

~ Re-Worlding the World: *Schelling's Philosophy of Art* ~

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Abstract

The problem with how we mythologise reality is arguably at the core of humanity's ecological/existential crisis. While others have pointed to this, F. W. Schelling produced a philosophy of art which both confirms it and lays the foundations for how it can be addressed. This involves reversing the polarities of the 'modern mythology', related directly to Art-and-Humanity's joint meaning crisis which Schelling claimed originates in our alienation from Nature and the rise of 'revealed religion'. Despite his resurgence (inspiring Complexity Science), the relevance of Schelling's aesthetics to resolving humanity's long-standing ethical problems has been neglected. In this paper, I begin by framing Schelling's view on religion, contextualising his ontological, cosmological approach to art. I then argue why his 'dialectical aesthetics', grounded in 'process metaphysics', presents a radical advance on Kant's and Hegel's 'reflective' standpoint featured in our dominant *theoretical* aesthetic paradigm (causing art's sharpest decline via the evolving 'modern' suppression of metaphoric thinking by 'symbolic idealism', at the heart of our 'worlding' problems). Then, showing how Schelling's *Principle of Art* leads us archetypally back to the *normative* sciences, I argue redirecting the self-destructive modern mythology means reorienting 'final cause' in our narratology. And why this firstly requires distinguishing *proper* metaphor from the symbolic constructions common in 'conceptual art'. (In a subsequent paper, Schelling's *Art 'in the Particular'* will be revealed to offer the practical application of his Principle to any artforms/works '*for all time*' in praxis, advancing my argument here for why his system offers a suitable framework for collectively re-worlding the world).

Keywords: Art, Imagination, Kant, Metaphor, Mythology, Nature, Normative Aesthetics, Schelling.

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
The Ancient Idea of Wholeness	5
Schelling's 'Process Metaphysics' Paradigm for Art	8
1. From the Standpoint of 'Reflection' to 'Production'	10
Hegelianism	10
Kant's Aesthetics	12
Art as 'Process Metaphysics'	17
Aspiration vs Reflection	19
The Standpoint of Production (Naturalising vs 'Naturalism')	20
The 'Empirical Object': Rebellion Against the Divine	23
2. Schelling's System: The Principle of Art	28
Mythological Focal Points (and the Modern 'Miracle' of Art)	28
Ideas as Archetypes: The Beauty-Truth Indifference	33
Higher Beings of Fantasy	36
The Determining Law	39
Conclusion	41
<i>References</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>APPENDIX - SCHELLING'S SYSTEM OF ART (SYNOPSIS)</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Notes</i>	Error! Bookmark not defined.

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

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854)

Introduction

F.W. Schelling understood that the origin of all nurturing or corrupting human needs and desires lies in Nature. And hence the source of all human made conflicts and problems is in fact our alienation from Nature; since it is this which must create the *aesthetic* privation driving any misunderstanding of what naturally benefits us. Our ethics are obtained logically from this, in an intuitive grasp of ‘good’ or ‘bad’; the same intuition which other species possess.² But, being human (as Max Scheler says, ‘the *understanding* animal’), we produce morals while striving to reconcile our intuition with what is occurring around us. Individually and collectively, we become acculturated and habituated to what nurtures or corrupts us; and we shape and pursue our quest in the world according to how we convert these habits into ‘laws’. These laws merge how we understand the world with how we come to believe we must act in it. This ‘normativity’ embodies our *Mythology*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My aim in this paper is to show how Schelling found a way, perhaps the *only* way, to retrieve a *genuinely* collectivising possibility – via a philosophy of art which naturalises our aesthetic judgement, returning it to ethical and logical normativity. But his ‘dialectical aesthetics’ was subsequently lost in the rise of theoretical aesthetics, and the ontology of art became submerged in neo-Kantian deliberations. Rediscovering it could rescue humanity, or at least return us to the necessary path toward the ethical and logical frontiers we must clearly conquer before any other ‘world’, in order to flourish *as humans*.³

Here I will argue why Schelling’s philosophy of art both ‘in general’ and ‘in the particular’ bears renewed attention. (The latter will be elaborated in a subsequent paper, explaining how his categorical framework could be applied today - see *Appendix* for a synopsis).

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

What emerges from obscurity, in studying the rise and decline of art in various epochs, is the historical transformation of our uses of ‘symbol’, ‘allegory’, and ‘metaphor’. Schelling, Paul Ricoeur, and others recognised this was pivotal. But it has largely been disregarded by scholars of art, whose interest was diverted from such *ontological* properties of art toward historical analyses focused essentially on describing stylistic trends and tastes (effects/affects). Theoretical aesthetics after Kant hence grew toward attending exclusively to art’s ‘materiality’, even though it is its ‘immateriality’ which is of most benefit to humanity. I have elsewhere argued this essentially

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

renders it useless (being both unscientific, and incapable of assessing meaning-value), and we should abandon it in favour of reconnecting Art to the normative science of aesthetics.⁴ Reducing Art to sensual ‘theories of beauty’, as our mythologising essentially has, ignores the fact that art is our most profound way of understanding the *meaning* of beauty, and so our most valuable way of approaching truth.

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

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

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To make an argument for naturalising art according to Schelling’s paradigm, it is first necessary to address why normally problematic terms like ‘materiality’ and ‘immateriality’ should not present a challenge. They only do, after all, in an exclusively utilitarian view of the world (offering no means of distinguishing Aristotle’s ‘internal’ from ‘external’ goods). On the other hand, suggesting we change *our entire collective mythology* to remedy humanity’s ‘behavioural crisis’ sounds altogether far-fetched.⁵ Understanding why these are related, and why there really is no other lasting and *meaningful* redress for the latter, will mean returning to Schelling’s words above on the relation between mythology and religion, and how to define them. To begin with, it will help to broach both challenges together with an outline of how early philosophers approached notions of Being and Unbeing. Which are key to the idea of ‘worlding’, and the long-standing relation between religion, science, and philosophy.

Anyone concerned with what must be considered ‘sacred’ will hopefully grant that the significance of Art’s higher meaning value, to individuals *or* humanity at large, stretches beyond the art object itself. Art ‘as principle’ has a unique *Self-actualising* potential to produce higher meaning in the person-Person relation. Not, as many imagine, *merely* by an *artwork’s* ‘sensual’ fascination or populist connectivity (its materialistic or empathic attraction); but rather by virtue of one key factor alone. That at the core of its true spiritual value to humanity – aspiring to the highest possible meaning value (which Max Scheler designated as ‘Holy’) - is the optimum employment of metaphor making higher meaning possible. Metaphor is in fact life itself personified; but *proper* metaphor elevates ‘general aesthetic’ meaning in Art. And this is why it is most important that we can distinguish it from ‘improper’ metaphor.⁶ If we cannot, human life itself (and art) remains impoverished at best. And, at worst, threatened by our own devices to be reduced to mechanism.

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

⁴ See Trimarchi 2022, 2023.

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

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

The Ancient Idea of Wholeness

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

Art 'as principle' (*poesy*) thus bound the political community's 'quest' into the entire fabric of their heroic society, via the individual. The art object *itself* was only the subject of 'criticism' inasmuch as it pertained to '*the ideas*'. Thus, art's *principle* was inseparable from philosophy. Aristotle, in the *Ethics*, thus distinguished the special kind of 'making' (*poiesis*) associated with art from that of artefacts by differentiating the *prudence* involved. Art was a *normative* 'science'; whose 'religious' normativity embodied the art of making Reason.⁷

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

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

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

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

⁷ Trimarchi 2022.

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

⁹ Kenny *WP*, p.6-7.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.7.

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

At the core of this 'bridge' is some notion of Spirit (or 'soul'). While Pythagoras and later Socrates too believed in an individual transmigration of the soul – essentially, reincarnation of our individual selves into various other forms in other epochs – the Heraclitean notion re-envisages it as truly cosmological. It connects humanity to the cosmos in a way that returns us to a "pantheistic" worldview capable of linking humanity together with the world as 'One'. But this title is arguably unsuitable, because it is important to note the 'gods' are 'ideas'. They do not embody the same 'will to power' theism that will later transform 'Spirit' into the symbols of worship, mysticism, and miracle in modern religions (or indeed the emotivist 'secular religiosity' of personality and fetish).

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

To correspond with Being, Parmenides creates the notion of Unbeing. The philosophical origin of nominalism's self-justification lies here; vesting the power of *creation* in the act of *naming*, while relegating what we may be unconscious of to supposed *non-existence*. 'What you can call and think must Being be, for Being can, and nothing cannot, be' he writes.¹³ Descartes would later rephrase this notion of what is and is not in the existentialist separation of humanity from nature via the aphorism: 'I think therefore I am'.

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

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

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

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

¹² Gare 2013.

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

¹⁴ Parmenides cited in *Ibid*, p.12.

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

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

Though Democritus wrote on ethics as well as physics it was not until the height of Athenian democracy, with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, that natural philosophy could help explain human Spirit as consistent with both scientific inquiry and what Schelling calls the ancient “Religion” – which is best understood as ‘civic humanism’. With the pre-Socratic Anaxagoras (c. 500 BC), natural philosophy and its explanation of the development of the universe is connected to Mind. But Aristotle argues he conflates soul and mind. ‘Mind’ (*nous*), according to Anaxagoras, is ‘infinite’ and separate from ‘the matter over whose history it presides’. And because it does not evolve, it is able to control the elements.¹⁶

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

As we will now see, Schelling’s ‘process metaphysics’ returns art to its rightful place in this ancient way of thinking about Wholeness. We might from his perspective call it a ‘science of Mind’; functioning in concert with philosophy’s role of developing a binding human Spirit *connected by* Nature’s *relation to* History. The pre-Socratics above, from whom Schelling drew inspiration, may be considered ‘unscientific’ because they lacked experimental methodology. But this would only reflect a limited way of defining science. As in the modern tendency to deny philosophy and art’s original joint ‘Spiritual’ purpose: to balance experiences of a world oversimplistically divided by existentialist notions of Being and Unbeing.

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

¹⁶ Kenny *WP*, p.24.

Schelling's 'Process Metaphysics' Paradigm for Art

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

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

Therefore, 'a stable norm, a model generated from within reason itself', Schelling suggests, is what we need to comprehend the recurrence of antitheses that create 'laws' from Nature apt to produce paradoxes and division in *human* nature. In what follows, I will propose that neither what is commonly understood as the 'paradigms of tradition', nor Kant's 'corrective mechanism for taste' (to use Kai Hammermeister's phrases), can recreate this *naturalised* normative aesthetic required to produce a sustainable future via a Human Ecology. A new mythology is needed, and only a paradigm of art as *process metaphysics* such as Schelling's can hope to construct one matching the realistic world of the ancients. How it can be made *practicable* in today's milieu is for future examination, but outlining its core features is where we must begin.

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

True mythology thus shuns mechanism. It can *only* emerge organically by integrating the potences of freedom and necessity, to embody life's 'proto-narratives'; like filling a vacuum, just as meaning arises in Nature. 'Whenever mythology degenerates into an object for *use*', says Schelling, it becomes 'precisely because it *is* only usage, a mere formality' – just like art.²² But as later discussed, their *higher* 'use' is evident in another critically important feature of Schelling's philosophy, contradicting Kant. That is, that there is no 'divinity' without reason. The artworks of antiquity were 'naturalised' by archetypally inhabiting a mythology *grounded in reality*. Their art did not elevate 'the *familiar*' idealistically to pure fantasy, as does the modern mythology - which Schelling shows *constrains* the imagination. Rather it is the ancient mythology's orientation toward Reason that allows the imagination to expand *reproductively*.

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

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

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

¹⁹ Schelling, *PA*, p.82.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.45.

²¹ *Ibid*, p.50.

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

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

Hence, Schelling’s point above that History claims a *preordained* principle of Art, albeit revealed in mythological antitheses, is a recurring theme in my examination. Heidegger says, in modernity ‘we are too late for the gods and too early for Being’.²³ But, as Schelling argues, Greek mythology managed to transform the ‘gods of nature’ into ‘gods of history’. And though he speculated these antithetical mythological ‘worlds’ would one day merge (in true epic fashion), returning the gods of history to nature, he realised ‘the phenomenon of modern poesy’ in his time was ‘not yet the consummate antithesis’.²⁴ As humanity inches toward irreversible tipping points, we have however arguably reached this; making a sustainable alternative *totalising* mythology now a very real *moral* challenge for Aesthetes.²⁵

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

Schelling’s aesthetics has however been dismissed as ‘romantic idealist’, whereas it is in fact radically ‘realist’. Kai Hammermeister, in *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (2002), for instance downplays its social significance in deference to Hegel’s, suggesting that while Schelling regards aesthetic intuition ‘a merely private affair’, he incorporates it into a mythology as an afterthought ‘to guarantee the social aspect of art’.²⁷ This underestimates Schelling’s insistent embedding of *the productivity of Nature* in the reciprocal relation between the ‘one poet’ and ‘generation living as one poet’.

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

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

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

²⁴ Schelling, *PA*, p.79.

²⁵ Trimarchi 2022.

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

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

1. From the Standpoint of 'Reflection' to 'Production'

In Schelling, knowledge of the absolute through art is realised as a unification of the subject and object, via the merger of beauty and truth. Hegel instead transforms this 'truth' into an appeal for unifying humanity with Spirit as an historical progression, connected to beauty conceptually but leaving art no access to it. Comparing these two different developments of Kant highlights why Kant's aesthetic paradigm was an unfinished project, contributing great individual insights that were overall unresolvable.²⁸ The significance of these different 'standpoints' for the future of art, and the superiority of Schelling's approach, are argued below.

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

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

Hegelianism

In Hegel self- 'realisation' is more a self- *legislating/legitimizing* conception of 'being'. As Arran Gare notes, Hegel's integration of Fichte and Herder's philosophies portrayed the ego as resulting from the development of the self-identical 'I'; which Kant argued formed the basis for upholding the reality of freedom as the foundation for ethics.²⁹ Aligning the ego with Spirit, which was then cast in opposition to nature, placed the human 'I' in constant struggle to control nature. Schelling challenged this in opposition to Fichte.

Hegel's standpoint inured aesthetics with a 'fixity' unsuited to describing its normative autopoietic teleology as connected to a natural conception of *selfhood* (as 'becoming'), where Art's *potences* can be better understood (ontologically). Modern philosophies of art were henceforth unable to escape ties to an historical framework (opposed by Herder) privileging fragmenting, subjectivised, deterioration of a once unified conception of art and selfhood (revived in Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*). Post-Marxist, neoliberal interpretations of human freedom and self-determination understandably then sit more comfortably with Hegelianism.

Heidegger too understood art as 'ontology'. But his development of Hegel, becoming narrowly focused on the 'ontology of the *artwork*' (ie., Art in 'the particular'), struggled under Kant's dialectics. Aligning with Hegel's view of Art's historicity being entwined with *human* history, the artwork becomes a means of 'revealing content' in which 'metaphysical truth' (defined as the 'unconditional' absolute) is about 'being'. Heidegger then exempts Kant of the charge of 'subjectivising', claiming aesthetic judgement is ontologically fundamental to shared socio-cultural (and for Kant, 'natural') purposiveness. This confirms his view that art makes a *demand* on us, to which we are called upon to respond.³⁰ But what kind of demand?

Ingvild Torsen describes it as cathartically 'self-realising'. Heidegger's artistic 'truth' is revealed *Daesin* - letting the work 'be'. And beauty's 'symbolic function' *displaces* the self.³¹ This prompts reflection on the 'subjectively

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

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

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

³¹ Ibid, p.30. Heidegger accurately interpreted Kant's notion of 'disinterestedness' (ie., art becomes dysfunctional once 'interest', or self-consciousness, is applied); but as Torsen shows subsequently derives a new false conception of art as

purposive feature of our constitution' (via terms of 'existence' or 'judgement'); questioning our *identity*, but more importantly, 'what human freedom amounts to'. No 'metaphysical truth' is revealed here; rather one 'ultimately, about ourselves' obtained in 'reflective judgement'.³² While Kant's 'demand' rests in a reality of 'pure forms' precipitating 'human laws' (ie., *theorisations*); Heidegger's derivation via Hegel grounds the artwork in the fixed socio-historical reality of the audience.

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

As Torsen points out, this ultimately proves Heidegger's 'metaphysical thesis' incapable of explaining art, forcing him to downplay philosophy's role. He establishes art's 'normativity' instead in the 'event', which 'functions as a first concrete manifestation of a certain historical being' (following the *later* Hegel's historical model).³⁴ From here Heidegger suggests abstract art's claim to normativity follows, without apparent difficulty, from Hegel's idea of beauty - which essentially returns us to Kant's paradigm. This provides further justification for abandoning any role for philosophy to explain art.³⁵

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

De-coupling art and nature, claiming what art presents is really the reflection of 'spirit' in nature (not nature itself), excludes both representation *and* beauty as defining qualities of art. This, says Torsen, 'also rules out that art has an "other"'. Nature's 'spirit' is *materialised* through art, only in the expression of characteristics of a human community. Heidegger joins this 'indifference toward natural beauty' with his notions of content and truth to conclude that 'an art that is both non-representational and, possibly, not beautiful at all' must be admitted.³⁶

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

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

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

grounded in 'content', and ultimately technology. Without interest, what is activated when encountering the artwork is 'not the faculties of the subject, but rather the relation between the subject and object itself' – which removes the standard for beauty from the subject.

³² Ibid, p.27.

³³ Schelling, *PA*, p.73.

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

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

³⁶ Ibid, p.293. This ultimately sanctions nihilistic "art".

³⁷ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.101.

This problem deepens in Hegel's construction of art categories (loading further burden on the meaning of 'materiality').³⁸ Being based on Kant's questionable notion of *conceptual* aesthetic truth (see below), strongly opposed by Schelling, they advance the unsettling suggestion art becomes more useful to humanity as its *materiality* decreases and *conceptual* nature increases - while its *value* decreases over time. Furthermore, Hegel (again, contrary to Schelling) casts art as 'thesis', religion as 'antithesis', and philosophy as their 'synthesis' (resolution) - rendering philosophy superior. Which, all together, ultimately manifests in the claimed superiority of *both* philosophy *and* 'concept' over art; a mistaken conflation which will fuel *theoretical* aesthetics (and indeed its eventual demise).³⁹ This in the end leads Heidegger to disavow metaphysics, and defend questionable definitions of art.⁴⁰

However, the main problem with Hegel's transcendentalism is that it leads him to characterise art as 'the striving for, the achievement of and the abandoning of the ideal as the true idea of beauty'.⁴¹ This also makes art's *end* (purpose) one which appears, and can only be justified, historically. Hence, his more or less direct adoption of Kant's problematic account of beauty produces 'a narrative [which] inevitably leads to the classification of aesthetic truth as that of a bygone historical period'.⁴² But, as we can see above, his 'classical' apotheosis of art is cast into difficulty by the fact that his historical narrative peaks in the *middle* period, forfeiting the dialectical movement upward, and completely undermining any such 'historical' justifications. As a result, his students were later prompted to revise this, reinstalling the Renaissance as Hegel's true 'triadic third'.⁴³

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

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

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

Kant's Aesthetics

The gaps between Kant's principles of 'pure reason' and Aristotle's 'practical reason' are evident in the *Critique of Judgement*. This is widely credited as the most influential text in the history of philosophical aesthetics; however, it is seminally beholden to Plato's ideal of perfection. Between the first and second *Critiques* Kant moves from consecrating aesthetics as a theory of sensual perception to designating it a theory of taste, clearly to try to resolve many associated problems in each. Beauty and truth can never be merged, aesthetic judgement never moves from imagination to understanding, and natural beauty is rendered 'eternally' tied to purpose (as *utility*). 'The beautiful' becomes 'that which, without any concept, is cognized as an object of a *necessary* pleasure'.⁴⁴ Whereupon we arrive at the prevailing mythology of artworks as symbolically fortified constructions of the sensible realm. (And indeed art's 'Spirit' *artificially* grounded in the social sphere).

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

³⁹ For this argument see Trimarchi 2022 and 2023.

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

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

⁴² Hammermeister, *GT*, p.104.

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

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

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

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

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

What contributed to art being considered a faulty means to understand reality, though useful for rearranging it, was the wedge Kant’s aesthetics then drove between philosophy and art. As Hammermeister notes this centred on three main insoluble arguments. The philosopher’s ontological discussion of art, the epistemic role it is attributed, and the practical function located in artworks. These, as we shall see, are resolved in Schelling’s system. But the emphasis they have placed on art’s *false* “objective” (ie., purely ‘formal’) characteristics arises in what is summarised below under five key interrelated problems: Judgement, Imagination, Purpose, Beauty-Truth separation, and Conceptual utility. Kant dissociated art from history to the extent that concrete developments were marked as those which ‘have received applause for the longest time in the course of culture’ (giving a place to tradition).⁴⁸ But then art’s only possible *unifying* resolution could be found in the subjectification of aesthetics, divorcing cognition of this experience from the object and firmly rooting it in the subject.⁴⁹ Hence gaping dialectical inconsistencies emerged.

Firstly, separating art from cognition meant emphasising cognitive aspects of criteria for establishing aesthetic Judgement. These, taken from Kant’s first critique as the structure upon which he bases his investigations, are: quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Yet most of his theoretical conclusions - associated with types of beauty, purposiveness, taste, and pleasure relative to aesthetic judgement - rely on his wavering belief that *pre-cognition* is the operative means to make such judgements. This inconsistency is never resolved. Next Kant places limitations on Imagination to synthesise elements of the sensual

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.21. See Trimarchi 2022 on the ‘general aesthetic’ vs Art.

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

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

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

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.41.

manifold. One such ‘unfathomable’ element is sublimity, argued to be not a *quality* of an object, but a *response of the subject* ‘much like the pleasure that we call beauty’. Such subjectivising limitations extend to almost every aspect of his aesthetics.⁵⁰

Thirdly, while subjectivity (ie., the ego) subsequently governs art’s ‘*imaginary*’ purpose and interpretation, the artwork is purportedly (though clearly not as Kant intended) placed in the same category as the beautiful object in nature. Like *natural* ‘objects’, according to Hammermeister, having no end outside itself art thus serves no Purpose and is ‘free from all finality’. But Kant’s so-called ‘*purposeless* purposefulness’ has been misinterpreted to render art’s connection with humanity *similarly* purposeless.⁵¹ The connection between Art and the Person (says Hammermeister) must either be split, or *both* must be objectifiable.⁵² Thereafter, with the rise of logical positivism, both are essentially permanently ‘materialised’, via Hobbesian mechanism. (The already cast adrift *Self* can only tenuously be related to Art *experientially*, via psychologism - which Kant rejected. And Art, with the Imagination disabled, becomes further fragmented and defuturised).

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

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

Notably, pre-Kantian philosophers kept notions of art and *natural* beauty strictly separate. Kant’s continuation of this is significant for two reasons. Firstly, confirming this philosophical presupposition (originating in Plato’s ideal of divinely ordained beauty) underwrites Art’s devaluation pre-Kant. Secondly, subsequent historicising de-emphasis of natural beauty as a feature of art (eg., Heidegger’s, with Hegel’s tacit agreement) now had a firmer foundation. Furthermore, since Kant subsequently elevates ‘adherent’ beauty above all others, the positivistic manipulation of natural beauty is encouraged as an ideal.⁵⁴ Utilitarian, mechanistic attributions of artistic ‘beauty’ via purely technological fabrication (absenting truth) becomes normalised, and formalised in theories of ‘effect’ and ‘affect’ (ie., ‘efficient causes’).⁵⁵

Art being the prime product of human ‘innovation’ and manifestation of purpose manipulating *adherent* beauty, means *any* fetishised materialisation of the artwork (or indeed the Person) can ultimately be justified in any culture or epoch. So too the intentionality and identity of the artist as ‘creator’ of novelties, paradoxes, and illusions;

⁵⁰ Ibid, p.30.

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

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

⁵³ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.26.

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

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

elevating the ‘artist as hero’ to engineering genius. A status marked, contrary to Kant’s stated intentions, by the capacity to conjure passive, ‘miraculous’, reception of experiences in ‘sublime’ infinity, with “purposeless purposefulness”. All consecrated by a concept of ‘progress’ favouring pursuit of efficient over ‘final’ cause, and therefore external over internal goods.

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

But, as Hammermeister points out, Kant had very limited firsthand experience of art, using ‘wallpaper patterns, porcelain, paper cutouts, and carved handles of walking sticks as prime artistic examples’.⁵⁶ By contrast, Schelling accessed the great works available in the museums of Jena and Dresden under the tutelage of friends like Goethe, and Schiller whose *Aesthetic Education of Man* offered sustained attention to a wide range of individual artworks. While Hegel’s focus was subsequently heralded as a ‘veritable world history of art’, Kant’s was centred on the bigger questions of truth and reason.⁵⁷ Being clearly uninterested in the construction of the artwork (making almost no reference to any) and directing his attention entirely at the theoretical in favour of the practical, his paradigm thus unravels under the inherent impossibility of integrating his two types of beauty in aesthetic judgement. How Pleasure, Beauty, and Truth are conceptually prised apart, denying the artwork’s *phenomenological* meaning-value, requires some explanation. Because making taste the *requirement* for aesthetic judgement, subordinating qualities of the object to subjective reception of pleasure/displeasure, will have major consequences for both art *and* morality.

First, with taste affording no *cognitive* judgement, Kant claims it is ‘not logical, but aesthetic’, condemning aesthetics to both subjectivity and illogicality.⁵⁸ Then his two categories of pleasure (‘the agreeable’ and ‘encountering good’) are distinguished from both types of beauty as being *interested* in the existence of the object. And though entirely subjective, their cognition is deemed to hold true universally. Art could therefore be completely dissociated from any objective ‘good’, purely subjectively. Since beauty and pleasure have no sustainable relation to insight and cognition, aesthetic *judgement* rendered no rational purpose or universality. With its higher usefulness to humanity disabled, Art’s then misconstrued ‘infinite interpretability’ disarms both its meaningfulness and purpose via ‘disinterestedness’.

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

This fabrication has been benignly attributed, as Hammermeister does, to explaining why great art presents renewed pleasure of endless re-conceptualisation. Though Schelling does subscribe to art’s replenishing pleasure, it is on completely different terms to Kant. Kant’s account is nevertheless more suited to endless repetition of familiar concepts in the continual search for ‘the new’ (via modern art’s exploitable *materiality* in the marketplace). This makes ‘permanent revolution’ the mother of invention and signifier of progress. Hence renewable *symbolic* idealising, replacing metaphor with concept, became increasingly endemic in the modern mythology of art,

⁵⁶ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.24.

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

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, p.28.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p.29.

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

⁶¹ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.29.

⁶² *Ibid*, p.30.

limiting its higher meaning and understanding, and narrowing its focus on ‘experientialism’. Art’s *real* ‘claim’, and artistic intention, are thus curtailed. Kant’s *artificially* collectivising aesthetic idea, lacking meaningfulness, yet subjectively universalizable via an object’s ‘*necessary* pleasure’, shows why turning any ‘found object’ or ‘readymade’ idea into ‘art’ (in any artform) has been institutionalised.

The fundamental problem with Kant’s logic was that cognition, normally associated with reason, was subsequently associated with intuitive thinking – via symbolic conceptualisation - contradicting his original claim. In this complete reversal, aesthetic judgement becomes a manipulable ‘cognised’ function entirely dependent on reflective sensibility/imagination. The imagination is ‘free’ to subsume any object under a concept, with the faculty of understanding providing ‘logic’ irrespective of any real Beauty-Truth relation. With incitement of pleasure in us being purpose enough, matters for serious artistic inquiry *in praxis* become subject now to the separation of actions from matters of knowledge. Art’s *adherent* beauty can be *rationalised* as meaningful, rather than felt intuitively as natural (*free*) beauty.⁶³

What price such “freedom”? Even though subjectivising aesthetic judgement is at odds with Kant’s own claim that taste is no science at all, by symbolic transference of his logic morality too is entirely subjectivised.⁶⁴ Though beauty is determined by the senses and imagination, taste *prepares* the habit for this to become the rule.⁶⁵ And, being humanity’s only means to *communalise* meaning, it not only habitually rationalises aesthetic judgement, but morals too. Good aesthetic judgement produces moral virtue; and its regular exercise pointing ‘beyond the sensory pleasure toward a moral interest’ habituates individuals in ‘finding delight more in moral ideas than in sensuality’.⁶⁶ So Kant was not advocating a poor conception of morality *or* pleasure; he argued pleasure we feel in beauty ‘should ultimately be directed toward morality, because only moral ideas may be contemplated as ends in themselves’.⁶⁷ It is just that his aesthetics falls foul of a series of contradictions which sever the ontological connection between beauty and morality, through faulty attempts to tie them together by other means. Therefore, his aesthetic *dialectics* could only support a debasement of ethics to subjective moralising.

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

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

When we encounter the *dynamical* sublime, however, we are faced with ‘a moment of anxiety’; the intense displeasure of being confronted by the mighty power of nature, making us feel vulnerable and inferior. But the mathematical sublime - *abandoning* imagination - gives us the rational tools to deal with this. It provides the next

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

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

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

⁶⁶ Ibid, p.39.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p.38.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.33.

very important step in which we overcome nature: 'self-realisation'. The 'displeasure of inferiority' is turned into 'a sense of independence and even human superiority'. Achieving this involves 'a process of reflection', however, whereby 'the encounter with the forces of nature lets us discover in ourselves a "power of resistance"' reconfirming human freedom 'is not subject to natural destruction, but transcends the sensory realm'. This is the ultimate pleasure of art, arising from 'our insight into the indestructibility of human nature'.⁶⁹

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

Art reconceived as 'process metaphysics' reverses this ideal to reconnect humanity and Nature in the real world, by taking a completely different view of 'the sublime'.

Art as 'Process Metaphysics'

Contrasting Schelling's *dialectical* aesthetics with Hegel's reaction to Kant reveals why it posits art as *fundamental* to civic humanism, rather than instrumentally applicable. Hegel's and Kant's dialectics (for different reasons and despite their respective merits) have instead underwritten a more than just historiographic, but in fact *deontological*, materialist paradigm securing both Art and *the Self's* fragmentation.⁷¹ Schelling's paradigm however reverses key aspects of Kant's 'standpoint of reflection' which fuels the modern mythology. Essentially, Art's very particular kind of imaging is shown as not *re*-presentation of objects, but 'a representation of the absolute within limitation', without suspending 'the absolute' (*Object*).

Furthermore, *Reason* is not an added historicism. As I will show in future, the construction of art *in the particular* (artforms/artworks) is subject *only* to the reason inherent in the *potences* (or consequences) of the affirmation of the whole unity (the *Principle*). Though illegitimately historicised in modern mythology, the artwork is like an organism, which can never have its *essence* separated from the subsistence of its form because its 'being' immediately constitutes the *activity* within it.⁷² Being and becoming produce the condition of indifference in the organism, and hence the condition of indifference between ideality and reality in the artwork.

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

Schelling's 'process metaphysics' of art has been casually dismissed as 'romantic idealist' by some and too radical by others.⁷³ Perhaps because his underpinning of the principle of Art in Nature appears deceptively simple. Art's 'highest identity', says Schelling, 'is at once the highest objectivity'. Its 'absolute reality' (universal) can only be found in *indifference* with its 'absolute ideality'. And since the *ideal* real 'is much more real than the so-called real itself', it requires the cultivation of determining laws which hold 'pure limitation' and 'undivided absoluteness' in the same purview. The principle of Art's absolute (whole) thus *productively* relates to the construction of the artwork (part) - from the unity to the multiplicity of art (in the social sphere) - in the

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

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.34.

⁷¹ Arran Gare, "Natural Philosophy and the Sciences: Challenging Science's Tunnel Vision." *Philosophies* 3, 4, (2018) p.41. n.59. This provides necessary background on the comparative dialectics of Schelling, Hegel, and Kant, which space here prevents fuller examination of. According to Gare, Schelling 'explained the transformations in the concept of metaphysics that led to Kant's... then characterised his own as "metaphysical empiricism"'.
⁷² See Trimarchi 2022 to distinguish 'legitimate' from 'illegitimate' historicization processes.

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

transition from the infinite to the finite. Though this may seem merely conceptual at present, this *Principle's* application proves far more realistic than the Kantian paradigm for art in practice.

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

Kant's synthesis of mental representations, while rejecting Humean associationism's argument that objects of experience are formed *only* by perceptions, is surpassed by Schelling's synthesis of the subject with nature. His rejection of Fichte's attempt to impose the subject (or self) on Kant's synthesis led to his re-definition of metaphysics as 'process metaphysics'. A new emphasis on how 'intellectual intuition' itself and all meaning emerges in nature then becomes central to his philosophy of art. 'God' as Nature - as All or Absolute - thus equals the *indifference* of consciousness and unconsciousness. This posits cognition as a process of semiotic productivity, which nature produces in the real world.

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

While Kant's sublime extracts beauty and truth from the realm of the suprasensible, out of the realm of the senses entirely to a purely subjective ground, Schelling's merger of them provides objectivity for this search. Cognition, in Schelling the *merger* of feeling and thinking, synthesises aesthetic intuition, which he argues is 'precisely the intellectual intuition gone objective'.⁷⁴ We could consider Art a 'science of Mind' (more than psychology or neuroscience, for instance) given the uniquely *normative* aesthetic standpoint it produces in consciousness itself. As Schelling says, 'that absolute identity that had already divided itself in the self' is simply not available in anything besides art. It is an 'identity' which 'the philosopher regards as already divided', but which 'in the first act of consciousness' is *only* accessible in art's morphogenic meaning-productivity *and no other intuition*.⁷⁵

This is why the posited nature of the world of objects is made meaningful in art on a new, higher level via the *limits* imposed by *other individuals*. The self's 'moral universe' manifests as law only by *such* engagement, where constraints on its freedom are mediated by the 'other'. Only now, *by the Self seeing itself in the Other*, can this be *realised* as self-actualising. Art is thus reconnected with morality because insights formed in these relations, by this process, create the self's *habits*. Not just personal habits, but the Self's (person<->Person) entire *habitus* and how it is constructed, all originate here. History writ large is formed out of the 'ongoing gradual revelation of the absolute', through an endless process rendering it therefore *never to be known* in history.⁷⁶

Schelling's *Naturphilosophen* (nature as 'productivity and product') uniquely posits Art's purpose to be associated with *thought in action* directed toward semiotic productivity (Aristotle's *poiesis/praxis* nexus). Hence his system of art tracks *meaning's* progress in the resolution of becoming and being. Kant's various separations, artificially prising open the interrelation between an active subject and its object, are thus replaced by a more realistic perspective on constructing new subjectivities. However, it is Kant's notion of 'community of causation' which elucidates why Art's objectivity must be understood as ontologically and teleologically normative, since how it reconnects Nature and History is via distinctive propositions. Kant introduced this idea in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and, as Gare says, 'defended functionalist or teleological explanations of living processes in the *Critique of Judgement* (although here he specifically ruled out a theory of emergence)', thus contributing to 'a new conception of nature'.⁷⁷ Herder then developed Kant's original idea of human consciousness, but importantly, conceived this 'as social rather than individual and active rather than contemplative'. Art's perplexing consciousness-expanding capability was, with Herder's radical rethinking of the nature-human history nexus, no longer seen as derivative of and reducible to an historical epic narrative.

Schelling subsequently constructed a metaphysics of genuinely social aesthetic inquiry, in which productivity and product are developed in a 'community of causation' *with ethics at its foundation*. His 'absolute' is *consciousness itself*, manifest in its original formlessness as 'intellectual intuition' in an ever-becoming state of being. But, importantly, it *precedes* the subject-object split, and this establishes the primacy of the self, in radical opposition

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

⁷⁵ Schelling in *Ibid*, p.74.

⁷⁶ Schelling in *Ibid*, p.70.

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

to Kant's and Hegel's transcendentalism. Art's *natural* connection to the Person is revived, exposing why Art's *Principle* transcends art as a product of historical narrative.

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

'Being', so described (as 'suspended'), is neither appearance *nor* identity, since identity too precedes subject-object separation. Both need an instance (in Alfred North Whitehead's terminology, an 'occasion') to bring subject and object together, and so 'being' as either appearance or identity is *always* a liminal concept of cognition. This is why the art object's *absolute* is inaccessible to conceptual knowledge, and only grasped in the intellectual intuition *unmediated* by concepts. Kant restricted this kind of access to God, but Schelling recast it (following Fichte) as a form of certainty - as the act of the self *positing* itself. The 'empirical self freely posited' in which occasion 'the self acquires a certainty of itself without reaching knowledge of itself since the certainty remains unconceptualized'.⁷⁹

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

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

Aspiration vs Reflection

Kai Hammermeister (2002) praises Hegel's earlier described historical approach to aesthetics as privileging philosophy; while casting doubt on Schelling's. But he apparently favours a definition of aesthetics as essentially theoretical, having no ontological bearing; thereby underestimating Schelling's system of art and its foundation in process metaphysics. Characterising a collection of Schelling's works (from different periods, culminating with the *Philosophy of Art*) as returning to the Kantian notion of 'art as representation of the absolute by divine means' is thus clearly mistaken. Without discriminating among Schelling's 'Neoplatonic tendencies' blamed for his difficulties, Hammermeister overlooks important details underscoring the essence of 'reflection' which Schelling rejects. For instance, Schelling's mimesis is construed as closer to the Platonic mimesis adopted by Kant and Hegel when in fact it accords with Aristotle's. Also, Schelling's development of Kant's 'community of causation', and adoption of Herder's Nature-History nexus over 'empirical' history, putting the social ramifications of his system in strong competition with Hegel's triumphant historicisation of art, are neglected.

Hammermeister claims Schelling later retreated from elevating art's status above philosophy, but this is not evident in his *Philosophy of Art* and more likely a misreading of his intentions. Nevertheless, in deference to Hegel, he situates Schelling's *System* as 'the grandfather of today's tendencies in philosophy to abort metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology all in favour of aesthetics'.⁸⁰ When in fact Schelling's *revival* of metaphysics succeeded in *bringing it together* with ontology and epistemology under the *auspices* of aesthetics. Both Schelling *and* Hegel demonstrably gave a place to art and philosophy as separate modes of inquiry, though for admittedly very different

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

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

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.86.

reasons based on different approaches to the 'absolute'. To avoid such oversights, it is necessary to take full account of this, and why Schelling's ideas of 'infinity', 'sublimity', and 'religion' are not in any way associated with modern religiosity, but steeped in the ancient cosmology.

For instance, Schelling's inherently synthetic approach to infinity contrasts sharply with Kant's 'mathematical' infinity (in particular) adopted in Hegel and Heidegger's 'absolutes'. Unlike Kant, Schelling's 'Absolute' is the unconditioned totality, the self-organising universe within which intellectual intuition arises, *reproducing* itself in imagination. Like Peirce's evolution of thought originating 'out there', it is thus also simultaneously absolutely *internal*. His idea of 'transcendence' is *in the world*, embodied in *reproductive* 'communities of causation', wherein parts and wholes interact autonomously within certain constraints (ie., the art->Art/person->Person double-unity = 'Religion'). And when he argues, as Hammermeister says, that 'no poetic world can exist outside religion', and that 'no objective representation of religion is possible without art', he does not mean the *revealed* religion of Christianity, Islam, etc., whose 'infinities' are beyond the world. He means the ancient 'religion' of civic humanism.

Thus, in no way does Schelling relinquish art's power in the social sphere as Hammermeister suggests. Despite recognising Herder's influence on Schelling, and the social implications in both Kant's and Schelling's aesthetics, several difficulties arise. For example, Hammermeister misinterprets the role of the individual in artmaking. Schelling's idea of 'genius', he says, displays the standard 'parallelization of the work of the artist with the divine creation' being a 'painful event of individualization and materialization... [because]... "the artist must negate himself and descend into the singular, not shying away from isolation, nor from agony and the pain of form"'.⁸¹ However, the artist descending 'into the singular' is simply the process of the self glimpsing itself in the mirror before recognising the other. It does not entail any 'individualization' necessarily setting genius apart from society. Neither does the 'materialization' of the artwork necessarily entail a *physical* materialisation (as divine creation implies), because Schelling's 'empirical object' (becoming metaphoric 'truth') is in fact the 'materialisation' of *thought* in natural semiosis.

Yet Hammermeister weaves this argument into a suggestion that 'Romantic irony' is Schelling's ideal object representing the 'absolute' where *the Object* of art resides. Karl Solger's 'sublime' notion of 'enduring the terrible' (recalling Kant's) is invoked, wherein 'the incorporation of the absolute... in an object of art' destroys its eternal nature, causing sadness.⁸² Solger calls this 'embodiment of the idea' in a material object a moment of 'tragic irony', leading Hammermeister to mistakenly declare on Schelling's behalf that the artwork 'is not identical with the idea', but its *reflection*. When, clearly, for Schelling the absolute in art *is* the idea ('the gods'). It is in fact an ideal *aspiration*, in the same way Aristotle's 'golden mean' is the ideal 'mark' to aim for in balancing the virtues. However, this is added to a list of other apparent inconsistencies and reasons to defer to Hegel's aesthetics. Ideas selectively drawn from Schelling's friend August Schlegel, R. M. Rilke (who questionably interprets Aristotle's 'katharsis'), Schopenhauer, Lessing, Solger, and others are enlisted to propose equally contestable counterclaims to Schelling's differences with Kant on 'genius', 'the eternal', the function of mimesis, etc.

What emerges is an underlying apparent misunderstanding of Schelling's 'empirical object', and its significance for distinguishing the modern and ancient mythologies (see below). There is no 'tragic irony' in the 'materialisation' of the absolute. It represents merely an apparent "paradox" - that 'being' is never permanent but always remains in the *real* world 'becoming'. What this transition lays bare, as Hammermeister himself well describes it, is that 'while the intellectual intuition encounters the absolute in its transcendent state and sensual perception only considers the transient nature of objects, art hovers in between these two spheres'.⁸³ In other words, as the 'materiality' of the object of aesthetic intuition approaches the ideal (beauty-truth nexus) its *possibility* of 'being' renders it as real. This, as we will see, is Schelling's two ontologically connected different perspectives of the same absolute merging: 'An object is beautiful when it is so adequate to its idea that the infinite (the concept) enters the real. In fewer words, in beauty the real becomes ideal'.⁸⁴

The Standpoint of Production (Naturalising vs 'Naturalism')

The phenomenology of perception helps to clarify Schelling's standpoint of production from that of reflection, and how we understand what is 'natural'. Ernst Cassirer for instance developed a philosophy of symbolic forms along the lines that the 'knowing subject' was the point of departure of their perception rather than the 'objective world'. Husserl on the other hand embraced Brentano's 'science of the spirit', arguing Nature belonged to the

⁸¹ Ibid, p.80.

⁸² Ibid, p.80

⁸³ Ibid, p.80.

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

sphere of the spirit. His attempt to understand reality was thus formulated in transcendental phenomenology and, as Gare argues, this ‘overcame naturalist objectivism, and for that matter any form of objectivism, in the only possible way, by beginning one’s philosophising from one’s own ego; and that purely as the author of all one accepts, becoming in this regard a purely theoretical spectator’.⁸⁵ Schelling’s standpoint of production, originating in Herder, melds these perspectives.

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

Schelling’s philosophy of identity ensures the societal discourse of values is communicated like this and from the ‘bottom up’. An idea later taken up by process metaphysicians from Peirce to Bergson, Bognadov, Whitehead, Mead, Bertalanffy, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Lucien Goldmann, and combined with the best aspects of Hegelian social and political philosophy. It was, as Gare says, ‘revised and defended against various forms of reductionism, including Hegelian Marxist reductionism which reduced people to and legitimated their treatment as instruments of the world-historical process’.⁸⁷ As Douglass Stott says, the *artwork* thus ‘discloses in actuality that identity of the conscious and the unconscious, of spirit and nature, of freedom and necessity... as the principle of the absolute grounding all knowledge’ that defines a community.⁸⁸

Artistic engagement, characterising spirit from this standpoint of ‘productivity’, allows possibility to flourish as ‘semiotic freedom’. For both Hölderlin and Hegel the union of beauty and truth is only *mirrored* in the realm of the senses. This could not overcome the split between thought and reality, which Schelling resolved by reconceiving consciousness as the productivity and product of Nature itself. The reason beauty and truth are integrally interrelated is because the two together produce a conscious and unconscious recognition of *normativity* evident only in Art (not the general aesthetic) – as Schelling shows here:⁸⁹

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

Kant’s thesis, in which ‘genius’ inspired by ‘divine’ supra-sensibility prescribes the *rule* of art, is upturned here by linking the *principle* of art integrally to Nature. This is what makes the Aristotelian concept of mimesis *normative*. The ‘mimesis’ of art is *not* an *imitation* of objects, as he was often misinterpreted. Rather, a *binding* of the subject-object relation *in the realisation of the whole*. This essentially defines Art’s ‘standpoint of production’, and how we should understand its ‘expressionism’ (whereupon ‘the explicit’ must always *point toward* ‘the implicit’).

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

Artistic ‘genius’ is better described then as prudently harnessing possibility and melding it with reason (applying judgement about meaning *and* technical proficiency); than as a portal to supranatural ‘sublimity’. While an artist

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

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

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

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

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

⁹⁰ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.71.

holds certain intentions in producing a work, involving all manner of processes, the additional force beyond their control needed to bring it into ‘being’ or ‘disclosure’ (though this disclosure is itself only another stage of ‘being’) is *not* found outside Nature, in Kant’s sublime *suprasensible* realm. What Kant called ‘genius’, Aristotle characterised as ‘prudence’. A *virtue* - reliant more on chance than what is implied by ‘divine intervention’ or ‘genius’ - yet not completely beholden to accidentality, nor independent of a collective ‘spirit’. Following is an example of how the Kantian ‘experientialist’ tendency to merit the suprasensible has invaded the most unsuspecting areas of our mythologising of art.

Schelling’s standpoint of production can be distinguished in praxis from, for instance, the socialist theatre of Bertolt Brecht - which provides a good example of the Hegelian standpoint of *reflection* (and the artwork’s *illegitimate* historicisation in Theatre).⁹¹ This ‘theater of the scientific age’ is characterised by David Roberts as a rebellion against artistic traditions that ‘demands a level of self-reflection which can be attained only through the union of art and science’.⁹² However Brecht’s aim was simply to bind social observations to entertainments, which was not at all ‘revolutionary’, though *stylistically* new.⁹³ Like other modern expressionism, it drew upon contemporaneous effects on the human condition for its material (eg., industrialisation); but encouraged actors to determine the ‘true’ nature of the object being represented, from observational experience. Similarly, his productions employed means for creating ‘necessary distance’, allowing the audience to have this truth revealed via a ‘free favouring’ experience afforded by ‘disinterest’ (cf. Kant).

Achieving ‘disinterestedness’ was intended to promote ‘objectivity’, but this method relied on prevailing illusions of experimental science at the time for its truth-telling (ie., observation = truth). Logical positivism however presupposes no clear distinction between observation and interpretation in what are assumed ‘controlled observations’. The *theatrical* ‘principle of historicisation’ Brecht invented (based on the ‘interrogative gaze’) requires actors to adopt an *interpretative* attitude (*grund-gestus*) and ‘master the act of observation’.⁹⁴ Observation, however, can never really be considered ‘controlled’; there is *always* an active subject present.⁹⁵ Therefore our interpretation of what appears familiar becomes our *understanding*. And interpretations, over time, turn into accepted beliefs which become habitual ways of pre-conceiving, pre-valuing, and even imagining new experiences.⁹⁶

Prudence, however, begs heeding the important lesson which *Gestalts* teach us: ‘We observe holistically and analysis of the whole into its constituent parts is a *secondary* activity.’⁹⁷ What an observer reports is often described in terms of the experience of *sensations*. Therefore, as well as constituting our reality as a relation between the whole and parts, we are always deciphering the confusion between what we think we are seeing if we are not knowing what we are looking at and what we are feeling sensationally.⁹⁸ Hermeneutics, how we ‘bring to understanding’ anything in experience, is thus further complicated by preconceived ideas of how the “motion” of meanings can be corralled for effect (recalling the Hobbesian reduction of mind to inert matter).⁹⁹ However, as Schelling and others have revealed, it is not meaning that moves, but its *affordances*.

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

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

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

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

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

⁹⁵ Gare, “Science, process philosophy”, p.194.

⁹⁶ *Ibid* p.202, p.267.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p.196. Emphasis added.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p.196.

⁹⁹ Hobbes 1999.

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

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

* * *

In supplanting the ancient mythology’s immersion in Nature, our attention moved from a standpoint of production to reflection, making ‘symbolic capital’ the new currency of meaning-value (in Art *and* the Person). This produced the illusion that the normative science of aesthetics changed, when only observation of our *experience* of it changed. Schelling’s system instead guides the construction of the artwork via the phenomenology of semiotic productivity. How to ‘realise’ the nature of the world through art is aligned with Aristotle’s meaning of mimesis. And from this standpoint, the product’s integrity is governed by one *Principle*. It beckons us to reclaim *theoretical* ‘naturalism’ for its more proper association – ‘speculative naturalism’ – and its defining philosophy of Art.¹⁰¹ And to recognise that another more fundamental rebellion is called for, if the Imagination in modernity is to become truly *re-* productive again.

The ‘Empirical Object’: Rebellion Against the Divine

Why the *Principle of Art’s* definition is linked to and reliant upon the ancient mythology’s superior *collectivising* features, as elaborated in §2, is because the *mythological* standpoint divergence rests on Schelling’s ‘empirical object’. Properly distinguishing these standpoints therefore requires we return to the critical differences between the modern and ancient mythologies: two different ways of worlding, and conceiving the integral relation between Art and civic humanism (‘Religion’). Examining misrepresentations of Schelling’s aesthetics, highlighting its advance on Kants, reveals why it is not ‘classicist’ as Hammermeister suggests, but a radically empirical way of reconnecting Art to the normative sciences.

This is unfortunately hidden in Hammermeister’s conflation of Schelling’s different concept of infinity with the Platonic-Kantian one. We are thus left thinking this ‘object’ can be obtained in modernity, by simply conceptualising it; when it can only be perceived as ‘empirical’ within the *ancient* mythology. The main ‘empirical’ difference essentially concerns orientation toward Beauty *and* Truth ideals, pursued differently in each because of the different individual-collective relations. I have previously suggested this ‘intentionality’ – *purposing* Art’s unique ‘truth’ – depends upon how we approach *relating* ‘the finite’ to ‘the infinite’ (ie., ‘universalising’); but it also rests upon how we *define* these, and hence ‘Divine’ or ‘Sublime’ ideality. Hammermeister rightly recognises that Schelling’s *metaphysical* grounding of aesthetics suspends ‘the individualizing tendencies’ of Kant’s aesthetics; and revives the Neoplatonic notion that art does not represent objects, rather ‘*the idea of the object*’.¹⁰² But situating these alongside the suggestion art is *not* engaged in ‘naturalistic mimesis’, leads to difficulties arising from ambiguities associated with these terms.

We can better begin to understand this ancient empirical object by considering Schelling’s departure from Kant in Michael Vater’s description of how one should approach his standpoint of production, (and, I suggest, attend to art accordingly as ‘process metaphysics’).¹⁰³

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

¹⁰¹ See Segall 2012.

¹⁰² Hammermeister, *GT*, p.79.

¹⁰³ Schelling, *PA*, Stott, D. *Translators Introduction*, p.4. n.5 (From Vater’s introduction to *Bruno: or, On the Divine and Natural Principle of Things*).

[I]n order to investigate reality outside of experience, he must abandon the Kantian path of transcendental questioning and the merely heuristic answers it obtains, and boldly operate as a metaphysician, that is, seek to generalize certain features of experience and fashion a comprehensive account of all the domains of reality in terms of these generalized features.

This implies a *metaphoric* way of approaching ‘real-ising’. As Vater continues, ‘the features Schelling chooses to generalize are logical relations, the identity-and-difference of the subject and object in the situation of knowing, and that of the mental and physical aspects of the self-conscious organism’. These logical relations underscore ‘Schelling’s conviction that philosophy must once again acquire a metaphysical foundation if it is to be a systematic account of reality’. As Stott notes, Schelling’s ‘philosophy of identity’ countered Hegel’s ‘Spirit’ by positing that the same dynamic forces at play producing nature were also producing the human intellect and spirit - simply viewed from different perspectives. Thus, ‘[a]t the fundamental level of dynamic force or activity, the *reality* of nature was in fact identical with the *ideality* of the spirit or intellect’.¹⁰⁴

This thinking clearly influenced and was influenced by his studies in art. It fundamentally challenges Kant’s dialectics because, while repudiating *Idealism*, Schelling’s radical depiction of reality placed *ideals* themselves at its very foundation. Hence a *normative* understanding of aesthetics is revived: Art’s absolute is ‘*that with regards to which being or reality follows immediately from the idea... by virtue of the simple law of identity*’.¹⁰⁵ ‘God’, or ‘infinite reality’, is the ‘*immediate affirmation*’ of itself. This of course necessarily ‘normalises’ *human* nature, and *personhood*, via the Art-Person relation. Kant’s subjectivism is therefore overturned in Schelling’s first principle, the ‘law of identity’. Any concept of individual reality must be understood as a *conditioned* reality. In Humanity, as in aesthetics, objective reality is thus found in *the real* forces of Nature from which reason evolves because *ideality* is a human construction based on *the ideal* originating in Nature:¹⁰⁶

Being does not follow directly from concept with regard to anything that is dependent or conditioned. For example, the individual human being is conditioned by something that is not his own idea. It follows that *true* reality or reality in itself cannot be attributed to any individual person.

This ‘principle of subjectivity’ was Schelling’s first principle of philosophy and cognition, defying post-Kantian challenges to metaphysics. Stott argues (contrary to Hammermeister) it rendered ‘ontologically inferior or subordinate that part of the world that was apparently separate from the human ego’, developing into an alternative both ontological *and* epistemological understanding of aesthetics to Kant’s.

Claiming the subjectivity displayed in human self-consciousness itself (*identity*, regressed back to Nature) was *the first principle*, completely changed the subject-object relation. Moreover: ‘That which encompasses’, says Schelling, ‘is not identical with that which it encompasses’.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the fundamental *aesthetic* Principle of identity (linking *Art* to the *Person* in Nature) prohibits *the particular* being universalised. In other words, the symbolic standpoint of *reflection* cannot properly universalise the human subject. All other major departures from Kant essentially stem from this and, as noted, revolve around how we ‘universalise’ meaning in each mythology. In §2, the significant impacts of Kant’s aesthetic legacy on modern art, particularly its *purpose* (transforming notions of originality etc.), are outlined. But it is first necessary to understand the basis upon which Schelling’s empirical object comes to claim Art for the Person via the primacy of Metaphor.

As noted, because Kant’s view of art’s ‘purposiveness’ is linked to inner perfection, true universality can only be achieved by means of concepts. ‘Sublimity’ is hence only its *symbolic* aspiration, while for Schelling it is *metaphoric* - obtained under a completely different presupposition. Kant argues there are no sublime *objects*, only ‘sublime states of subjectivity’ obtained from encountering ‘certain classes of objects’.¹⁰⁸ Thus his prescription leads to ‘experientialism’. This presents a stark contrast to Max Scheler’s definition of ‘*phenomenological experience*’, during which we – in *poetic* discourse - turn away from the sensory world and ‘bracket off’ what is accidental, focusing on the essential nature of things. Which allows us to *indwell* in Reason.

In the same vein, Schelling’s *empirical object* produces the ‘eternal’ and ‘sublime’ by drawing upon a notion of infinity grounded *phenomenologically* in the *purposely* lived experience arising from how we *purposelessly* mythologise beauty, truth, form and so on.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p.xxx.

¹⁰⁵ Schelling, *PA*, p.23. Author’s emphasis.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.23.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p.24. Schelling gives a simple example: space is characterised by length, width, and depth but space itself is – precisely for the reason given here – ‘none of these in the particular, but is rather the absolute identity of all three, their infinite affirmation, their essence’.

¹⁰⁸ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.33.

Hammermeister claims Schelling is merely harking back to a ‘golden age’ in his descriptions of ‘eternal’ Beauty and Truth. But this labours under the misapprehension he understands Greek art as archetypal in an *historical* rather than *mythological* sense. Schelling, however, insists the absolute can have no temporal relationship to ‘the true universe’ which is ‘utterly eternal’ because, as Stott says, ‘time never affects that which is eternal’. Therefore, the artwork’s absolute ‘cannot be conceived as having preceded anything in time... [because]... being is not equal to the idea’. Rather, being in itself is in this sense, compared to the idea, ‘merely privation and not true being’. The absolute precedes everything only as regards *the idea* of a ‘concrete’ absolute. And *that* concreteness belongs to the phenomenal world, only preceded in time by the idea.¹⁰⁹

To fully appreciate why this makes art’s Empirical Object only approachable in the ancient mythology, recall firstly that, in Christianity, ‘the absolute relationship’ between the finite and infinite requires that the universe be viewed ‘as history’. It cannot conceive the finite as a *metaphor* of the infinite ‘with independent significance’, hence the *finite* ‘can only be taken from that which falls into time, and accordingly from history’.¹¹⁰ Christianity and the art of modernity are thus ‘historical’, and *succession* becomes predominant in modern mythologising. Both Art and Religion become a ‘world of ideas expressed in acts’. Whereas, in antiquity, metaphoric *simultaneity* ruled perceptions. Not understanding Schelling’s radically *ahistorical* definition of Art, and how ancient Greek archetypes are applied in it, can lead to passing-over Schelling’s very different idea of sublimity to Kant’s.

This is illustrated phenomenologically in the *Philosophy of Art* in his comparison of beauty-truth *intentionalities* present in various ancient works, where he critically exposes failures to express the ‘true sublimity’ of Nature to render ‘grace’ in some. Generally, says Schelling, ‘wherever only the element of the grand or powerful was sought... the sensual kind of beauty we call grace could be neither sought nor introduced’. Sublimity is rendered by focusing on the ‘inner balance of the soul’, on the ‘sublime in itself’, and eliminating any ‘indignation of feeling and passion’.¹¹¹ This ‘spiritual archetype’, he argues, emerged as the ‘grand style’ from a more severe earlier style where necessity and truth remained dominant elements but lacked the grace of later works.¹¹² ‘A certain degree of beauty was still sacrificed to the correctness and truth of the forms themselves’ he says, making their ‘majesty and greatness... appear harsh when juxtaposed with the wavelike contours of the graceful style’ (which Renaissance artists like Raphael and Correggio later employed).¹¹³

The ancient Empirical Object lies in this ‘truth of forms’. But Schelling is here not referring to a *comprehensible* empirical truth, rather to the *apprehension* of a ‘higher one based on abstract concepts separated from nature and particularity’. That is, truth ‘comprehended only by pure understanding’ obtained in the *precision* of the works of the oldest style. Seeking *this* ‘sublimity’ in art comes from *associating* Nature with human nature as *together* being the *origin of form*, from which our recognition of the interaction between form (the finite) and non-form (the infinite) emerges. And in the ancient tradition, it surfaces – as *the unifying ‘principle’ of Art* – by recognising in sculpture for instance ‘a system of concepts that initially constitutes a harsh, angular style, until this system of rules itself also becomes second nature and grace emerges’. In other words, the Beauty-Truth merger is found in ‘the essence of things themselves’, which are in nature ‘posited into form’. But there this merger is accidental, ‘and rendered more or less confused and unrecognizable by particularity’. It thus ‘cannot emerge directly from imitation of nature’. It only manifests as a sign of ‘grace’ (ie., the qualia of ‘ease and facility’); whose *Truth* embodies the spirit of art’s *Principle*.

Thus, contrary to Kant, Schelling’s higher truth of Art, while *pursued* in form, is *not* found by imitating *the perfection of individual forms* in nature (ie., ‘divine’ *form*). But rather in a universal concept with which ‘no individual or particular object could be commensurate’.¹¹⁴ Modern mythologising (under the historicising precepts of Christianity) instead requires that Art’s ‘empirical object’ presents a particular *allegorising* relation to Time. An observation lacking in Hammermeister’s analysis, where the eternal, divine, and sublime all converge in an amalgamation of Schelling’s absolute with seemingly similar ones. For instance, the poetic theories of modernist writers: James Joyce’s ‘theory of epiphany’, Virginia Wolfe’s ‘moment of being’, and Marcel Proust’s ‘*moment privilégié*’. The ancient ‘empirical object’ is thus described as a ‘perfect moment in time’. But it is only conceived as such in *modern mythology*. Schelling’s claim that ‘every object is ruled by an eternal concept’ is therefore misread by Hammermeister as explanation for the artwork *representing the transcendental* beauty of the idea to the senses. Rather, as we will see in §2, to understand Schelling’s empirical object it becomes necessary to

¹⁰⁹ Schelling, *PA*, p.25-26. The absolute is ‘*God’s infinite condition within the All*’. Hence ‘*the informing of “his” infinite ideality into reality [is]... as such... eternal nature*’. Thus, ‘the eternal’ does not stand outside Nature.

¹¹⁰ Schelling, *PA*, p.62-63.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, p.189.

¹¹² He refers here mostly to sculptural works like that of Niobe.

¹¹³ Schelling, *PA*, p.190. Note Schelling’s descriptions here make sense of the method of categorisation I will detail in future.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.191.

recognise the *principle* of art as a *rebellion against 'the divine'*, from which all else about the construction of art in 'the particular' is revealed.

Hammermeister argues that, anticipating Hegel, Schelling was reproducing the Platonic theory of mimesis, echoed by Plotinus and Schopenhauer, where the artist must *imitate* the spirit of the object through images, and in Schopenhauer's words 'only insofar as he grasps it in his imitation does he achieve truth'.¹¹⁵ But, clearly, this is not at all what he intends. The error apparently arises from assuming he adopts *Hegel's* notion of Beauty: 'the sensual splendour of the idea', and the suggestion the artist 'turns away from the visible world to directly imitate the ideas' (cf. Scheler's phenomenological experience). In any case, simply suggesting the artwork 'represents not the empirical object but its idea' cannot fully account for Schelling's more precise definition of it as a *pre-cognised Absolute*.

Importantly, this definition renders art *beyond interpretation* (though not *intelligibility*). It also denies the 'general aesthetic' arbitrary attribution of 'miraculous' purposefulness we are familiar with in modern 'conceptual art' (i.e., mimicking nature in art's effects/affects). Contrary to Kant's suprasensible idea of 'eternity', and the misinterpretation of Aristotle's mimesis as mere appearance, Schelling's Empirical Object claims the *knowing* of beauty and truth's merger. And this is only available in the mode of attention habituated under the *ancient mythology*.

What some might consider a 'classical' leaning, is really Schelling's revelation that the Greek archetypes are humanity's highest progenitors of the proto-narratives of life *embodying* his 'mythological categories' of meaning.

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Hammermeister's claim that Schelling's later writings therefore yield to 'a conception on a larger historical scale in which entire peoples serve as agents of artistic production', underestimates his ontological underpinnings of Art in ancient civic humanism.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, his suggestion Schelling's absolute adopts a character of 'bottomless nothingness', in which the 'faintly terrible' beauty emerging from the sublime 'takes up the Aristotelian theory of catharsis', is misguided.¹¹⁷ As are claimed 'inconsistencies' examined further below, clearly derived from similar false impressions. These misunderstandings, as noted, originate in an *historicist* notion of 'being' as permanence and hence art as *representation* (i.e., *reflective*, not *productive*).

This predominant way of creating the modern world as we know it probably explains why history deferred Art's promise to Humanity, to Hegel and not Schelling. Nevertheless, it was Schelling's advances on Kant that resolved such key problems as those we will now return to. Not least, the suggestion that Time is transcended so that an object's 'true being', preserved in a 'perfect' moment, 'eternalizes' it in the art object. Time is indeed an essential potency, but this 'preservation' of an object's eternal being through art is contradicted by the *dialogical* reasoning in Schelling's system, which reveals the importance of Metaphor.

In summary, Schelling's 'empirical object' may be simply understood as an 'ideal' in thought we cross over a threshold to, by contemplating something in 'the real'. A place where the object has reached its telos in meaning, but in which temporality is not *suspended* by any supranatural force. It lies, as it were, *before* Time ('for all time'). Kant's 'sublime' is not required to obtain the artwork's *absolute* meaning, because the Absolute *does not need* to be suspended. Art's truth is not fixed in 'being' beyond the temporary stage of its metamorphic recognition; it is always *poised in becoming* while recognised in 'being' as *disclosure*. Metaphor does not *represent* the object; it is not a copy, but *actually its idea*. It only suspends an artwork's 'object' (Peirce's 'second').¹¹⁸

The artistic divergence between ancient and modern mythological outlooks is made *phenomenologically clear in praxis*. And we can only move to the former by progressing from a standpoint of Reflection to Production. This is elucidated further below by addressing key misrepresentations of Schelling and how he frames the *Principle of*

¹¹⁵ In Hammermeister, *GT*, p.79.

¹¹⁶ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.78.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.78. Heidegger's 'demand' of Art, following Hegel and Kant's, attempts to align meaning creation to the human condition by *grounding* the artwork in the fixed socio-historical reality of the audience via 'catharsis'. As Torsen (2016) suggests, this is Heidegger's view of 'reflective judgement' elicited by art. However, Aristotle's original idea of 'Katharsis', according to Joe Sachs, is a cleansing transition from fear to pity generated by contemplation of 'the other'. This was misinterpreted as a therapeutic purgation which has been psychologised in modernity (*Poetics* 2006: 10-13).

¹¹⁸ See Peirce 2012; Parret 1994; Potter 1997. In a subsequent paper, since it is beyond my scope here, I will show why this ("object 1") is Peirce's second *en route* to the Object's real *First*. This more fully explains how Schelling's absolute functions in his *Construction of the Content of Art*.

Art under the terms of his mythological categories. Schelling's aesthetics does indeed explain why 'art does not represent' *objects* but rather 'the *idea* of the object'; however, modern misappropriations of 'naturalistic' and 'mimesis' must be confronted.¹¹⁹ Their misconceptions arise in part from a belief (misattributed to Kant) that Art's 'sublimity' is akin to 'enduring the terrible'. When in fact Art's truer 'empirical object', and the 'reproductive' imagination it develops, calls for a different spirit of active subjectivity: a *rebellion against* the Divine.

¹¹⁹ Hammermeister, *GT*, p.78-79.

2. Schelling's System: The Principle of Art

Kant's aesthetics wavered on fundamental points, not least whether teleology should be privileged over mechanism, which plagued him to the end.¹²⁰ Instead, Schelling's unified *Principle of Art* holds firm on this and the principle of identity upon which it rests. The alternative course he charts moves us beyond reflection and interpretation. *Naturalising* art makes interpretation a necessary process, not an end in itself. Art's 'infinite' interpretability in Kant's paradigm, as noted, presupposes 'being' as fixity, while Schelling's view derives instead from clear *mythological* distinctions arising in Nature's more complex reality, refocusing our attention to its *Normative* aesthetic metaphysics. Hence, contrary to Hammermeister's view, he clearly *re-established* metaphysical, ontological, and epistemological philosophical inquiries about art. Far from 'submitting' to theoretical aesthetics, he revived Art's *foundation* in all *three* normative disciplines, revolutionising metaphysics in the process.

To advance this argument further I will first elaborate on the different reasons for why we lost our mythological focal orientation and what this meant for art. To understand how the principle is constructed, it is helpful to first examine precisely how it deteriorated and the phenomenology this produced. The 'practical' significance of this to the Principle of Art (art 'in general'), and why it requires the ancient sensibility, will then become clearer. This will yield a perspective from which to approach its re-imagining in modernity, as a realistic response to humanity's current trajectory.

Next, I will outline how to construct *the Ideas* as archetypes in the beauty-truth nexus. At root here is Schelling's important revival of the real connection between philosophy and art, situating his revolutionary 'process metaphysics' alongside ancient Greek cosmology. This underscores how his three 'mythological categories' negotiate various indifferences progressing meaning in all artforms (in praxis) leading us to 'higher beings' of Fantasy under the Principle's 'determining law'. Revealing this Principle's deeper foundations in ethics, upon which normative aesthetics can be revived in modernity, is my main aim here.

It is upon such footings that later examination of Schelling's systematic approach to constructing art 'in the particular' will prove capable of changing practices, traditions, and institutions necessary for making meaningful progress in reorienting our mythology.

Mythological Focal Points (and the Modern 'Miracle' of Art)

Firstly, it is necessary to explain why our modern world is founded on ideology and not genuine mythology. Then by retracing what occurred when art came into the service of the 'modern mythology', outline important changes influencing how we pursue meaning and valuing. In the process, the ontological relation between the individual-collective in mythologising and subject-object in artmaking, will reveal the necessity of reconfiguring the latter in order to be able to transform the former.

The 'modern mythology', as Schelling and others have argued, began with Christianity. Though of course revealed religions like Christianity offer many pro-social benefits, it is important to understand their inherent mythological orientation; particularly as it manifests in the phenomenology of art. Art and nature, Nature and *human* nature, are separated at Christianity's onset; when art too adopts its alternative, ideological, 'historical' reasoning.¹²¹ While Greek mythology drew the universal into the particular, demanding a *metaphoric* treatment of ideas; 'the fundamental demand raised by Christianity was just the opposite'. It took up 'the finite into the infinite' (symbol), making particularity into 'an *allegory* of the infinite'.¹²² All 'ide-ology' is constructed in the same way, *resisting* philosophy ('metaphysics'). The Greek's was hence the world of '*the real*', whereas through Christianity humanity pursued the world of '*ideals*' (via what Schelling calls '*symbolic idealism*').

When, as Schelling says, 'man wrests himself loose from nature', this marks the 'beginning of history and modernity' precisely because it upturns *reality* (since, of course, we are *part* of nature). *The Person* becomes for

¹²⁰ Gare, "From Kant to Schelling to Process Metaphysics", p.51.

¹²¹ Schelling, *PA*, p.59. Christianity is underscored, as Schelling says, by a formidable ideology (cf. MacIntyre 2007). There was he says an antithesis in Christianity, but the 'realistic principle' remained completely dominant, preventing it from dissolving 'into philosophy the way all other Oriental religions did'. As Schelling says, 'Even during the period when the first reports of the life of Jesus were composed, a narrower body of more spiritual knowledge developed within Christianity that was called gnosis. In their seemingly unanimous resistance to the invasion of philosophical systems, those who first spread Christianity demonstrated a strong feeling and a secure consciousness of what they really wanted. With obvious reflection they removed everything that could not become universally historical or the affair of all human beings.'

¹²² *Ibid*, p.61. Drawing the infinite into the finite is another way of defining *Metaphor*.

the first time a 'historical being', like *poesy* and 'religion'. This placed limits upon the 'material' that the art of modernity could thenceforth use. 'The material content of Greek mythology was nature', while that of Christian mythology was 'the universe as history, as a world of providence'. The latter could only intuit universality constrained by a narrowed subjective and symbolic worldview; while the ancients' intuition of universals was in Nature, allowing them to *externalise* their world.

The modern mythology is therefore not a genuine mythology, as Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel argue.¹²³ Comparing ancient *Fantasy* with the *Phantasy* of today, it becomes quickly evident modern mythologising produces a lack of real autonomy in our *imaginaries*. With often hidden, but profoundly negative, effects on both art and how we create our world. Our *possibility* of merging Beauty and Truth cannot help but be constrained by the fact that 'all that is finite in it is transient', and all that is absolute is 'infinitely removed'. 'Precisely this', says Schelling, is '*the subject* of the modern world'. A sentiment echoed by Friedrich Schlegel who writes:¹²⁴

Our Poetry... lacks a focal point, such as mythology was for the ancients; and one could summarize all the essentials in which modern poetry is inferior to the ancient in these words:
We *have* no mythology.

As noted, the way the cosmos and history are 'worlded' together in Greek mythology informs the Principle of art – the construction of art 'in general'. Their natural archetypes are truer and *more real* by virtue of their ahistorical nature and mythological status.¹²⁵ They are, as in the essence of all their art, *metaphoric*. Greek mythology and art therefore involves *ahistorical reasoning*, which can bind the individual with humanity in more than a merely successive historical way. Their *real* 'religion' can thus rightly be described as pursuing a civic humanist *totality bound with Nature*; hence their mode of worlding was *not* 'religious' in the modern sense, and their view of Art was non-ideological (rather 'cosmo-logical' in the Heraclitean sense). As Schleiermacher says: binding us to the cosmos and 'every event it disperses', with the universal being 'a condition of continual activity' revealing itself to us 'at every moment'.¹²⁶

With this universalising tendency turned on its head, driven by the logic of historicism, modern myth-making becomes religiously 'ideo-logical'. *Allegorising* (subordinating the finite into the infinite) is now modernity's *self-defining* meaning-making 'mythological category' governing our habitual universalising. This changes the very *idea* of 'religion'. Both meaning and valuing, which are of course linked, derive their essences and potences from the reality we create. The pre-Christian etymology of 'holy' – the highest value in Scheler's hierarchy of values - is that which must be 'preserved whole or intact' so that the 'health' (and 'happiness') of a community may be realised. But since revealed religions are founded on division (eg., the Triune's separation of deities; the separation of 'the mystery' between individual and institution; etc.), as the modern mythology grows, 'holy' adopts a more symbolic meaning and 'the sacred' becomes meaningless, or at least indefinable beyond purely subjective valuing or doctrine.¹²⁷ A 'private world' myth then undergirds what Alasdair MacIntyre calls the failed Enlightenment project's ideologically-driven debased philosophy of Emotivism fuelling both rampant capitalism and totalitarianism in a neo-Darwinian struggle for global dominance.¹²⁸

As noted, several important changes in our imaginaries – affecting both Art and the Person - accompanied this reversal in 'worlding' reality, necessarily inflicting aesthetic, ethical, and logical privations equally on art and society. Creating a disjuncture between them which we experienced in an *economically, ideologically* globalising, yet culturally determined marketplace expanding the demand for ever-fragmenting *external* goods (redefining both Art and the Self). External goods are paraded as *internal* goods, in both religious and secular society, creating more confusion. Because Christianity's mythology had to *contain* the 'history of the world', it helped develop - much aided by artistic pursuits increasingly employing symbolic archetypes - 'morals' to match a culturally

¹²³ Ibid, p.59. For Schiller's argument: p. 300n46.

¹²⁴ In Ibid, p.300 n46. Emphasis added.

¹²⁵ As Schelling says: 'The Greeks did not at all take the gods to be real in the sense, for example, that common understanding believes in the reality of physical objects; from that perspective the Greeks considered the gods to be neither real nor unreal. In the higher sense they were more real for the Greeks than every other reality'. (Schelling, *PA*, p.35). They become 'cosmological' in the *merger* of Nature and History.

¹²⁶ In Schelling, *PA*, p.301, n.54.

¹²⁷ The primary pre-Christian meaning of 'holy' referred to an act of retention of the integrity of something, avoiding fragmentation or transgression. 'Holy' there reflects the highest value that can be assigned in a *real* Ideal (i.e., *sacred*) conception of art, because it represents both well-being and valuing a retention of 'wholeness' - of 'being' in the *disclosure* of the work. The highest possible values in any human aspiration or inquiry are thereby integrally linked to the phenomenological importance of the whole *in relation* to its parts. And 'Holy' is thus an ultimate expression of being's relation to becoming, via Spirit, Scheler's second highest value (see <https://www.etymonline.com/word/holy>).

¹²⁸ MacIntyre 2007.

stratified reality.¹²⁹ Art's fundamental *purpose* was redefined; serving now to install *historical* 'standards' via the modern art canon (and its anti-thesis: permanent revolution). As MacIntyre argues, emotivist moralising was hence subtly inserted into the very fabric of our divided world, the 'moral characters' promoting it, and the deeply held assumptions underwriting it. The 'material' for artmaking, in all artforms, was laid down alongside what Fred Polak notes as the weakening of *both* 'religious' and 'aesthetic' emotion 'in the same life sapping forces of cultural dynamics'.¹³⁰ Artistic rebellion (various 'avant-gardes', only summoning the *antithetical* as their 'anti-ideology') necessarily went hand in glove with the new *ideological* form of collectivising casting the individual Self permanently adrift.

Human "progress", the conflicted individual-collective relation, and Art as principle's so-called 'development' (in fact, its fragmentation), were all *conditioned* alongside the different kind of attention to the artwork now required. As Schelling explains, for 'a people whose poesy is characterized by limitation and finiteness', as was the ancients', '...mythology and religion are matters of the collectivity itself. The individual is able to constitute itself in a collective fashion and genuinely become one with that larger whole'. However, in modernity, where 'the infinite or the universal predominates', an individual cannot ever become simultaneous with the collective, but rather is always 'the negation of the larger group'.¹³¹ Moreover, accentuating our divided world, modern religions can only spread 'through the influence of individuals of superior wisdom who are only personally, not collectively, filled with the universal and the infinite'. Hence, with collapsing traditions of thought capable of identifying genuine exemplars of Art, only certain *individual* 'characters' (via professionalised specialisations, eg., like other 'gurus': the actor, novelist, etc.,) fuel the proliferating 'religious' – increasingly *sensationalist* and *technicist* – demands of modern expressionism. The public sphere becomes corrupted by popularly or self-appointed 'prophets'. 'Art history' becomes steeped in a modernist – increasingly *anti-humanist* – secular aesthetic religiosity which 'necessarily assumes the character of a *revealed religion*'.

Since *all* 'revealed' religions (and *secular* religiosity) adopt the same allegorical mythologising, various forms of miracle, magic, and mysticism begin to permeate the proliferating production and admiration of art's growing 'symbolic capital', alongside its historical canonisation.

Because the 'divine' no longer reveals itself in Nature as it did in antiquity, but is now only perceptible in history, the *modern* ideal of art becomes fragmented: historicisable, manufacturable, and mass producible (ie., as only *artefacts* were in antiquity). The real and ideal unities in which nature and history were once related, are now '*ideally*' deconstructed. In antiquity, the artwork was an expression of one and the same possibility, because there it could only be signified through *the finite*. Whereas it can be a multiplicity of forms when the infinite can *become* finite, as in modernity (ie., individualised). Originality therefore became 'the fundamental law of modern poesy', as Schelling argues – because it could 'miraculously' grow symbolic capital via this *individualising*. Whereas in antiquity 'this was by no means the case in just this sense'.¹³² Miracles are an impossible concept in Greek mythology, because their 'gods' are not 'extra' or 'supernatural'. There is only one world, not two as in modernity (one sensual and another *supersensual*). Christian mythology, however, 'which is possible only within absolute disunion, is at its very inception already founded on miracles'.¹³³

For the increasingly alienated, fragmenting *Self*, each new *appearance* of 'heroic' art in our mythology heralds the genius of immaculate conception (via, in fact, the continual reinvention of one fragment or another of the real ontological *Principle* of art, ie., its '*phoenix*'). However, its value quickly fades; since it can *only* arise in an artwork challenging *historical* precedent or orthodoxy, in permanent revolution/rebellion, as the modern 'miracle of art'. The 'artist as hero' myth has no precedent in ancient *genuinely* heroic society. It is a modern individualistic fabrication. Take, for instance, the "heroic" idea of 'suffering for art'; or its extension, artmaking as some feat of endurance or physical prowess (ie., 'vocal gymnastics' in singing, or any other such 'virtuosity' producing only 'sensational' lower-order meaning). In fact, as Schelling says, and common-sense dictates, '[p]ure suffering can never be the subject matter of art'. Though it has become so, as a form of nihilistic fascination in 'perfection' of

¹²⁹ Consider Bourdieu's 'high brow', 'middle brow', and 'low brow' art.

¹³⁰ Fred Polak, *The Image of the Future*. Translated and abridged Elise Boulding. Amsterdam, London, New York: Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company, 1973, p.275. Though these 'emotions' are not equated and 'in certain respects antithetical'.

¹³¹ Schelling, *PA*, p.69. The only 'totalising' mythology in modernity was primarily constructed under Christianity (which confirmed 'reality' to be a *part* of the past). Though not universal, it provided the *template* for how to manage the creation of a poesy 'for the entire species' generated from the material of our whole history. It thus remains the *historical* focal point of art's canon (cf. Tanner 2010). What we need is a new *cosmological* one.

¹³² *Ibid*, p.75. On this point regarding the difference between the meaning of originality in antiquity and modernity see also p.301 n51 for Friedrich Schlegel's comment that 'provided individuality is what this word defines: indivisible unity and an inner and vital coherence' then the right of individuality stands, and the 'virtue of man' is indeed in his 'originality'.

¹³³ *Ibid*, p.69.

the inner so-called dualities of pleasure and pain in modernism and postmodernism.¹³⁴ The ‘gods’ of antiquity do not suffer, he says, because they are ‘blessed in their finitude’. But the symbol of Christ, the ‘*voluntarily suffering* god... can never be taken except as one who endures, since for him humanity is an accepted burden’.¹³⁵ Many more symbolic ideals are unravelled by accounting for the socio-psychological separation and fragmentation of Art and ‘the *Self*’ in the ‘tragic irony’ of divine self- “realisation” (ie., via Kant’s dynamical sublime).

All, as earlier argued, are now bootstrapped artistically to the modern mythological standpoint of reflection. In antiquity, because the artwork ‘takes up the infinite within itself’, the finite counts for something in and for itself – and the artwork can be seen to stand *for* the one principle of art. ‘[T]he finite’, says Schelling, ‘in its own infinitude is able to assert itself against the infinite to the extent that even rebellion against the divine is possible; indeed, such rebellion is even the principle of sublimity’. The meaning of the artwork ‘emerges through a synthesis of absoluteness with limitation’ such that neither absolute form *nor* formlessness are suspended. Being and becoming, part and whole, are merged. Whereas, in Christianity, ‘there is only unconditional surrender to the unfathomable, and even this constitutes the sole principle of beauty’.¹³⁶ Thus, while in antiquity nature was revealed and the ideal world was a mystery, in Christianity ‘nature had to withdraw as a mystery to the extent that the ideal world was revealed’.¹³⁷ Art and human nature’s ideals succumbed easily to psychologism.

Since in Christianity the divine was a fleeting appearance, the concept of the miracle (inseparable from *revelation*) also becomes imperative in the ideal of Art. This crystallises in the historical mythologising of the object/subject (artwork/artist) being now not timeless in the ancient sense, but ‘eternal’ in modern fantasy. ‘A miracle’, says Schelling, ‘is an absolute viewed from the empirical perspective’ since it occurs within the finite realm ‘without for that reason having any relationship to time’. But while Greek sensibility ‘demanded pure, beautiful limitation on all sides in order to elevate the entire world’, the modern mythology ‘taken by itself to a world of fantasy... [demands]... the unlimited and supernatural’ achieved by means of a *constructed* absoluteness ‘in order never to be awakened from its supersensual dreams’.¹³⁸

The most significant change for the modern construction of art, then, rests in how ‘the universal character of subjectivity and ideality within Christianity caused the element of [the metaphoric] to flee completely into the act (actions)’.¹³⁹ The fabricated ‘absoluteness’ of succession converted the ‘ancient epic’ metaphor driven (polyphonic) narratology into modern ‘romantic epic’ plot-driven fragmented (uni-vocal) narratives. That transition reveals how the modern ‘miracle of art’ arrived, as our *real* potential for collectivising deteriorated. As Schelling explains, the ‘tremendous universal character of the church’ needed to *contain* nature within it, since ‘nothing could remain alien to it’. And because the ‘divine’ could no longer reveal itself *in nature* in the Christian world (being only perceptible in history), the beginnings of empirical observation attempted to awaken interest in the living phenomena of nature via *mysticism*. Thus, ‘[t]he highest religiosity expressed in Christian mysticism’, says Schelling, ‘considered the mystery of nature and that of the incarnation of God to be one and the same’.¹⁴⁰ Christianity’s archetypes then developed into hierarchies which required humans themselves, not nature, to symbolise the realm of ideas. And this world of ideas was expressed in *acts* (actions).

‘Art as permanent revolution’ was born out of a mythology of succession. So too *consequentialist* ‘ethics’. These are therefore the only kinds of ‘mythological’ ideals upon which anyone can today base “philosophical” assessments of art (eg., structuralist/poststructuralist Critical Theory, New Historicism, etc.). Hegelian idealism, Heidegger’s concession to it, and the entire art cannon - whose theoretical aesthetic standardisation derives from the Kantian infinity’s standpoint of reflection - all assume this purely historical, repeated miracle-creating mythology transferred into the artwork. However, as should now be clear, truly great art is *only* identifiable with that ‘absoluteness’ occurring within the *finite* realm of timeless history. Which our *false* ‘mythology’ cannot make real due to its *limited* inherited definition of ‘sublimity’ and ‘eternity’. Schelling’s ‘empirical object’ is thus not a

¹³⁴ ie., Kant’s neo-Platonic perfection of the idea. See, for instance, Stelarc’s (2012) *Ear on Arm Suspension* <https://www.pinterest.de/pin/273030796139500400/> accessed 6/07/2003. Note ear grafted on left arm.

¹³⁵ Schelling, *PA*, p.64.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p.62. Schelling here compares paganism to Christianity; it is a corollary of the relation between the artwork in antiquity compared to after that the onset of Christianity.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, p.66. Modern mythologising can hence only produce ‘revealed religion’.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*, p.56: ‘[T]he Greek fantasy was directed from the infinite or eternal to the finite. The Oriental fantasy... was directed from the finite to the infinite, yet such that within the idea of the infinite the element of disunion was not necessarily suspended’. Hence, in the former, ‘the ideas’ are ‘formed within reason and... from the material of reason; intellectual intuition is that which presents them internally’. Ancient Fantasy is thus ‘the intellectual intuition within art’, which in modernity becomes illusory ‘Phantasy’ (p.38).

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p.67.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p.65-66: ‘God becomes exoteric in nature; the ideal appears through an other as itself, through a being’ - but only as an essence (its ‘symbol taken independent of the idea’). Therefore: ‘In the ideal world, and thus primarily in history, the divine casts off its outer covering and is the revealed mystery of the divine realm’.

moment in time *concretised*; it is rather *eternal possibility* of the merger of beauty and truth *realised*. Joyce's 'theory of epiphany', Wolfe's 'moment of being', or Proust's '*moment privilégié*' are modern mythological *fragmentations* of it, separated out now by succession. Consequently, the 'sublime' is not where some bolt from the blue *originates* (or divine intervention occurs); nor a 'crossroad' where, as popular song mythology goes, the artist does a deal with the devil, returning to perform miracles. Rather it is a stage in the never-ending process of *reproductive* imaginative disclosure.

If the '*element of the miraculous within historical relationships*' (historicised religious mythologising) is *au fond* the only material upon which modern art can be based, what does this mean for the modern Imagination? If all we can do is place 'classical' art on a pedestal, while committing it to an irretrievable, undesirable past, where does this leave it? Even Dante's *Divine Comedy*, as Schelling claims, while uniquely rising above this, is nevertheless like Shakespeare's or Milton's works essentially 'always historical'. It is not that being bound by an *historical* mythology makes art impossible (especially if employing proper metaphor helps transcend it, as these artists do). Rather, that we must take stock of the limitations placed on the meaning-value potential of contemporary artistic productivity, revealed in the trajectory modern art has *inevitably* been forced to take.

They are revealed in the above account of how we lost our focal balance and were rendered without a genuine mythology; how meaning was drained from the changing 'material' (content) of art, and why this came to dominate. Hence, becoming familiar with the part-whole *worlding* features of each mythological standpoint helps to later apply Schelling's mythological meaning-making categories to *worlding* artforms/works. Unveiling the Principle's *Ideal* categorical construction of them. In antiquity, the part is not an *allegory* of the infinite; it is absolute within itself, and the absolute of the whole is collapsed also within it ('the universal *is* the particular, the collective the individual'). It is 'a world of the collective even though the particular is the predominating element in it'. Modernity is the 'world of individuals'. In it, the 'ideas' ('gods') are symbols; 'the particular merely means or signifies the universal, and... because the universal rules within it - the modern world is that of individuals and degeneration or collapse'. By contrast: 'In the world of antiquity everything is eternal, enduring, imperishable; number has, in a sense, no power because the universal concept of the collective and of the individual coincide'.¹⁴¹

When we recognise the construction of Art 'as principle' follows each mythology accordingly, we can segue the much more meaningfully objective road of inquiry which Schelling opened for art *and* humanity. His *dialogical* ontology, as noted, places 'sublimity' *within* Nature (and thus human nature), without singling out the individual from the collective. In other words, it is 'Self'-*actualising* rather than 'self'-*legitimizing* viz the person<->Person relation. The only thing Schelling holds in common with Kant's 'sublimity' is recognising it as *necessary* chaos. But infinity is simply number suspended. And since 'the particular thing [individual] in absoluteness is not determined by number' (since it contains the absolute whole *within it*), the idea of infinity does not render it 'unfathomable' by the imagination. Nor is it a 'terrible thing' from the supranatural.¹⁴²

The potential for re-applying this understanding to liberate humanity's Imagination, will rely upon reconfiguring modern 'ideas' as archetypes for producing 'higher beings of fantasy' under this unifying principle's 'determining law', outlined next. As I will explore in more detail in future, constructing a new mythology requires rediscovering these *natural* archetypes' relevance and applicability to *our own* ethos. Schelling's friend, August Schlegel, optimistically believed humanity was on the cusp of developing this *New Mythology* capable of rescuing both art and the Self. He argued that if it might re-emerge, it could only do so 'in that great phenomenon of our age, in idealism'. Nevertheless, he knew 'Idealism in any form must transcend itself... in order to return to itself and remain what it is'. Schelling, a true 'realist' I suggest (ie., a 'naturalist'), foresaw the immense difficulty in retrieving the ancient sensibility. He recognised that, before aesthetics could be returned to its rightful place, it needed to transcend history; and that a 'future mythology' needed to be found 'in a higher speculative physics', requiring a revolution in science.¹⁴³ That is the Complexity Science revolution currently underway (albeit still struggling to be heard above entrenched scientism).

He was thus in no way clinging to any nostalgic classicist preference for Greek art, as a matter of 'taste'. Rather to the socially universalising archetypes of Beauty and Truth in Nature. How these emerge, and could re-emerge in future, can now be examined.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p.73.

¹⁴² See Ibid, p.295 n2.4. In August Schlegel's words: 'Let one not imagine that the infinite is a philosophical fiction and seek it beyond the world: it surrounds us everywhere, we can never escape it; we live, move and exist in the infinite'.

¹⁴³ Ibid, p.77.

Ideas as Archetypes: The Beauty-Truth Indifference

Having explained what bearing relations like becoming/being and infinity/sublimity have on producing an ‘archetypal world’, and established the difference between *metaphoric* and *allegoric* treatment of ideas in approaching Schelling’s empirical object, we can now return to the beauty-truth nexus and what ‘stable norm’ can *here*, within reason, be *apprehended*. Or indeed what real/ideal antitheses might lead us astray. Whereas once we *cultivated* this unifying normativity, the difficulty in doing so in modernity is recognised by Schelling, Schlegel, Polak, and others in the fact we possess no ‘self-enclosed’ mythology. Schelling’s system identifies the lack of a ‘real epic’ to be responsible for this, because ‘mythology becomes established only in the epic as such’.¹⁴⁴

The merger of Truth and Beauty is blocked in the modern world, essentially, by an epic failure to *affirm* ideality in reality. Which, as argued, is the sign of a degraded principle of Art’s capacity to seek *Reason*. The ancient Greek epic archetype embodies ‘the absolute science of reason’ (since reason is obtained in the indifference between the real and the ideal) manifesting in *the real*. However, the modern epic creates this indifference in an *antithetical* fashion; manifesting it in *the ideal world*. Schelling’s *metaphysical* configuration of the unified principle of art (via ‘the principle of *identity*’) reveals how each achieves this. Simultaneously exposing what we might call the ‘actantial’ separation of art and philosophy in modernity.

Firstly, recall Aristotle’s claim that art is knowledge and action integrated in the third element, indifference. In their *merger*, Schelling says knowledge retains the subjective as ideal, while in action the objective is ‘the real factor to which knowledge corresponds as the subjective factor’. Art is *neither* knowledge nor action; it is rather ‘activity completely permeated by knowledge’ or ‘knowledge completely permeated by activity’. We only reach the *essence* (‘absolute’) of the ideal and real world through Art in this indifference. As Paul Ricoeur also shows in *The Rule of Metaphor* (2003), because of this, ‘knowing’ is approached by philosophy and art in different ways. Philosophy, says Schelling, is the direct representation of the ‘divine’ through *reason* (the ‘idea’). Art is the direct representation of *indifference*. The products of art reconfigure back through intuition what the philosopher ‘allows to be divided up in the primary act of consciousness’.¹⁴⁵ Therefore, in art ‘[t]he degree of perfection or of the reality of a thing’, he says, ‘increases to the extent that it corresponds to its own absolute idea and to the fullness of infinite *affirmation*’.¹⁴⁶ It achieves this by combining the *potences* (or unities) necessary to bring *the particular* closest to *its idea* (see *Appendix*).

Ricoeur distinguishes between ‘speculative’ and ‘poetic’ discourse using proper metaphor. Adopting Schelling’s terms, we can begin to describe the phenomenology of poetic intentionality like this. The ‘absolute affirming activity’ in art informs absolute reality into ideality by combining potences in various ways. The potences or unities of the ideal world are knowledge (real potence) weighted towards the subjective; and action (ideal potence) weighted toward the objective. Action is the *affirming* activity of the *affirmed* condition of knowledge, and art - defined as the potence of *their* indifference - is thus simultaneously the indifference between the nonconscious and conscious, and necessity and freedom. Ricoeur’s ‘tensions’ reveal why proper metaphor contains all these integrated potences; and how their application determines the quality of metaphor and depth of meaning produced. Context, content (‘material’), and intentionality naturally all govern how the affirming activity integrates with the affirmed condition in the disclosure of any given subject-object relation.

Now, as Schelling says, anything that is absolute *in its particularity* may be thought of as a ‘universe’ and as such is called an ‘idea’. ‘The gods’ in Greek mythology are *a synthesis* of the universal and particular. When ‘viewed in themselves’ they are ideas: ‘images of the divine... [which]... on the plane of the real’ reveal their own particular essence. ‘They are ideas’, he says, ‘only to the extent that they are god in a particular form. Every idea, therefore, = god, but a particular god’.¹⁴⁷ Art is the *science of ideals* because of how it determines ‘particularity or... the reflected nature of its images’ relative to their absolutes. It does this by encouraging us to think in a way that yields the *double unity* of the particular and the absolute in any idea. Following Schelling’s precise logic below helps to distinguish his ‘empirical object’ in Art, while clarifying art’s integral relationship with philosophy.

Among all modes of speculation, art is most closely related to philosophy because both have a capacity to reflect the ‘absolute identity’ (archetype) of things. But it is art’s *determination of particularity* that distinguishes its ‘objectivity’. Every idea is the ‘universe in the form of the particular’, but it is not *real* as this particular because ‘the real’ is ‘always only the universe’. Hence every idea has *two* unities, ‘one through which it exists within itself and is absolute’ (ie., the absolute is formed *into particularity*) - metaphor; and ‘one through which it is taken up as a particular *into the absolute*’ - symbol. This ‘double unity’ explains the mystery of how every ‘particular’ may

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p.71.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Stott, D. *Translators Introduction*, p.xxxiii.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, p.29. Emphasis added.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p.35.

be ‘comprehended both within the absolute and, in spite of this, also as a particular’.¹⁴⁸ Art, *in praxis*, corresponds to its own absolute *idea* and to the fullness of the *disclosure* of this. Thus: ‘Whereas philosophy intuits these ideas as they are in themselves, art intuits them *objectively*... Indeed, the gods of any mythology are nothing other than the ideas of philosophy intuited objectively or concretely’.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, despite Hegel and Heidegger’s claims (and many aesthetes’ since), philosophy and art cannot live without each other. ‘What ideas are for philosophy, the gods are for art, and vice versa’ says Schelling – which in part explains the relation of Beauty to Truth. Without philosophy (as Scheler’s hierarchy reveals), it is difficult to establish any of the necessary boundaries around how we *value* meaning, such that the mythologies we choose to live by are actually embedded in the real world. And without Art’s inherent ‘subjective-objectification’ *intentionality* being able to be apprehended (with more reliable means to gauge its implicit *meaning*-value than theoretical aesthetics can supply), its unifying *Principle*’s higher purpose - merging gods/ideas in Beauty and Truth – is denied.

A *naturalised* art is really hence our *only* means of achieving this very particular objectivity; which returns us to Schelling’s universalising ‘empirical object’ and the ancient idea of Wholeness. ‘Our systematic construction of art’, says Schelling, ‘leads us back precisely to the point to which instinct first led poesy at its inception’.¹⁵⁰ ‘God’ is a *relational principle* for understanding Nature (not just ‘living’ Nature, but the entire cosmos) as the ‘All’ or ‘Absolute’ indifference between consciousness and unconsciousness.¹⁵¹ Therefore ‘if art is the representation of the forms of things as they are in themselves’, then the ‘universal idea of art’, its *Principle* governing both content and form, must be found ‘in the archetypes themselves’. Our real world can only be understood by how our ideal world relates to it, *ideationally*. Thus, the *real* purpose of this ‘science of ideals’ is to posit ‘absolute identity’ as ‘the source of all mutual informing [into indifference] of the real and the ideal’.

Nature, where all human cultures originally derived their mythologies, returns as the immediate cause and final possibility of art. Genuine Art ‘in-forms’ *the archetypes* which Nature produces (ie., it *models* rather than *mimics* form). And, through it, the reproductive Imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) is enabled to mutually inform Beauty and Truth into unity. Its power of *individuation of ideas* presents these ideals as *simultaneously* real (and, as Schelling says, ‘the soul simultaneously the body’).¹⁵² This merger is thus revealed - *only in the imagination* - through archetypes in this metaphoric process of ‘absolute ideation’.¹⁵³ It is only *artificially* revealed symbolically (which is the ‘factual’ purpose and means of ‘arte-facts’). Since such *essences* are *real and ideal world* mergers of knowledge and action, only by cultivating imagination can they be obtained and art produced. (‘Poesy and art can never really be taught’, says Schelling; recalling Aristotle’s view this ‘making’ is *habituated* - just as morals obtain the habituated character of our ‘ethical’ intuition). Wisdom and civic humanism (‘religion’) are linked to art, via the archetypal beauty/truth merger of ‘gods’/‘ideas’. As Hölderlin’s *Hyperion* describes it: ‘The first child of divine Beauty is art... Beauty’s second daughter is religion. Religion is love of Beauty. [The wise love] ... Beauty, eternal, all-embracing Beauty; the people love her children, the gods’.¹⁵⁴

There are, in both the modern and ancient mythologies, also *ugly* ideals. The ugly forms within Greek mythology, says Schelling, are generally ‘also ideals, albeit *reverse ideals*, and as such are included in the realm of the beautiful’.¹⁵⁵ We recognise ugliness in modern and postmodern art via these ‘reverse ideals’, that we can equally habituate ourselves toward (eg., dystopia, nihilism, narcissism).¹⁵⁶ But as we will soon see, *such* an habitual tendency was completely foreign in the construction of the *ancient* epic and the forms of beauty and truth within it, because of its orientation to the *real* world of ideas. The reversed attentional shift in modernity explains how the *modern* epic deteriorated, rendering such ‘reverse ideals’ *reflectively* attractive abstractions in themselves.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p.35. See Ricoeur 2003 for the difference in how metaphor is *legitimately* applied in philosophy or art.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, p.17. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.35.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.xxxiv. This of course reflects Spinoza’s influence on Schelling implying ‘the idea of generative activity’ upon which Art’s *Principle* too rests (“the ultimate or basic organizational principle of the universe”): *Reason* (applicable to the terms ‘absolute or identity’). See Toscano 1999.

¹⁵² Schelling, *PA*, p.32. Scheler’s ‘hierarchy theory’ operates on the same basis: both originating in Anaximander’s cosmology (emergence through limiting the unlimited).

¹⁵³ The *same* imagination Kant deemed could not move us toward *any* understanding at all. Such is the radical challenge Schelling presents here to both Kant and Hegel.

¹⁵⁴ In Schelling, *PA*, p.295 n2.3.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p.40.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Postmodern’ aesthetics treats ugliness as *separate* from theories of beauty (whereas Aristotle, Schelling, and others combine them). Hegel’s view of Christ’s suffering (whose ‘ugliness’ could not have been depicted in his classical Greek ideal apotheosis of art) renders ugliness in modernity not only permissible, but *necessary* (Hammermeister, *GT*, p.98-99).

¹⁵⁷ See Schelling, *PA*, p.223-230. Only briefly mentioned here, to be later examined.

This is why *harmonising* Beauty and Truth archetypally, pertains equally to the universalising of *the Person* (humanity) in the individual ‘self’. Religion being irreducible to worship of gods as other worldly entities observing humanity from beyond, makes ‘God’ our own creation *in the inherence of Nature*. And since human nature and Nature are a ‘double unity’ in the Art-Person relation, ‘the gods’ are also the simultaneous inherence of the absolute ‘All’ in *our* own absoluteness and vice versa. Hence why *both* ‘natures’ can *only* be understood as habitual, and *normative* ethics (and morals) originate here in the *harmonious* link between all three normative sciences. Because as Schelling says, ‘only a harmonious disposition (harmony, however = true morality) is genuinely receptive to poesy and art’.¹⁵⁸ The ‘human sciences’ today revert to psychologism whenever failure to harmonise our culturally overdetermined mythology with nature emerges as ‘existentially’ problematic. And Existentialism is partly to blame for denying that, as in the ancient epic, the ‘material’ of both art and the self is more fruitfully sought in the *Ideas* producing the *highest* indifference of the ‘absolute with the particular’.¹⁵⁹ In other words, in ‘the real’ *intersubjective* world:¹⁶⁰

The question whether the ideas themselves are subjective or objective is nonsensical, and is posed only by someone who remains completely within the realm of reflection, someone who knows the universal only as a phantom of thought, as a product of abstraction, and who in contrast knows the particular as *that which is real*, without considering that the particular arises just as much through abstraction from the essence and is to that extent just as much a phantom of thought as the universal.

To live in the real world means *not* reflectively using the unpredictability of Nature to fragment the Art-Person relation (as does the Kantian-Hegelian-Heideggerian historically constructed paradigm), but rather harnessing the teleology of natural polarities to unite them.¹⁶¹ Modern positivistic logic explains universality as a ‘doctrine through which the purely universal is viewed in its opposition to the particular, that is, in its emptiness’. But ‘this emptiness’, says Schelling, ‘can then only have an equally empty particular as its counterpart, namely, the physically particular’. Such explanations, he argues, constitute ‘a misunderstanding of the platonic doctrine of the ideas, which most historians of philosophy conceived sometimes as merely logical abstractions, sometimes as real, physically existing beings’.

The *reality* of Beauty or Truth, in any meaningful new mythology, must be reconceived as the ancients did, by understanding their merger in Freedom (unpredictability) and Necessity (predictability).

We can only approach *complete ideality* by perceiving this ‘genuinely real element in all things’, in ‘the *idea*’ universally drawn into the particular. That is, *metaphorically* and hence ‘eternally’ (not transiently, via symbols) - only by contemplating ‘absolutes’ present in Nature’s archetypes. If their unknowable possibility of balancing necessity and freedom is banished from our world (ie., through our descent into mechanism), we will remain unable to idealise a harmonious utopia. It cannot be created by any artificial intelligence, only by human intuition (because AI has no *embodied perfect sign* relation to Nature, as we do). Evolving into machines (Kurzweil’s ‘Singularity’) would therefore risk losing this intuition which is embodied and cannot be *replicated* (because it is not *reflective*). Thus, because ‘*absolute*’ unpredictability/predictability in humans and Nature is what *binds* us in a perfect sign relation (modelled by the *Art-Person* double-unity), these beauty/truth archetypes reveal themselves in *coinciding opposites*. The *normative* logic of aesthetics hence demands a *process metaphysical* explanation for how *the meaning* of reality *progresses* in their merger.¹⁶² Which Schelling’s system provides.

The *meaningful* interaction of form with non-form, governing the ‘laws’ for constructing *any* artform or artwork, is evident in the transitional progressive character of Schelling’s three mythological categories (the *schematic*, *allegoric*, and *metaphoric*). Therefore, irrespective of culture, tradition, history, or taste – precisely because the essences and potences Schelling identifies via *the Principle of Art* are derived from the semiosis of signification *in Nature itself* – these supply the reasoning anyone *in any epoch* can use to define and communicate how meaning is produced in art *for all time*: *Schematism* is that representation in which ‘the universal means the particular or in which the particular is intuited through the universal’. *Allegory*, that in which ‘the particular means the universal or in which the universal is intuited through the particular’. *Metaphor* is the synthesis of these two, ‘where neither

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p.21.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.78.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.295 n2.4.

¹⁶¹ The tenets of positivistic science, based on observation and prediction, were overshadowed in the twentieth century by redefining science as comprehension or understanding. Demolition of the strong reductionist view of ‘final causes’ was replaced with a relativism which gave a place to ‘realism’ via models which emphasised causal relations privileging understanding over prediction. This liberated theoretical biology from the shackles of physics and chemistry, and biosemiotics grew out of this. I argue Art’s ‘teleology’ is akin to bio-semiosis, hence my reference to ‘final causes’ relates to Peirce’s ‘semiotic realism’ (Trimarchi 2023).

¹⁶² Theoretical aesthetics cannot process this merger, because it relies entirely upon *reflection* (Trimarchi 2022).

the universal means the particular nor the particular means the universal, but rather where both are absolutely one'.¹⁶³ Schelling's *metaphoric* mode of representation is thus called 'absolute form'.

These constitute the active function of *the Principle*, founded on the *ancient* (not modern) mythological understanding of 'fantasy', generating the unique claim Art makes on the *reproductive* imagination to intuit these transitions.

Higher Beings of Fantasy

My earlier dispensing with key misinterpretations of Schelling's *Principle of Art* confirmed that its origin in *Greek* mythology lies in an *intimate phenomenological relation to Nature*, via their *cosmology*, rather than 'classical' ideals as such. Also, that infinity, sublimity, and the divine are *in the world* - posited in a conception of 'the absolute' as a part-whole relation. Not *outside* Nature (as Kant believed), as a deity or 'will to power' accessed via a supervening ego. *This* is what elevated Art above an historical status to a *mythological* one. Only the latter can produce *genuine* 'phenomenological experience', which is what enabled the ancients to understand the indifference between the ideal and the real 'for all time'. Their unique view of 'gods' (*ideas*) thus provides the ultimate paradigm for explaining 'the means by which art acquires separate, self-enclosed figures for portrayal, and yet within each figure simultaneously the totality, the entire divinity'. '[T]he law of all the figures of the gods' is deduced from their unique characteristics *modelling natural semiosis*, making Greek mythology 'the highest archetype of the poetic world'.¹⁶⁴

Before proceeding to the Principle's 'determining law', it is necessary to give some important background to Schelling's mythological categories, making it easier to appreciate why it is only a *re-productive* imagination that orients us toward 'higher beings' of fantasy.

One doesn't get a full sense of how profoundly different the modern and ancient mythological outlooks are – and their effect on the Imagination - until account is taken of how *the implicit* became overtaken by *the explicit* in the degradation of Allegory itself in its separation from Metaphor.¹⁶⁵ (This may explain why Hammermeister does not notice Schelling's empirical object is not the same 'Object' in each mythology). The separation of the allegorical element from the metaphoric, as Schelling says, 'occurred... after all poetic spirit was exhausted' in the mythological overthrow. 'The complete dissociation of the Greek fantasy from the allegorical' manifests in the fact that, earlier, 'even personifications that might easily be taken to be allegorical beings' (as 'signifying' something) were understood 'as *real* beings that *are* simultaneously that which they signify'.¹⁶⁶ *Allegory* was (like metaphor later) subsequently degraded. (However, this does not entirely rule out its usefulness in art. Dante for example, says Schelling, 'is allegory in the highest style', whereas in Voltaire's *Henriade* 'the allegorical is quite visible and crass').

Therefore, in Schelling's time 'metaphor' retained an archaic entirely *linguistic* connotation because of its origin in rhetoric. The word 'symbolic' was still used because, in *rhetoric*, metaphor could not be granted any higher status in meaning production.¹⁶⁷ In *all art*, because the 'ultimate principle of beauty' is its object, as Schelling says, the literal cannot be awarded higher meaning-value. Thus all 'tropes' (including 'ordinary' metaphor), all linguistic embellishments, were subordinated. So too in poetry itself; and poetic discourse in any artform was henceforth, until much later, described as 'symbolic'.

¹⁶³ Schelling, *PA*, Stott, D. *Translators Introduction*, xlv.

¹⁶⁴ Schelling, *PA*, p.36. Had he been familiar with Aboriginal or Māori mythology, for instance, he doubtless would have drawn similar parallels with *their* natural archetypes in contrast to Christian mythology. However, importantly, Greek gods (*ideas*) become *human* forms (the infinite drawn into the particular). In other ancient mythologies this is reversed - humans become *animals/plants/landscapes* (ie., the cosmos); the particular is drawn into the infinite, as in Christian mythology (Christ becomes a man, but still manifests the infinite). This allowed Christian *historical* 'mythology' to be seamlessly absorbed during colonisations (eg., in Torres Strait Islander culture).

¹⁶⁵ Schelling explains how 'the symbolic' (ie., *metaphoric*) was degraded by his own contemporaries like Christian Gottlob Heyne, in the process downgrading Homeric poesy to 'mere allegory'.

¹⁶⁶ Schelling, *PA*, p.48.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p.207. 'Metaphors... belong more in the realm of the rhetoric', even though this can 'seek to speak through images in order to make itself more vivid, or in order to deceive and to awaken passion. Therefore, in poesy everything belonging to the embellishment of speech is subordinated to the highest and ultimate principle of beauty. For this reason, no general or universal law can be presented regarding the use of imagery, tropes, and so on, other than precisely that of such subordination' (p.201). Plato, however, 'compares the effects of poetry with those of a magnet', so it then *adopts a supra-linguistic meaning*.

The decay of classical ‘symbolism’ (proper metaphor) into the merely two-dimensionally *symbolic* in modernity revived application of the word ‘metaphor’. But with its lexicalisation in science and the humanities (via confusion with allegory), proper metaphor’s use in much modern artistic practice was replaced with symbol.¹⁶⁸ The historicised degradation of both Allegory and Metaphor masked the significance of transference between the fundamental mythological categories: *schematic* -> *allegoric* -> *metaphoric*.¹⁶⁹ But how this changed *Fantasy* is elucidated by the ancient condemnation of ‘*parenthyrsos*’.

Parenthyrsos was what the Greeks regarded as false sentiment or affectation of style. It depicted wild artistic tendencies to portray ideas in ‘violent and forced’ ways, which amount to what we today call ‘symbolic’ (ie., schematic/allegoric representations familiarising us quickly with the intentional object), and ‘idealist’ in the vulgar sense. This was considered a ‘defect in matters of passion’ which Theodoros Epigrammaticus describes as ‘unreasonable and empty passion, where no passion is required, or immoderate, where moderation is needed’. As he says: ‘For men are often carried away, as if by intoxication, into displays of emotion which are not caused by the nature of the subject, but are purely personal and wearisome’.¹⁷⁰

Ancient Fantasy could curb such excesses because their standpoint of production rendered *higher* meaning both accessible and necessary. There are two key reasons for this, and why the *reproductive* imagination is critical to developing any society’s civic humanist orientation. Firstly, ancient Fantasy places *the Person* at the centre of artistic contemplation over ‘personality’ (the *affectation*), liberating the Imagination and providing Art true autonomy in the ‘world of gods’ (ideas). Their ‘empirical object’ is, like ‘ideas’ *in themselves*, thus neither one of understanding nor reason, and neither moral nor immoral. Because, as Schelling argues, no such measurement can be applied to the ‘higher beings of fantasy’.¹⁷¹ Secondly, it is capable of generating the kind of *deeper* longing needed for producing meaningful *quests*.

To address the first reason, it should by now be clear why such placement represents the only truly *social* way of worlding, and that no ‘rational’, ‘mechanical’ ideal construction of human totality, as Hegel imagined, is possible. Modern individuality, being so conceived (‘reflectively’), simply cannot pay due respect to the *complexity* of human predictability/unpredictability. Genuine totality is hence only really possible under a *humanist* conception where the Art-Person autonomy can flourish in its mythologising. Where our corresponding relation to *this* in the Nature-History nexus itself coheres in the Freedom-Necessity indifference. Where the individual person embodied in humanity’s ‘personhood’, as MacIntyre suggests, remains opaque and unpredictable enough, ‘in possession of ourselves’ enough, to engage in *realistic* long-term projects.

As Schelling notes, nothing we call ‘individual’ is really ‘real *in itself*’; it is only real in relation to a whole.¹⁷² But our mythology can only render individuality in *opposition* to the whole, alienating us from it. This is because the standpoint of reflection can only cultivate ‘ideas’ in the fantasy of private life. The individual is enticed to ‘be original’ by creating meaning *for himself* in ‘the universal content or material from particularity’. ‘Originality’, then, predominates archetypally (possessively) in modernity because – since *the particular* is universalised - the individual *appears* as the collective. Therefore, the point of departure for artistic productivity is always ‘difference’.

The tendency is then to accentuate superficial difference, rather than produce *meaningful* novelty. Which provides the illusion of Art’s unifying principle being an historicisable *Object*, whose exemplary artwork (*object*) can thus “naturally” also be artificially historicised.¹⁷³ The art of modernity hence becomes possible only as a *particularity*,

¹⁶⁸ Eg., the bland symbolism of Andy Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Tins*. Or the slightly more sophisticated ‘visual synopsis’ contained in Damien Hirst’s fly-covered cow’s head in his work titled *A Thousand Years*, praised by critics as superlatively metaphoric but fact it only displaying *parenthyrsos* in the self-evident disjuncture between ‘passion’ and ‘subject’ (and no suspension of the *Object*).

¹⁶⁹ Schelling, *PA*, p.201. For detailed explanation supporting and expanding upon Schelling’s view, see Ricoeur 2003. Essentially this has to do with the gradual weakening of criteria for allegory’s predicative function, originating in an historicization of the *meaning* of Aristotle’s concept of analogy, turned by medieval philosophers into an ontological and theological *rapprochement*. Ricoeur’s great insight is in recognising the split between poetic and speculative discourses originates in the differences created between *morphology* and *predication*. (The categorical transference will be examined in a future paper).

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p.311, n.61. Common among artists thinking ‘Internalisation’ – entirely subjective psychological preoccupation – is itself an “artform” (eg., ‘performance art’) when it is merely ‘navel-gazing’.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, p.38. As Schelling argues, ‘the superiority of modern poesy’ over the so-called immorality of Homer’s gods is nonsense. ‘In their immorality, the Homeric gods are... merely naïve and truly neither moral nor immoral, but rather... completely freed from this contrast’.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p.34. Emphasis added. ‘Individual’ means not taking up ‘the absolute whole into [a] particular form’. Without our relation to humanity, we cannot *really* be individuals

¹⁷³ Eg., so-called ‘Ephemeral Art’ formalism emerging in the 1990s brands the ‘transitory’/‘mystical’ symbolic.

a 'transition... characterized by nonabsoluteness', compared to the 'timeless' art of antiquity. This is why, like any revealed religion, it can never become 'mythological', except as a *historical* mythology where content or material can only be realised by its ideas *acquiring independence* from their meaning. It cannot create meaningful *longing*; the kind that can draw collective aspiration into the individual (making the individual and collective quest the same). That sense of *longing* (Art's *ontological claim* on humanity) was cultivated *metaphorically* by the ancients; but in modernity, *individualist* religiosity produces an unfulfilled sense of longing via historical, symbolic, 'paradigms of tradition'.¹⁷⁴

As the character of artmaking became generally *allegorical* rather than *metaphoric*, the artwork became conceptual. It was either merely explicitly symbolic or incomprehensibly subjectively reflective (infected by *parenthyrsos*), rendering Art's Principle indefinable. The 'productive imagination', encouraging individualistic, positivistic materialism, produced an historical and 'divided species'. But Greek art could unify human perceptions by manifesting the '*absoluteness*' of the real world *naturally*. Modern art had to become a multiplicity manifesting its non-absoluteness as merely an 'idealist' *signification* of reality. The ancients' art was thus bound mythologically to nature in archetypes, while modernity's manifested as providence or 'history'; as 'rebellion', or rather, 'unconditional surrender'. As 'sublimity' which, as Schelling says, is merely 'beauty in the narrower sense'.

With the collective able to cultivate itself or 'develop *into* the... particular', meaning could flourish in antiquity in a 'self-enclosed', cultivated world. Whereas in modernity, with the individual striving 'by itself to express the universal', ideas became objective meaning only as an 'infinite totality' (symbol). The meaningful *whole* becomes inconceivable except as infinite particularity - always as *becoming*, never as *being*. '*The Ideas*' in modernity could only become objective through *acts*, when in antiquity they could become objective *in being*. This is why figurative meaning in modernity manifests largely in transient appearance, while the figures of ancient mythologising are enduring and eternal 'natural beings of a higher order'.¹⁷⁵ The difference in their respective 'empirical' objects lies here.

Not being able to approach the ancient Empirical Object, *confines* the art of modernity and the Imagination. All intuition, being 'only in history', is limited by time; therefore, any synthesis of schematic with allegoric meaning must be conceived in 'infinite time' (ie., 'the eternal' as purely symbolic). Being *enslaved* by 'infinity', the idea fails to become proper metaphor, but stagnates in *inward* subjective "metamorphosing", in and for itself, which Schelling refers to as 'mystic'. Mysticism - contrary to modern misconceptions - is really *antiithetical* to higher meaning because it is *entirely* subjective. Christianity had to control mysticism for its own ends, so it was only allowed 'within action [acts, eg., *ritual*], since there it was simultaneously objective and universal'. In this way it lent 'objective' meaning to the symbolism of the church.¹⁷⁶ Little wonder, then, that what is understood as 'metaphor' in modern and postmodern artmaking rarely finds any greater depth than a kind of mystical religious symbolism.¹⁷⁷ And most narratives employ fantasy in either a bewilderingly predictable or unpredictable fashion, constituting 'necessity' and freedom' purely unrealistically, idealistically, or arbitrarily, without meaningful ends.

Thus, since meaning is not able to be *conceived* mythologically, modernity's '*preferring*' cannot be made 'objective' without the state or church.¹⁷⁸ And, being fashioned from the same material as *revealed* religions (mysticism, false morality, and conquest), it can only generate a superficial sense of longing via symbolic idealism. Only 'external goods' can flourish, driven by markets ('efficient causes'), while any worthy collective quest possessing an end in itself ('internal good'), like preserving bio-diversity, struggles under their growing burden.

Ancient fantasy, producing *habitual* metaphoric thinking, was not subject to the same confinements. In antiquity, higher intuition of *ideas* ('the gods') is acquired 'from what exists within the parameters of space' (ie., through '*natural* limitation'). Metaphoric meaning, *grounded* in this reality, arising from the real world of ideas, is expressed as an *external* act manifest as *a unity* of the infinite in the finite. It therefore *reveals nature* - and the ideal world is hidden (awaiting discovery, expanding the imagination reproductively); while the modern

¹⁷⁴ Schelling, *PA*, p.80. 'Longing', in Scheler's philosophical anthropology, is tied to choosing, but to conflate deliberation about *ends* with choosing or preferring *particulars* is to substitute aesthetic normative purpose with sensibility.

¹⁷⁵ Schelling, *PA*, p.80.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, p.75.

¹⁷⁷ Evident in many modern dramas (eg., *Game of Thrones*). Some dramatic styles are based *entirely* on mysticism and ritual (eg., Jean Genet's 'Theatre of Ritual'), and others like 'Theatre of the Absurd' usually replace proper metaphor with mystical imaginaries. The resurgence of fantasy in modern filmmaking (eg., even its supposed 'political satire' in films like *Barbie*) is nothing less than a celebration of how *objective* meaning may be, via symbolism, completely subjectivised to legitimise the individual will to power over the collective. Genuine art works on our imagination precisely in the reverse.

¹⁷⁸ For brief explanation of Max Scheler's concept of 'preferring' see Trimarchi 2022. Essentially, 'choosing', which is an act of *willing*, is preceded habitually by 'preferring' certain values (this being an *a priori* intuitive act). Ethics are *preferred*, morals are *chosen*.

imagination reveals only the ideal world (and *nature retreats* into mystery). Art, being thus derived directly from this ‘nature religion’ of antiquity, founded on the History-Nature/Necessity-Freedom nexus *as* tradition, can produce realistic imaginaries and ‘Traditions of thought’ of a higher order.¹⁷⁹

Humanity desperately – more than any other time in history - needs a higher ‘Fantasy’, that can bind the individual more meaningfully to the collective, as in ancient heroic societies. Without an Imagination that can render a genuine sense of both personhood and longing, neither meaningful ethics nor morality nor genuinely collectivising art can emerge to generate the kind of *deeper* conviction capable of undertaking *meaningful quests* (eg., creating a Human Ecology). And the *Reason* (‘narrative order’) to pursue them heroically.¹⁸⁰

The Determining Law

Schelling’s ‘determining law’ of the principle of Art reverses the polarities of idea and reality, reviving the ancient mythological double-unity with *the Person*, simultaneously expanding the Imagination (consciousness) and binding it to Reason – returning us to the higher beings of Fantasy. Issuing forth as it does from *Nature’s* normativity, ‘the law’ of Schelling’s unified *Principle* of art adheres to ‘*unchangeability within itself*’. This manifests in artforms/works under *exemplary* natural archetypes. By contrast, modern art rests theoretically upon laws of ‘*progress within change*’. Whereas Kant, Hegel, and Heidegger regard the ancient archetypes as historical ‘standards’, Schelling’s insights lend them far greater depth. From their *reflective* standpoint, subjectivity rules and a modern law-making tendency inevitably resulted from the dual focus of their aesthetic *and* social idealism. Which should by now be understood by the reader as expressing a *misappropriation* of morality in relation to ethics.¹⁸¹

Schelling’s *ahistorical* process metaphysics of art instead reveals the relationship of aesthetics to ethics, charting art’s change of character in the historical journey between two archetypal *mythological* antitheses. Through it, art is bound by one principle, ‘for all time’. This *Principle* is not, therefore, bound by ‘rules’ of Art; but by the logic of what Max Scheler calls ‘laws of aesthetic and ethical *valuations* of value-complexes’, which are ‘laws of experiencing specific *facts and contents* that give unity to ethics and aesthetics’.¹⁸² Art is thus, essentially, a way of *valuing*. And the above-mentioned ‘unchangeability’ is expressed in the ‘determining law’ as a limitation, which *presupposes* the reality that making, understanding, and appreciating art is an active process involving an active subject. Hence how this law works on the imagination is key, and lies in the fact that the ‘gods’ are strictly limited.

Firstly, Schelling differentiates the portrayal of the ideas through the *creative* imagination, in becoming *reproductive*, from fantasy. The ‘objects’ (ideas) are *intuited* by fantasy, presenting the synthesis in images; but productions of art are obtained and processed in our *reproductive* imagination. The relationship between ‘creative imagination’ and fantasy is the same as that between *Reason* and intellectual intuition. Fantasy intuits objects externally and ‘casts them out from within itself, as it were, and to that extent portrays them’, and creative imagination receives and forms these ‘objects’. The ‘divine imagination’ (ie., reproductive imagination) must then be understood in this nexus, which operates ‘[a]ccording to the same law the universe forms and molds itself within the reflex of human creative imagination into a world of fantasy’.

Why is this ‘consistent and pervading law’ *necessarily* ‘absoluteness in limitation’?¹⁸³ Because, as soon becomes evident, it is limitation which governs the construction of ‘art in the particular’ (artforms and their related artworks). For instance, landscape painting is a form *limited* by the fact that landscapes can only be experienced entirely subjectively (due to their fleetingly ‘formless’ appearance); whereas a human being can be portrayed more *objectively*. What renders Michelangelo’s *David* more *objective* to us is our common experience of the implicit

¹⁷⁹ As Schelling says, Greek mythology could only be *conceived* as Art, not as ‘religion’ in the modern sense.

¹⁸⁰ Consider recently released film, *American Fiction*, about how African-American ‘experientialism’ - despite the profoundly real experience of these peoples’ historical struggle out of slavery - through contemporary literature, is turned into yet another pop culture mind-game industry. The film however must ultimately *celebrate* this well-worn narrative mythological order of things, by making the central figure in the end enslaved to accepting whatever salvation he can in materiality. Though, through ‘Monk’, we are beckoned to seek humanity’s apparently lost faculty to transcend experience, he is just a symbol of his anti-utopian reality, of the modern mythology he is, like us, bound by. Hence, all the while struggling with that familiar residual sense of false transcendence, which we call ‘romantic irony’, we search for something in the plot’s conceit to long for. But no metaphoric transcendence can be found.

¹⁸¹ This argument is made in Trimarchi 2022.

¹⁸² Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Translated by Manfred S. Frings and Richard L. Funk. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 188-189.

¹⁸³ Schelling, *PA*, p.37.

ideality of his body's unreal dimensional *extension* in space, counterposed by the equally implicit but real *tension* of immanent poised action. These interactive features are also what simultaneously make him more human to us collectively, since we individually embody the same *real* tensions (even though we do not share the same *ideal* extension).

Schelling's complex descriptions of these kinds of constructions unfold under this Principle, exposing *the relation between* the material (form) and immaterial (non-form) - or matter and reason - by which we come to understand real and ideal indifferences. As Schelling says, this involves resolving 'matter... into *absolute identity*', which '*occurs only within reason*'.¹⁸⁴ Reason 'belongs neither to the real nor to the ideal world exclusively' because (being the 'All') it equally dissolves all particular forms. Hence neither world 'in and for itself' can reach a level of reality 'higher than that of *indifference*'.¹⁸⁵

Undergirding this logic, of course, is Schelling's clear rejection of any ideological or dogmatic 'Idealism' as a philosophical route to reasoned existence. His 'philosophy of identity', drawn entirely from his 'transcendental philosophy' where *the indifference* of being and becoming are together the condition of existence in the organism, then *equally* affirms the existence of both the real ('material') and the ideal ('immaterial') world in the *Imagination*. His explanation of the *archetypal* production of meaning in artforms/works thus advances on Kantian and Hegelian transcendentalism by resolving the relation between the imagination and understanding. The sublime becomes - *not* a Solgerian condition of 'enduring the terrible' - but that self-actualising aspirational intentionality embodying the 'empirical object' in Nature:¹⁸⁶

The world of the gods is the object neither of mere understanding nor of reason, but rather can be comprehended only by fantasy. It is not an object of understanding, since understanding remains bound to limitation; nor is it one of reason, since even in scientific or systematic thinking reason can portray or present the synthesis of the absolute with limitation only ideally (archetypally). Hence, it is the object only of fantasy, which presents this synthesis in images.

Thus, 'Eternity', 'Infinity', and 'the Divine' are contained in the Absolute, which humanity *only* accesses in Imagination (*via*, of course, intuitive, retroductive reasoning). The above 'logic of the universe' Schelling argues was misunderstood in Platonic doctrine, which then became 'historic truth'. Art *reflects* these ideas 'only to the extent that nature transfigures itself into the totality and absolute unity of forms' (ie, autopoietically in the general aesthetic). But only our *reproductive* imagination advances them '*within reason*' as *truly Art*.¹⁸⁷

Finally, regarding the state of chaos where both Kant and Schelling agree 'sublimity' *emerges* (Merleau-Ponty's 'obscure zone'), wherein 'something terrible' supposedly occurs (ie., *Reason*), Schelling's portrayal is appropriately mythological. The 'sublime', he says, is that first 'complete assembly of the gods' appearing 'only after the purely formless, dark, frightful element is driven out'; which we experience as disclosure of the absolute. Ancient Greek cosmological 'in-forming' transitions between being and becoming, spiralling upward toward *Reason* like this: 'Absolute chaos is night... [and]... the first forms and figures fantasy allows to be born from within it are also still formless'. But this 'world' must perish before the gods can enter: 'The first children are monstrous', and 'Chaos must devour its own children'. 'Kronos, too devours his own children' until finally 'the realm of Zeus begins'. The destruction continues, and 'only after this final victory does heaven become clear and Zeus take serene possession of tranquil Olympus'.¹⁸⁸ This allegory of continual destruction and renewal, where Whitehead's 'actuals' and 'possibles', being and becoming, eventually find rest (impermanently) in disclosure, depicts the transformation of lower to higher meaning-values in artmaking.

Formlessness, through the pervading law of absoluteness in limitation, transfigures continually into form and then new formlessness. The interplay of Freedom and Necessity in the *reproductive* imagination produces 'sublimity' in active contemplation of the 'higher beings' of fantasy. (Just as balancing them *in society* renders life meaningful). There is no magic wand wielded by 'genius'; nor 'divine' intervention. Higher meaning determination simply requires contemplation beyond our selves, upon the multiplicity emanating from the 'bottomless emptiness' of the general aesthetic's endless absolute inherent freedom of particularities. In future, I will show how Art's ultimate power rests on 'precisely this separation of forms', which only obtains because each is absolute within itself. There, the strength of Schelling's *Principle of Art*, under this 'determining law', becomes more profoundly apparent in close examination of the *essences* and *potences* defining each individual artform and their artwork exemplars.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, p.27: '*Reason is thus within the All itself the full reflected image of God*'. Author's emphasis and bold.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, p.26-27. Neither *alone* can become 'absolute identity itself' (therefore the absolute's '*existence*' is nonsensical).

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, p.38.

¹⁸⁷ cf. Aristotle's distinction between art and artefact, argued in Trimarchi 2022

¹⁸⁸ Schelling, *PA*, p.37-38.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed Schelling's *ontological, cosmological* view of art overturns our dominant Kantian aesthetic paradigm. And why the Kantian/Hegelian/Heideggerian 'demand' on us, which Art produces in the 'modern epic' worldview emerging since the onset of Christianity, is a fantasy stripping humanity of real 'final causes' (hence meaningful 'ends'). Art's *actual* claim on us, I suggest, rather calls up a deeper conviction to *correspond* with the real world, by enjoining the subjective *and* objective as continuity, transcending Cartesian-dualist oppositions that still dog philosophy and art today. An *ontological* re-conception of art's purpose changes our modern habitual standpoint of reflection and reveals Art is really our only way to access Schelling's 'unprethinkable being'. The progression of meaning in Schelling's mythological categories will in a subsequent paper reveal why I argue for the primacy of metaphor as the foundation for constructing more realistic, reproductive, 'utopian' imaginaries. It concludes my argument for why adopting Schelling's approach to nurture this intellectual intuition *in praxis* is the only way to begin to meaningfully redirect our collective mythology.

As argued above, great art must be *metaphoric*, since this constitutes the highest meaning-making *synthesis* of schematic and allegorical imagination. The ancient *Greek* mythology was entirely metaphoric, since their representation of forms 'as gods' made it *necessarily* so. This laid the very important foundations in anglophone countries for *thinking* metaphorically, which subsequently deteriorated here and elsewhere with globalisation of the modern mythology. The same kinds of mythological foundations were, of course, laid by other ancient cultures (according to different 'particulars', though relative to the same 'absolutes'); all however now submerged in a homogenising mythological standpoint incapable of worlding a real humanising totality (under the auspices of 'totalitarian', 'democratic', or 'theocratic' governing ideologies).

Returning to the objective epic sensibility of antiquity, as noted, begins with reconceiving *Art's* 'purposefulness' as *ahistorical*, not 'historical' as in Hegel's aesthetics. The latter involves 'efficient cause', the former 'final cause'. This, then, necessitates firstly understanding why it must be our modern notion of 'Religion', of what is sacred, which requires adjustment. Schelling's process metaphysics paradigm for art was argued above to provide a suitable framework for this attentional shift, surpassing our current dominant neo-Kantian paradigm, by adjusting our habitual standpoint of reflection to one of production. And hence correcting the mimetic illusions of theoretical 'naturalism', reclaiming art's relation to Nature as a processual *naturalising* of art (by reviving its unifying Principle and the primacy of Metaphor).

As suggested, this 'shift' means reconsidering our very *conception* of 'modernity' which, as MacIntyre claims, is not a period but an *ideology*. It is not therefore a question of trying to undertake the impossible task of reverting to the 'classical' ideals of a distant past, but of instead recreating suitable ideals in our own epoch. I will later show that, beginning in arts practice, Schelling's 'ahistorical' approach allows us to do this; by correcting the tendency to misinterpret both 'classical' and 'modernising' valuations of artworks, and avoid recourse to what Jaus and Bensing called 'a general spirit of the age, which involves circular reasoning'.¹⁸⁹ Schelling's systemic categorical approach to 'constructing' artforms and artworks under this new paradigm, though clearly overlooked by philosophers of art following him, is undergirded by his revival of the ancient unified *Principle* of Art.

I have suggested in §2 why this Principle, in its 'determining law', supplies the reason Schelling's general construction of 'absolute form' (via proper metaphor) subsumes other more schematic and allegoric forms of *morphogenic* semiosis (eg., metonymy, synecdoche, and narrative). The '*absolute* indifference' of the universal and particular within the real is therefore the basis upon which all artforms and artworks will later be shown to produce higher meaning. As will become clear, this essentially involves reorienting the subject-object relation in such constructions, revealing why it is *phenomenology* rather than 'rules of art' which makes this meaning directionality apparent. Such examination will necessarily involve how reality emerges in 'the particular' under a particularly *purposefully purposeless* artistic intentionality (contrary to Kant). Yet without yielding to 'the explicit'. Where intentionality meets purpose, in the construction of the *Formative* and *Verbal* Arts, lies the reason the ancient epic far outshines the modern romantic epic. Hence comparing these epic forms bears strongly on the question of mythological orientation, and our ability to 'totalise' as a meaningful collective pursuing any genuinely heroic utopian quest in concert with Nature.

As argued elsewhere, this is a quest at odds with the task of the Nietzschean *Übermensch*; described by Fred Polak as reducing humans to a mechanism - 'rendered lifeless, stripped of every shred of dignity – not only as a reality, but as an ideal'.¹⁹⁰ My main claims supporting Schelling's aesthetics, to avoid placing such

¹⁸⁹ Hans Robert Jaus, and Elizabeth Bensing, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," *New "Literary History"*, Vol. 2, No. 1, A Symposium on Literary History Autumn, 1970, 7-37, p.19.

¹⁹⁰ Polak *IF*, p.279.

limitations on the imagination, can be summarised as follows. Firstly that ‘personhood’ thrives on civic humanism and a *natural* ahistoric orientation toward final cause (though cultures are, naturally, historicised). And that the telos of life progresses via *Nature* and *shared temporality*. Therefore, the key factor linking the Person to Art, to produce an *Ideal* mythological character and conviction, is *Purpose*. Fragmenting and devaluing ‘Art as unified principle’ reduces its *real* purpose to merely servicing individual needs, creating a private world (and a dual privation in the public sphere). The character of our modern aesthetic habitus thus nurtures emotivist psychologism in the experience of art, and an overriding though ultimately pointless focus on individual personality in artistic practices, traditions, and institutions, shifting our attention from the *genuine* ‘Other’.

Countering the strong tendency to normalise this as an ideal via art today (ie., in ‘anti-art’), a proposed method for modelling Schelling’s process metaphysics of Art, to phenomenologically identify any artwork’s ‘ethical intentionality’ (demonstrating Art’s ‘realistic’ purpose), will in a later publication offer the potential for re-establishing aesthetics *in practice* as a normative science. I will there propose why this is capable of restoring the ancient link between Art and Morality (via Aristotelian virtue ethics), thereby properly responding to Schelling’s call for a New Mythology. Combining Schelling’s system with the insights of other philosophers reveals a practicable way of achieving this mythological transition beyond the arts ecology, in the society at large.

How can any such proposition be realistic, one might ask, if art has undeniably become no longer generally considered in modernity anything more than some species of commodity or utility? As ‘purposeful’ only in some material way; as a trophy offering financial reward, kudos, or special access to knowledge or experience? As an end ‘democratically’ available to anyone via certain attention to, essentially, the ‘materiality’ of life? And, very often, according to a kind of purposefulness that when scrutinised cannot be taken seriously to in any way resemble Art’s ‘greater purpose’ of orienting our final causes?

The accumulated wisdom of generations once led us to view Art in itself as a very different kind of ‘end’. To seek through it something ‘immaterial’ which could only be obtained purposelessly, via a certain manner of contemplating implicitness (eg., as in meditation or ‘religion’). How do we re-train our collective gaze on the immaterial, on the implicit; and still produce an heroic society such as we will need to survive this century? I have here only shown why our imaginaries inevitably changed, and presented the theoretical grounding for returning to the objective epic sensibility of antiquity; the practical application of which will be provided in future.

For, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty realized, it is *in the practice and appreciation* of art that our entire cultural predisposition toward the world emerges as a binding mythology.¹⁹¹ But our *habitus* changes whether we spend our time engaging with art or not, because the aesthetic is all pervasive in human cultures via the ‘self-structuring’ that occurs in environmental semiotic productivity, which anthropological phenomenologists like Max Scheler have elaborated the conditions for. We all sense when the general spirit of our age reverts to circular reasoning; just as we notice this reasoning in the forms culture throws up. We are however all variously caught in its headlights; glued to the present, like the imminent roadkill of our own symbolic historicisms. And prone to ignore its significance, seeking higher meaning in either form, or formlessness and accidentality alone. As Merleau-Ponty says of the decline in painting: ‘We are so fascinated by the classical idea of intellectual adequation that [a painting’s] mute “thinking” sometimes leaves us with the impression of a vein swirl of significations, a paralyzed or miscarried utterance...’. In such a reduction he asks:¹⁹²

Is this the highest point of reason, to realize that the soil beneath our feet is shifting, to pompously name “interrogation” what is only a persistent state of stupor, to call “research” or “quest” what is only trudging in a circle, to call “Being” that which never fully is?



¹⁹¹ Merleau-Ponty 1973, 1993, 2005; also, Kaushik 2011.

¹⁹² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. trans. by Colin Smith, (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005), 192, p.189-190.

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APPENDIX - SCHELLING'S SYSTEM OF ART (SYNOPSIS)

the absolute—absolute identity
 God—Universe—the All
 self-affirmation

	the affirmed reality	the affirming ideality	indifference identity	
potences	real All real world nature	ideal All ideal world spirit	God ideas	
real	matter— being allegorical	knowledge schematic reflection	truth	necessity
ideal	light— activity schematic	action allegorical subsumption	goodness	freedom
indifference	organism symbolic	art symbolic reason	beauty	indifference
	real potence Philosophy of Nature	ideal potence Transcendental Philosophy		
	indifference Philosophy of Art			

the absolute becomes objective

real series of art				ideal series of art	
the ideal informed into the real				the real informed into the ideal	
the infinite into the finite				the finite into the infinite	
the universal into the particular				the particular into the universal	
the real unity as symbol				the ideal unity as symbol	
matter as symbol				language as symbol	
affirmed condition				affirming act	
formative art				verbal art	
real potence	ideal potence	indifference	real potence	ideal potence	indifference
music allegorical	painting schematic	plastic arts symbolic	lyric allegorical	epic schematic	drama symbolic