningful art can emerge. That rests on an odd reading of Hegel's texts, since he never says there will be no new meaningful art, and on an even odder reading of his conception of sublation, which, as he stresses, means preserving as well as canceling. On Hegel's view, art – as well as religion, but that is another story – gives us what the philosophical system cannot, namely, the lifeworld itself; or, to use the language of a recent analysis of Hegel's theory of art by Ben Rutter, art gives us the "liveliness" (*Lebendigkeit*) that the system cannot, a liveliness that philosophy must take in and cancel (render into

non-lively concepts) but must also preserve (in the sense that without anchoring itself in practice, and in art in particular, philosophy's conceptual activities will inevitably deteriorate into merely formal exercises cut off from the life of the culture in which it grows).[24]

For that reason, Hegel thought that the lyric poem (on the way to song, as he put it), not music alone, was the ascendant modern form of art.[25] In the fractured Christian and post-Christian world, the "inner" and the "outer" come together only contingently, and as the "inner" increasingly gains in authority over the "outer," the distinction between the two increasingly takes on the false appearance of a separability of the two.[26] To use Hegel's own examples, whereas in the ideal case (of the idealized life) of the ancient Greeks, individuals could with confidence speak of their lives in terms of the whole – where, for example, both Antigone and Creon can each radically affirm the unconditionality of their own respective *Pathos* as authorized by the "whole" – this kind of authority collapses under the conditions of the pluralism and differentiation that characterize modern life. The artist can now only authoritatively speak of his or her own voice, and he/she is successful when that voice is also heard by others as also being their own (or of hearing their own voice for the first time in hearing his/hers). Moreover, that kind of success is itself also contingent on a variety of factors, such as the conventions of the community's speech, the reputation of the author, the imaginativeness of the audience, and so forth. Thus, the lyric poet, speaking to us of his or her own subjectivity, in a way that reconciles us to our own lives, but also in a way that cannot be guaranteed success, becomes the paramount modern artist.[27] When successful, the lyric poet achieves a kind of "universal communication" without a concept to guide him or her.

Yet, if this is indeed the case, then art could not be the royal route to the metaphysical without metaphysics, as Schelling and other Romantics hoped, since the basic problem facing art – how to fully express the "inner" without residue in the "outer" – was itself insoluble.

However, even if art could resolve the Kantian problem of freedom versus nature in intellectual intuition (which it cannot), modern art nonetheless faces another, even more concrete problem it cannot fully resolve. This problem was also brought up by Hegel, and it achieved its first great expression in one of his best students, the writer and poet, Heinrich Heine. It would take a longer argument than I can give here to show all this, but Heine came to terms early on with three different Hegelian claims in working out his lyric poetry and his essayistic writings. First, he came to terms with the idea that what art seeks is in modern life impossible, namely, the full exhibition (*Darstellung*) of the "inner" in "outer" form. Second, he came to terms with the more specifically modern anxiety about the dialectical connection between what Michael Fried has referred to in painting as theatricality (or phoniness in its most general form) and absorption (of one's being *in* the action, not being some bystander of one's own activities).[28] Thus, "theatricality" – aiming for effect, "trying to please" – is always inherently bound up with absorption in that what we take ourselves to be doing or to have done can never be fully settled until after the fact; there is no way we can appeal, say, to the purity of our hearts that is beyond the interpretation of others that will fix in place what it is we are doing, have done, or announce we plan to do. Third, there was a determinable dynamic in modern life that shifted in the direction of either denying the role of subjectivity altogether or reducing it merely to some set of "inner" facts (such as bare feelings); subjectivity required, as it were, its own defense.[29]

The problem for the lyric poet, as Hegel saw it, was that the lyric poet can only speak with his or her own voice. The idea of speaking with the authority of the "whole" behind him/her is ruled out; the authority of the "whole" has to do with prosaic and abstract things like constitutional law, matters that lend themselves only reluctantly to satisfactory aesthetic ("sensuous") treatment. However, to be successful, the lyric poet had to speak with a singular voice that can also be taken up by others as expressing or shaping their own voices without that shaping taking the form of a rule; the lyric poet, that is, must speak from his or her own experience in a way that is universally communicable and normative but without the possibility of stating a rule for others. (The lyric poet does not, that is, issue moral commands; the Kantian overtones here are obvious.)

What compounds the problem for the modern lyricist is the issue of fraudulence.[30] Is the voice speaking to us about, say, a broken heart, itself real, or is the whole affair merely an act, a device, say, to sell more volumes (or albums)? Or, even worse, is the voice speaking to us itself deceived about itself, such that it may be perfectly sincere and perfectly false at the same time, with the result that we, in taking that voice as "our own," might also be perfectly sincere and perfectly false at the same time? This is made especially problematic if one accepts Hegel's own conclusions about how there can be no automatic answer to this since no answer can rely in any immediate way on any supposed authority of the first-person point of view. If what is at stake is the depth of the poet's voice – whether what the poet says reveals a deep truth about ourselves by revealing a deep truth about himself or herself – and if the question about the depth of the poet's voice cannot be resolved by simply asking the poet, "Did you really mean it?", and if the pluralism of modern life also rules out any kind of self-evident appeal to the authority of the whole, then what could be the appropriate stance towards such lyric poetry?

The ever-present charge of fraudulence only raised the stakes for Heine. Lyric poetry, as Hegel consistently noted in his lectures, has the life of the "nation" behind it, by which he meant that more so than other forms of art, lyric poetry relied on the nuances of the language in which it is written. Poetry, as we all know, translates only with difficulty – a mediocre translation of a foreign novel is often easier to comprehend than a fairly good translation of a foreign poet. Yet, as Thomas Pfau has rather convincingly shown, for a Jewish poet such as Heine, there was always the additional charge hanging around in the background that Heine's use of German, however inspired it was, could at best be only a "clever" manipulation. From the standpoint of the nationalist Romanticism making that accusation, Heine's (and other Jewish writers') high German was necessarily suspect since it supposedly could not really come from the heart; it thus had to be a pose, or at least not "real," since it was necessarily written in a "phony" voice (Pfau 451–52).[31] (It is perhaps obvious but still worth noting in passing that this is the linguistic version of the musical objection Wagner later raised against Mendelssohn.)

Heine's solution was to adopt his own version of an ironic stance. Heine's irony is not that of Friedrich Schlegel's Romantic irony. Schlegel argued more or less for an "office-holder" conception of the self: Just as any individual can hold different offices that need not cohere with each other – one's acts as the tax-collector need not coincide or have anything to do with one's taking over the leadership of the local garden club – likewise the self is itself simply a series of normative statuses that need not have anything to do with each other. For Heine, on the other hand, the unitary self is, like Hegel's conception of the self, something to be achieved and is thus a "project" which

can always fail – perhaps even in catastrophic ways, but it remains a project, whether one is looking forward (in the *Book of Songs*) or backward (later in Heine's *Romanzero*). One is the being for whom one's own being is an issue, never just a given; and one achieves satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.

Heine quite famously styled himself as the successor to the Romantics; as he put it in a letter to a friend, "The Thousand year empire of Romanticism is at an end, and I myself was but its last mythical emperor – the one who gave up his throne" (as qtd. in Prawer 512).[32] Likewise, in his *Confessions*, he claimed to have been not only the "last romantic" but also to have himself shifted the very ground of poetry itself and to be the poet who opened up "the modern German lyric."[33] Now, although Heine quite often dissembled about himself, at least on this point, he got it right. Romantic irony in its Schlegelian form simply avoided the basic problem facing the modern lyric poet and modern art in general; the estrangement of "inner" and "outer" facing the modern lyric poet was resolved in Schlegel's version only by in effect erasing the inner. Heine's irony, on the other hand, directly responded to the estrangement within modern life itself. Both the world the subject confronts and the subject himself or herself is full of contingency in even crucial matters – love, the prime theme of the post-Christian lyric, is itself always contingent – and displays a resistance to reason. (In fact, large portions of the lives of modern individuals are given over to irrationalities in the form of slight tics, idiosyncratic tastes, and full-scale neuroses.) On the Hegelian view of things, although philosophy can delineate the conceptual shape of such irrationality and contingency in our world and thus make the whole intelligible to us – reason does not run out when dealing with the whole – philosophy is of much less help in grasping modern life in its full contingent concreteness, much less in our individually realizing our freedom within that embodied condition of unreason and contingency.

On the other hand, the artist, particularly the lyric poet, in exhibiting to us the truths of our lives (the depth of these matters), does this in a way that, to use Hegel's own words, "the dead inherently empty concept" cannot.[34] Philosophy may give us the full conceptual meaning of what it is to be such a modern agent; but it cannot tell us what it is like to be such an agent, nor how to come to terms with the ineliminable *quartiers* of unreason and contingency that all agents confront in their daily lives. Art turns out not to give us the metaphysical without metaphysics; it gives us both the liveliness philosophy cannot supply and the insight into the particularities of our own contingent condition that the system can only make intelligible as a whole. Nor does art apply the general teachings of philosophy; it is its own enterprise, even if it admits itself to be subordinate in the complicated Hegelian fashion to philosophy.

In his self-styled stance as the "last of the Romantics," Heine saw himself as the successor to both Weimar classicism and Romanticism itself. From Heine's retrospective look at things, Weimar classicism had seen itself as mediating between the inner life and the outward reality with the aim of achieving a kind of Olympian equilibrium in its response to the *Sturm und Drang* that accompanied it. Although one could admire Weimar classicism for all its depth, by Heine's time, it was increasingly looking out of date in an industrializing world that was putting the lack of equilibrium within self-conscious life more fully on display; in those circumstances, such classicism looked more like a pose than a position. On the other hand, although Romanticism, with what Heine mockingly called its intoxication with moonlight and its nuttiness about nightingales, was the effort to carve out a space for subjectivity in the increasingly disenchanted world of the new Europe, it too doomed itself with its

desire to achieve a unity through aesthetics that could not be achieved (*Werke* 99).[35] Weimar classicism turned out to be only a dream, and Romanticism had turned out to be only a highly attractive impossibility.

What was then left to a lyric poet?[36] The lyric poet had to confront what was, in Hegel's language, our own shared predicament:

> Spiritual culture, the modern intellect, produces this opposition in man which makes him an *amphibious animal*, because he now has to live in two worlds which contradict one another … But for modern culture and its intellect this discordance in life and consciousness involves the demand that such a contradiction be resolved. Yet the intellect cannot cut itself free from the rigidity of these oppositions; therefore the solution remains for consciousness a mere *ought*, and the present and reality move only in the unrest of a hither and thither which seeks a reconciliation without finding one. (*Aesthetics* 54; *Werke* 13:80)[37]

Heine's response was, as we noted, his irony. The idea that there could be any kind of authenticity in the national voice (high German) that serves as a touchstone against fraudulence is itself a mirage; it is part and parcel of the same idea that holds that one can fix a meaning independent of its use. If so, then it is the poet's ironic and equally dexterous use of the language that is the condition of any form of authenticity that can be achieved in the lyric. Heine's use of irony sought thereby to establish an "intimacy" of poet and audience that would also maintain its critical distance.[38] The poet indulges himself in his "object" at the same time as he pulls back from its object to remind himself and the reader of the possibility that both poet and reader may have fooled themselves, which in Heine's situation could only be pulled off by also calling attention to the very high German in which it is written. The "theatrical gesture" thus fuses with the absorptive character of the poems. Reconciliation in the Hegelian sense would then come from the lyric poet's showing to himself and to us that, as we earlier noted in Adorno's description of the music of the early Beethoven, there is "the possibility that all might be well," something that could never be accomplished by mere wit alone but which also required *virtuosity* with the language, not any kind of national soul calling for its so-called authentic expression.

Both Heine's *Book of Songs* and the *Travel Pictures*, taken as a whole, display his own way of incorporating such theatricality into themselves. (In both his poetry and his prose, Heine's face, as it were, stares back at us much as Manet's *Olympia* does, and, even so, we are never quite sure which face we are seeing.) In the *Book of Songs*, his first collection, we have sets of poems that take up fairly Romantic themes and metaphors (about love, deceit, and the like), and then through various techniques – such as Heine's well known use of *Stimmungsbrechung* – he changes the entire voice of a poem, sometimes within the poem itself, sometimes in the poems immediately succeeding other poems, and this occurs especially in those moments of reverie, of full absorption where the *Stimmungsbrechung* serves to keep the reverie from swallowing the reader into a completely "mindless" absorption. Reverie and self-conscious withdrawal, in their unity and alternation, form the core of Heine's lyricism as the expression of our own modern "amphibious" natures. The only way to stage the always temporary equilibrium between poet and audience is to acknowledge to the audience that one's own awareness that what one is doing always carries with it the possibility of fraudulence, and that this possibility cannot be set aside merely by assurances on the part of the writer that what he says really does come from his heart.[39] (Both writer and reader may be deceived. The problem, after all, with the kitsch poet is not always

that he is deceiving his audience; sometimes the problem is that both he and his audience go in for kitsch poetry). The Romantic desire for wholeness is a trap, and the job of the poet is to show us both how to stay out of the trap *and* that "all might be well"; the contingency of life is something to which we must reconcile ourselves, not something we should try to overcome. *Aufhebung* (the Hegelian sublation that cancels and preserves), not *Überwindung* (the fantasy of escaping all that and getting back to something solid, like the old-time faith or the national *Volk*), is the guiding concept at work in his Heine's post-Romanticism.

The "one and all" is, in Heine's lyrics, both this world of contingencies and ourselves as beings who self-consciously orient ourselves in that world.[40] For Hegel and Heine, the attraction of the sublime was the undoing of the poet's task; the task of the artist was the same as the philosopher's: To grasp the fundamental truths about our own mindedness, *Geist*, and to come to terms with what that meant without indulging in fantasy. Each does it in different ways. In a late period in his life, Heine himself summed up the issue as concisely as any post-Hegelian could have wanted:

> What is the highest thing in art? It is that which is the highest in all the other manifestations of life: The self-conscious freedom of *Geist*. (*Werke* 466–67)[41]

But what is the self-conscious freedom of *Geist*? We return to the original question which Kant raised, and to which Romanticism and post-Romantic thought and art addressed themselves: Purposiveness without a purpose? Perhaps that is what it means to be an amphibious modern.

Notes

1. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* §57, §59.
2. This leaves teleological judgments aside, but that need not concern us here.
3. Although I say it was a relatively short distance to there, I am clearly eliding over the largest of the jumps that had to be made, namely, to demote Kant's own claims about the superiority of natural beauty to artistic, or "aesthetic," beauty and to focus on the latter instead. I do this for reasons of space and because that step is not crucial to the argument made here.
4. Much of Schelling's work up until the 1809 essay on freedom consisted of his various attempts to carry out this slogan into all of its details. It quickly led him to a two-track vision of philosophy: A "philosophy of nature" that led up to self-consciousness and freedom, and a "transcendental philosophy" of self-consciousness and freedom that culminated in a philosophy of nature. The two are brought together through a kind of "intellectual intuition" of how the two tracks come together that does not presuppose the discursive nature of either track, and that is both constructed in and expressed through art. Schelling's key idea there was that in choosing between two very different "frameworks" (*Naturphilosophie* and transcendental philosophy), where what counts as a reason for counting an object as belonging to one framework or another is set by the framework itself, any reason for choosing one framework over another – say, "pragmatism" – itself just begs the question. Thus, why not say it is art (and not rational insight or pragmatic satisfaction) that determines which frameworks are to be established?
5. Although this genre of the "fragment" was established by Schlegel and Novalis, a case could be made that it was only truly realized in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science* and Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*; in both those cases, there are a set of fragments that make no claim to systematic unity, but there is a voice that is both continually addressing another person and correcting itself as the staged "conversation" continues. Moreover, a case could also be made that Adorno's *Negative Dialectic* also fits this model. However, to make that case would take me far afield from this paper.

6. Novalis, *Logological Fragments* II, #9 in *Novalis: Philosophical Writings*. This of course invites an obvious comparison with Wittgenstein's better-known idea about the goal of philosophy being that of *dissolving* philosophical problems; Wittgenstein's (and Novalis's) proposal would be to see this kind of "philosophical therapy" as yet another form of post-metaphysical / post-philosophical practice.
7. Novalis, *Logological Fragments*, §66, in *Novalis: Philosophical Writings* (60).
8. Indeed, one could apply the model to Romanticism itself; as it and its offshoots and cousins developed, it turned out that the concept of "Romanticism" itself took on a different texture than it had at first and that we only came to understand what Romanticism really was by looking at how it had worked itself out. To use Hegel's language, the *abstract* concept of Romanticism becomes more *concrete*, not in the sense merely that there could to be more applications of it – more figures to which we can apply the term, "Romantic" – but also that we come to understand what is involved and implied by Romanticism only as it begins to work *itself* out.
9. Hegel's use of the term, "development," "*Durchführung*," employs the metaphor of a musical development (as in a sonata). Here is the extended quote: "Es sind im allgemeinen diese beiden Gänge sehr bestimmt ausgedrückt. Eine Seite ist dabei diese Durchführung der Natur zum Subjekt, die andere die des Ichs zum Objekt. Die wahre Durchführung aber könnte nur auf logische Weise geschehen; denn diese enthält den reinen Gedanken. Aber die logische Betrachtung ist das, wozu Schelling in seiner Darstellung, Entwicklung nicht gekommen ist. Der wahrhafte Beweis, daß diese Identität das Wahrhafte ist, könnte vielmehr nur so geführt werden, daß jedes für sich untersucht wird in seinen logischen Bestimmungen, d. h. in seinen wesentlichen Bestimmungen; woran sich sodann ergeben müßte, daß das Subjektive dies ist, sich zu verwandeln in Objektives, und das Objektive dies ist, nicht so zu bleiben, sondern sich subjektiv zu machen. Man müßte am Endlichen selbst aufzeigen, daß es den Widerspruch in sich enthielte und sich zum Unendlichen machte; so hätten wir also die Einheit des Endlichen und Unendlichen." Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 20, 435.
10. This "Hegelian-Romantic" thesis about conceptual content, moreover, means that in working out such concepts in "life" – in practice, as we can otherwise put it – we are rarely simply making explicit the proprieties already contained in the practice. Those proprieties in fact cannot be realized until they have been put into practice, and in almost all the interesting cases, what counts as making them explicit is itself a matter of great contestation. To know what one is meaning therefore is, once again, not a matter of grasping some already determinate meaning and then expressing it (or applying it) but of continually repositioning oneself in a social space that is always partly fluid, and that means that prior to all explicit acts of "meaning something," one must always have a pre-reflective grasp of what the three ex-seminarians from Tübingen called the "one and all," the *hen kai pan*. This grasp of the "one and all" and where we are within it is given to us in "life" – that is, given to us practically – and we run into antinomies when we try to articulate it (or, as we might put it using Wittgenstein's terms, we acquire bumps and boils in the intellect when we run up against the limits of a fully discursive attempt to articulate that pre-reflective sense). Thus, this takes a very different stance towards meaning than that advocated by analytic neo-Hegelian/Fichteans such as Robert Brandom in his *Making It Explicit*, however much both conceptions share an emphasis on the practical. If so, this means that attempts by Andrew Bowie, for example, to explicate Romantics such as Schleiermacher in Brandomian terms are bound to fall short. See Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: From Kant to Nietzsche*..
11. This of course dovetails nicely with Wordsworth's often cited formulation in his 1805 *Prelude*, "Our destiny, our nature, and our home / Is with infinitude, and only there …" William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (240; 6: 538–39).
12. Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle: An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity*.
13. So argues Lydia Goehr in her piece, "The 'Ode to Joy': Music and Musicality in Tragic Culture" (45–78), in *Elective Affinities: Musical Essays on the History of Aesthetic Theory*.
14. Hegel, *Aesthetics* (249); *Werke* (vol. 13, 322).
15. This last formulation comes from Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, §7 *Zusatz* (*Werke*, vol. 7). Curiously, although it is the most dialectical of all of Hegel's formulations about freedom, it appears only in the student lecture notes, and not, as far as I can see, in any text written by Hegel himself.

16. Hegel, *Aesthetics* (908); *Werke* (vol. 15, 156).
17. Hegel, *Werke* (vol. 3, 591): "This revelation is thereby the sublation of its depth, that is, its *extension*, the negativity of this I existing-within-itself, which is its self-emptying, that is, its substance – and is its *time*."
18. Hegel, *Werke* (vol. 3, 74): "However, consciousness is for itself its *concept*, and as a result it immediately goes beyond the restriction, and, since this restriction belongs to itself, it goes beyond itself too."
19. This particular example might be misleading. Hegel obviously holds that there are many such examples of mundane success in knowledge, but he also holds that if one tries to take the basic terms of an account of such consciousness and make it the basis for an "unconditional" grasp of things, one quickly runs into contradictions. Ultimately, "consciousness" *as* "the unconditioned" is self-contradictory; "consciousness" is only intelligible as itself a moment of "self-consciousness," which can lay claim to being "the unconditioned." To summarize Hegel's idea about that all too briefly: We can learn to orient ourselves by empirical objects only insofar as we can also learn to orient ourselves by each other (and vice versa).
20. Hegel's one explicit definition of *Befriedigung* is in his 1826 essay in the *Jahrbücher*, "Über die unter den Namen Bhagavad-Ghita bekannte Episode des Mahabharata von Wilhelm von Humboldt." *Werke* (vol. 11, 152): "The actualization of an end is an achievement [*Gelingen*]; that the action has success [*Erfolg*] is a *satisfaction* [*Befriedigung*], an inseparable fruit of the completed action."
21. To stay more or less within the dense jargon of the Hegelian logic: The negativity is "absolute" in that the relation itself is an example of *self*-limitation instead of mere limitation by an "other." In successful projection outward, each forms the normative limit of the other, and the normative limits of each can only be established in a fully mutual act of limitation. It follows, of course, from this that no individual agent abstracted away from his or her sociality can ever be in the position of embodying "absolute negativity." Desire is always "finite," since it is limited not by itself but by what would satisfy the desire; the only desire that could be infinite would be that which would be the object of desire defined by desire itself, yet different enough to satisfy the desire; in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, the master's failure to define the vassal in that way is the proof, as it were, of the impossibility of such a desire.
22. Robert Pippin argued this point in *Hegel's Idealism*; more recently, he has sharpened his view on this by showing how two lines from Hegel's *Phenomenology* must be taken together. Those lines are: "This unity must become essential to self-consciousness, which is to say, self-consciousness is *desire* itself"; and "*Self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness*." Self-consciousness is "desire" in being a projection outward from itself (and since self-consciousness is the "truth" of consciousness, it is required to complete the account of consciousness, and thus all consciousness is "desire itself," a projection outward to objects that are different from and put normative limits on consciousness); this projection outward can only be ultimately satisfied in having that projection meet a corresponding projection back from another self-conscious agent. See Robert Pippin. *Hegel on Self-Consciousness: Desire and Death in Hegel's* Phenomenology of Spirit.
23. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (306).
24. This idea of the *Lebendigkeit* found in art is taken from Ben Rutter's forthcoming, *Hegel and the Modern Arts*.
25. See Hegel, *Aesthetics* (1152–53): "In this third sphere [Romantic art] lyric poetry is of such overwhelming importance … This inclination towards a lyrical treatment is essentially grounded in the fact that the entire life of these nations has been developed on the basis of the principle of the personality which is forced to produce out of its own resources as its own what is substantive and objective, and to give a shape to that, and this process of plumbing its own depths it pursues more and more consciously."
26. This failure to note the distinction between distinction and separability underlies all those who continually take Hegel to be denying the distinction between pairs of things. To be sure, Hegel himself partially encourages this misreading by referring to items that are distinct but inseparable as possessing not a "formal" identity but instead a "speculative identity"; to speak of an "identity" at all here, of course, encourages the view that the items really are not distinguishable at all. Robert Pippin shows how the failure to note

the "distinguishable but inseparable" distinction can lead to really deep-seated misunderstandings of Hegel's views on the distinction between concepts and intuitions. See Robert Pippin, "Concept and Intuition: On Distinguishability and Separability."

27. This line of argument is essentially a riff on Ben Rutter's more nuanced account in *Hegel and the Modern Arts*.
28. Michael Fried has shown how modern painting has had to come to terms with the tension between what he has called "theatricality" and "absorption" in painting – that is, the aim of modern painting to present its subjects as if they were unaware or indifferent to our seeing them, or even more generally, to present the painting itself, quasi-paradoxically, as if it itself were not there to be observed – where the relation between "absorption" (for example, being fully taken up in activity) and "theatricality" (for example, calibrating one's speech or posture to produce an effect in others) necessarily oscillated back and forth so intensely that by the time of Manet, the only way to avoid the phoniness of a purely theatrical painting was to incorporate some kind of theatricality into itself, as Olympia's harsh gaze at us illustrates. In his commentaries on Fried's art-historical distinction, Robert Pippin has argued that this distinction is not merely art-historical but *ontological*: The very nature of agency is such that the question of whether one is merely acting for theatrical effect – whether somebody is a "phony" – or is acting in some more genuine sense is always present, and both are implicated in each other as closely as "inner" and "outer" are ("Authenticity in Painting: Remarks on Michael Fried's Art History"). In even the most elementary forms of action, Hegel held that something like a subjective intention was not to be taken as a separately identifiable "thing" but as a "moment," an inseparable aspect of a whole, namely, the action itself; an intention is always itself an action on the way to realization (which can fail to be realized for a variety of reasons). What we call the action itself is also an inseparable aspect of the intention; the action is the intention realized. (We have the same word for the whole – "action" – of which both intention and action are moments.) Our "inner" and our "outer" can be distinguished but never separated from each other, and our individuality and social existence are similarly linked in being "distinguishable but not separable."
29. Hegel's own version of the theatricality/absorption distinction appears in Hegel, *Aesthetics* (619–20), where he says: "Producing effects is in general the dominating tendency of turning to the public, so that the work of art no longer displays itself as peaceful, satisfied in itself, and serene; on the contrary, it turns inside out and as it were makes an appeal to the spectator and tries to put itself into relation with him by means of the mode of portrayal … In that event this emergence from itself falls into the contingency of appearance and makes the work of art itself into such a contingency in which what we recognize is no longer the topic itself and the form which the nature of the topic determines necessarily, but the poet and the artist with his subjective aims, his workmanship and his skill in execution … To be brought thus into this subjective community of understanding and judgment with the artist is the most flattering thing. The reader or listener marvels at the poet or composer, and the onlooker at the visual artist, all the more readily, and finds his own conceit all the more agreeably satisfied, the more the work of art invites him to this subjective judgment of art and puts into his hands the intentions and views of the artist … But in that case such a trading in secrets is itself only an affectation once more and a false contrast to the aim of pleasing."
30. This is the issue Stanley Cavell raised in connection with modern music, which has to do with the loss of trust between musician and audience. Ben Rutter also shows how this worry transfers naturally over to lyric poetry. See Rutter, chapter 3.
31. Pfau, "Melancholy into Ressentiment: Aesthetic and Social Provocation in Heine's *Buch der Lieder* (1827); in Pfau, *Romantic Moods: Paranoia, Trauma, and Melancholy, 1790–1840*.
32. Heine, letter to Varnhagen, 3 January 1846; cited by Prawer, 512.
33. "Ich weiß, es war »das letzte freie Waldlied der Romantik«, und ich bin ihr letzter Dichter: mit mir ist die alte lyrische Schule der Deutschen geschlossen, während zugleich die neue Schule, die moderne deutsche Lyrik, von mir eröffnet ward. Diese Doppelbedeutung wird mir von den deutschen Literarhistorikern zugeschrieben." *Geständnisse*. Heinrich Heine. *Werke*: Digitale Bibliothek Band 7 (99).
34. Hegel, *Aesthetics* (54). "Now this opposition does not arise for consciousness in the restricted sphere of moral action alone; it emerges in a thorough-going cleavage and

opposition between what is *absolute* and what is external reality and existence … more concretely … in the spirit it appears as the contrast between the sensuous and the spiritual in man, as the battle of spirit against flesh, of duty for duty's sake, of the cold command against particular interest, warmth of heart, sensuous inclinations and impulses, against the individual disposition in general; as the harsh opposition between inner freedom and the necessity of external nature, further as the contradiction between the dead inherently empty concept, and the full concreteness of life, between theory or subjective thinking, and objective existence and experience. These are oppositions which have not been invented at all by the subtlety of reflection or the pedantry of philosophy."

35. Mondscheintrunkenheit, allem blühenden Nachtigallenwahnsinn; *Geständnisse*. Heinrich Heine. *Werke*: Digitale Bibliothek Band 7 (99).
36. A suggestion from Ben Rutter would help here as to how Hegel might, if he had bothered, come to terms with Heine's works. Hegel's own answer to this question, which Hegel himself never fleshed out and which appears only near the end of his career, was "objective humor." Subjective humor was, more or less, mere wit. However, as Hegel put it, "… if, on the other hand, what matters to humor is the object and its shaping within its subjective reflex, then we acquire thereby a growing intimacy (*Verinnigung*) with the object, a sort of *objective* humor. Yet such an intimacy (*Verinnigung*) can only be partial and can perhaps be expressed only within the compass of a song or only as part of a greater whole." Hegel, *Aesthetics* (609). Hegel's own coinage, *Verinnigung*, here points out the difficulty of articulating just what it is that Hegel is trying to say. Objective humor has to do with an "intimacy" with its object (a person, a natural landscape, etc.), but it is an intimacy that takes its object into its own inwardness, "makes" it inward, its own. The whole passage: "… und es dem Humor andererseits auch auf das Objekt und dessen Gestaltung innerhalb seines subjektiven Reflexes ankommt, so erhalten wir dadurch eine Verinnigung in dem Gegenstande, einen gleichsam objektiven Humor. Solch eine Verinnigung jedoch kann nur partiell sein und sich etwa nur im Umfange eines Liedes oder nur als Teil eines größeren Ganzen äußern. Denn sich ausdehnend und innerhalb der Objektivität durch- führend, würde es zur Handlung und Begebenheit und zu einer objektiven Darstellung derselben werden müssen. Was wir dagegen hierher rechnen dürfen, ist mehr ein empfindungsvolles Sich-Ergehen des Gemüts in dem Gegenstande, das wohl zur Entfaltung kommt, aber eine subjektive geistreiche Bewegung der Phantasie und des Herzens bleibt, ein Einfall, der aber nicht bloß zufällig und willkürlich, sondern eine innere Bewegung des Geistes ist, die sich ganz ihrem Gegenstande widmet und ihn zum Interesse und Inhalt behält" (*Werke*, vol. 14, 242).
37. Hegel, *Aesthetics* (54); *Werke* (vol. 13, 80).
38. What Heine's post-Romantic use of irony conveyed was also in part what had always been missing from Hegel's own aesthetics: How to combine Hegel's content-driven philosophy of art, with its emphasis on the extent and limits of art's grasp of the "unconditioned," with Kant's own, more formalistic conception of art has having a kind of normativity that could not be brought under concepts, that displayed a "universal communicability" among subjects. Hegel's conception of art focused on its truth; Heine's focused on how its truth emerges in the ironic communication between reader and poet, and on how that conception had to be worked out anew with each reading of an older poem and each writing of a newer poem; the idea of working out a new reading and writing could not be guided by a concept, but it was not arbitrary. Nor could it be merely an example of some overall aesthetic theory (even Hegel's), since that would make it conceptual. "Universal communicability" is something to be *achieved*, and it cannot be done by applying a principle (a concept) to its materials.
39. However, since all humor supposes a distance between something – for example, between a comical character's pretenses of importance and the reality of his life – "objective humor" requires an enactment in the lyric of the nature of self-consciousness itself; as Hegel describes it, a "sensitive abandonment of the heart in the object," a way of exhibiting the way consciousness must project itself beyond itself and nonetheless take an inward turn in doing so (the way in which consciousness has its truth in self-consciousness). Hegel, *Aesthetics* (609) "… empfindungsvolles Sich-Ergehen des Gemüts in dem Gegenstande."
40. Heine had always accepted the equally fundamental Hegelian ideas that modern life was contingent and full of unreason even if the whole was itself intelligible through the means of Hegelian thought; and that it was the arts, not philosophy, that formed the truths about

our mindedness in that area of contingent life. There is some evidence that he added religion to that list while dropping philosophy out of it, although, as with everything in Heine's work, his own ironic approach makes it impossible to know just exactly what his attitude to that was. It is not too far off the mark to see our current worries as continuing the Romantic and post-Romantic tussle over whether only art gives us the intuition of the unconditioned (or access to the sublime) or whether art takes a subordinate but irreplaceable place behind conceptual thought in our orientation.

41. "Was ist in der Kunst das Höchste? Das, was auch in allen andern Manifestationen des Lebens das Höchste ist: die selbstbewußte Freiheit des Geistes." Heine, *Lutetia*. *Werke*: Digitale Bibliothek Band 7 (466–67).

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