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## AESTHETICS AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF ART, 1840–1900

Gary Shapiro

The question can be raised whether the category or discipline of philosophical aesthetics existed before the eighteenth century. Unlike “logic,” “ethics,” and “physics,” a traditional Stoic division of philosophy with great staying power, “aesthetics” is clearly a product of modernity. As Paul O. Kristeller demonstrated in “The Modern System of the Arts,” it was in the eighteenth century that the idea of the aesthetic as a distinctive human capacity and the parallel consolidation of the notion of the fine arts crystallized in the writings of (mostly) French, German, and English philosophers and critics.<sup>1</sup> The modern concepts of art and aesthetics emerged together. Any history or genealogy of aesthetics will have to confront the possible tensions between an orientation to the arts and one to aesthetic subjectivity; it should take account of the canon of the fine arts that the new field of aesthetics inherited from the eighteenth century as well as its conflicts, margins, and exclusions. We should be aware, for example, that the very notion of literature (in contrast to earlier traditions of poetics and rhetoric) arose around 1800, and almost immediately generated the idea of

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1. Paul Oskar Kristeller, “The Modern System of the Arts,” in *Renaissance Thought II*, Paul Oskar Kristeller (ed.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Kristeller’s essay originally appeared in 1950, anticipating the analogous contextualization of Kant’s aesthetics by Hans-Georg Gadamer (in *Truth and Method*) by ten years (both were students of Martin Heidegger). Cf. Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 3–16. The first modern use of the term “aesthetics” is generally credited to Alexander Baumgarten (1714–62), in suggesting that there could be a general logic of sensibility. While Baumgarten drew on Christian Wolff’s (1679–1754) Leibnizian notion of sensibility as confused cognition, he gave this formulation a new direction by considering the arts as forms of perfecting and clarifying thought in sensible form.

world literature (which, as Marx observed in 1848, is a recent invention of the bourgeoisie).<sup>2</sup>

There is, then, only a modern aesthetics. The Greeks and Romans were concerned with the power of poetry and music and the beauty of the *kosmos*, but had no "aesthetics," and nor did the medievals, despite their hermeneutic fascination with the meaning of biblical narrative. For the development of aesthetics in the specifically modern sense two things were required: (i) *the discovery of "man"* in the meaning that Michel Foucault gives to that term, that is the being who understands that his entire construction of the world is possible only through his own finite powers, and who sets himself the infinite and, as it turns out, impossible task of clarifying the nature of these powers, including aesthetic sensibility or taste; and (ii) the critical and practical formation of a *system of the fine arts*, in which poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and others (including some later marginalized, e.g. gardening and landscape architecture) were understood as having fundamentally similar aims and roots.<sup>3</sup> The arts became a philosophically crucial form for the self-understanding of the finite human being at the time when it became possible to speak of art in something like the usual modern sense. This understanding was pursued in settings and institutions such as museums and concert halls where the arts had both a privileged and a newly isolated place. Aesthetics was the experience of beauty, sublimity, and art in which the human being manifests its universal capacities, coming to a knowledge of itself as reflective subject (Kant) or as participating in the work of *Geist* (Hegel).

Both Kantian and Hegelian aesthetics are centered in the concept of a universal humanity that comes to understand some of its deepest powers through aesthetic experience, including that of the arts.<sup>4</sup> The Kantian form revolves around the power of reflective judgment (*Urteilkraft*) by which the mind becomes aware of the free play of its other powers and claims universal validity for its judgment. This power of reflective judgment can be exercised either in regard to the beauty and sublimity of nature or with respect to the productions of fine art. This harmony of the faculties that we glimpse in the judgment of taste is one that involves a certain indeterminacy; it does not accomplish a fully articulated understanding of either the meaning of the aesthetic object or, more importantly, of the roots and unity of the three great human powers. Hegelian aesthetics envisioned the achievement of a self-conscious human universality as a historical process that could actually be completed; the

2. The earliest occurrence of "literature" documented by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is 1812; the word does not appear in Grimm's *Wörterbuch*.

3. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1970).

\*4. For discussions of Kant's and Hegel's aesthetics, see the essays by Thomas Nenon and Terry Pinkard, respectively, in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 1*.

grand narrative of art, as developed in Hegel's lectures, is a story of spirit coming to itself historically, within the medium of sensuous material, a medium from which it eventually twists free, transforming itself into religion and philosophy. This universal historical hermeneutics concludes elegiacally by proclaiming the notorious "death of art," or to follow Hegel more precisely, the judgment that art is no longer an original source of thought, having been surpassed by and comprehended (*aufgehoben*) in religion and philosophy. Between roughly 1840 and 1900 philosophers assumed the task of elaborating and sometimes transforming the conception of the universal aesthetic human and the meaning of art that Kant and Hegel had pursued in their distinctive ways.

### I. AESTHETICS AFTER HEGEL

Although a number of Hegel's critics and commentators assume that he spoke of the "death of art," what he actually claimed was more complex and not at all as naive as this phrase sounds. Hegel had said that art had completed itself in its essential movements, that it had become a subject of science (*Wissenschaft*), and could no longer play its former role as a primary source of thought, having been superseded (*aufgehoben*) by religion and philosophy. What we could now expect was not the disappearance or death of art, but its dissolution or unraveling (*Auflösung*), which would involve stylistic experimentation, play, and ironic self-consciousness. Hegel remarks that the knee no longer bends before the painted Madonna seen as an artistic image, but art continues to be the great educator of humanity and a fertile field of cultural life.<sup>5</sup>

The artistic world inherited by the post-Hegelian generation was one in which relatively new institutions such as the museum and the concert hall had firmly established themselves as the sites of art, corresponding both to Kant's divisions among the cognitive, practical, and aesthetic spheres and to Hegel's elaboration of a science of aesthetics. This new situation was contingent on the rise of the bourgeoisie, greater literacy, and global markets that fostered various forms of translation. The rising middle class sought credentials for its new social standing in the exercise of universal taste (to put it in Kantian terms) or in becoming knowledgeable heirs of art's universal history (to inflect this in a Hegelian way).<sup>6</sup> This project fit well with the European restoration of order that prevailed from Napoleon's defeat in 1815 to the revolutionary period of 1848.

5. G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, T. M. Knox (trans.) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. I, 11 (art on its highest side a thing of the past), 103 (the knee does not bend); vol. II, 593–611 (dissolution of Romantic art).

6. For a Marxist account, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), esp. 1–30.

While many artists and philosophers who took this new cultural context for granted found inspiration in Hegel's aesthetics and his dialectical approach, the question arose whether Hegel had claimed premature closure in his triad of symbolic, classic, and Romantic art, and in his system of the individual arts, which traced a development from the most material and earth-bound art of architecture to the purely imaginative world of poetry. Post-Hegelians such as Karl Rosenkranz and F. T. Vischer were impressed by Hegel's dialectical procedure, but argued that he had unduly restricted the scope of aesthetics by limiting its field to the beautiful.<sup>7</sup> They set out instead to demonstrate that the beautiful was only one of a nest of related fundamental aesthetic forms that also included (at least) the sublime, the comic, and the ugly. In Vischer's early work *On the Sublime and the Comic* (1837), and in his later massive and encyclopedic *Aesthetics* (1846–57), he implicitly claimed to out-Hegel the master, situating the beautiful as only the first or immediate moment of the aesthetic, a moment thrown into relief by its negation in the sublime, itself a negative and excessive movement, surpassing the self-contained harmony of the former. The final, reconciling moment is the comic, conceived as combining the immediate appeal of the beautiful with the disparity and conflict typical of the sublime. Vischer, after completing his monumental eight-volume *Aesthetics*, wrote an essay acknowledging that he had vastly underestimated the role of the perceiver, or the aesthetic subject, which contributed to Benedetto Croce's later verdict that Vischer's *Aesthetics* was "the tombstone of Hegelian aesthetics."<sup>8</sup> Rosenkranz's *Aesthetics of the Ugly* (1853) employs a similar structure, but he pushes the dialectic further to explore the extremes of horror. While we can see how the tables of contents of Vischer's and Rosenkranz's treatises could appear to be (as F. H. Bradley said of Hegel) a "ballet of bloodless categories,"<sup>9</sup> Rosenkranz's stress on Hegel's "power of the negative" in aesthetics was an important (if little

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7. Johann Karl Friedrich Rosenkranz (April 23, 1805–July 14, 1879; born in Magdeburg, Germany; died in Königsberg) was educated at the Universities of Berlin, Halle, and Heidelberg. His influences included Hegel and Schleiermacher, and he held appointments at the University of Halle (1831–33) and University of Königsberg (1833–79). His major works include *Hegels Leben* (1844), *Aesthetik des Hässlichen* (1853), and *Hegel als deutscher Nationalphilosoph* (1870).

Friedrich Theodor Vischer (June 30, 1807–September 14, 1887; born in Ludwigsburg, Germany; died in Grunden) was educated at the University of Tübingen. His influences included Hegel, and he held appointments at the University of Tübingen (1837–55, 1866–87) and University of Zürich (1855–66). His major works include *Über das Erhabene und Komische* (1837), and *Aesthetik, oder Wissenschaft des Schönen* (1846–57).

8. Benedetto Croce, quoted in Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Critique of My Aesthetics" (1866), Jason Gaiger (trans.), in *Art in Theory: 1815–1900*, Charles Harrison and Paul Wood with Jason Gaiger (eds) (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 686.

9. F. H. Bradley, *The Principles of Logic, Volume II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928), 591.

acknowledged) step in a tradition represented by Theodor W. Adorno, who saw Rosenkranz's aesthetics of the ugly (*Hässliche*) as anticipating a more recent concern with dissonance as a fundamental aesthetic category.<sup>10</sup> As Rosenkranz proceeds from the formless to disfiguration, the destruction of the image, the demonic, evil, and terror, he effectively explores a dimension of subjectivity opened up in Kant's analysis of the sublime. Reading beyond the obsessively systematic tables of contents of such works, we discover a number of philosophically rich discussions of music, literature, and other arts, some of which were read by American transcendentalists and pragmatists.<sup>11</sup>

Søren Kierkegaard took a different direction from Hegel. Many of his writings, especially those in the first volume of *Either/Or*, could (except for their ironic tone and pseudonymous authorship) be taken as contributions to Hegelian aesthetics like those proliferating in Germany; closer attention to context will take account of Kierkegaard's agonistic relations with contemporary Danish Hegelians.<sup>12</sup> In "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," a pseudonymous author argues that the modern world is comic, insofar as it presents subjectivity as pure form; whereas in Greece the social bond brought people together in common life, the modern state, in abandoning any real claim of authority, leaves the modern subject to lead an essentially isolated life.<sup>13</sup> Since ethical substance is lacking in modernity, the suffering of the modern hero must be completely self-inflicted. If Hegel's analysis of *Antigone* rightly discerned the tragic in the clash of two substantial powers – the universal claims of the state and those of family and ancestral piety – the modern Antigone would be one condemned to an absolutely private existence with a secret about her father, whose anxiety would be increased by her unresolvable uncertainty as to whether her father also knew and suffered from knowing it. Kierkegaard's own pseudonymous authorship, playing as it does with various forms of the secret and the incommunicable, involves a complex strategy for awakening an intense awareness of the caesura of public and private. He deploys the forms of Romantic irony against the aestheticism of the movement, as he parodies the practices of Hegelian philosophy in order to validate the concept of individuality.

10. Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (eds), C. Lenhardt (trans.) (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 68.

11. Much post-Hegelian and post-Schellingian aesthetics was published in translation in the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* (1867-93), a basic source of philosophical education and discussion for such North American philosophers as Peirce, James, and Dewey (Dewey's *Art as Experience* [1934] has been said to be his most Hegelian work).

\*12. For a discussion of Kierkegaard that situates his work in relation to Danish Hegelians, see the essay by Alastair Hannay in this volume.

13. Søren Kierkegaard, "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," in *Either/Or*, Howard Hong and Edna Hong (trans.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Kierkegaard would no doubt have been amused by the growth of positivist aesthetics in France and Germany later in the century. He would have seen in the “experimental” aesthetics, pursued by Johann Friedrich Herbart, Gustav Fechner, Robert Zimmermann, and Carl Stumpf, a comic exhibition of how even the aesthetic could be emptied of subjectivity in the modern age.<sup>14</sup> These aestheticians typically model their methods on a positivist interpretation of the natural sciences, one that imagines that theory must not only be confirmed by data but that our knowledge of laws arises from a process of accumulating observations. They wedded this to a reduced conception of the aesthetic judgment; characteristically, they have little or nothing to say about the notion of the aesthetic subject, simply taking as given the datum of the judgment of taste that Kant begins to analyze in the first four moments of his “analytic of the beautiful.” Fechner distinguishes an “aesthetics from above” (in the manner of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel) and an “aesthetics from below,” that involves determining the laws of pleasure and displeasure; these can be determined only by observation. Zimmermann follows Kant in distinguishing mere feelings (which may vary widely from subject to subject, being pathological in Kant’s terms) from aesthetic judgments. Yet, unlike Kant, he claims that the experimental methods of the exact sciences can be used to “identify the specific relations of sound or color” that produce aesthetic judgments. This approach abandons any attempt to derive the whole of aesthetics from a single principle (such as “harmony is pleasing”). Zimmermann argues that “there are just as many objective principles of taste as there are aesthetic judgments.” Aesthetics should follow the model of the exact sciences, he proposes, reducing “the most complex expressions of taste, as produced by the works of nature and art, to those original factors which are incapable of further analysis.” This is a project that can be completed, Zimmermann asserts, yielding “a normative standard of eternal validity.”<sup>15</sup> In practice this means that with respect to the visual arts, for example, experimental aesthetics attempts to understand the work in terms of responses to color, form,

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14. Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841) was an influential neo-Kantian philosopher and educational theorist. Gustav Fechner (1801–87) was a German psychologist and philosopher who is generally regarded as the originator of psychophysics. Robert von Zimmermann (1824–98) was a Czech-born Austrian philosopher who published a series of studies in aesthetics. Carl Stumpf (1848–1936) was one of the earliest students of Franz Brentano; later he turned increasingly toward empirical psychological investigations. Histories of aesthetics published around 1900 devote attention to the works of all these aestheticians, demonstrating their prominence during the nineteenth century. See Bernard Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic* (New York: Meridian Books, [1892] 1957), 363–92; Benedetto Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*, Douglas Ainslee (trans.) (New York: Noonday Press, [1902] 1955), 370–403.

15. Robert Zimmermann, “Toward the Reform of Aesthetics as an Exact Science” (1861), Nicholas Walker (trans.), in *Art in Theory: 1815–1900*, Harrison et al. (eds), 607–9.

and other measurable and observable properties. In an 1892 critical review of the history of aesthetics, Wilhelm Dilthey argued that "experimental aesthetics is unable to explain how the work of art is more than a heap of impressions."<sup>16</sup> Recent efforts to construct psychological theories of art and the aesthetic are in danger of analogous reductionism, which can be put in Dilthey's terms by saying that they lack a hermeneutic dimension.<sup>17</sup>

Dilthey argued that the experimentalists were unable to recognize holistic properties of artworks, notably style, that they had a reductive view of thought and content in art, and so necessarily produced an arid formalism as the ground of their researches. Both experimental and rational approaches (which he identifies with a tradition including Descartes, Leibniz, and Baumgarten) omit the activity of creativity and genius that gives each work "an inner delineation," or style: "Style exudes an energy which enhances the vitality of the viewer and his feeling of life ... the psyche, by its delight in the inner form of its own activity, assumes a superiority over the crude satisfaction of impulses."<sup>18</sup> To this "Kantian" pronouncement, Dilthey adds the "Hegelian" insistence that the artist's spirit is necessarily formed by the spirit of his age. Dilthey concludes with programs for both the arts and aesthetics: aesthetics must be enriched by the historical sense, which will involve attention to the circumstances of the present, in which naturalism is pointing to real conditions of life; and art awaits "men of genius" who will discover styles for the new age in which we are becoming aware of "the relation of the worker to the machine and the farmer to his soil, the bond of persons working together for a common end, genealogical lines of descent and heredity, the confrontation of the sexes, the relation of passion to its social and pathological basis and of the hero to masses of unnamed people who make him possible."<sup>19</sup> Like so many programmatic statements, Dilthey's betrays its own limits when he declares that these are tasks for the unique depth of the "Germanic character," as distinct from the Latin, Nordic, or Slavic.

Dilthey's own distinctive contribution was his *Weltanschauungslehre*, or theory of worldviews, and after distinguishing the Greek and Roman, medieval, renaissance, and early modern views, he suggests here some of the themes of the emerging worldview of the "new age." The disclosure of worldviews, and the way in which great artists or "geniuses" dealt with these, was part of his project for a renewed hermeneutics, which was provoked by his study of Schleiermacher.

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16. Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and its Present Task," Michael Neville (trans.), in Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (eds) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 205.

\*17. For a discussion of Dilthey's approach to hermeneutics, see the essay by Eric Sean Nelson in this volume.

18. Dilthey, "The Three Epochs of Modern Aesthetics and its Present Task," 205-6.

19. *Ibid.*, 221-2.



That project and his critical-philosophical essays on Goethe, Novalis, Hölderlin and other poets (later collected in *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, 1906) had great importance for Martin Heidegger and his student Hans-Georg Gadamer, both of whom would criticize the very notion of aesthetics, replacing it with hermeneutics and ontology.

## II. AESTHETICS AND REVOLUTION: MARX AND WAGNER

The 1840s were a time of political and social unrest, marked by revolutionary demands and activity aiming at greater democracy and asserting the rights of the working class. This ferment contributed to newly expanded conceptions of the universal aesthetic subject and to programs for new forms of art that could speak to the sense of future possibility aroused by radical social movements. The composer and theorist Richard Wagner absorbed his Left Hegelianism from Feuerbach;<sup>20</sup> it chimed with the eclectic transmission of German idealism he received from miscellaneous sources, including Thomas Carlyle. Wagner greeted the revolutionary spirit by calling for a revolution in art. He followed the Hegelians in seeing the defining characteristic of Greek art as its public role in the *polis*. While this led to a scathing criticism of the compartmentalization of art and the aesthetic in bourgeois society, Wagner refused to accept the “death of art” entailed by this culture. He called for the new revolutionary art to draw its inspiration from the complexly organized industrial activities of the modern metropolis:

Who, then, will be the artist of the future? The poet? The performer? The musician? The plastic artist? – Let us say it in one word: the folk [*das Volk*]. That very same folk to whom we owe the only genuine art-work, still living even in our modern memory, however much distorted by our restorations; to whom alone we owe all art itself.<sup>21</sup>

Yet Wagner’s invocation of this apparently natural base of the people, echoing Feuerbach’s call for a *Philosophy of the Future* in its naturalism, concludes with a call for an ethico-aesthetic revolution under the symbolism of the divine that will join the universal humanity of Jesus with the beauty and strength of Apollo. This puzzling synthesis was left mysterious, although it may have played a role

\*20. Feuerbach and the Left Hegelians are discussed in the essay by Lawrence S. Stepelevich in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 1*, as well as in the essay by William Clare Roberts in this volume.

21. Richard Wagner, *The Art-work of the Future*, in Wagner, *Prose Works*, William Ashton (trans.) (St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1972), vol. I, 204–5.

in Nietzsche's identifying the figure of Christ in Raphael's *Transfiguration* as "Apollo."<sup>22</sup>

Marx's early philosophical writings disclose an analogous perspective. He saw modern industrial society as necessarily leading to the alienation of workers from their deepest human possibilities, notably involving free and spontaneous human activity and from the development of the senses. Marx's analysis of alienated labor, in which humans make themselves other than they are, presupposes a conception of the human as an aesthetic subject, which, if it were in touch with its genuine nature, would be involved in creative and expressive work. Marx did not write a single systematic work in aesthetics, and this dimension of his thought was largely ignored until it proved to be a rich inspiration for later thinkers such as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin, Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and others.<sup>23</sup> In the 1830s Marx aspired to be a poet and a drama critic; while he soon abandoned these ambitions for philosophy, his writings draw extensively on world literature (whose reality and concept he saw as a contribution of the bourgeoisie). Marx's early aesthetic utopianism owes much to Schiller<sup>24</sup> and Hegel. He suggests that the whole range of human sensibility is not fixed in our nature, but the product of an ongoing historical development, one in which the arts could play a role in expanding our possibilities of perception and creation: "Only through the objectively unfolded wealth of human nature is the wealth of the subjective human sensibility either cultivated or created – a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form, in short senses capable of human satisfaction, confirming themselves as essential human capacities."<sup>25</sup>

The critique of post-Hegelian philosophies of subjectivity in *The German Ideology* (co-written with Friedrich Engels) rejects any valorization of a pure consciousness that would be independent of the lived, material, and social world of human beings. The early writings identify productive labor as the human essence, or "species-being," and this activity is genuinely free only when free of physical need; in this respect Marx's very model of nonalienated labor comes close to the Kantian notion of the aesthetic as independent of practical interest. If nonhuman animals are bound by the instincts of their species in their production (e.g. of nests and dwelling places), "the human knows how to produce according to the standards of any species and at all times knows how

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22. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, Ronald Speiers (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), §4. Hereafter cited as BT followed by the section number.

\*23. Essays treating all of these figures can be found in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 5*.

\*24. For a discussion of Schiller's aesthetics, see the essay by Daniel Dahlstrom in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 1*.

25. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts" (1844), in Marx, *Selected Writings*, Lawrence H. Simon (ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1994), 75.

to apply an intrinsic standard to the object. Thus humans create also according to the laws of beauty.”<sup>26</sup> “The laws of beauty” are not further defined, and taken together with Marx’s later remarks on the eternal charm of Greek art, which he explains as the eternal attraction of the childhood of the species, this formulation betrays a taste solidly formed in the Kantian and Hegelian traditions.<sup>27</sup> Yet Marx was not completely bound by the aesthetics of the beautiful. He made a close study of Vischer’s *Aesthetics* in 1857–58, and it seems that Vischer’s account of the sublime as intrinsically excessive, surpassing all limits, played a role in Marx’s later formulations (notably in *Capital*) of how capitalist production and social relations also embody the power of the negative, giving some theoretical grounds for the famous words of the *Communist Manifesto* that declare how in capitalism “All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air . . . .”<sup>28</sup> This analysis is at the root of later interrogations of the culture industry and the feverish transformation of aesthetic style in late capitalism by Benjamin and Adorno. The poetics and rhetoric of Marx’s epic, prophetic, and parodic texts (e.g. *Capital*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Herr Vogt*) reflect his Hegelian and post-Hegelian formation; they also show his limited adoption of an artistic, conceptual persona developed in fuller form by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

On one level, Marx’s conception of the aesthetic subject can be seen as his translation of German idealism into the history of the laboring social body. As such it stands under the sign of the beautiful, the fundamental category of Hegel’s aesthetics. Yet Marx, like the post-Hegelians, also accorded special significance to the sublime and the comic. In the opening pages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, he implicitly criticizes the bourgeoisie’s displacement of the aesthetics of the beautiful into the political realm, remarking that:

the tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living ... in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle-cries, and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language.

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26. *Ibid.*, 64.

27. Karl Marx, “From ‘A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,’” in *Marxism and Art*, Maynard Solomon (ed.) (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 61–2.

28. Marx, *Selected Writings*, 162. See Georg Lukács, “Karl Marx und Friedrich Theodor Vischer,” in *Probleme der Ästhetik* (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1969); Mikhail Lifshitz, *The Philosophy of Art of Karl Marx*, Ralph Winn (trans.) (London: Pluto, 1973), 75–7.

Through this merger of aesthetics and politics they find "the ideals and the art-forms, the self-deceptions that they needed in order to conceal from themselves the bourgeois limitations of the content of their struggles and to maintain their passion on the high plane of great historical tragedy." The alternative is not the abandonment of the poetic for a narrowly practical and mundane realism, nor an acceptance of the capitalist divorce of work and things of the spirit, itself simply a hypertrophied development of the initial division of intellectual and manual labor. Marx's concept of human activity involves an irreducibly aesthetic dimension. A new revolutionary aesthetic will free itself from the elegiac attachment to the past: "The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future .... [In earlier revolutions,] the words went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the words." The aesthetic of the coming revolution, formulated here in traditional terms of form and content, is sublime rather than beautiful; it acknowledges the unanticipatable character of the future; rather than imagining itself in terms of a beautiful past, it accepts the absolute novelty of futurity that lies beyond all present limits.<sup>29</sup>

### III. SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE: FROM PURE CONTEMPLATION TO THE PHYSIOLOGY OF AESTHETICS

Following the failure of the revolutionary activity of 1848, the time was ripe for Arthur Schopenhauer's aesthetics of pure contemplation, which offered a redeeming transcendence of the will, and so of all practical and political activity.<sup>30</sup> If circumstances did not allow the development of the active aesthetic human, it still seemed possible to cultivate one's own aesthetic sensibility. Schopenhauer radicalized the Kantian aesthetic subject, and his valorization of music (not poetry, as in systems of the arts like Hegel's) as the art giving the deepest insight into our subjectivity, coincided with the ongoing modern formation of taste in which music effectively serves as the ultimate test in distinguishing elite from common taste.<sup>31</sup> While his major work, *The World as Will and Idea*, was first published in 1818, it was the expanded edition of 1844 that marked the

29. All quotes in this paragraph are from Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in *Selected Writings*, 188-90. Cf. my "From the Sublime to the Political: Some Historical Notes," *New Literary History* 16(2) (1985); Terry Eagleton, "The Marxist Sublime," in *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*.

\*30. For a detailed discussion of Schopenhauer, see the essay by Bart Vandenabeele in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 1*.

31. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu: "Music represents the most radical and absolute form of the negation of the world, and especially the social world, which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of

beginning of Schopenhauer's influence.<sup>32</sup> For Schopenhauer, aesthetic contemplation involves a complete suspension of the will; the latter is the obscure, dark side of the world and of human life, and as long as we are in its power we are tossed restlessly on the sea of desire, unable to be content for more than a moment with any of our satisfactions. Only pure religious resignation and philosophical contemplation offer any similar relief from the suffering that is necessarily bound up with the domination of the will that rules most lives most of the time. Like Kant, Schopenhauer distinguishes aesthetic subjectivity from cognition and desire, but raises the stakes by his claim that we are desperately in need of escape from representation and desire:

[when consciousness] considers things without interest, without [individual] subjectivity, purely objectively .... Then all at once the peace, always sought but always escaping us on that first path of willing, comes to us of its own accord and all is well with us ... that moment we are delivered from the miserable pressure of the will. We celebrate the Sabbath of the penal servitude of willing; the wheel of Ixion stands still. (WWI 1: 196)

The artist, too, must have been in a "calm, tranquil, will-free frame of mind," something that is evident in an art form such as Dutch still life and landscape painting, where it is necessary to focus an impartial attention on the most ordinary and humble objects (WWI 1: 197). Arts other than music allow the viewer or reader to see the will objectified in the world; an attentive aesthetic contemplation will reveal the various gradations of the will or its "adequate embodiments," not as particulars but as Platonic Ideas. So Schopenhauer (like the Hegelians) constructs an extensive hierarchical system of the arts, leading from architecture, which embodies elemental resistance to the force of gravity, to tragedy, in which we observe the will in conflict with itself. Even animal painting and animal sculpture (or the aesthetic contemplation of actual animals) allows us to know the "restlessness and impetuosity of the depicted will, It is that willing, which also constitutes our own inner nature, that here appears before us in forms and figures." All of Schopenhauer's aesthetics, then, rests on this tension between the pure contemplative state and the seething, indeterminate will that we are. The simplest explanation of what we discover in the aesthetic state is to be found in the Hindu watchword "That art thou" (WWI 1: 219–20).

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all forms of art" (*Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, Richard Nice [trans.] [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984], 18).

32. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, E. F. J. Payne (trans.), 2 vols (New York: Dover, 1966). Hereafter cited as WWI followed by volume and page number.

Schopenhauer's theory of art and the aesthetic is structured by this duality between a fully luminous consciousness and the obscure and aimless will at the heart of reality. At the point where our consciousness is clearest and least obstructed, we are confronted with the chaotic will that we really are. This ultimate dualism is the last word of Schopenhauer's aesthetics; the aesthetic subject can never become a whole. The opposition finds its highest tension and deepest resolution in music, which is "by no means like the other arts, namely a copy of the Ideas, but a *copy of the will itself*" (WWI 1: 257). Music is such a copy because it embodies the entire gamut of human feelings, not this or that particular "affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment or peace of mind," but all of these emotions, or movements of the will as they are in themselves, independent, as is music, from any specific representation such as we find in plastic art or poetry (accordingly Schopenhauer dismisses program music as an inferior form [WWI 1: 261]).

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche offers an analysis of the aesthetic human (*ästhetische Mensch*), a concept he takes immediately from Schopenhauer and Wagner. Nietzsche had befriended the older Wagner, who by this time had adopted Schopenhauer's thought (apparently confirming Nietzsche's later judgment in *On the Genealogy of Morality* that artists are always the "valets" of religious or philosophical ideas).<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche defines human art in terms of two natural art impulses, named theologically after Apollo and Dionysus. Yet these are *natural* forces, so the Apollonian can be considered initially as the dream-like and visionary dimension of life, and the Dionysian as its intoxicated, orgiastic, and ecstatic side. Nietzsche betrays a divergence from the early Wagner in replacing the latter's projected alliance of Jesus and Apollo with the productive *agon* of the two Greek figures; so in describing Raphael's *Transfiguration* in *The Birth of Tragedy* he refers to the painter's Jesus only as the radiant Apollo (BT §4). This binary of aesthetic forces is analogous to Schopenhauer's indeterminate, surging will and the principle of individuation. Nietzsche accepts Schopenhauer's teaching that life is suffering (finding it already in archaic Greek poetry) but transvalues his idea of art: great art, like Greek tragedy, is one that affirms life in all its suffering, and involves a play between beautiful Apollonian phantasy (*Schein*) and Dionysian excess and undifferentiated multiplicity. Tragedy consists in staging various versions of the ritual in which there is a clash and creative *agon* between individual figures (heroes, actors) and the music and dance of the chorus. An artistic manifesto, as well as a rewriting of Schopenhauer (as the post-Hegelians rewrote Hegel), *The Birth of Tragedy*

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33. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Carol Diethe (trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Essay III, §5. Hereafter cited as GM followed by the essay and section number.

expands Schopenhauer's idea of music with Richard Wagner's program of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (the total work of art), and deploys it in a call for a renewed cultural nationalism that requires its own tragic myth, a myth that must be independent of morality in order to safeguard its place in the "purely aesthetic sphere" and which admits the ugly, the disharmonious, and the dissonant (BT §24).

In 1886, Nietzsche severely criticized this early statement for its Hegelian attempt to produce a grand aesthetic synthesis through opposed concepts, and its failure to find an appropriate voice for his thought, which was a confused medley of poetry and prose. He continued to affirm the necessity of a tragic worldview and *The Birth of Tragedy's* general project of situating the question of science within that of art, and that of art within the question of life. Nietzsche's later philosophy of art involves a scathingly direct attack on the Kantian-Schopenhauerian theory of disinterested contemplation (GM III: §6) and sketches a philosophy of life as the will to power. In this later perspective, the Greeks are no longer the privileged origin of art, but simply its finest practitioners as well as its finest enemies, as in Socrates' replacing the multiplicity of perspectives staged by tragedy with the "one great Cyclops eye" of reason and science (BT §14). In another late work, Nietzsche says that what he learned from the Greeks was the eternal recurrence of life; so the questions of origin, teleology, and return that are basic to Hegelian aesthetics are folded into an antidialectical vitalism of difference.<sup>34</sup> Art no longer has a privileged origin or goal, but in its sheer excess and affirmation it is now seen as the will to power articulating itself for itself. Nietzsche announced the project of a "physiological aesthetics."<sup>35</sup> Indications are that this was to be centered on the artist, and the receptive experience was to be understood as an analogous quickening of powers. The indispensable "physiological condition" of artistic creativity is *Rausch* (intoxication, frenzy, or excess); while *Rausch* had been specifically associated with the Dionysian in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche says in *Twilight of the Idols* that the Apollonian too is a form of *Rausch*, being a frenzy of the eye. Music as we know it is "only the remnant of a much fuller world of expression of the affects, a mere residue of the Dionysian histrionicism."<sup>36</sup> While Nietzsche's discussions of music and literature (to use the names of these reduced genres) are much more extensive than his writings on architecture, painting, and landscape design, he

34. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), in *The Portable Nietzsche*, Walter Kaufmann (ed. and trans.) (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), "What I Owe the Ancients."

35. Nietzsche, GM III: §8; cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (eds) (Berlin: dtv/de Gruyter, 1980), vol. 13, 529–30.

36. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man," §§8–11.

was already concerned in *The Birth of Tragedy* with the diagram of forces that enables the perspectivism of the Greek theater, and in *Twilight of the Idols* he exempts architecture from the Apollonian–Dionysian duality, seeing it as an eloquence of power capable of “the grand style,” which is powerful enough to eschew being pleasing. There is then in Nietzsche the sketch of an aesthetics oriented as much to spatial construction as to musical composition. It is telling that when he cites Heraclitus to explain the Dionysian phenomenon, he chooses an unusual variant of one of his sayings, comparing the “world-forming power” to a primitive architectural activity, to “a playing child who sets down stones here, there, and the next place and who builds up piles of sand only to knock them down again” (BT §24).<sup>37</sup>

#### IV. THE AESTHETIC HUMAN: NEW VERSIONS, ALTERNATIVES, AND QUESTIONS

Alain Badiou takes Nietzsche to be the typical philosopher of the “age of the poets,” an era whose beginning and end can be designated by the names of Hölderlin and Heidegger.<sup>38</sup> In this era philosophy not only takes the poem or artwork as its organon (a position already announced by Schelling) but sees philosophy itself as a form of poetry. Nietzsche confirms the designation when he says that the fundamental opposition is that between Plato and Homer (GM III: §25), or in writing what he took to be his most important work, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, as a poetic narrative that parodically plays with multiple genres. Nietzsche develops the idea that all language is poetic, as in the celebrated claim, in his unpublished essay “On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense,” that “truth is a mobile army of metaphors and metonymies” or figures of speech. On this view there is no absolutely literal level of language that can serve as contrast term to the poetic; the philosopher who is true to this insight will have to become something of a poet in order not to perpetuate the illusion of a purely cognitive language. Yet to the extent that it is language that speaks us (adopting a

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37. Editors typically cite this as fragment 52 in the Diels-Kranz numbering; however, the phrase comes from Plutarch (“On the E at Delphi,” in *Moralia* V, 393F) and is not there specifically attributed to Heraclitus. In context, a speaker in Plutarch’s dialogue cites lines from Homer (*Iliad* 15.360–64) to demonstrate the folly of speaking of Apollo, who is absolutely one, as changing or entering into human affairs, after accusing Heraclitus of similar theological blasphemies. So Nietzsche has both transformed condemnation into praise and adapted a spatial and architectural metaphor to the description of music, ordinarily taken to be a temporal art.

38. Alain Badiou, *Manifesto for Philosophy*, Norman Madarasz (trans.) (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1999), 69–78. [\*] For a discussion of Badiou’s aesthetics, see the essay by Gabriel Rockhill in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 8*.



Heideggerian locution that Nietzsche anticipates) we might speak of an age of poetry rather than poets, a gloss that accords with Nietzsche's treatment of the "I" or ego as a misleading metaphysical interpretation of grammar and helps to explain his importance for poststructuralist thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida.<sup>39</sup> By suggesting the primacy of language, Nietzsche points the way toward a nonhumanist aesthetics, one in which the primary concepts are rhetorical and textual, rather than psychological. Language or corresponding sets of conventions, styles, and diagrammatic procedures could be seen as replacing the individual creative genius; the reception of art was then described not as the quickening of the deep subject (Kant), the assumption of a purely contemplative consciousness (Schopenhauer), or the virtual model of the freely productive human (Marx), but in terms of activities such as reading and interpreting. At the same time that Nietzsche was opening up such possibilities with his philosophy of language, Charles Sanders Peirce was developing a general theory of signs (growing in part out of his own Hegelian and Schellingian criticisms of Cartesian intuitionism), which had analogous consequences in a variety of semiotic approaches to the arts in the next century.<sup>40</sup>

Two important texts from around 1900, Benedetto Croce's *Aesthetic* (1902)<sup>41</sup> and Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899/1900), are marked by the contrast between the continuing quest to define the aesthetic human on the one hand, and the articulation of alternative, more linguistically oriented approaches to art and the aesthetic on the other.<sup>42</sup> Croce's full title explains that he considers aesthetics "as science of expression and general linguistics." As expression, the artwork is to be seen as the unique completion of a process of intuition; it is an ideal fact, not to be confused with a physical artifact or text. In contrast to all attempts in the Aristotelian and rhetorical traditions to formulate the rules and principles by which artworks are formed, Croce argued for an absolute distinction between the expressive-intuitive work of art, whose result can never be anticipated, and the product of craft, which presupposes a prior intention

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\*39. Nietzsche's importance for Foucault and Derrida is discussed in detail in the essay "French Nietzscheanism" by Alan D. Schrift in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 6*.

40. For Peirce's semiotics see *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss (eds) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931-58), vol. II, paras 219-444; the editors thoughtfully entitle this selection "Speculative Grammar," calling attention to Peirce's medieval sources for thinking about language and categories; some of Heidegger's early thinking on these topics emerges from his study of Duns Scotus, one of Peirce's sources. [\*] For a detailed discussion of Peirce, see Douglas Anderson's essay in this volume.

\*41. For a discussion of Croce's place in Italian philosophy in the twentieth century, see the essay by Silvia Benso and Brian Schroeder in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 7*.

42. Croce, *Aesthetic*; Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, James Strachey (trans.) (London: Hogarth Press, [1899/1900] 1962), vols 4 and 5.

and rules of technique. The artist is not a maker but a creator; *poēsis* excludes *technē*. Linguistics is to be freed from grammar because "language is perpetual creation."<sup>43</sup> The upshot is a valorization of what "new critics" in the anglophone world came to call "the poem itself," a self-sufficient totality or organic unity in which form and content are ultimately indistinguishable, and these very categories may be abandoned because they are embedded in the inappropriate model of craft or *technē*.

If Croce reduces linguistics to poetics, Freud's work points in a very different direction.<sup>44</sup> *The Interpretation of Dreams* seems to echo Schopenhauer, portraying human life as dominated by unconscious desires (which are disclosed by artists, as in Sophocles' and Shakespeare's depiction of the Oedipus complex); it also agrees with Nietzsche in seeing the dream as a prototype of artistic production. Freud articulates a poetics for interpreting the dream that recalls the rhetorical tradition that Croce seeks to demolish. Looking at the dream on the analogy of a hieroglyphic text, Freud identifies elementary procedures of its composition: condensation, displacement, scenic representation, and secondary revision. This is, of course, an unconscious rhetoric, but one that can be reconstructed by the analyst in interpreting and decoding the dream. In Freud's later essays on literature and the visual arts, these principles are put to critical work, while he nevertheless retains more traditional concepts, confessing that psychoanalysis still cannot unravel the secret of genius, which distinguishes great art from mundane production.

## V. THE QUESTION OF THE CANON: NATURAL BEAUTY AND LANDSCAPE GARDENING

In *What is Art?* Leo Tolstoy offers a version of expressionist aesthetics, but one that dispenses with the concept of genius, or reassigns it to the collective spirit of the people. Authentic expression must be sincere and communal, the expression of religious feelings of a universal humanity, the expression of common feeling that is universally intelligible. While this leads to Tolstoy's repudiation of all high art (including Shakespeare and his own famous novels), his celebration of folk art coincides in some respects with the programs of Wagner, early Nietzsche, and others who see art in terms of the need to recapture an authentic origin that has been obscured by what they see as modernity's compartmentalization of aesthetics. Like Dilthey and Croce, Tolstoy supports this position with

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43. Croce, *Aesthetic*, 150.

\*44. Freud's work and its influence on subsequent philosophy are discussed in detail in the essay by Adrian Johnston in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 3*.

a critical history of aesthetics, which he sees as the rationalization of elite tastes that resolve themselves into markers of social distinction. Aesthetics turns out to be nothing but an ideological dodge for justifying class superiority. However crude Tolstoy's judgments of high art and folk art may be, his manifesto highlights an otherwise unthought presupposition of the history of aesthetics from its mid-eighteenth-century beginnings to his own time, that is, the question of the canon. He argues that there is a circular and unexamined relationship between the art valued by cultured taste and the principles of aesthetics that aim to explain and justify the production and appreciation of such art:

[T]his science of aesthetics consists in first acknowledging a certain set of productions to be art (because they please us), and then framing such a theory of art that all those productions which please a certain circle of people should fit into it.<sup>45</sup>

... what is considered the definition of art is no definition at all but only a shuffle to justify existing art.<sup>46</sup>

Later writers such as Mikhail Bakhtin and Pierre Bourdieu<sup>47</sup> argue in similar fashion for a more explicitly social conception of taste and the artistic canon; Bourdieu in effect reformulates Tolstoy by declaring that "taste is an acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate' ... It functions as a sort of social orientation, a 'sense of one's place.'"<sup>48</sup>

The nineteenth century was marked by a number of disputes about the canon. Wagner, at first an outrageous rebel, became a touchstone for poets as well as musicians. The impressionists and postimpressionists, initially excluded from the salons, overshadowed the academicians who had ridiculed them. Nevertheless, as Tolstoy would point out, such disagreements still took place within certain implicit boundaries and were resolved within relatively cohesive social groups (indeed, it was the Emperor Louis-Napoleon who sponsored the Salon des refusés that allowed Manet to exhibit his scandalous *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* in 1863 when it was refused by the official Salon). More telling is the way in which some forms of art disappear from the canon or reappear unexpectedly. For example, the eighteenth-century formation of modern aesthetics coincided with a taste that accorded a high place among the arts to landscape

45. Leo Tolstoy, *What is Art?*, Aylmer Maude (trans.) (Indianapolis, IN: Library of Liberal Arts, 1960), 44.

46. *Ibid.*, 47.

\*47. For a discussion of Bourdieu, see the essay by Derek Robbins in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 6*.

48. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 466.

design, but European taste after Hegel meant, as a recent historian of the art has noted, that “garden encyclopedias replaced treatises in aesthetics.”<sup>49</sup> While Kant, following a number of British critics, sees landscape gardening as a major art (a form of painting), Hegel represents a drastic change in taste that was typical of the culture by 1830 when he dismisses parks and gardens as trivial accompaniments to architecture. The disappearance of gardens from the canon also coincided with a decided turn away from a concern with natural beauty (and its affines, the sublime and the picturesque). Ten years after writing his massive, systematic *Aesthetics*, Vischer issued a self-criticism in which he declared that his entire long treatment of natural beauty was a fundamental mistake, and that his “agreeable excursion through the domain of natural beauty” was fundamentally flawed because he had not begun by making the crucial point that beauty is a subjective production, a thesis that he came to only in the third moment of his original system.<sup>50</sup> Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are striking exceptions to the general neglect or exclusion of both the aesthetics of nature and various forms of landscape and land art. Schopenhauer compares the poet to the hydraulic engineer who creates displays of water in fountains and cascades; both present Platonic Ideas by exploring the extremes and not just the ordinary conditions of what they depict (WWI 1: 152). Nietzsche’s philosophical-poetic *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is, among other things, a landscape poem that follows its protagonist through complex geographical and climatic variations. When he wakes from confronting his most abysmal thought, Zarathustra’s animals tell him what he must believe as the teacher of eternal recurrence, but the only part he accepts of what they say is that “the world awaits you like a garden.” In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche devotes a chapter to “Peoples and Fatherlands,” which is in effect a geoaesthetics in which national cultures and their representative arts, specifically music, are situated with respect to human and natural geography; for example, Wagner’s music and Hegel’s philosophy are both said to be foggy and nebulous, echoing the German climate. North and south (and similar concepts) become aesthetic categories in this hint of a “physiological aesthetics” that could remind us of Marx’s concept of the earth as “the human’s inorganic body” and that looks forward to Heidegger’s investigations of place in Greek and German poetry and Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of music as a way of occupying space.<sup>51</sup>

49. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), 314.

50. Vischer, “Critique of My Aesthetics,” 687.

51. Heidegger’s geoaesthetics is developed most perspicuously in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (trans.) (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), Hölderlin’s Hymn “The Ister”, William McNeill and Julia Davis (trans.) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); and *Elucidations of Hölderlin’s Poetry*, Keith Hoeller (trans.)

## VI. CONCLUSION: TENDENCIES AND DIRECTIONS

In the wake of Hegel's monumental and systematic aesthetics, later philosophers and critics were left with the task of either revising his system within the framework he established or striking out along new paths. In a revisionary mode the primacy of beauty was challenged within the Hegelian school by new analyses of the sublime, the ironic, and the comic that were still indebted to the dialectical approach and the idea of history as a meaningful development of spirit. More radical departures took the form of reversing Hegel's notion of the transformation of art into the science of art by exploiting the supposed irreducible and ironic discrepancy of the internal and the external (Kierkegaard), or rethinking art as the engine of a new cultural revolution (Wagner, Marx, the younger Nietzsche). These radicalized forms of aesthetics could be seen as the intensification of what Hegel called "moments" of the Absolute: irony and the unhappy consciousness in the case of Kierkegaard, or (impossible) reversions to an art-oriented society of the sort Hegel saw in ancient Greece, as with the cultural revolutionaries. Both tendencies continued to be effective in the twentieth century. The arts saw a variety of minimalist projects that seemed to question the fullness and harmony of the beautiful (e.g. the painters Malevich, Mondrian, and Reinhardt), while surrealism encouraged a transformation of daily life and, not coincidentally, frequently acknowledged its debt to Hegel (this tendency is represented in continental philosophy by Georges Bataille and Jacques Lacan, who linked the Freudian unconscious to the Hegelian dialectic<sup>52</sup>).

While even Baumgarten had already spoken of semiotics as one of the main dimensions of aesthetics, it was left to the structuralist and poststructuralist thinkers of the twentieth century to work out the implications of aesthetics's "linguistic turn." Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, and Julia Kristeva were inspired by Nietzsche's and Freud's meditations on language as well as by Saussure's. The contest between hermeneutics and semiotics tended to refashion the contrast between philosophies of the self-knowing aesthetic subject (as in Hegel) and notions of language as an autonomous system. The questions that thinkers such as Tolstoy had begun to raise about the social and economic presuppositions of the idealist aesthetics that dominated the nineteenth century were sharpened and intensified with different emphases by, for example, the social theorist Bourdieu and philosophers such as Derrida (e.g.

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(Amherst, NY: Humanity Press, 2000). For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's discussion of music as a form of territorialization, see "The Refrain," in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi (trans.) (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

\*52. For further discussion of Bataille and Lacan, see the essays by Peter Tracy Connor and Ed Pluth in *The History of Continental Philosophy: Volume 5*.

in "Economimesis"). Such inquiries led to increased questioning of the canon of high or great art that thinkers as different as Hegel and Nietzsche had taken for granted, so that by the second half of the twentieth century writers such as Barthes, Umberto Eco, and Jean Baudrillard were deploying their analytic energies in explicating such putative artistic sites and genres as television wrestling and Disneyland rather than Sophoclean tragedy or Italian Renaissance painting.