

SCHELLING'S 'ART IN THE PARTICULAR': RE-ORIENTING FINAL CAUSE

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ABSTRACT: Schelling's *Principle of Art* returns us to an ancient epic sensibility, laying the foundations for reversing the unrealistic 'modern mythology' arguably at the core of humanity's ecological/existential crisis. This contribution examines how, by detailing his systematic approach to constructing art 'in the particular' (art-forms/works). 'Particularity' is subject *only* to the reason inherent in the *potences* (or consequences) of the affirmation of the whole unity (*Principle*). Hence Schelling's 'affirming principles' determine boundary conditions for his 'mythological categories', revealing why their generalities inform a 'scientific sequence' for explaining the features of the Formative and Verbal arts (ie., all artforms, 'for all time'). Examining specific examples shows how Schelling resolves key difficulties (appearance/reality, form/non-form, intentionality, and purpose) for assessing art's higher meaning-value directionality; why phenomenology is key to understanding it; and how we arrived at the problematic modern 'epic' reversal of ancient universalising focusing our attention on 'efficient' over 'final' causes in art-making/admiring. Explaining practical application of the Principle-in-action expands on why Schelling's 'dialectical aesthetics' presents a hitherto unrecognised radical advance on Kant's. My conclusion summarises what shifts in attendance to the art object Schelling's system demands, and why his *Philosophy of Art* offers a suitable framework for collectively re-worlding the world.

KEYWORDS: Art, Epic, Essence, Form, Intention, Object, Reason, Schelling, Subject.

INTRODUCTION

In *Re-Worlding the World: Schelling's Philosophy of Art*, I argue that F. W. Schelling's Principle of art opened a way to reconnect art to normative aesthetics, ethics, and logic (Tramarchi 2024). His application of the natural archetypes of ancient

Greece elevates Art once more to a *mythological* status, as opposed to its *historical* one in modernity, enabling us to encounter and process the indifference between the ideal and the real 'for all time'.¹ Their cosmological attention to the world through art allowed them to externalise it metaphorically, achieving a productive rather than reflective standpoint conducive to collectivising effectively and developing the foundations of civic humanism. A mode of worlding lost in modernity, in whose absence arguably lies the origins of Art and Humanity's joint meaning/existential crisis. Here, to advance my argument that restoring Art's single unified Principle offers a way to ameliorate that crisis, I will show how Schelling's construction of art 'in the particular' can help us 're-world the world' accordingly. And so, reorient the great 'epic reversal' in our attention to final causes that occurred in humanity's transition from the ancient to modern mythology.

To regain that *genuine* 'epic' sensibility arguably needed for humanity's flourishing in concert with Nature means 'naturalising' art, since it remains our ultimate way of valuing. The earlier examined Principle *in-forms* Particularity, in the same way Schelling's 'reproductive imagination' synthesises thought, as an active subject engages in intuition of what Max Scheler calls a 'phenomenological experience'. This involves positing sublimity, infinity, or the divine, as a conceptual 'absolute'; not as an 'absolute' deity (as we moderns understand God), but as a part-whole relation in the *real* world of *Ideas*. In approaching this, the Principle guides particularity in praxis as it did in antiquity, through the *ontological* phenomenological relation of Nature via *human nature* to History. Constructing particularity archetypally, not as a fixed 'classical' ideal, as we tend to revere historical events, but on the continuum of becoming *real* (or, approaching *Reason*).

The benefits of combining the same natural 'totalising' archetypes as the Greeks with a humanist philosophy (ie., *speculative naturalism*) to create a harmonious New Mythology and genuinely heroic society were previously argued. There are good dialectical aesthetic and anthropological phenomenological reasons for why their particular mythologising provides, as Schelling says, 'the highest archetype of the poetic world'. Art naturally 'acquires

¹ 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; Character/character... etc., are used similarly.

separate, self-enclosed figures for portrayal, and yet within each figure simultaneously the totality, the entire divinity' by modelling the unique characteristics of 'the gods' (*Ideas*) in *natural semiosis* (Schelling 1989: 36). Sophocles' resort to the Gods was usually the way in which any impasses were resolved then, and as Alasdair MacIntyre says, '...the divine verdict always ends rather than resolves the conflict' (MacIntyre 2007: 143). For a new mythology, without Gods to perform this task (since, as Heidegger says, 'we are too late for Gods'), our only recourse is to rediscover a sense of *solidarity of selfhood* according to the archetypal signs of Nature using the ancient mythology as a guide. This means *naturalising* the Art-Person double-unity 'for all time' in our 'epic' narratology, returning us to an 'aesthetics of meaning'.

However, what this most certainly does *not* mean, is that there is some algorithm for art. Previously examined misrepresentations of Schelling's *Principle* leave an impression his complex prescriptions amount to "laws". Merely returning, as Kai Hammermeister suggests, to the neo-Kantian *theoretical* aesthetic paradigm which establishes conceptual formalisms that are entirely subjective and arbitrary by nature. Whereas in fact what binds Reason to Fantasy in Schelling's approach is not these '*progress within change*' styled formalisms, but an *ahistorical* account of the function of antitheses in our worlding tendencies. This, as noted, provides the logic for a 'determining law' of all the figures of the gods, based on strict *limitation*; which in turn reveals the laws of aesthetic and ethical valuations of what philosophical anthropologists like Scheler reveal as 'value-complexes'. These are intuited in experiencing *specific facts and contents* in art objects, which produce the basis of a phenomenological experience and hence a way of *habitually* understanding Art *phenomenologically* in terms of meaning-value.

Casting Schelling simplistically as 'Romantic Idealist' would be remiss. Especially considering his sharp criticism of the modern romantic epic. Nevertheless, his at times admitted enthusiasm for using apparently farfetched allegorical explanations which, as Douglas Stott says, 'did indeed get out of control' with some of his successors, might account for his systemic categorisations being underestimated.² Schelling's 'relational analogies' were often mistaken as 'material' ones, and though his explanations in *The Philosophy*

² Schelling himself warns August Schlegel viz 'making too much' of his analogies (Schelling 1989: 299n45).

of Art are not entirely consistent, complexity rather than contradiction is to blame. Not, as I will show, in the long run undermining his cohesive logic.³ Schelling's approach to nurturing our intellectual intuition of 'ethical phenomenology' in praxis proves the most promising way to begin *meaningfully* redirecting our collective mythology ultimately because it accords with C. S. Peirce's pragmatic maxim. The fact his Romantic 'absolute' is not accessible to reflection meant that, as Andrew Bowie says, there must be 'an interplay of cognitive, ethical and aesthetic modes of articulation' for *higher* meaning to occur. This allowed 'pragmatist attention to the idea that normativity is inseparable from each of the notional cognitive... moral and... aesthetic realms' (Bowie 2003: 330).

To make this argument, in §1 below I will give an overview of Schelling's reasoning and why it affords an 'epic reversal' in the *Particularity* of Art. §2 examines why this understanding requires taking a phenomenological 'process metaphysical' approach to artform/work construction. In §3, I detail how this is self-evident in the *Formative Arts*, via the 'in-forming' of beauty-truth intentionality. And, using the specific example of architecture, how it allows us to discern art from the 'general aesthetic'. §4 reveals how, following this, in the *Verbal Arts*, we can *phenomenologically* distinguish the modern and ancient 'epics'. And in §5 I show why it is these key differences that produced a world of 'efficient cause' upon which the modern mythology has led us toward anti-utopian ends (via the novel and drama specifically, and our take on tragedy and comedy in general). My conclusion then summarises how Schelling's philosophy of art opens the way forward to a New Mythology.

I. ART IN THE PARTICULAR

Art can only be a '*science of ideals*' in how it determines particularity. Hence the 'intellectual intuition' of what I have called an artwork's 'ethical intentionality' arises from *natural* boundary conditions. Limitation produces a higher order fantasy because it grounds ideality in reality. The absolute *in and of itself* offers no multiplicity or variation that the freedom and unique existence of particulars can use to produce meaning. (Which is why Schelling refers to the absolute as

³ Stott points out some very minor inconsistencies. Schelling is simply making his aesthetic paradigm marry in with the key aspects of his *System*, working through the ideas, which ultimately head in the same radical direction in the *Philosophy of Art*.

'bottomless emptiness,' though this has been misconstrued to imply an *artwork's* 'infinite' interpretability).⁴ These particulars, through limitation of absoluteness within their forms, obtain *the necessary relationship* for this autopoiesis to occur. Producing not just the common (ie., 'general aesthetic') meaning appearing in Nature, but the *highest* meaning which goes beyond interpretation.⁵ After all, as Schelling says, the 'mystery of *all* life' is revealed in this synthesis of the absolute with limitation.

Absolute reality follows from absolute ideality in this way because absolute *actuality* equals absolute *possibility*. Thus, *the Ideal* becomes the real which is 'more real than reality itself', only through a cultivation of this higher order fantasy. Being unable to understand 'the absolutely ideal' as also immediately 'the absolutely real', says Schelling, leaves one in possession of 'neither philosophical nor poetic sensibility'. Our ordinary consciousness of reality does not concern what is absolute in either because '...[t]his common reality is no true reality at all, but rather in the true sense nonreality' (Schelling 1989: 35). To illustrate this, consider how the reproductive imagination elevates thinking.

Firstly, in order to approach reality, as Bruce Matthews points out, one's personal reflection on anything is a 'necessary evil' from which the self moves from 'its original condition of wholeness to its more differentiated state of reflective activity' (Schelling 2007: 18). That primary stage of 'productive intuition' in which reflection first arises (cf. C. S. Peirce's *Firstness*), is where we need to *return to anew* if we are to obtain the essence of reality. The second stage facilitating this occurs *most objectively* during a phenomenological experience, the specific kind of which great art affords. Via art we revisit this pre-conscious, unerring apprehension of the object (at the 'limbic level', as Matthews suggests) only because this 'journey' brings an intuition of *otherness* to our consciousness. The external world becomes present to us in all its original freshness, as a conviction of knowing (as *necessity*). This ontological *claim* art makes on us *re-worlds* modernity's habitual 'logical positivist' illusions of permanence and certainty. Which, at the initial stage of reflection, manifest as a worlding tendency formed only in *sensible* intuition, producing *our first concept* of the object.

⁴ As Hammermeister does (Trimarchi 2024).

⁵ Explaining how this corresponds with the process of transforming lower to higher values (in Scheler's hierarchy) is beyond my scope here.

The conceptual products at this stage only generate meaning for us via a ‘correspondence theory’ of truth. To obtain ‘the real’ *existential* truth, we journey (via the artwork) over a gap – the kind of which metaphor provides. The differentiation of the *first* ‘productive’ act of reflection from this second epoch of intellectual intuition is through what Schelling expresses as ‘judgement’ (*Urtheil*); as a process of, basically, separating concept from intuition. As Matthews says: ‘Concepts arise for us in the separation of the act of producing from what is produced, “when we separate the acting as such from the outcome,” which we then call “the concept”’ (Schelling 2007: 19). This *initial* reflection is an ‘unconscious act of productive intuition’ serving as ‘the generative ground of the resulting concept’. But here truth must be accounted for by a *correspondence* of the object as perceived and intuited (essentially, concept as ‘representation’). Whereas, during a phenomenological experience, the original identity of the object is obtained directly (‘objectively’) in that second stage of separation returning us to *Firstness* (via Peirce’s ‘suspended second’). We pass through Schelling’s ‘mythological categories’, moving from conceptual *representamen* to metaphor, through this process.

Matthews’ description essentially accounts for why Kant argued the concept could not move us to ‘understanding’ via the imagination; because his philosophy *begins* with ‘the divide between concept and intuition’ and cannot move beyond the ‘already formed world’ of that fixed correspondence. His ‘analytic starting point enters into the process too late, missing the beginning, the self coming to know itself’. Beginning from consciousness, says Schelling, one ‘will never be able to explain this conformity’, because it must remain a *conceptual* truth. As Matthews (Schelling 2007: 19-20) keenly observes, from Kant’s analytical standpoint...

...the very fact that correspondence can occur on the abstract level of reflection indicates that concept and object must share the same structural identity on a more fundamental level. The horizontal picture of correspondence is just too static and one-dimensional to generate anything more than a circular argument of how the two relate. To provide a criterion whereby concept and intuition can be judged to agree or disagree we need a prior field of unity that transcends this duality. We need a vertical dimension, a genetic process of knowing, whose starting point will provide us with the basis for explaining the necessity with which our concepts involuntarily match up with our intuitions of the external world.

This was Schelling's first principle of 'identity', whereby the object's image of 'real Firstness' (in Peirce's terms), which stands between the object and concept, is adjudicated 'prior to the act of judgment'. Its 'un-prethinkable being' lies *beyond* consciousness. Which is critical, says Mathews, for understanding why: 'Under threat of circularity, the ground of consciousness cannot itself be consciousness, just as the ground of reason cannot itself be located within reason, and the ground of reflexivity cannot itself be accounted for in reflexive terms'. As he argues regarding philosophy, and I similarly viz *Art*, any such attempt of 'immanent grounding', as was made by Kant and Hegel (the latter on historical terms), 'always proves circular and thus futile' (Schelling 2007: 20).⁶ This becomes most apparent by examining the converse: how the mythology-constructing features of art's particularity stimulate our *re*-productive imagination to manifest the integral link between Art's identity and the self/other's reality.

Schelling is not alone in arguing such a way of understanding the construction of *real* reality is superior to any rationalised 'logical' artificial abstraction of the part-whole relation. But his method of exposing this in *Art*, via the three mythological categories, is unique. Variations in how the *schematic* and *allegoric* are combined, and become synthesised in the *metaphoric*, produce higher meaning as a vertical upward-spiralling progression (not static conceptual circularity). How does this occur in praxis?

Firstly, the Principle is affirmed by moving form away from the schematic and allegorical toward the more formless metaphoric truth-beauty nexus, while always accounting for the relation of the parts to the whole. This underscores the important relationship between Schelling's *formative* and *transitive* identity-affirming principles, which combine to reveal the directionality of higher meaning production following various polarities. The same principles for rendering *realistic* ideality apply to artworks in all artforms, following their specific form/non-form related value *essences* and *potences*. It is because this occurs differently in each that leads to the false modern impression of 'many principles' of art. But in fact, they create one unifying Principle categorically defining particularity as Schelling does in the Formative series: music, painting, plastic

⁶ Note Mathews' mention of attendance polarities corresponds with McGilchrist's designation of left/right hemisphere lateralisation traits: 'The LH recognises horizontal lines (the ideal), while the RH pays attention to vertical lines (the real)' (Trimarchi 2022: 450 n66).

arts; and in the Verbal series: lyric, epic, and drama - where we find the 'truth of form' lies in key interrelationships.

These transformations, inherent in the interplay of real and ideal meanings emerging from form/non-form, reveal the two different mythological standpoints for rendering portrayals – either arriving closer to, or further away from, the 'materialised' image of the real object. Art's higher meaning, as we will see, lies between parts, proportion, etc., portrayed not by accidental appearances of truth in 'common reality' (becoming formalisms); but freely according to the archetype of an artist's intuition of the Beauty-Truth nexus governed by the polarities of Necessity and Freedom. Here we can uncover the mythological realities undergirding two fundamentally opposed ways of worlding. These categories are hence the firm foundation upon which Schelling's unified *Principle of Art* constructs artforms/works ('particularity') as its *exemplars*. And the basis upon which *any* mythological orientation to reality is rooted.

The Mythological Categories

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 mythological categories (the *schematic*, *allegoric*, and *metaphoric*). They constitute the active function of the *Principle*, founded on the ancient mythological meaning of Fantasy and the unique claim Art *alone* makes on the *reproductive* imagination (Trimarchi 2024). In that interaction, it is the *missing* characteristics of the 'gods' (as archetypes of 'ideas') which produce the highest artistic value (higher meaning). And, in turn, the ancient mythology's *contemplative* virtue. *Limitation* works on our imagination via the interaction between 'pure limitation' and 'undivided absoluteness'. To explain this, Schelling compares Venus (love) with Minerva (wisdom) to show how their 'mutually limiting characteristics exclude one another within the same deity and are absolutely separated' at the same time, to produce (within this limitation) the effect of 'every form [receiving] into itself the entire divinity' (Schelling 1989: 36).⁷

⁷ 'Pure limitation on the one hand, and undivided absoluteness on the other are the essence of the figures of the gods'. Minerva 'the archetype of wisdom and strength in unity' exhibits pure limitation by having 'feminine tenderness' eliminated from her. Venus, goddess of love and object of 'fantasy' (imagination), exhibits the highest *artistic* virtue however because constraining Imagination draws the universal/absolute

As later shown, it is this ‘separation of forms’ upon which Art’s ultimate power rests, because each form is absolute within itself. It is the pervading law of absoluteness in limitation, underscoring Schelling’s ‘affirming principles’, which transfigures *formlessness* continually into form and then new formlessness. This is what produces the possibility, through Art’s Principle, to contemplate the ‘mystery of *all* life’ – which only the ‘higher beings’ of fantasy can entertain. It is, as previously argued, *rebellion against the Divine*, not any fabricated ‘miracle of art’ or magical ‘genius’, offering this access. And only contemplation beyond ourselves via *phenomenological experience* of the general aesthetic’s endless absolute inherent freedom of particularities, can provide it. Michael Vater’s summary of Schelling’s conclusions about humanity’s ‘epic and eternal’ odyssey, recalled here by Arran Gare (2002: 6), underscores this complexity in Art’s elevation of our consciousness:

The odyssey of consciousness ends, not with the transition to any timeless and final logical language underpinning all, but with a recognition of the finite and fragmented textures of empirical reality and the multiplicity of its partial intelligible schemata.

My outline below of how these categories merge to produce meaning must therefore be prefaced by Schelling’s insistence that: ‘*In the content or material of art the only conceivable antithesis is a formal one*’ (Schelling 1989: 78).⁸ That is, it is always a merely ‘temporal antithesis’ manifest objectively in form. This is because the content or material of art is always only one ‘absolute identity’ manifesting as both a product of necessity and freedom in this double-unity. Necessity is the unity of the universe with the finite, freedom the unity of the finite with the infinite. These categories produce meaning in this temporal antithesis as ‘form’. But, since form is not static, like any process of transformation this *character* of Nature reflects ‘that of unseparated unity... that is *still effective before separation*’ (ie., real Firstness). And, by the same token, even though the ‘seed of the infinite resides within it’, it is the *finite* (‘form’) that predominates.

Hence Nature preserves *the meaning of form* in this process at various stages, but possibility always exists for the finite to move in the direction of the infinite

(prudently) into the particular. As Schelling says, had Venus been ‘invested with the cold wisdom of Minerva’ she may not have wielded so destructive an influence on the Trojan War.

⁸ Author’s emphasis.

(freedom).⁹ On the continuum of being and becoming, at each stage of ‘being’ there is a *disclosure of meaning* (which is not to say meaning is absent in ‘becoming’). Both formal and non-formal *disclosure of values* are similarly transformed in the same process (progressing along Max Scheler’s hierarchy of values). Therefore, when *schema* and *allegory* are combined, their lower order meaning-values immediately advance to a higher order beyond ordinary meaning (‘ordinary reality’).¹⁰ In a *phenomenological object*, disclosure moves here beyond representation (ie., initial conceptual reflection). Note below, as Schelling defines these categories, how the part-whole relation governs the progress of meaning in this transition. And how the ‘image’ shines through, due to the re-productive separation of it from both concept and object (Schelling 1989: 46):¹¹

The representation in which the universal means the particular or... the particular is intuited through the universal is *schematism*. That representation, however, in which the particular means the universal or... the universal is intuited through the particular is *allegory*... The image is always concrete, purely particular... [whereas]... the dominating element in the schema is the universal, although the universal is intuited as a particular... To that extent it stands between the concept and the object and as such is a product of the power of imagination.

In other words, the image remains purely conceptual/symbolic until it progresses upward to allegory. Because ‘all language is schematism’, the ‘mechanical artist’, says Schelling, uses schema as the rule to guide production, sketching an outline as it were in its initial stages (Schelling 1989: 47).¹² But only

⁹ As Schelling says, ‘the only possible direction is that from the finite to the infinite’, ensuring that ‘chaos’ or instability is always the underlying reality of the system. In other words: the artwork, once having achieved a unity (‘being’/‘disclosure’ – or ‘form’) only needs the slightest disturbance to send it again toward ‘the infinite’.

¹⁰ The schematic, allegoric and metaphoric progress through lower to higher meaning-value *between and within* each (like *all* meaning progresses in the ‘general aesthetic’). I will in future show how Scheler, Peirce, and Ricoeur’s insights augment Schelling’s system allowing these transitions to be tracked and evaluated.

¹¹ This differentiation of metaphor from concepts, countering the Kantian-Hegelian *reflective* model, as noted elsewhere, has been neglected by contemporary scholars eg., George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) where symbols and ‘concepts’ are confused with metaphors. (Consequently, their neo-Kantian ‘image schema’ neuro-mapping model lacks Schelling’s sophistication in explaining art’s higher meaning, which I will expand upon in future).

¹² The tendency for modern art to remain fixed in the schematic or allegoric suggests why theorists fragment Art in terms of ‘principles’ associated with different ‘languages’ (which are merely technologies of action). Eg., the ‘language of photography’, though implicit, does not alone produce art. And, though all signs in the universe partake in ‘language’, neither Art nor Mythology are *merely* a ‘language’. As Schelling says,

as this develops in combination with allegory to become proper metaphor does any fully realised artwork come into being. Schematism or allegory alone cannot produce ‘a complete representation of the absolute in the particular’. Only their synthesis allows meaning to be elevated to metaphor, and only the most excellent synthesis to *proper metaphor*.¹³ The latter occurs when ‘the universal [whole masses of phenomena] is signified in the particular’.

Each mythological category can be differentiated via the different modes of thinking applied in science or art (ie., speculative or poetic discourse). In science their distinction is described as follows: ‘Arithmetic allegorizes... Geometry schematizes... and philosophy is the [metaphoric] science among these’ (Schelling 1989: 48).¹⁴ Whereas in the formative arts, music allegorises, ‘...painting schematizes, the plastic arts are [metaphoric]’. And in the verbal arts ‘lyric poetry is allegorical, epic poesy demonstrates the necessary inclination to schematization, and drama is [metaphoric]’.

What we can’t fail to notice in these descriptions is their inherent self-structuring *Intentionality*. From here it is but a small step to understanding Schelling’s construction of Art ‘in the particular’. This upward progression of meaning reveals the primacy of metaphor, as the foundation for constructing more realistic, reproductive, ‘utopian’ imaginaries. Because, in Paul Ricoeur’s words, a metaphoric utterance possesses ‘the vehemence of a semantic aim’.

Formative and Transitional Affirmations

The key *formative* ‘affirming’ principles consist in how essences, polarities, and potences resolve the part-whole and becoming-being *relativities*. While the key *transitional* (identity) principles are bound by Schelling’s mythological categories: the schematic, allegoric, and metaphoric, which progress *meaning-value*. It is

Greek mythology is not ‘simply... a schematism of nature or... the universe, though it may well appear that individual elements in it can be interpreted as *signified* in the universal’.

¹³ Hence metaphors are used *differently* in philosophy and art - distinguished in Ricoeur (2003) as speculative vs poetic discourses - though philosophy and art are linked. Art proceeds through all the potences within the real (objective) while philosophy does this within the ideal (subjective), (Schelling 1989: 15-17).

¹⁴ Note ‘symbolic’ is commonly used archaically by Schelling to mean ‘metaphoric’, because the archaic meaning of metaphor in rhetoric was exclusively literal, and ‘symbolic’ came to express its non-literal meaning (see Trimarchi 2024). But ‘symbolic’ today strictly refers to ‘likeness’, completely different to ‘metaphor’. I have therefore where necessary replaced ‘symbolic’ with ‘[metaphoric]’ in the author’s text.

therefore *how* the relation between the *Principle* and art *in the Particular* works, that uniquely addresses key difficulties in Kant, examined in Trimarchi (2024). As explained there, Schelling is not interested in rules or definitions, only in generalising from essences what is governed by Reason. Generalities are more useful because the *affirming principles* operate on different levels.¹⁵ As noted, we can separate intentional orientations phenomenologically, using Schelling's constructions to reveal the dialectical/dialogical relation of Art's *particularity* to its (whole) *Principle's* mythological direction. Art's formative *productivity* is directly correlated with its products according to the semiosis derived by convergence of Necessity and Freedom. This *autopoietically* situates every type of artwork within Schelling's artform categories, via key polarities.

Under this 'process metaphysics' paradigm, various subjective-objective orientations direct different modes of meaning production under the limitations of each artform. It is necessary here to provide an outline of how higher meaning is directed via Schelling's artform categories (elaborated in §3&4), and why this informs the reorientation of meaning-values in artworks from 'efficient' to 'final' causes (§5). Pointing to just a few examples later will then sufficiently demonstrate why Schelling's identity-affirming (*formative* and *transitional*) principles are derived from sound reasoning. And precisely how all categories in his system address the main problems of appearance and reality, form, intentionality, and purpose.¹⁶

Firstly, since knowledge and action are merged, art's *higher* meaning-value resides in the Principle *enacted* optimally. Every artwork is a theory (hypothesis) *only* in relation to Art's *Principle*. The *real* identity of its subject (content) rests in the subject-object relation governed by the formative and transitional real/ideal indifferences *together*. That is, in their merger, via the transition from infinite into finite (hence 'unity into multiplicity'). This determines both the process and *qualia* of construction of 'the particular' – the artform and artwork itself. Making them *exemplars* of a unified Principle inhering in the multiplicity of *all* artforms/works.

Because this Principle->Particular relation is governed by these *identity-affirming* principles, any artwork's higher meaning thus actually lies in its origins

¹⁵ No *strict* categorical divisions are possible because these affirming principles operate *in continuity*, as indeed do the laws of Nature and the semiotic reality these create.

¹⁶ See Trimarchi (2024) for explanation of how Schelling's 'affirming principles' merge knowledge and action. Why they resolve the problems of art 'for all time' is proven by detailed examination of specific examples, which space here precludes, but a few are pointed to in §3 and 4.

and the *praxis* of its making. And its disclosure is discernible in the phenomenology of its ‘subject-objectification’. We can assess this by judging the real-ideal indifference value of the key formative factors (essences, polarities, potences) in the transition toward metaphor. However, the very particular way these *formative* and *transitional* principles are determined in each artform/work does not unfold conventionally, but *characteristically* under their own peculiar logic. (Unsurprisingly perhaps, since so does an artwork’s *meaning*). Schelling’s system hence, being relational, requires a unique hermeneutics to describe the processual realities of his generalising of essence and form described below, and how his ‘scientific sequence’ translates these into meaningful categories.¹⁷

Schelling’s broadest categorical distinction - dividing Art between ‘the formative’ and ‘the verbal’ – sets out how the ‘forming’ of artforms/works must be understood. This appears odd at first, because all art is in some way ‘formative’. It is the affirming principles which make the distinctions understandable. The verbal arts (‘poesy’) represent the *ideal* side of the world. Hence, in these, *form* is worked into *essence*. But the formative (mostly non-verbal) arts represent the *real* side of the world where *essence* is worked into *form*. Though not a strict division, understanding this *polarity* elucidates the relation between Intentionality and Purpose in all possible manifestations of Art. In either category of ‘worlding’, the artwork becomes more real to us as its *Ideal* is approached. Paying special attention to purpose and intentionality in the interaction of form and non-form in each bears this out. So, to unravel this complexity, it is to the question of form that we must first turn.

The Formative Arts (Essence into Form)

The *non-verbal* arts of music, painting, and plastic arts are naturally enough categorised as *formative*. But since form is also obviously a feature of the *verbal* arts, understanding why *music* is categorised as ‘formative’ (given its particular ‘real-ideal’ polarities) reveals why *all* art is essentially ‘plastic’ (and there can be no strict separations). Similarly, it explains why the plastic formative art of Sculpture and verbal art of Drama can *equally* offer the ultimate *formative* expression of proper metaphor, since as we will see each ‘embodies’ Poetry

¹⁷ I will in future argue this necessarily combines other philosophers’ perspectives to fully appreciate.

differently. What will become clear is the centrality of art's perfect sign, *the Person*, as the real/ideal metaphoric *Object* ('Identity') of *all Art-Forming*.

Now, as noted, the non-verbal arts are generally to do with 'the real side' of the world while the verbal arts are to do with 'the ideal side'. But this cannot be a strict division either (since neither is the real or ideal so *in Nature*). Although this ideational polarity is key, it *varies* in potence in individual artwork-artform relations. For instance, just as music involves both verbal and non-verbal elements, so too does drama which is categorised as a *verbal art*. Each artform however accords different *essence* weightings in becoming meaningful *particularities* (ie., transitively). Such complexities unfold as follows.

Firstly, as in all arts, in the *non-verbal arts*, music, painting, and plastic arts like sculpture and architecture use different technologies of action to produce metaphoric plasticity. The plastic arts are '*essentially*' metaphoric because they 'encompass all the other artforms as particulars within themselves'. *All art* however – including verbal art - has a 'plastic' constituent, and each artform encompasses in different ways all the *unities* (potences) which give them their *essence* as forms (eg., in music: rhythm is 'music', harmony is 'painting', melody is 'plastic'). Music is *formative* because it encompasses the other forms as its own unities, as does painting. But music differs from painting in that it portrays matter not as 'corporeal' – not as a unity of bodies - but as a unity of *essence*. Thus, music's portrayal is not by means of 'bodies' but by means of an *act*. But because music is given to us in 'matter' (ie., scores, performances, or recordings) its *essence and form* are taken together to constitute 'body'. (Music's special connection to the verbal arts, via *sonority*, will later reveal the particularity of *their* 'plasticity').

Hence it is the relation of form/non-form to real/ideal identity which is key to understanding all this. Music informs *the ideal* into *the real* but manifests as 'act' or 'event' instead of as 'being'. Therefore, it always appears to us as '*relative identity*'. It portrays essence within form, and to that extent inheres as pure form, with anything accidental being substance used as its medium. In painting, the ideal identity 'has acquired contours and form, though without yet appearing as real it merely portrays *models* of the real' (Schelling 1989: 201).¹⁸ It portrays form within essence and 'insofar as the ideal is also the essence' constructs things as

¹⁸ Emphasis added.

essence. Sculpture and architecture on the other hand are plastic arts that inform as ‘*absolutely* ideal’.¹⁹ They transform ‘the infinite... into the finite, life into death, spirit into matter’. But because *the ideal* is in these artforms now transformed *wholly* into matter, they are also ‘*absolutely real*’. They can thus carry the highest potences of meaning in the plastic arts.²⁰ Music expresses its forms quantitatively, painting qualitatively, and sculpture, architecture etc., – since they portray ‘substance and accidentals, cause and effect, possibility and actuality as one’ - express themselves both quantitatively *and* qualitatively (Schelling 1989: 162).

Given the nature of Art’s plasticity, Schelling devised a ‘scientific sequence’ of *potences* for ‘forming’ *all* art ‘in the particular’- defying *historical* sequence (reviving Art’s link to the *normative* sciences). An artform/work’s various essences and potences can thus be graded in terms of (i) limitation (expression of necessity), (ii) orientation toward the absolute, and (iii) expressed ‘indifference’ of these (its wholeness or unification of these potences). Put simply, *particularity* or difference first, *identity* second, and *unity* and difference (uniting the universal and particular) third. We must continually return to *particularity* (necessity), *identity* (absoluteness), and *unity* (wholeness) given their key bearing on understanding the meaning-value of an artwork’s appearance/reality, in terms of intentionality/accidentality, purpose/purposelessness, form/formlessness, and so on.

The Verbal Arts (Form into Essence)

The *formative* differences among the *verbal* arts (outlined below) follow this same ‘scientific’ progression. Poetry is the most potent verbal artform because it most readily ‘takes the subject and, accordingly, particularity as its *point of departure*’ (Schelling 1989: 208). Its combined potences *optimally* express ‘the condition of a subject... or... the occasion of an objective portrayal from an element of subjectivity’. The subject-object/beauty-truth merger *always*, then, points to *the Person*.²¹ Even though *formatively* poetry corresponds to the allegorical (being ‘real’), *transitionally* its self-defining identity-affirming principle is metaphor.

¹⁹ The plastic arts also include *bas relief* which I don’t discuss because it sheds no particularly new light.

²⁰ The modern innovation of Digital Art is also ‘plastic’. But avatar/hologram ‘sculptures’ for instance are not ‘wholly matter’ (they are virtual, hence *artefacts*); and as such, *unless incorporating Drama* (eg., in Cinema) digital arts, like paintings, portray form in essence and merely *model* the real.

²¹ See Trimarchi (2024).

Hence its *necessity* - or 'particularity' - *embodies Art as a whole*, above any other artform. In every possible art-*Form* then (non-verbal or verbal), the merger between the real and ideal manifests as a *self-actualising* merger of subject and object.²² And the *Object* is *always the Person*, though we are naturally often led to believe it is not in myriad possible *subjects*. Why this is so reveals the real nature of art's 'materiality', which the artforms of Sculpture and Drama demonstrate in their particularities.

Because Art's inherent *ontological Purpose* is to create possibility grounded in Reason, its intentionality in any artform *must* model the very processes of nature in these mergers; but *only* in contemplating the indifference of Nature and human nature (in myriad ways). The *limit* cases - splitting Art's *essences* and *potences* into two opposing orientations toward essence or form - are the particular artforms/works merging Truth with Beauty. And through them, *the Person* - the *Ideal* human spirit (in *Selfhood*) - must really be understood as a '*resolution*' (indifference) of human nature with Nature. This is why human form, the key ancient archetype, must always be presented *not as it appears*, but according to the '*idea of nature*' (ie., as *becoming*). This is the *real* Human Condition, which only Art can express (via many subjects). And in the self-defining *character* of art-forms (as '*limit cases*'), this condition is expressed poetically optimally in *the formative* as Sculpture. And in *the verbal* as Drama. How do they reach this status? The answer lies in the essence/potence particularity of Poetry in each.

Consider this question firstly in the verbal arts. As I have proposed, it is Art's *immateriality* that accounts for its real benefit and purpose. Hence, its implicitness moves us beyond 'language'. As Dante says: 'How incomplete is speech, how weak, when set against my thought!' (Dante 1984: Canto XXXIII, 121-122). In the verbal arts, then, form is *both* idealised and realised in *essence*. Poetry is the 'art of arts', and replaced the archaic word 'poesy' (from the Greek *poēsis*: making/composing poetic 'language'), because it is the *ideational* essence of all verbal *and* non-verbal art. In the formative arts the self-affirming act does not *appear* ideal except through 'an other, and thus as something real'. But in 'poesy' (though also *essentially* 'formative') the absolute manifests *directly* as 'cognitive act'

²² The 'self-actualisation' of the person *together with* the collective, in the person-public disclosure of the work, brings being as actuality and as potentiality into play. The power of art to actualise without assigning fixity thus represents its fundamental greatest value or benefit to humanity.

(Schelling 1989: 202).²³ It does not require an ‘other’ because its essence is revealed in *ideas*.

Nature - the ‘revealed world of ideas’ - is productivity *and* product. The works of poesy, however, appear as ‘an act of producing instead of a condition of being’: they are ‘*materialised*’ in language. ‘Matter itself is the divine word that has entered into the finite’, says Schelling (1989: 204). But language is *also* connected to the *inorganic* - eg., to music/sound - as *sonority*; making ‘the word’ recognisable in the differentiation between *tones* through ‘pure differences’. Being itself inorganic ‘yet lacking the corresponding body’, poesy finds it in language. But poetry has a higher potency than *any* formative art because it maintains the universal nature and character of *the ideal essence* - the Ideas (‘gods’) - in speech and language through sonority and metaphor.

Using Schelling’s ‘scientific sequence’ (*particularity, identity, and unity*), according to the relevant formative affirming principles, the following related transitional categories emerge. Firstly, corresponding to the ‘allegorical’, is lyric poesy (the ‘real’). Secondly, corresponding to the ‘schematic’, is epic poesy (the ‘ideal’). And thirdly, like sculpture, combining the allegorical and schematic in the metaphoric mythological category, is drama. Drama, being the ‘*indifference*’ of epic and lyric poesy (the real and ideal), is therefore the highest expression of poetic discourse, combining verbal and non-verbal essences.²⁴

The verbal arts are thus, like music (in that its *potence* of matter is viewed from the perspective of *essence*), also ‘plastic’ *in their ideal*. Music, being a formative art, does not allow its acts to appear as something ideal but *real* (although only *through an ‘other’*). Poetry however reveals essences which *do* appear real. But only *implicitly* (non-literally), and not ‘empirically’ in the classical sense (ie., ‘experientially’). We can distinguish false poetry in the same way as false Art in general (Schelling 1989: 204):

The principle of false poesy, just as that of false philosophy, is empiricism, or the impossibility of recognising anything as true or real except that which derives from experience.

The key polarity in the verbal arts thus becomes the transitional tension between allegory and metaphor, with the highest potency of meaning (ideal-real

²³ Recall there is no *strict* division between the ‘formative’ and ‘verbal’.

²⁴ See Trimarchi (2024) *Appendix*.

indifference) resting in the latter. Poetry is distinguished from prose - *intentionally* - because its goal is not *just* understanding (literally), whereas it is in prose. Poetry aims for a *higher* understanding which strives to be as absolute as possible. As in music, we identify this intentionality *phenomenologically* in rhythm and the limitations on form which are characteristic of its means/intentions of communicating (modalities). With rhythm and accent, poetry *strives towards essence* (ie., representing ‘the absolute’ or ‘the universe in the particular’). It aims to transcend actuality, by *requiring* possibility. What else distinguishes poetry phenomenologically from prose, then, is *form*. But form does not *drive* poetry’s striving or ‘purpose’. It manifests merely in the *necessary limitation* of time – specifically, internal time. This distinguishes poetry’s means of communication and accessing that particular possibility which *only* it can render (Schelling 1989: 206).

A *poetic work* in the larger sense is a *whole* possessive of its own internal time and momentum, and thereby separated from the larger whole of language and completely self-enclosed.

Poetry is therefore ‘composed for the ear’, as Schelling says, because its *internal logic* rests in a self-enclosure tightened by the limitation of form. This in turn allows it to transcend the usual goal of language (ie., simply *understanding*). Prose instead ‘is language that has been occupied by the understanding and formed according to its purposes’. Art exhibits only ‘limitation and strict separation of forms’, and prose is ‘to that extent itself indifference’. In wanting to step out of that indifference, in search of *possibility*, it generates ‘the afterbirth of poetic prose’ (Schelling 1989: 206). Whereupon a transition toward ‘the metaphoric’ begins (producing great literature and drama - see §4 and §5).

But, by the same token, there are other limitations on poetry. Great poetry, for instance, does not indulge in *parenthyrsos*. Embellishments responding to *external* purposes (eg., verbal/non-verbal affectations found in *Slam Poetry*) can detract from its internally driven higher purpose. Rather, *simplicity* is the highest element, as it is in all formative arts too (Schelling 1989: 206-207).²⁵ However, in poetry, simplicity (via the limitation of ‘self-enclosure’) brings with it *Freedom*. It allows a departure from the ‘logical and mechanical sequences of thought’ which

²⁵ See Trimarchi (2024) re *parenthyrsos*.

shackle prose to the limitation of understanding. Thus, in poetry, language becomes ‘a higher organ... allowed to use shorter turns of phrase, more unusual words, unique inflections... [etc.,]’, though bound by ‘genuine inspiration’ (Schelling 1989: 207). Hence it is not that prose necessarily cannot render higher meaning, far from it. Rather, that it does so best in approaching poetry. Not via formalisms, but by attending to the narrative potency/transitional polarity limitation in the tensions between allegory and metaphor.

Hence, using Schelling’s reasoning, we can distinguish between the appearance/reality of both good and bad poetry and prose. I will in future show precisely how this can be done in a way that defies structuralist/post-structuralist attempts to draw focus to form as the predominant signifier of artfulness (ie., via styles and tastes). My point here is to show how it is *limitation* in form/formlessness, producing ‘self-enclosure’ (internal logic), which returns us to the essence of all art – plasticity. And thus the reason Sculpture rises in equal stature to Drama. Essentially, it is Art’s *immaterial* absoluteness in particularity that allows *any* ‘material’ productivity of higher meaning to emerge, producing as it does in sculptures the highest simplicity: ‘grace’ (Schelling 1989: 199).

[I]t is precisely in the absoluteness of sculpture that we find... why it does not expand itself into complex compositions, since its entire greatness lies enclosed in one or a few figures, a greatness that is based not on extension in space but rather only on the inner perfection and self-enclosure of the object itself.

Sculpture thus involves dimensions ‘not evaluated or appreciated empirically, but rather according to the idea’. As in nature, ‘every individual organic work’ is achieved ‘by suspending length and width and structuring everything concentrically’. Great sculpture closes its own circle, ‘drawing in everything toward the center’ and expanding into a totality while apparently limiting itself. Time and space merge to present higher meaning optimally here in the expression of the human figure, which as noted offers most metaphoric meaning-value potential of any *Object*, raising sculpture’s status to the highest formative and ultimate plastic art.

August Schlegel’s 1827 publication *On the Theory and History of the Plastic Arts* and, much later, Mondrian’s ‘Neoplasticism’ expanded their definition to all other visual arts and poetry. Others like the Russian Schellingians (notably poet Dmitry Venevitinov) defended the self-enclosed ‘corporeal’ plasticity of the

ancients over the ‘pictorial’ plasticity of the moderns. The *spirit* of the ancients’ entire approach to art was plastic (real) – reflexive. The moderns’ is pictorial (ideal) – reflective.

And it is here we can clearly identify, in *Purpose*, the archetypal mythological reversal at the heart of Art and Humanity’s joint meaning crisis in modernity.

The Collectivising Intent (Efficient vs Final Cause)

I have previously argued why the modern epic reversal from final to efficient cause needs to be corrected to create a beneficial New Mythology (Trimarchi 2024). This reversal manifested in the historical deterioration of the ancient epic into the modern romantic epic (see §5). The key features of this transformation, engendering art’s decline in the modern mythology, are best understood by looking at how the Principle of Art operates in relation to particularity to produce the ancient epic sensibility. As elaborated in §2, the above-outlined explanation of mythological categories transitioning affirmatively in the Formative and Verbal arts supports an argument for *phenomenology* over ‘rules of art’. This is ultimately because it is only *non-formal* values (‘immateriality’) arising from Art’s essences, polarities and potences, oriented in *one* direction, that can possibly produce higher meaning. Formlessness, as Schelling says, is after all the *essence* of all possible reality. The ancient approach to formlessness is quite different in that it possesses a *collectivising intent* producing an *objective* universalising orientation toward ‘final causes’ (ie., ends possessing their own internal logic). Understanding why requires first considering the *essences* of Space and Time, and the opposing Reality-forming Intentionalities in each mythology.

To begin with, according to Art’s Principle, the realm of ideas is one in which all artforms are equally aiming for authentic, clear conceptions, which through the indifference of freedom and necessity become real. In any *great* art this indifference is often expressed as its *soul* which is not something ‘taken from experience’, rather an ‘idea transcending nature’ that the artist possesses, imprinting it in whatever form chosen.²⁶ But, as suggested – irrespective of an artist’s intention - different *levels* of semiotic productivity in any artform follow the operation of affirming principles in each according to certain ‘boundary conditions’ (freedoms/necessities). These, governed by the *Principle* to produce

²⁶ Again, *modelling*, not merely copying or mimicking Nature.

Reason, determine meaning potentialities and related artform/work hierarchies. Hence within and across artforms gradings appear by virtue of how meaning-values transition across the mythological categories.

First, consider the *transitive* (mythological category) limitations created by the essence of Space. Because *space* is painting's main essence, close scrutiny reveals paintings are inevitably *allegoric* in the portrayal of some subjects (eg., inorganic objects, plants, and animals) but *schematic* in the portrayal of others (eg., landscapes). Only if the affirming principles allow key affordances to progress meaning upward in such subjects (occurring differently in each), can a painting be elevated via various potences toward *metaphoric* significance (ie., Reason). In sculpture, while space also has a bearing on its affirming principles, it is its merger with *Time* that proves more important.

Let us consider the essence of Time in more detail. In music, because its necessity lies in succession, Time is the universal form, making *rhythm* the chief potency. The infinite is informed into the finite such that time is intuited as form abstracted from the real. The principle of Time in the musical subject is 'self-consciousness', which is what within its ideal contents informs 'the unity of consciousness' into a multiplicity. The temporal foundation of meaning production in music - the *ordering* of potences (eg., rhythm, tone, etc.,) - is what produces Reason. Beats or tones haphazardly placed have no effect on us because we are driven by natural impulses to seek '*pure identity*' in the activity. Rhythm constitutes (ie., 'collectivises') that identity in recurring intervals, imposing variety to avoid uniformity. We are generally intolerant of 'meaningless activities of uniformity' (eg., counting). So, music's 'real unity' becomes potently metaphoric as its primordial 'unconscious, self-forgetting numbering or counting' reaches the 'soul'. Meaningless rhythmic succession becomes meaningful only through the introduction of '*tact*'. Tact is the potency that turns the purely accidental into necessity, and the means by which the whole 'possesses time *within itself*' rather than being *subjected to* time.

Reality is, subject to these various essences and potences, therefore formed in *particular intentionality*. Any suggestion Art is *ideally* intentionally/purposefully deceptive cannot be sustained because firstly art 'scorns concealment'. And, on the other hand, construing absences as deficiencies can easily lead to mistaking them as *essential* 'formalisms'. Both errors just presuppose 'materiality' in art as

real, when in fact it is its non-formal 'immateriality' that produces genuine realness (and higher meaning). The merger of Space with Time occurs differently in different artforms which, like that between Truth and Beauty, makes *intentional* demands on attention/content. For instance, 'high simplicity' is paramount in sculpture because anything fragmentary here, as Schelling says, 'leaves us with the impression of smallness, and in the case of complete saturation, of pettiness' (Schelling 1989: 193).²⁷ The predominating factor of 'extended space' demanded by sculpture offers optimal worlding potential which *arrests Time*. Hence sculpture affords us a heightened sense of 'death relative to life' because it portrays the highest unity (in the non-verbal formative arts) between space and time.

Intentionality therefore ultimately depends upon *purpose*; and a *mythology* of art can accordingly either possess an individualising or collectivising purpose. This orientation is co-determined by habitual attention to the Beauty-Truth nexus, in the relation between 'accidental' comprehensibility and 'ethical' intentionality directed toward 'the Person'.²⁸ That is, however, only because it is the *condition* of beauty inherently linked to higher truth, as Schelling claims, not the *perfection* of beauty itself, which is the Object of Art. A *naturalised* approach to art, as the ancients had, resolves this relation under warrants of Reason according to this Principle. This, as suggested, provides grounds for *objectively* distinguishing what counts as art or not in any humanising society.

To understand Art's inherent collectivising intent, the first thing we must do is discern arbitrariness of intention from purpose in any artwork. Recognising why Art shuns empirical understanding is key. Making accidental or empirical experience an *essential element* of any artwork lowers its meaning-value because both favour means over ends, the latter by didactic intent. Scholarly investigation has no limits in origin or end, ultimately placing the burden of comprehension on something accidental (eg., the observer's knowledge). Any accidental attractiveness detracts from a collective intent, hence both tendencies counter the *collectivising purpose* of art. A *Purpose* which, as I will show, is only concerned with an artwork's fulfillment of 'the inner requirements of being true, beautiful, expressive, and universally significant'.

²⁷ Eg., see *Big Clay #4* by Urs Fischer (§3).

²⁸ Trimarchi (2022).

Thus, the Reality-forming intentionality present in the artwork itself bears witness to its *inherent Purpose*, irrespective of what the observer or indeed the artist believes it to be. Distinguishing ‘efficient’ from ‘final’ cause can then also be approached *phenomenologically*.

Firstly, efficient causes *invite* formalisms - eg., via ‘technologies of action’, or merely mimicking Nature – which subvert attention from the *normative* features of art’s *meaning-value* apprehension.²⁹ The latter is only intuited from the artwork’s *inherent* process of *informing the absolute into the particular*, not from assuming any final form as the entire source of *value* (and hence meaning). What defines an artwork’s ‘final cause’ (or *end*) comes from attending to its internal logic of ‘subject-objectivation’ (Schelling 1989: 119). This, as Schelling describes it, is a kind of ‘immaterial materialisation’ of our *consciousness*; of its ideal meaning, as the object guides it back ‘from this objectivity into its own self-recognition’ (cf. Matthews above). Its ‘reverse development of objectivity into itself’ reveals why the ‘other unity’ within it is inseparable from the first, as in ‘organism’, becoming Reason as the absolute ideal *within* it. It transfigures into ‘the aether of absolute ideality’ (ie., they become ‘essentially one and the same’). Therefore, this ‘final’ objectification (Schelling’s ‘empirical object’) is *only signified in Art* as ‘disclosure’ (not fixed being).³⁰

Art replicates, not natural *form* per se, but the same *semiotic merger of the real and ideal* occurring as autopoietic ‘objectivation’ in Nature. Form’s ‘absolute’ in Art – *only* ‘insofar as it manifests itself in the phenomenal world through the first of the two unities’, the *ideal* - is *the essence* of matter (ie., *meaning*). Thus, as noted, *all* art, is plastic (‘formative’). Just as *the brain* is plastic, and must be so to create meaning. Which is why *purposefully* attuning intentionality to the *condition* of beauty linked to *higher* truth and meaning binds the Art-Person double-unity to Nature as an

²⁹ Hence any ‘found art’, or ‘readymade’ “artwork”, or an array of stones arranged appealingly on a gallery floor, cannot be considered art if these only mimic *patterning* Gestalts evident in Nature (ie., *symbolising* it). This same reasoning extends to discerning meaning-value assessments in any artform. For instance, John Coltrane’s highly prized work *A Love Supreme*, as technically, performatively exquisite as it is, arguably labours under a *symbolic* internalisation of the ‘general aesthetic’ (‘Nature=God’ likeness), rather than achieving proper metaphoric transcendence. On the other hand, his expansive transformation of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s (originally rather clichéd) *My Favourite Things*, or his song *Alabama*, arguably offer a more metaphorically/meaningfully superior person-Person disclosure. This moves beyond *material* interpretation toward an ‘ethical phenomenological’ assessment (which I will address in future).

³⁰ Trimarchi (2022).

ethical relation. *All artforms*, as in the *formation* of ‘matter’ itself, encompass and express *all* unities in precisely the same process. This is why there is only *one* Principle of Art, a principle of ‘process metaphysics’; and its link to *the Person* is crucial to mythologising *human* nature, and hence *humanism*.

As argued elsewhere, this principle was fragmented into oblivion by our prevailing neo-Kantian subjectivising ‘theoretical aesthetic’ paradigm, orienting humanity toward efficient causes in mid to late ‘modernism’ (Trimarchi 2022, 2023, 2024). The ‘miracle’ of art was idealised symbolically under certain historicising precepts governing our subject-object polarities. It became subjectified in most artforms through identity fragmentations converting artmaking to cultural artefact mass-production, for markets consuming symbolic capital (ultimately transferred monetarily into the global economy). In §4 I will, using Schelling’s account of the ‘modern romantic’ epic’s rise to dominance, elaborate on how declining artistic development and public life manifested in the art object’s particularity. As explained in §5, developments in the novel, drama, tragedy, and comedy followed an ‘epic’ reversal of the human telos, upturning our important attentional orientations toward ‘fate’ in modern mythologising.

In short, whereas in antiquity fate took on an objective epic sensibility, in modernity this was replaced by false “epic” subjectivity and indomitable personality. The emergence of the modern epic form heralds the individuality of the poet, who accompanies the narrated event with reflection (directly or indirectly); and problematically prevents the whole artwork developing ‘from within the object itself’. Its essentially reflective standpoint means it can only achieve its ends ‘by means of contrasts’. Thus, its universalising tendency becomes purposefully, univocally, oriented toward utility and mechanism (efficient cause). It always requires that the subject enter the realm of *Phantasy*, via the *productive* rather than *re-productive* imagination.

The aesthetic privation ensuing from this reflective standpoint, strengthened by Kant’s aesthetic legacy, completely transformed how we mythologise both *Art* and *the Person* in modern Fantasy. Our ideality and humanity became simultaneously fragmented and defuturised under the precepts of a divided world. Schelling’s system however shows Art at its greatest, even in Tragedies, is always *futurising* and never anti-utopian because of its search for this Necessity-Freedom balance in *the Person*. Genuine artistic intentionality

always orients us toward a utopian worlding. In much modern nihilistic ‘art’, however, a counter-utopian tendency prevails.³¹ Portraying personhood as *ideally* the antithesis of real courage and greatness of character, as it must, it performs a transgression against *the Person* which is anti-social, anti-collectivist, and as Schelling’s system would categorise it: *anti-art*.

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Many difficulties associated with modernity’s aesthetic privation are resolved by paying attention to meaning-value orientations produced in the tensions relating the principle of Art to specific artform/artwork constructions discussed in the following sections.

The ‘problems of art’ are not inherently unfathomable mysteries we should relegate to ‘the miraculous’, but are resolvable firstly by understanding that all artforms are *inherently* bound by certain constraints. Though painting features strongly in my examples (for several reasons), as Schelling’s unifying *Principle* mandates, ‘each particular art form... constitutes the entirety of art’ (Schelling 1989: 128). It is therefore unnecessary to thoroughly examine every variation possible in the ‘forming’ of art; rather to simply show how Schelling’s transitional *identity-affirming principles* combine with essences, polarities, and potences to produce higher meaning. As they do in all or any possible artforms, though differently in each.³² This in itself explains why there are not, as modern philosophers of art are prone to argue, ‘many principles’ of art – but only one. All contemporary and future innovations in art, I suggest, can be traced - via this Principle - back to each of Schelling’s categories.³³

The problem, for structuralists and poststructuralists for instance, has been not having suitable means for recognising the ‘subject-objectification’ of beauty as a *merger of reality and ideality* in the form of the object, as this system does. (Hence the *theorised* ‘paradox’ between “realism” and “naturalism”).³⁴ Schelling’s accounts of *particular* formations of art, being united in principle by processes of

³¹ Trimarchi (2023).

³² Schelling’s *affirming principles* in fact explain what are wrongly presumed to be ‘many principles’ of art.

³³ Eg., the modern innovation of Cinema, is Drama combined with the Plastic (ie., digital) Arts.

³⁴ Trimarchi (2024).

semiosis originating in Nature, do not constitute ‘formalisms’ as such. Nor do they invite psychologism. They simply describe the limitations and freedoms by which each artform/work *is bound* inherently to generate certain modes of attendance. In any construction, perceiving Truth and Beauty relative to form must naturally involve the part–whole and becoming-being phenomena. This offers a truer means of comparing artforms/works according to meaning-value.

As later argued (§3), this is essentially how we must redefine artistic ‘naturalism’. Taking meaning productivity oriented toward the absolute (universe) in-formed in the particular as our starting point, we can assess its progress in all Art - from music to sculpture – ‘for all time’ (ie., in *any* epoch) with greater clarity. Moreso than a merely materialist ‘critical theory’ account of their properties can ever reveal based solely on the observance of forms, styles, and tastes. Using Schelling’s process, formlessness itself or any fusion of form becomes easier to understand in terms of meaning-value. Being able to identify *the Principle in action* is key to this phenomenological approach; which as noted involves seeking an inherent poetic intentionality – a ‘metaphoric utterance’ - in the Particularity of *any* prospective exemplar.

The obviously unsettling (*apparently* paradoxical) reality of all this is that Particularity in itself is *essentially* meaningless. Yet it nevertheless *primarily* governs what becomes progressively meaningful; by virtue of (i) the *inherent limitations* of any artform, and (ii) the processual imperatives these force upon the formative and transitional affirming principles. However, the *contextual* nature of this perceived antinomy is key: it constitutes *necessary* antithesis (essence vs form). It is what *humans do* to create ‘culture’ from nature - with respect to the Art-Person double-unity and Art’s ontological binding ‘collectivising’ intent – that offers resolution, and *real* freedom.

2. PHENOMENOLOGY VS ‘RULES OF ART’

In Art, as noted, the problems of Appearance/Reality, Form, Intentionality, and Purpose owe much to the subject-object relation. Modern mythologising tends toward falsely universalising the subject matter in attending to form, thus making “objective” portrayals subjectively/symbolically. In turn, various formalisms lend themselves to ‘rules of art’, leading to deception, faux rebellion, and fetish. But, as Schelling says: ‘All the rules that the theoreticians offer concerning *forms*

are of value only insofar as these forms are conceived in their absolute state, namely, in their [metaphoric] quality' (Schelling 1989: 131).³⁵ Rules are thus superseded by the relativities in Schelling's cohesive categorical system, for the simple reason that it is founded on a robust philosophical framework able to attend to art's *immateriality*. To elaborate on it, I will expand on the formative arts in §3, and in §4 the verbal arts. But it will be first necessary to highlight the *phenomenological* realities imposed by artforms themselves.

The Reality of Particular Intentionalities

To begin with, we can dismiss the essentially nihilistic presupposition that Art is *ideally* intentionally/purposefully deceptive. Even though its ontological 'reality-shifting' properties such as intersubjectivity, and the key *meaning-drivers* like metaphor, narrative, etc., might make it *appear* untrustworthy as regards truth. Schelling condemns any Aesthete's intent to *seek* deception, claiming one 'who has to forget that he actually has a work of art before him' must be incapable of any artistic enjoyment (Schelling 1989: 129). On the other hand, Art scorns concealment if it is 'merely a means and... not itself made into an allegory of beauty'. So, the phenomenology of 'ends' and 'means' *employed* in any attempt at artmaking reveals why such intentions are self-evident in how form and non-form are *re-presented* by the artist, deliberately or not (Schelling 1989: 198).

Painting is the best artform to elucidate this, because of how it works on our dominant *optical* means of perception. Firstly, recall that in all genuine art '[o]nly insofar as the universal or identity itself is transformed into the particular is it *real*' (Schelling 1989: 126). Therefore it is only as *negation*, as privation or the *limitation* of reality that the ideal unity becomes real, or *in-formed*. All form is mediated by 'technologies' (eg., in painting: colour) in which 'the material side of things becomes form'. Though an active subject is *integral* to the objectification of form in all art, colour is only 'a subjective synthesis of light and nonlight [which] takes place in the eye' (Schelling 1989: 124).³⁶ So, in painting, colour is an especially

³⁵ 'One cannot deny that for the eye, too, the straight line is the symbol of hardness, of inflexible dimensions, just as the bent line is a symbol of flexibility, the elliptical one – placed horizontally – of gentleness and transiency, the wavy line of life, and so on.'

³⁶ See McGilchrist (2010) for why optical perception poses particular problems for understanding reality. Schelling and Goethe's experiments on the separation of light using a prism reveal the limitations of the Newtonian paradigm in explaining the complexity of the phenomenology of light and colour, arguably now

strong *subjectifying* potency. (Hence, given the dominance of *observational* experience in how we habitually perceive and accept reality, painting features in our historical attendance to the *formation* of art and view of the subject-object 'conflict').

But, as Schelling shows, painting 'focuses on the *purely ideal* side of things' even though its main goal is not 'that crass deception one usually insists upon in order to make us mistake the painted object for the real one'. And it is this which tends to create misunderstanding about intentions regarding appearance and reality. In Art there are 'higher demands... than those that already can be found in the senses', says Schelling. So, over-emphasising the latter naturally tends to divert our attention (and hence valuation) to *unnecessary* or *accidental* technical productivity. In other words, to lower 'material', utilitarian, or even 'biological' values reciprocating sensation.³⁷ Exclusive focus on 'technologies of action' as a gauge of *artistic* proficiency or merit easily turns into seeking perfection where it is not needed, in favour of meaning. To understand why Art's *real* objectivity requires more than a passive attendance to its phenomenology, consider the following.

Drawing is the first (schematic) means to *in-form* and therefore the fundamental technology of action which painting relies upon (even when noticeably absent); with colour and chiaroscuro being the other key 'unities'. As Schelling says, 'only through drawing is painting actually art, just as only through color is painting actually painting' (Schelling 1989: 129). Chiaroscuro however is the technology allowing contrast to be blended (ie., between light and non-light, transparency and non-transparency), and what elevates a portrayal 'above all reality'. It combines with colour to provide that perfect deception of the 'living element'. But if we were to demand the *higher* reality Schelling refers to, as he says, 'we would sooner overlook considerable deficiencies in the drawing than in the coloring'. This is because any great artwork 'must rather *destroy* that particular appearance of reality' in order to achieve the higher one (Schelling 1989: 129). In

better understood by field theory physicists in terms of Schelling's (1989: 124) description here: 'The identity within light is combined into a totality with the difference posited into it by nonlight'. See also Seamon & Zajonc (1998).

³⁷ In Scheler's hierarchy, 'biological' or 'human' values occupy a lower order than the 'spiritual/holy', and 'utility' occupies the lowest.

other words, it might better be obtained through *drawing* (limitation). Herein lies the source of confusion.

The best *illusion* an artist can create in fact is of the *absence* of technology or technologies of action in a work, to render truer reality and meaning. Whereas a purely theoretical focus on these alone only consecrates the ‘materiality’ of art as real. And this merely misrepresents all antitheses and differences in form as *essential* within those differences. Hence, as Schelling points out, Raphael and Correggio’s apparently selective underemphasis in using drawing or colour, led critics in their time to simply mistake their absences as deficiencies. On the other hand, theorists are just as likely to assign a ‘style’ to such avoidances (eg., as with El Greco), rationalising success or failure by “philosophising” (or indeed, moralising). Technician fascination driven by the modern mythology has created the need to specialise interest toward particularities which are not necessarily *fundamental* in producing meaning and valuing.³⁸

Schelling’s attention to the indifference of *the real* and *ideal* content of *ideas* however shows why particularity is only really real in relation to an end. This is what makes his system *meaning-value* oriented. It redirects our attention from superficial observances of form fixity to the *intentionality* and *purpose* of formal and non-formal interaction. Toward the artwork’s ‘process metaphysics’ which, as he points out, only becomes *philosophy* if one can really present the universalising potency within a particular object. ‘In every other case’, he says, ‘where one treats the individual potency as a particular and presents laws or rules for it *as a particular*, it can only be a theory of a specific object, such as a theory of nature or a theory of art’ (Schelling 1989: 282).

An Aesthete’s deliberation about *the indifference* of reality and ideality is therefore critical. The real and ideal *potences* of the artwork yield a merger of *essences* in beauty and truth. These are predicated on the indifference between freedom and necessity; two ideas that Schelling argues no empirical science can

³⁸ Favouring ‘stylised’ over ‘realist’ (cf. ‘naturalist’) depictions - not just in painting - is essentially a reaction to the highly subjectivising *specialised* nature of the human eye’s evolution, and associating ‘seeing’ with reality (believing). In either depiction, however, the real *Object* of Art is that ‘higher reality’ (Trimarchi 2022; Trimarchi 2024).

determine the meaning of and *can only be approached* by philosophy.³⁹ Only the history of ideas mediated by philosophy can elucidate our habitual patterns of attendance and what causes them to apply certain values to art. Hence the importance of comparing the phenomenology of art in the ancient and modern mythologies (Schelling 1989: 129).

Anyone who views the idealistic constructions of Greek artists must be smitten immediately by the impression of their nonreality. He must recognize that here something is portrayed that is elevated above all reality even though it is *made real* in this sublimity precisely through art.

As noted, then, the whole question of appearance/reality can be considered one of assessing *ideality* in various ways, according to particular intentionalities. Under Schelling's *Principle* of art, ideality is *normative* - guided by speculative naturalism and virtue ethics - reconstituting *the Person-Art perfect sign relation*. The part-whole phenomenon is fundamentally implicated in perceiving truth and beauty relative to form. However, the artist must 'show the human form not as it actually appears, but as it is *in the design and idea of nature*, which no real form fully expresses'. The affirming principle here thus moves toward the whole via the formless metaphoric truth-beauty nexus affordances emerging from schematic and allegorical accidentalities which warrant *interrelatedness* (Schelling 1989: 132).

The truth of form includes observance of the relationship between individual parts, or proportion, which, again, the artist is to portray not according to the accidental appearances of truth in common reality, but freely, and according to the archetype of his own intuition.

This *artistic* intuition comes, of course, from understanding the relative consistency of parts in relation to wholes in terms of line, perspective, proportions, and so on. But it also benefits from considering *what factors mitigate between* the 'truth' attained in the faithful imitation of nature, and that which reveals an 'absolute' morphogenic ideal *metaphorically*. Schelling describes this as unveiling 'the interior of nature', with the artist 'not satisfying himself merely with the usual appearance of [any] form' (Schelling 1989: 131-132).⁴⁰ It requires

³⁹ Note this is equally true of structuralism and poststructuralism in literature, for instance. As Schelling (1989: 282) says, 'By basing laws on the particular as particular, one thereby removes the object from the absolute, and science from philosophy' (see also Trimarchi 2022, 2024).

⁴⁰ Brackets added.

avoiding anything unnecessary, superfluous, accidental, or repetitive. Ancient mythologising was habitually 'inclined entirely toward the necessary, the strictly essential', whereas modern mythologising 'cultivated the accidental and gave it independent existence' (Schelling 1989: 130). Two opposing approaches to the *ideality* of particularity; the latter redefining 'individuality', and the perceived reality of human purpose.

Using particularity to *fragment* reality, creates dissonance. Realising its necessity for 'reality-shifting', to introduce realistic propositions, instead uncovers *possibility*. One universalises truth and beauty as separate and fixed, the other as poised interdependent potentials. These two different artistic intents still today battle over how we should reconceive the human telos as whole.

Adopting the latter intent, in painting for instance, perspective should ideally be *necessary* perspective; that which 'serves to avoid all harsh or unvaried monotony'. (The ancients employed perspective 'not for deception, as do the moderns', says Schelling). In drawing, there are specific things to avoid which do not contain 'the symbol of organic form', such as regular, angular, parallel, perfectly round - as opposed to oval, elliptical, and curved - lines. These suggestions will not surprise any artist trying to bring to the surface a 'more deeply concealed truth' of any object in nature. Likewise, any *fabricated* object still relates to nature through the 'inner idea' of the human body (see later discussion on architecture).⁴¹ Prudence is needed to decide 'the appropriate balance of parts such that each in particular expresses the meaning of the whole insofar as it is appropriate' (Schelling 1989: 132).

It is the phenomenological *intentionality* present in the artwork's *Object* itself, then, which is really where the artist needs to find the truth of her subject's 'inner idea'. Schelling cites Winkelmann's description of a sculpture of the torso of Hercules, illustrating why (Schelling 1989: 132):

'In every part of the body the entire hero reveals himself, as if in a painting, performing a particular deed, and just as one correctly perceives the intentions within the rational structure of a palace, so also does one here see the use and deed for which each and every part served.'

The whole needs to be thus represented *metaphorically*, 'not empirically'. To

⁴¹ As Mark Johnson argues, 'all meaning comes from the body'. (Only in an epoch like ours, could this claim appear 'radical' - ie., in repudiating structuralism/poststructuralism).

achieve this the part must not represent or portray ‘the object of a single, individual moment’ but rather the object ‘in the wholeness of its existence, and in so doing... use the individual moments of this particular existence’ to bring the object to life. The optimal expression of any form is to focus the greatest energy into the *essential* parts – that is, those which inform the ideal. ‘Just as the life of a person is unified in its idea’, says Schelling, ‘and all his deeds and acts are intuited simultaneously in that idea, so also in the painting’. Portraying an object in its absoluteness means taking it out of time, exhausting ‘the infinite element of its concept and of its meaning completely by means of the finite’. That is, expressing ‘the whole within the part... and all parts, in their own turn, within the unity of the whole’ (cf. democracy’s ideal).

Rendering *realistic* ideality in any artform is subject to the same *affirming principles*, yet according to each one’s specific form/non-form related value *essences*. In the non-verbal arts category (music, painting, and plastic arts), as noted, music portrays essence within form and painting form within essence. When a music piece’s essence is accidentality, for instance, this becomes the *medium* in which its form inheres most substantially (raising the value of spontaneity and improvisation, Time being their *essential* quantifier). But in painting, ideal form (eg., ‘space’ in a landscape painting, or ‘act’ in a portrait) becomes its essence, making this its substantial qualifier. However, a sculpture’s *plastic* ideal essence/form are expressed *together* as convergent ideals, because all such artforms must portray form/non-form, cause/effect, and possibility/actuality *simultaneously*.

In any artform, meaning is transitioned toward *wholeness* and hence elevated via the *non-formal* values arising from such combinations of essences, polarities, and potences. But only if the value-affordances they produce are oriented in a unified direction toward *realistic possibility*, by the *essence* of formlessness in-formed in ‘disclosure’.

The Transition of Meanings via Reason

Given the relation between Reality and Intentionality in constructing Art in the particular, how then is meaning elevated in our intellectual intuition by Reason? Firstly, as noted, meaning advances via the transitional affirming principles moving us toward Wholeness. But *only*, as the Principle requires, to the extent

that their formative absolutes are approached. Hence the graduated significance of Schelling's mythological categories. Passage through them, as we will see, dictates firstly that meaning progresses in the 'highest style', eliminating confusion within form, and displaying an appropriateness of ideas in what Winckelmann called 'high simplicity' (Schelling 1989: 160).⁴² Also, often overlooked in modernity, that not just *any* subject matter is suitable for artistic inquiry, and not all artforms are equal.⁴³ As Schelling reminds us, 'art should portray... the forms of a higher world and... things as they occur in that world'. Whole meaning obtained immanently is the 'holy' grail, as it were, because this requires the reproductive imagination to be trained *on Reality*, via the 'higher beings' of *Fantasy*.⁴⁴

Because artforms themselves - their self-defining necessities and freedoms – govern different *modes of attending* to and apprehending meanings, generalities are more useful than rules or definitions here. Only by generalising from essences what may be applied *reasonably* to a subject-object reality, are Art's affirming principles seen to do their work *differently* (as the complexities of art and life demand). No *strict* division exists because they operate *in continuity*, just like the laws of Nature and the semiotic reality they are bound by. Similarly, between artforms, generalities are useful in characterising their *peculiarity*. While the plastic arts are predisposed toward the metaphoric, music and painting are more *essentially* allegorical and schematic. Schelling therefore describes music as 'the art of reflection or self-consciousness', painting as that of 'subsumption or of perception', and plastic arts as 'the expression of reason or intuition'. It is not that reason or intuition play no part in music and painting (far from it), only that they are generally apprehended more *empirically* (ie., experientially) than metaphorically.

Thus, *the mythological categories* themselves emerge according to 'boundary conditions' (freedoms/necessities) governing different *levels* of semiotic

⁴² This is how the Principle's 'determining law' of limitation produces 'grace' (Trimarchi 2024).

⁴³ Eg., Schelling (1989: 144) criticises Dutch painters for painting chicken yards (though of course we are now familiar with far more objectionable content in 'postmodernism'). The point is once again not a matter of taste. It is that, as he says, every 'lowly' subject must have a 'higher association' for meaning if it is to be art. See also discussion on the portrayal of 'the ugly' and baseness, which Schelling refers to as the 'reverse symbolic'.

⁴⁴ See Trimarchi (2024). Note, the highest value, 'Holy', is the etymological root of 'whole'.

productivity. These simultaneously determine intra- as well as inter-artform/work hierarchies and meaning potentialities, via their particular *essences and potences* triggered by various subjects. Accordingly, paintings produce *allegoric* meaning in the portrayal of still life inorganic objects, plants, and animals; but *schematic* meaning in the portrayal of landscapes. In landscapes ‘the limited element is alluded to by the unlimited and formless’, and it only schematically produces meaning because the formed element ‘is symbolized by form itself, which is itself formless’ (Schelling 1989: 159). Painting only tends toward the *metaphoric* in the portrayal of human beings because it can allude here to a ‘higher element’ of consciousness.⁴⁵ As shown below, being essentially allegoric, it is only rarely that historical paintings rise to this higher level of meaningfulness.

Hence, for inescapable *phenomenological* reasons, there are lower/higher levels of ‘the metaphoric’ (‘improper’->‘proper’ metaphor) developed by elevating various combinations of the schematic and allegoric in each artform. The ‘lower symbolic’ is merely imitation; the higher progresses to its highest point by means of incrementally applying allegoric or symbolic *values*. At this *highest* point – proper metaphor - absolute ideas are expressed within the particular and all schematic, allegoric and metaphoric meaning becomes one. The reason this occurs is that these *meaning-drivers*, via the specific affirming principles in each artform, affect *subject-object relativities* which produce corresponding phenomenological affordances.

These transitional meaning-drivers are themselves governed by the polarities of idea and reality (*Reason*) defining Art as *Principle*. Landscape painting, for example, *must* favour embodying light and space over incidental subjects, because these are the real *intrinsic* elements to *all* landscapes. So, while plants and animals can be portrayed *empirically* objectively; landscapes can *only* be portrayed subjectively because, given this intrinsic limitation, ‘the landscape itself possesses reality only in the eye of the observer’ (Schelling 1989: 144).⁴⁶ Landscapes therefore must first *necessarily* concern themselves with *empirical* (schematic) truth - but, to be Art, *only* ‘as a covering through which [they allow] a higher kind of

⁴⁵ Any ‘higher consciousness’ currently resides only in posthumanist phantasy. And, were we to (foolishly) idealise humans as cyborgs, painters would necessarily be limited to using schematic and allegoric means.

⁴⁶ This, of course, lends them to being abstracted (though there are limitations regarding meaning-value potentials here too).

truth to manifest itself'.⁴⁷ (Otherwise, they remain 'arte-factual'). Thus *Allegory* - the main higher *meaning*-driver in painting (since language itself is *fundamentally* allegorical) - operates most prominently in Historical Painting. In Landscapes proper metaphor is rare, but not impossible; requiring the additional counterpoint of people, acts, or other suitably accompanying potences.⁴⁸ Here, as in all painting, the more *reason*-able the *un*-covering, the more *active* subjectivity required. And the higher the meaning *potence*, the greater the work.

As Schelling explains: 'The true object, the idea, remains formless, and it is *up to the observer* to discover it from within the fragrant, formless essence before him' (Schelling 1989: 145).⁴⁹ Such intuition must revert back *to the subject* (ie., 'object') in Landscapes because here beauty depends on *formless* essence and the *accidental* elements. The artist's object is more *accidental* here than in portraiture. Whereas landscape painting autonomously treats something that is merely *part* of appearance (which *depends* on formlessness); portraiture can move toward *objective* meaningfulness using potences like colour in the subject made to appear 'internal, organic, living, and flexible', because light and space are subordinated to these here (Schelling 1989: 136). This is why the accidental formlessness of bare landscapes is enlivened by adding human figures, animals and so on, in which *the possibility of objectivity enters* (via narrative/metaphor). Though, importantly, for this to elevate meaning an element of *necessity* must be brought into the landscape's relationship with these. Thus (to revert to *this* subject: the landscape) 'characters', particularly in organic form, may populate it as long as they are *not* its primary concern. This then begins a transition from *Schema* to *Allegory* in Landscapes, toward the higher meaning potentials historical paintings or human portraits are capable of producing.

This is how, within and across artforms, value-hierarchies appear. And why

⁴⁷ In other words, an artist must add a 'morphogenic' element here (which, by contrast, can arise in the mere facial expression of a living *human* portrait). The power of 'the absolute' rests in providing *aspiration* to meaning beyond the 'covering'. It is here that Reason melds appreciation *between* observers, making more objective judgement possible.

⁴⁸ A good example is Turner's dramatic last-minute addition of a single dab of paint (a buoy) adding metaphor to his grey seascape (*Helvoetsluys*) at the 1832 Royal Academy's summer exhibition. The added 'actantial' counterpoint heightens meaning-value metaphorically via 'the absolute' relativity indifference between storm and calm (and our identification with the buoy). <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1215250/Revealed-180-years-The-Turner-painting-upstaged-Constable-reignited-rivalry-painters.html>

⁴⁹ Emphasis added.

they partly govern meaning-value potentials in artworks. The lowest form of portraiture, for instance, is simply imitation of living nature (ie., flowers, animals). And slavish imitation here only produces lower order meaning. Yet, transference toward *metaphoric* significance, eg., even in Still Life paintings, can elevate meaning if context allows for a ‘metaphoric utterance’ (in rare cases).⁵⁰ When the observance of nature in which ‘it has followed a reasonable design and, as it were, the goal of expressing an idea’ inheres in such paintings, this elevates meaning potential. The highest form of portraiture is, naturally, of the human subject. And the highest meaning potential achievable here consists ‘in embracing the idea of a person that has dispersed into the individual gestures and moments of life, to collect the composite of this idea into *one* moment’. With form, and indeed a degree of formlessness too, *objectivity* emerges. The person portrayed becomes more like the person himself; that is, more like ‘the *idea* of the person, than he himself is in any one of the individual moments’ (Schelling 1989: 146).⁵¹

Hence here the *essence* of Time intervenes as a potency, because only humans possess History.⁵² Momentary symbolic significance thus becomes a means by which allegorical elements can hierarchically elevate meaningfulness further via *Narrative*. And if the portrayal of a subject’s *wholeness* requires incorporating individual manifestations to fix it in the moment, then the simplest form of allegory lies in *alluding* to its ‘inner nature’. At its most basic, allegory merely *signifies* the universal through the particular. But painting can elevate meaning allegorically in several ways from this point, before achieving higher metaphoric meaningfulness and power. Schelling lists this progression – from natural allegory (as in the example just given), to historical allegory, to moral allegory – as the three main ways painting has utilised this modality throughout history.

⁵⁰ To achieve this a Still Life must, as Ricoeur says, place ‘*man in discourse and discourse in being*’. So, even such paintings (at their best) can involve propositions of ‘human conduct’ (French painter Jean-Batiste Chardin provides good examples). As argued below, this criterion viz the Person applies to *all* artforms.

⁵¹ Human portraiture is the highest form of portraiture because *personhood* offers the capacity to inhere most meaning. We may anthropomorphise this ‘person’ in other painted ‘objects’ (eg., animals), but that is always secondary or referred meaning. As argued elsewhere “bearers of *ethical* values can never be thought of as ‘objects’ because ‘as soon as we tend to “objectify” a human being in any way, the bearer of moral values disappears *of necessity*’ (Scheler 1973: 86). The *purpose* of Art (‘as principle’), therefore, is to offer us a way to ‘objectify’ these bearers via the subject-object interface in artworks. But we can only distinguish their *ethical* value by how this occurs as ‘real’. That is, as *given*, phenomenologically.” (Trimarchi 2022: 297).

⁵² Trimarchi (2024). We became ‘historical objects’ at the onset of Christianity.

Each produces a different kind of semiotic productivity, governed by its self-structuring freedom/necessity, orienting attention toward different essence/potence polarities.

In the highest progression, proper *metaphoric* painting, the subject ‘not only signifies or means the idea, but *is itself the idea*’ (Schelling 1989: 151). Schelling (189: 147) again references Winckelmann’s acute insight below, characterising this as the *primordial* cosmological merger of beauty and truth:⁵³

‘The idea of beauty... is like a spirit drawn from matter through fire that seeks to beget a creation according to the image of the first reasoning creature designed within the understanding of the deity.’

The metaphoric image ‘presupposes that an idea precedes it’, says Schelling. And, in historical painting, this idea becomes metaphor ‘by becoming historico-objectively and independently visible’. Thus, art and history become interrelated in this artform, via this progression, when the allegoric *occasions* a rise to meet the metaphoric (eg., as in Jacques-Louis David’s *The Death of Marat*) (Schelling 1989: 152).

Just as the idea becomes [metaphoric] by acquiring historical significance, so in a reverse fashion does the historical element become [metaphoric] only by being combined with the idea and becoming the expression of the idea... According to our explanation, the historical is itself merely one particular mode of the [metaphoric].

This upward spiralling forward (‘futurising’) transitional movement, as I will now show, highlights the particular significance of Time as an *essence*. Especially as regards the Art-Person *Identity* (connected to History via Nature). Its primordial intuition, as a sense of reaching beyond ourselves, is easiest understood through the artform of music.

The Essence of Time

As noted, Time embodies the ‘soul’ or ‘spirit’ of art in a unique way. As an idea transcending nature, which artists subjectively imprint upon a chosen form (Schelling 1989: 153).⁵⁴ This idea ultimately returns us to the question of

⁵³ Winckelmann here recalls Heraclitus (see Trimarchi 2024).

⁵⁴ In explaining this, Schelling refers to a description by Winckelmann of the sculpture of Laocoön.

intentionality/purpose; which music helps to elucidate via the essence of Time. Since, in music, necessity lies in succession, *rhythm* becomes the main potency universalising Time's form. A piece of music's universal meaning is drawn into particularity through Time being intuited as a form *abstracted* from reality. Thus, we move self-consciously through a musical 'landscape' because *subjective* Time is what in-forms ideality here into expanding consciousness (Schelling 1989: 109). Rhythm provides the 'pure identity' of a piece, without which (absenting all other potences too) we may be cast adrift on a world of amorphous 'sound'.⁵⁵ But by the same token, as Schelling (1989: 202) notes: 'In every activity that is by nature meaningless such as counting, we do not endure long within that uniformity'. Music is the 'self-numbering of the soul' which primordially creates 'real unity' unconsciously (Schelling 1989: 109). And it is this 'soul' travelling through a 'landscape' which can, with the right affordances, move from the merely allegorical to the profoundly metaphoric. Therefore, it is only by introducing 'tact' that rhythmic succession becomes meaningful. Accidentality (as in the 'general aesthetic' *freedom* of a cicada's song) is now turned into *necessity*; taking the whole out of the grasp of Time so the musical landscape can *possess it in its essence* (Schelling 1989: 111).⁵⁶

Another potency of music is modulation and, while rhythm informs the unity into multiplicity, this produces the *identity* of one predominant "tone" (ie., its modular consistency) within the whole of a musical work. It maintains the *qualitative* difference 'just as through rhythm itself the same identity is observed in the *quantitative* difference' (Schelling 1989: 111).⁵⁷ The union of these two identities is melody, and all three 'dimensions' (rhythm, modulation, melody) produce meaningful music like this (Schelling 1989: 112):⁵⁸

The first dimension [rhythm] determines or qualifies music for reflection and self-consciousness, the second [modulation] for feeling and judgement, the third [melody] for intuition and the power of imagination.

Schelling's critique of *Canto Firmo* shows what these implicit hierarchies reveal about the form/non-form polarity, which can be applied more broadly to

⁵⁵ Swallowing a bunch of *essentially* unrelated sounds doth not a musical summer make (though Brian Eno's fans may disagree).

⁵⁶ Once again, it is the vital relation between part and whole which *re-produces* meaning.

⁵⁷ Emphasis added.

⁵⁸ Note the essence of Space (hence 'landscape').

communal notions of Identity. Though rhythm dominated in antiquity, according to Schelling Christianity transformed the ‘*chorale*’ into something that robbed music of ‘its most powerful energy: tempo and rhythm,’ because ‘in those early times the chorale always remained monophonic’ (Schelling 1989: 113).⁵⁹

In later times it was always set in four voices, and the complex art of harmony also spread to church hymns. The Christians took music first from verse and set it to the prose of the scriptures or to a totally barbaric poesy. Thus arose that form of song that now is dragged along without tact and with perpetually identical steps; along with its rhythmic pace it also lost all its energy.

We are reminded that, just like in contemporary music, human *sensibility* alone does not necessarily govern form. Often some utilitarian purpose dictates the forms we then just become accustomed to. That is, purposes other than pursuit of a real, natural, artistic sensibility of approaching the absolute - which become habituated.⁶⁰ What Schelling *really* shows in this example is that, *independently* of historical/social judgement, we can discern higher from lower *meaning productivity* (via purpose) in the actual phenomenology of the artwork. Schelling’s value-comparisons here are predicated, not on taste, but only on the relation between *essence* and *form* (or ‘the essential’ and ‘the necessary’) alone. A relation which is not simply abstract, but inheres in our attendance to *polarities of semiosis*.

The Christian abandonment of rhythm here marks the turn of our modern mythological attendance toward ‘*the world of ideals*’. Rhythmic music, says Schelling, ‘in general presents itself as an expansion of the infinite within the finite’, where the latter ‘counts for something by itself’. In harmonic music, however, ‘finitude or difference appears only as an allegory of the infinite or of the unity’. Rhythmic music is ‘more faithful to the natural character of music’ because, being ‘an art of succession’, this grounds it in reality. Harmonic music, however, ‘would like to anticipate in the deeper sphere the higher ideal unity, to suspend the element of succession from an ideal vantage point, as it were, and portray the multiplicity of the moment as unity’. Thus (Schelling 1989: 115):

Rhythmic music... will be more the expression of satisfaction and of vigorous

⁵⁹ Notice how *Gospel* music today restores the polyphony of these ‘dimensions’.

⁶⁰ Case in point: Rap music which, when it lacks any genuine poetic substance, is reduced to merely rhythm and rhyme. And otherwise is diminished by the fact harmony, melody, and tact (if present at all) are usually afterthoughts subordinated to the demands of the ‘didactic poem’ (whose limitations are later discussed). Though of course in popular music today Rap is not alone in sacrificing artistic sensibility for utility.

passion. Harmonic music will be more the expression of striving and of yearning.

The need to express 'striving and yearning' was seen by the Church as the necessary element of communality, that expressed itself through harmonic rhythmless music. Its subjectivising intent coupled an individual's personal communion with God with control of the public sphere, via suppression of art's objectivity (Trimarchi 2022: 279). In contrast, says Schelling (1989: 115), Greek states developed 'a pure collectivity, the species or type itself... [that evolved]... completely into a particular unto itself and *was* that particular... rhythmic in its music just as it was rhythmic in its manifestation as a state'.⁶¹

The importance of Time as an essence, to both Art and the Person, lies in its deeper phenomenological connection to *Identity* and significance to 'collectivity', later expanded upon. Delving deeper into the construction of the Formative and Verbal arts reveals why and how art was instrumental in subverting humanity's 'final cause' in the modern mythology. Identity polarities of essences and potences in today's art either declare a cultural demand or personal claim on us, according to the value complexes of modern revealed religions or 'secular religiosity'. But, as noted, art's *real* claim on Humanity is far greater than any such *culturally determined* ones. Art's inherent reflexivity can thus often tell us more about ourselves by attending to *how we use it to construct* artworks, than our 'empirical' experience of them.

3. THE FORMATIVE: WORKING ESSENCE INTO FORM

In *all* artforms, the extent to which 'substance' turns attention away from the accidental and towards only the necessary, has long been intuited by artists. Because obtaining the *essence of meaning* in any artwork's intentionality depends on this. The artist expresses his own intention completely '*by not leaving any doubt* about the significance he has attributed to each individual part [of the whole

⁶¹ Note Schelling's assessment is not a behaviourist psychological one. It simply recognises intentionality in processes of semiosis, which he identifies in these different mythologies. His descriptors are equally applicable today; for instance, in comparing uses of rhythmic vs harmonic (realist vs symbolic idealist) musical elements in any music (eg., classical, hip hop, jazz). The correlation of expression with mythology is still the same. Eg., note how rap music evolved from a purely reductionist rhythmic form eventually forced to combine with (often equally monotonous/extreme) harmonic variations, rarely achieving such seamlessness. Only rather (like other artforms/genres) a discordant secular religiosity *reflecting* our divided world.

artwork]’ (Schelling 1989: 134-135).⁶² This provides the sound philosophical basis upon which all genuine artistic practice rests, not subjective theorising about ‘empirical’ comprehensibility. If it is art, the artist will have imbued its substance with the appropriate intentionality, wherein it ‘*approaches ever closer to the ideal element, for the idea is the necessity and absoluteness of a thing*’. Therefore, with the removal ‘of that which does not belong to its essence’, says Schelling, ‘beauty emerges *automatically*’ (Schelling 1989: 133).⁶³

The *material* nature of any artwork, or its technologies of action, do not therefore in themselves alone *define* it, not even in ‘the *formative arts*’ (music, painting, or plastic arts). Only the artwork’s *phenomenological intentionality* makes it art, irrespective of its interpretability. Interpretation is not for Art an end, only a process. In this section, by examining in more depth how essence is worked into form, and in the following section how form is worked into essence, I will expand on why this is so.

Firstly, as shown below, apprehending the beauty-truth merger in any artwork is constrained by its *artform*’s propensity for revealing it – in the convergence of essence with form. The autopoietic ‘objectivation’ occurring naturally in the ‘general aesthetic’ must be able to be intuited as *an absolute* ideal, manifesting in the *phenomenal* world as a ‘material’ essence of *higher meaning*. Higher, that is, than a rainbow, sunset, or butterfly can merely *reflect*. Imaginative *re-productivity*, not mere reflective image-recognition (ie., *re-presentation* not ‘representation’), is what makes the *condition* of beauty linked to *higher* truth and meaning realisable as the Art-Person double-unity. Which is the only route to binding these two ‘perfect signs’ back to Nature as an *ethical* relation whose intentional reciprocity can be intuited.

No technological innovations can take away from Art’s fundamental *identity*, consisting in the reasoning inherent in its ontological properties (eg., metaphor). Because it is *these* that drive meaning, via the perfect-sign *purposeless-purpose* intentionality of its unified Principle. Art’s *self-actualising* merger of subject and object, in any possible artform/work, therefore must merge the real and ideal essences and potences such that its *Object* (always *the Person*, whatever the *subject*) is

⁶² Emphasis and brackets added.

⁶³ Emphasis added.

revealed as emerging possibility grounded in Reason.⁶⁴ The same autopoietic processes of Nature lie in the ‘general aesthetic’ intentionality inherent in these mergers; becoming elevated meaning in the artwork *only* via affordances producing propositions relative to the human ‘condition.’⁶⁵

Though these may emerge in a multitude of possibilities, the *Principle of Art* is split into two opposing orientations for their disclosure - toward essence or form – producing *limit* cases of *the particular* (artform/works) in the truth-beauty merger. *The Person*, being in *Ideal* human spirit a ‘resolution’ of the human nature-Nature indifference, means Form’s *ideal* essence in *the real* is the human figure. Hence, as noted, the formative and verbal arts define the optimal expression of these ‘limit cases’ in Sculpture and Drama respectively. For the simple reason that these are the art-*forms* offering most affordances for semiotic productivity/possibility of ‘the human subject’ – in the *real* and *ideal* side of the world respectively. Since Schelling’s time, Cinema represents a genuine modern innovation advancing the latter; but nothing has yet emerged to advance the former. Sculpture (for reasons we will soon see) is still the unsurpassed plastic art even though the plasticity of newly invented ‘digital arts’, for instance, presents enhanced possibilities for ‘formative’ productivity. What the latter lack is real world *embodiment*.

In this section, I will show how essence may be worked into form in the most *real* (ie., *genuinely* naturalistic) ways, by discussing the relationships between music, sculpture, and architecture. *These* particular ‘limit cases’, via their merger of the essences of space and time, best explain what ultimately makes any artwork, in any artform, ‘timeless’. The relation between intentionality and purpose is revealed in the polarities making the artwork more real as it reaches its ideal Beauty-Truth merger in the form/non-form interaction.

Beauty-Truth Intentionality and Comprehension

The problem of intentionality - circumscribing as it does the interrelatedness of appearance, reality, and form in *perceiving* any link between Beauty and Truth - begs the question of art’s comprehensibility. What produces art’s meaning via this

⁶⁴ The limits on what can be *the subject* (Object) of art, because of this, are indicated below (eg., bodily functions)

⁶⁵ C. S. Peirce defined Art’s propositions as *only* applicable to human conduct, in any circumstance, which is most directly applicable to ‘self-control under every situation, and to every purpose’.

link, given its *Object* is not *perfection* of beauty itself but the *condition* of beauty inherently linked to higher truth? As suggested, attending to the implicit phenomenological features separating ‘accidental’ comprehensibility and ‘ethical’ intentionality *directed toward ‘the Person’* is key. Furthermore, the modern *individualising* and ancient *collectivising* mythological orientations pay attention to the Beauty-Truth nexus in different ways, revealing Art’s objectivity thus has a certain *Character*.

It does *not*, for instance, slavishly pursue ‘pleasantness’ in the abrogation of truth. Like Aristotle, Schelling argues art is certainly *pleasing*, but this pleasantness is not meant to suppress that intentionality and artistic practice aiming ‘for a much higher truth than that which flatters through the senses’ (Schelling 1989: 131).⁶⁶ The limitations of theoretical formalisms, in all artforms, are subject to the purposiveness of ‘metaphorical utterance’. This involves art’s praxis in that *higher* purpose wherein a normative aesthetic sensibility of ‘admiring’ bound by ethics and logic opens up ways to *objectively* discern conditions for judging the meaningfulness of *any* potential ‘art object’. Intentionality thus *depends upon* purpose; but art’s higher purpose, approaching the Beauty-Truth *Object*, must be purposeless.

This, as noted, requires ‘naturalising’ our worlding habitually toward our perception of this. Returning briefly to the particularities of music helps to elucidate why.

Music by rights should pose problems for understanding art as ‘objective’. But Schelling’s categorisation of it as a ‘formative art’ clarifies this. As he says, music ‘viewed from the one perspective is the most universal or general of the real arts and closest to that dissolution into language and reason, even though from the other perspective it is merely the first potency of the real arts’ (Schelling 1989: 118).⁶⁷ It is *formative* because, in the *real* potency, it takes up the absolute only as rhythm, harmony, and melody, even though it appears to comprehend forms ‘still within chaos and differentiation’. But the latter, being the *ideal* potency, is subordinated in the forming process. Music hence expresses ‘only the pure form

⁶⁶ Here as elsewhere Schelling cites Dutch painting as an example of the latter.

⁶⁷ This argument derives from the Pythagorean notion of the musicality of the planets and cosmic bodies. Though Schelling’s extension of it falls in the category of ‘dangerous allegory’, perhaps excusable given the times, applying his conclusions about music is nevertheless worthy of serious consideration.

of these movements separated from corporeality’.

This complexity is apparent in Art’s ontological objectifying characteristics, and revealed in the tensions between ‘substance’ formation and intention. Form, as Schelling argues, is of course ‘only the body with which [art] clothes itself and in which it becomes objective’. And because substance and form converge in the absolute (as the *Principle* requires) ‘matter, content, or essence’ can become form. Importantly however: ‘The differentiation between substance and form... can be based only on the premise that whatever is posited as absolute identity within substance, be posited as relative identity within form’ (Schelling 1989: 118). Thus, the ‘substance’ (content) which *clothes* form - whether ‘material’, or technologies of action - only has a relative identity to the absolute idea (*Ideal*). And only as it approaches the *ideality* does it ‘become objective’, as Schelling says. Thus, objectivity does *not* rest in form alone.

In landscape painting, for instance, it clearly more exclusively rests on formlessness. Establishing formalisms from any ‘technologies of action’ (eg., line, brushstrokes, harmonics, repetition) capable of mimicking the general aesthetic, hence merely diverts us from attending to the artwork’s real *meaning-value*. Art’s normative aesthetic objective sensibility cannot be sourced in contemplation of form alone (ie., as ‘final’); rather it lies in the processual becoming of *the absolute* drawing into *particularity*. And this means attending to an artwork’s idealising *subject-objectification*. As Schelling (1989: 119) says: ‘Only through [immaterial] subject-objectivation does it manifest itself within objectivity and then as a recognized [‘material’] object guide itself...’ into a self-actualising manifestation of Reason (as ‘disclosure’).

This is a ‘reverse development of objectivity into itself’; its ‘other unity’ within it (the subject) being inseparable from the first. In art as in Nature, the ‘perfected informing of subjectivity into objectivity within the organism’ becomes Reason as the absolute ideal *within* it. The *objective essence* of subjective-objectivation in this absolute ‘informing’ ‘immediately transfigures itself into the aether of absolute ideality’. And the ‘absolutely’ real and ideal elements become ‘essentially one and the same’. This objectification (Schelling’s ‘empirical object’) is *only obtained in Art*, via Peirce’s suspended Second.⁶⁸ No other mode of inquiry can access it, because

⁶⁸ As noted in Trimarchi (2022) and Trimarchi (2024), to be explained further in future.

of the unique knowledge/action merger produced here.

Purpose therefore, via *ethical* intentionality, is what governs Art's objective *meaning-value* orientation. Art is not real if not *embodied* originally in 'organism'. And neither can our mythology be. This distinguishes artmaking from artefact-making (ie., designing/crafting) in the way Aristotle (2011: 283) describes. Discerning the intuitable Beauty-Truth *merger* from any 'empirical' understanding or experiencing of it, is only possible because art-making is predicated on certain practices directed toward 'the (metaphoric) significance of the particular forms themselves' (ie., their 'morphogenesis').

This is why the very *Principle* of art's construction *in the particular* relies upon mythologising *human* nature, and hence *humanism*, via Art's ontological link to *the Person*.

'In-Forming' The Person (Subject-Object Merger in Architecture)

In ancient mythology, art's power over 'the many' came more from conveying understanding *by disposition or mood* than by purposeful appeal to 'experientialism'.⁶⁹ The latter, by various commercial means in modernity, has confused the real intent inherent in art's unifying Principle. What runs counter to the *collectivising* purpose of art, is denying it that implicit purposelessness of being 'true, beautiful, and universally significant' *in itself*. The ancients did not practice art 'for *art's* sake'; but for sake of its self-defining double-unity with the Person and Nature in History. In modernity, it is aesthetic *privation* that has led to elevating the *individualising* intent in art-making to a "virtue" above genuine contemplation of the beauty-truth nexus (Schelling 1989: 157). To understand how to distinguish these intentionalities in any artwork, given the implicitness of art's real *purposeful-purposelessness*, an *ahistorical*, non-utilitarian approach to the Person's relation to History and Nature is key.

Firstly, it should be clear by now that higher meaning in art is *not* delivered in 'empirical' contents unless *essence* is *given* by it. Recall that Art's latent totalising intentionality is discernible in how it spurns *both* 'empirical comprehensibility' on the one hand and arbitrariness of means or ends on the other - for that *higher* purpose. The relation between *information* comprehensibility and genuine *artistic*

⁶⁹ See Trimarchi (2024) for how experientialism developed under the Kantian aesthetic legacy.

intentionality surfaces in the interface of ‘the implicit’ (apprehension) with ‘the explicit’ (comprehension). Winckelmann for this reason stipulates that ‘high simplicity’ – that is, the *appropriateness of ideas* and elimination of any confusion within the concrete (form) – be placed at the forefront of the artist’s intention before any attractiveness to ‘alien interests’. The latter are interests we should concern ourselves with least, because they inform only ‘empirical’ understanding of a work; when other interests to do with *the merger of the artist’s and spectator’s intentions* should be preferred (Schelling 1989: 157).⁷⁰ This merging of the subject-object relation in *Personhood* thus primarily concerns ‘self-enclosed’ *essences*.

Furthermore, as we know, many artworks may remain incomprehensible without losing their true beauty. Art should yield neither to elitism nor vulgar populism, says Schelling, and not ‘flatter... learnedness *or* lack of it’. In historical painting, for instance, it is ‘incorrect to demand that in the painting itself all necessary guidance be given concerning... [its]... empirical-historical comprehensibility’. That the painter be ‘as it were, our instructor in history’. Or, alternatively, that they should ‘free the painting itself from the task while demanding scholarly learning from the observer’ (Schelling 1989: 157). An extension of this reasoning reveals why, as noted, certain subjects are better than others as objects of artistic inquiry; and some, like bodily functions for instance, are ruled out entirely (eg., statue of a woman defecating below). Abstracting from the body merely directs us to lower values. Hence, if wanting to convey *optimum metaphoric* potential, the choice between a portrait of an animal, plant, or human, is clear. The critical *phenomenological* factor here is that ‘being and activity’ need to be merged in the *Object* of art; and ‘human being’ *naturally* possesses most possibility for this.

Humans best meet this requirement not *just* because only *we* possess History. But also, because the *ideal of humanism* which art too ideally portrays is avoiding descent into mechanism. As MacIntyre says, it is the Ideal essence of *humanity* to remain opaque and unpredictable enough, yet predictable enough, to be ‘in possession of ourselves’. And hence able to balance *freedoms* with *necessities* (just as Art does). Thus, any *habitual* propensity to be mainly attracted to mere utilitarian

⁷⁰ As Schelling says of historical painting, ‘the historical knowledge of the event portrayed in all its present and past conditions, contributes to the enjoyment of the work of art’ but this ‘lies outside the artist’s sphere of intention’.

or historical significance – ie., the empirical, accidental, and hence least metaphoric - reflects a meaning-value orientation toward the lower order. It is *reflective*, not *productively reflexive*. The particularities of why and how the Person is *always* like this - consciously or not - the real ‘subject’ (Object) of Art, are revealed by examining what makes architecture art.

As Schelling (1989: 163) shows, the ‘artistic impulse’ that exists in Nature as ‘a specific direction or modification of the general formative impulse’, is one where there is ‘a certain identity between the products and the producing agent’. It emerges as either a reproductive instinct (eg., bees producing wax for shelter and reproduction, bowerbirds decorating nests, etc.), or as metamorphosis or sexual development. Bees and spiders produce the material of their buildings within themselves, like coral polyps do. Humans on the other hand produce edifices externally (like crabs and snails). This ‘artistic impulse’ in humans comes from the same place it does in Nature. There are merely differing levels of organisation, from which we can see that ‘the organic everywhere produces the anorganic only in identity or in reference to itself’ (Schelling 1989: 164).⁷¹

If we apply this to the higher case of the production of the anorganic through human art, we find that *the anorganic, because it can have no [metaphoric] significance in and for itself, must acquire it in production through human art, through the reference to the human being and the identity with him*. Furthermore, in the perfection of human nature within itself this relationship and potential identity cannot be immediate, direct, or corporeal, but rather only an indirect relationship conceptually mediated.

This explains why in the plastic arts of Sculpture and Architecture, producing as they do *within the inorganic*, external references to human *being* are usually manifest in sculpture. And references to human *need* are usually manifest in architecture. Yet, when either is *most* artful (*Ideally*), there is ‘something equally independent of [humans] and beautiful in and for itself’.

Architecture, to the extent it is subordinated to utilitarian need, therefore *cannot* be art (Schelling 1989: 164).⁷² Utility and need are only *conditions* of building and architecture (not principles). A higher or lower meaning value is *in-formed* into an artwork by virtue of what intentionality is applied, because it is *bound* to ‘an appearance’ existing independent of it (ie., its *artform’s limitations*). It is only

⁷¹ Author’s emphasis.

⁷² Schelling here uses the Kantian term ‘fine art’, ie., as distinguished from craft.

intention which ‘puts into this form the impression and image of beauty’ that can elevate the work to ‘fine art’. Hence, in architecture, ‘precisely the *expediency* is the form of the appearance’, rather than the *essence* (Schelling 1989: 165).⁷³ Given this constraint, architecture only becomes *art* when its production ‘is completely external to the reference to need, which is merely form’.

Since form must be produced in relation to *essence*, there are additional constraints here. Because arithmetical and geometric relations predominate in *both* nature and art at the deeper levels, and because architecture is a reversion of the plastic arts to the inorganic, Schelling argues ‘geometric regularity must yet assert its rights in it before being cast off at the higher levels’. This means that ‘the requirement of beauty is made far more accidental’ in the *inner* elements of architecture than in the *external* elements. More precisely, beauty becomes *not* incidental but *subordinate* to ‘reason’ here *in the inorganic manifestation* of art. Schelling’s (1989: 166) reasoning is complex, and we must step through it slowly. Firstly...

Architecture can appear as free and beautiful art only insofar as it becomes the expression of *ideas*, an image of the universe and of the absolute. Yet a real image of the absolute and accordingly an immediate expression of the ideas is ...everywhere only the organic form in its perfection.

Music, though a formative art, is nevertheless freed from having to portray actual forms or figures because it portrays the universe in ‘the first and purest movement, separated from matter’. That is, it portrays the universe as ‘essence’. But architecture is ‘*concrete* music’, as it were, and as a plastic art it can only portray the universe as *both* essence and form combined. Not merely as form. This means it relies on *reason* (and the arithmetical, geometrical relationships sourced in the ‘reason’-ableness inherent in nature) to convey its *identity*.

However, this reason must be mediated through concept. Importantly, ‘not the immediate concept of the object itself, but rather that of something external to it’ (Schelling 1989: 166-167). And this must either directly or indirectly reference *the organic*. Thus: ‘That which in architecture actually refers to need is the inner element’. And this inner element - referred to earlier as *between products and the producing agent* - as in all art is referenced in organism via that ‘certain

⁷³ It is worth noting that in Schelling’s description of architecture ‘art as principle’ is *personified*, in tacit recognition that art and the person are the same perfect sign.

identity' in Nature with human being. The Person is therefore integrally connected to the architectural art object through *need*. Whereas architecture's connection to the organic is through *beauty*. But it only becomes beautiful when it is simultaneously '*independent of itself*'. Hence: 'As soon as it attains through appearance both actuality and utility without intending these *as* utility and *as* actuality, it becomes free and independent art' (Schelling 1989: 167).

A beautiful building is still not *necessarily* art if for instance its beautiful elements are accidental and external to its 'inner need' (*essence*) *without* it becoming independent of itself in this way. That is, by conceptual reference to something organic. This relationship between architecture's 'purposeful purposelessness' and reality (*the real* of Nature, via Reason) ultimately governs whether it becomes art (Schelling 1989: 167):

[B]y making the object already associated with the concept of purpose into its artistic object – thus making the concept of purpose itself with the object into that artistic object – the latter is *for it* as higher art an objective identity between the subjective and the objective, the concept and the thing, and is accordingly something that possesses reality *in itself*.

To summarise, for architecture to be great art it must portray the purposiveness within itself 'as an objective purposiveness'. In other words, 'as the objective identity between concept and thing', binding the subjective with the objective. This 'objective identity' only obtains originally from organism, but the *portrayal* of organism in architecture occurs inorganically for reasons explained above. This accounts for why Christopher Alexander can justifiably claim that it is organic form in architecture which elevates it above mere building, because architecture portrays the inorganic as an *allegory* of the organic.⁷⁴ The *meaning-value* of this form rises above concept as it approaches a metaphor of *the Person*. This is because the 'immediate real image of reason' is obtained in organism, and great architecture's *Identity* arises from its immediate identity with *this* reason. It is *not* mediated by the *concept* of purpose. Purpose now becomes a higher *end*, or 'final cause'.

⁷⁴ Christopher Alexander (2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) has developed a system of grasping what gives life to buildings, and for judging beauty in architecture, which combines similar ideas about Nature and human meaning. His four books on *The Nature of Order* provide an example of how a system may be devised to account for the complexity that exists in art and Nature.

The complexity of these relationships, Schelling (1989: 167) admits, doubtlessly gave rise to the common belief that architecture is merely useful. While it ‘panders to mere need and is merely useful’, he says, ‘it is indeed *only* useful and cannot simultaneously be beautiful’. Studied carefully, his explanations provide a phenomenologically objective means to elevate architecture to art, distinguishing it from ‘buildings’, much as Alexander has done. However, Schelling’s *Naturphilosophie* provides the sound philosophical framework for why such discernments can be arrived at *by virtue of meaning-value*.

It is unnecessary to detail Schelling’s account of variations in architectural developments throughout history here. Only to note his reasoning for judging their artfulness reverts back to why sculpture, examined next, and not architecture is the ultimate plastic art. Each assessment is derived similarly from his ‘speculative naturalism’. Thus, the ‘immutable elements’ of Egyptian architecture are described as allegorical of the elements of nature dominating their world, and sensibilities driving them to seek ‘eternally immutable form in the heavens’. Gothic architecture is characterised as ‘completely naturalistic and crude, a mere direct imitation of nature in which nothing recalls intentional, free art’, and so on (Schelling 1989: 172).⁷⁵ A *naturalised* art’s freedom is again distinguished from ‘general aesthetic’ freedom by a humanist (*ethical*) intentionality.

Natural Form: Merging Space and Time

In general, ‘naturalism’ as aesthetic theory fails by misconceiving attempts at approximating Nature (*and* human nature). Its modern consigned intentionality, as a ‘copy’ of the real, is completely at odds with Aristotle’s meaning of ‘mimesis’.⁷⁶ And, as Stott says, presupposing that natural phenomena by definition constitute

⁷⁵ Note Schelling’s detailed account of how the fundamental features of architecture, in any culture or at any time in history, can be explained by his categorical system based on natural philosophy as opposed to aesthetic theory. Thus, ideas about line orientation, symmetry and so on, are all explained in relation to the natural world. For instance, Schelling’s reference to ‘polarity’ – i.e., the east-west or horizontal polarity versus vertical polarity in the realm of the organic (eg., both animals and plants) – which in turn are designated ‘real polarity’ (top to bottom, or vertical lines) and ‘ideal polarity’ (sidewise, or horizontal lines). Again, these correspond respectively to McGilchrist’s (2010) designation of left and right hemisphere lateralisation traits. The left hemisphere recognises horizontal lines (the ideal), while the right hemisphere pays attention to vertical lines (the real).

⁷⁶ Trimarchi (2024).

‘a concurrence of the real’, virtually assures ‘the abrogation of beauty and thus also of truth’ (Schelling 1989: xiv):⁷⁷

A Van Gogh sunflower need not approximate the appearance of an actual sunflower: in fact, precisely in its departure from... [this]... do we sense its closer approximation to that idea that can never be fully rendered in the natural world.

The reason for this is that ‘no particular object fully renders its own idea or universal, but consists precisely in the privation of that universal’. Recognising this about particularity reveals why even in the Formative Arts higher meaning is, naturally, *immaterial*. Hence a *naturalised* Art presupposes a process of ‘*in-forming* the ideal into the real’. Which underscores Schelling’s reasoning for the reproductive imagination being energised by the artwork’s *ideational origins*.

This returns us to why great sculptures present us with the most metaphoric ‘expression of reason in matter’. Recall that in music the ideal informed into the real is manifest as ‘*act*’; and in painting the ideal acquires contours and colour but still merely portrays *models* of the real. In the plastic arts the infinite is finally completely transformed into the finite, the whole into the particular, ‘life into death’ and ‘spirit into matter’. And this is why sculpture rests at the peak of the nonverbal arts. But sculpture only reaches its *highest* meaning-value when the subject matter manifests in the particular transformation of something ideal into a total and complete being. That is, ‘into a reality that is itself represented as *actual*’. As Schelling (1989: 201) says, it is ‘**only** because it is now wholly and absolutely real, [that]... the plastic work of art [is] absolutely ideal’.⁷⁸ We register in this *metamorphosis* a recognition of the highest potency of intentionality in form (again directed toward *the Person*).

While Space is a limiting feature of painting, sculpture produces an *extension* in space. Therefore, dimensions are not evaluated or appreciated *empirically* here, as they are in painting or architecture (for differing reasons). Dimensions in a sculpture are determined more ‘according to the idea’ generating its meaning, because the *essence* of space allows the universal to become ‘the *entire* particular’ and ‘the particular the *entire* universal’. Furthermore, while we appreciate the

⁷⁷ The same kind of “naturalism” of course now prevails in most artforms (eg., in Theatre, Australia’s David Williamson in the 1970s employed ‘naturalism’ exclusively to offer clichéd renderings of ‘human nature’ during what was aptly dubbed the ‘cultural cringe’).

⁷⁸ Author’s emphasis and bold.

externally presented balance of inner forces displayed in the space of *both* painting and sculpture, the reason *sculpture* reaches its greatest meaning-value in the subject of the *naturalised human* form is because of a particular affinity with this essence (Schelling 1989: 187).⁷⁹ Human form, Schelling argues, ‘is eminently a reduced image of the earth and of the universe’, expressing life’s inner dynamics *materialised* in it ‘as pure beauty’. Unlike architecture, sculpture contains nothing recalling need and necessity. It is rather, as *all* art should be, pleasing in and for itself as ‘the freest fruit of inner, concealed necessity and independent play no longer recalling its own foundation’.

Sculpture ‘must portray ideas that are in fact elevated above matter, and yet must do so through external appearance’; and the human figure offers the best available avenue for this. If sculpture tries to portray plant life as an allegory of any higher level of organisation it merely coincides with architecture’s lower order potency. The sculpture of an animal too can ‘always portray only the species itself’. But it can do this ‘precisely because the species in and for itself is actually an individual’ (Schelling 1989: 184-183).⁸⁰ Animals *appear* ‘as particular’ in such portrayals only because the totality of their species cannot be expressed otherwise. Whereas the reverse is true for humans. We *individually* represent *the whole* species itself, and a human sculpture portrays both simultaneously.⁸¹

Art essentially developed as *a way of valuing*, to be able to objectify this collective *identity* in the individual without de-humanising a person by transforming them into an object. The *Person* is always also *collectively* the *natural* ‘subject’ of art, because it is a perfect sign representing the indifference between the individual and humanity at large. The error of much modernist sculpture is in reducing ‘the person’ to a concept, and often objectifying collective identity via ‘acts’.⁸² Deliberately symbolic treatments, like Antony Gormley’s famous *Angel of the North* (1998) depicting our ‘epic’ dehumanising industrialism, invariably idealise such reductions as heroic survivalism (albeit dystopian); while Jeff Koons

⁷⁹ This ‘essence’ is of course abandoned in mid-late modernism in favour of objectifying *the Person* symbolically. See pictures below.

⁸⁰ Hence, ‘The fable does not say: a fox, but rather the fox; not a lion, but rather the lion’.

⁸¹ Once again, this is why ‘the person’ is a perfect sign representing the indifference between the individual and humanity at large – and why art is ontologically and teleologically an expression of this reality.

⁸² See Schjeldahl (2014), and the kind of celebrity this creates - <https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2001/03/jeff-koons-200103>, accessed 11/06/2022, 12:04pm.

idealises our collective identity in frivolous faux “utopian” depictions of selfhood (eg., via balloon dogs and ‘porcelain pornography’). Rodin’s sculptures, on the other hand, idealise no one’s body or act in the more *expansive* self-enclosed identity of natural beauty and truth. Only such implicitly *naturalised* approaches to art can express *the Person’s* true reality, and invoke any higher meaningfulness concerning the human condition.

Thus, the ancient archetype of personhood obtains far greater *metaphoric* significance. Everything from its vertical stance (as humans are mostly portrayed, alluding to independence from earth); symmetrical structure (eliminating east-west polarity); and the subordination of the rest of the body to the free movement of the head; contributes to a ‘self-enclosed and completely balanced system of movements’. Exposing muscles, or their deliberate absence, renders humans metaphorically as a kind of ‘landscape’ or the structure of the cosmos itself. Any actual *imitation* becomes subordinate to metaphoric gesture and allusion to nature via *the Person* (ie., the human nature->Nature relation). Expressing the predominance of *the human spirit* corporeally is hence sourced in the portrayal of abstract truth: Truth and Beauty merge in *Spirit*.



In many modernist sculptures, we tend to see the human figure conceptually de-natured/‘supra-naturalised’, fragmented, symbolised, or mechanised.⁸³ This mythologises against a collectivising intent. Whereas androgyny, for instance, is today a conflicted expression of *personal political* freedom versus necessity, one may be surprised to find Greek classical portrayals of it offer something more realistically totalising (Schelling 1989: 191):

Greek artists also sought to imitate artistically those natures combining masculine and feminine beings that Asiatic effeminacy brought forth by castrating delicate boys, and thus to represent to a certain extent a condition of nonseparation of the identity of the genders. This condition – achieved in a kind of balance that is not simply nullity, but rather actual fusion of the two opposing characters – is one of the highest achievements of art.

Schelling here recognises the ancient *humanist* intentionality reflected in *Nature’s* polarities. The merger between the real and the ideal, expressed as indifference of two very human ‘characters’ of gender, sharing something of each in the other. Reality is not *ignored* in the conflict between freedom and necessity here. Instead, Nature’s truth emerges from an embedded intentionality toward concrete reasonableness. Finding *balance* hence becomes human nature’s *purpose* by extension.

To conclude, in the best sculpture, the perfect equation of ‘real unity’ (form) with ‘ideal unity’ (essence) is an indifference that must be taken in ‘with *one* sweeping gaze’. Thus ‘high simplicity’ is the requirement; but as shown above, this belies the kind of complexity only Nature reveals. The demands of merging space and time here are different to other artforms like painting. Geometric regularity, for instance, is subordinated in sculpture since in extended space directional meaning operates independently of the spatial elements that limit painting. But because it portrays the highest unity between space and time in the non-verbal formative arts, we are afforded a heightened sense of ‘death relative to life’ in sculpture.

⁸³ Neither illustrative sculpture above can be art in Schelling’s system. One transforms human nature into novel symbolic mechanism. The other ‘naturalistically’ depicts a bodily function (‘abstracting’ and objectifying the body, separating it from spirit). Many postmodern sculptural depictions of humans are similarly hyper-idealised, making the human subject appear alien; *symbolising* the idealised ‘real’ of a modern mechanised *Self* set aloof from Nature or cast adrift, but lacking metaphor and draining any higher meaning potentiality.

What arrests Time in the *verbal* arts, similarly makes intentional demands on attention/content related to the Beauty-Truth merger. However, under different circumstances.



Big Clay #4 (Artist: Urs Fischer) 84

4. THE VERBAL: WORKING FORM INTO ESSENCE

In the Verbal Arts there is a reversal of what occurs in sculpture and the other plastic arts. Here, the *ideal* side of the world works form instead into essence. Not needing to lift essence above ‘matter’ as sculpture does, though it is still revealed in *ideas*, in poesy the absolute manifests *directly* as ‘cognitive act’ and so an ‘other’ is not required, unlike the non-verbal arts (Schelling 1989: 202). Being also

⁸⁴ <http://www.florencedailynews.com/2017/09/19/piazza-signoria-hosts-urs-fischers-big-clay/>. Fischer is considered one of the ‘leading artists on the world scene today... exploring such issues as imperfection and entropy or the relationship between an artwork and space’. Note a distinct lack of unity between space and time here, merely abstracting spatiality as a concept fragmented from meaningful referents (except perhaps, we might imagine, symbolically human faeces). Where is the metaphor? If the intention is merely to depict *the quality* of solidity in a vibrant cultural space (as claimed), this is not an end in itself for Art (whereas such forming-accidentality *is* in Nature). This is not a realistic attempt at art-making because the object’s self-enclosed implicit referentiality *only* points toward accidentality (hence at best it merely mimics Nature’s ‘general aesthetic’).

essentially 'formative', with the Nature-Person relation still being the *Object*, like all art poesy's *ideality*, 'absoluteness' is also revealed archetypally. Hence appearance and reality, form and formlessness, intentionality and purpose must still be grounded in Reason.⁸⁵

Art's *immateriality* – which as noted accounts for its higher meaning-value - is here thus both idealised *and* realised in *essence*. Its *particular* productivity and products therefore appear as 'an act of producing instead of a condition of being'. Being itself inorganic, 'yet lacking the corresponding body', as Schelling (1989: 204) says, poesy finds its 'body' (ie., is 'materialised') in language. But the 'sonority' of language yields different *tones* inorganically. So *literal* meaning, upon universalising particularity and entering 'divine' finitude, is elevated in value metaphorically via 'poetry'.

As noted, Schelling's affirming scientific sequence presents the key relationships in poesy via transitional *mythological* category indifferences. Lyric poesy is 'the real' *allegorical* form of Epic poesy, which in 'the ideal' is *schematic*. Drama, like sculpture, combines allegory and schema to produce metaphoric elevation. Poetry rises above *all* formative or verbal arts because it maintains the essential universal nature and character of '*the Ideas*', more so than prose, through speech and language. Yet *Drama*, being the 'indifference' of Epic and Lyric poesy becomes the highest potential *expression* of poetry or prose, because of how it can uniquely present metamorphic reality with verbal and non-verbal essences combined.

The term 'poesy' is archaic, describing poetic 'language-making' as a whole; but ideational fragmentation in modern materialist conceptions of artmaking rendered it redundant. Yet its essence, *poetry*, still embodies *all* Art as noted because it optimally expresses 'the metaphoric'. This is why my examination of the Verbal Arts below must account for their evolution, from ancient to modern mythology. Poesy creates mythology from the material at hand in antiquity as in modernity. But in antiquity this was characterised by strict limitation, whereas in modernity freedom is emphasised, with more flow and mixture occurring. This, as Schelling (1989: 207) suggests, explains the emergence of numerous mixed genres in literature (as indeed in all artforms today). I will begin therefore

⁸⁵ At least it is in the ancient mythology, while as shown below in modern mythology it becomes grounded instead in 'the world of ideals'.

by briefly describing the emergence and decline of lyric poesy in antiquity. Then in more detail, the deterioration of *true* epic forms being gradually overtaken by lyric influences in modernity. This will reveal why the ‘modern romantic epic’ became dominant, spurring fragmentation of art’s Principle.

In §5, by considering its effects on developments of the novel, drama, tragedy, and comedy, I will show why it accompanied a reversal of our important attentional orientation toward ‘fate’ (among other things) in modern mythologising.

Lyric Poesy

Lyric poesy, like music, is most extensively subordinated to rhythm in that ‘only *one* tone, *one* basic feeling predominates’. In Greece, this form emerged with republicanism and the blossoming freedom of its polis. It was a time of ‘nobler passions’ when poetry and music enlivened the festivals and public life. ‘In Homer’, says Schelling, ‘sacrifices and worship are yet without music’, and the identity of the Homeric epic which was characterised by ‘the heroic principle, the principle of kingship and rule’, was liberated by lyric poesy.

This created a time when ‘individual themes express sociability of a sort that could develop and thrive only with a free and great state’ (Schelling 1989: 209). Eventually, this blossoming would turn in the other direction toward ‘merely sensual beauty’. It soon became inclined toward ‘fame... and beautiful sociability... [overtaking]... the soul of public life’. The outward looking objectivity of the ancient Homeric epic sensibility became gradually more restrictive and limited, turning inward in lyrical tones.

Nevertheless, lyric poetry developed the highest *rhythmic* variety, which Schelling describes as a quality reflected in the Greek states themselves. The Homeric ‘bud that was closed in the ancient epic merged with the lyric’, he explains, such that the Greeks remained ‘objective, real, and expansive also within the particularity of the lyric poetic art’ for some time. As the ancestor of modern popular song, it developed during this period ‘in the spirit that wars were fought by’, encouraging ‘a completely objective passion’ - unlike what was to soon become of it. ‘Alcaeus was the head of the conspirators against tyrants’, says Schelling (1989: 184), ‘fighting them not only with the sword but also with songs’.

But this ‘age of innocence’ was quickly subdued as ‘the singers were no longer

contented like the Homeric singers' (demanding pay, rewards, etc.,). Nevertheless, something of the epic had merged with the lyric poesy, which still lives on in the historic, heroic, popular songs of many cultures today. Schelling (1989: 209-210) here reminds us of Art's inspiration to civic humanism through the ages.

Just as the highest blossoming of the lyric art of the Greeks coincides with the emergence of the republic, the highest blossoming of public life, so also do the beginnings of modern lyric poetry coincide with that period in the fourteenth century of public disturbances and of the general dissolution of the republican alliances and states in Italy.

When public life however began to recede, says Schelling, lyric poetry 'had to direct itself inward'. Thus began the development of 'the romantic epic, which cultivated itself in Ariosto, Dante, and Petrarch, the first founders of lyric poetry' in modernity. How this transition occurred, alongside the corruption of genuine epic forms, is now enshrined in its sharp contrasts with the poesy of antiquity. It begins to feature strongly in the subjectivising content and 'theories of choice' becoming dominant in all modern artforms.

The intentionality driven in the ancient mythology by objective attention to 'the real' world, turned in the modern mythology to an increasingly unrealistic attachment to 'the ideal' world.

Lyric vs Epic Poesy (Time and Objectivity)

Antiquity celebrated 'primarily masculine virtues', as Schelling says, and the emotional relationships among men were dominated by the 'virtues that war and common public life' generated and nourished; 'love toward a woman was completely subordinate'. But as Dante's famous inspiration, Beatrice, reminds us, *modern* lyric poetry 'was at its inception consecrated to love and all the emotions in the contemporary concept of love' (Schelling 1989: 210). In its early development, lyric poesy maintained only a minor feature of the ancient sensibility, highlighting *particularity* differently. Epic poesy relates to the past *objectively*, while lyric poesy relates to the present *subjectively*. Ancient epic poetry hence registers a sense of 'inwardness and of particular, present reality' only within the genre's general character. Whereas the lyric poem 'sings of the present, and digresses to the immortalization of the most individual and transient features of that present: enjoyment, beauty, the love toward individual youths... even as

far as the details of beautiful eyes, hair, and individual body parts' (Schelling 1989: 210). Much like modern pop songs.

In the Epic the poet does not appear; but this will change. *Lyric* poesy becomes 'the real sphere of self-perception and of self-consciousness' where concrete form is replaced with 'inner disposition, no object, but rather only mood'. While initially liberating in some ways, as modernity advances these features begin to constrain the objects of attention themselves. Poesy ceases to be 'the image and accompanist of a public and common life, a life within an organic whole'. And lyric poesy's objects are lost in 'completely subjective, individual, momentary emotions in which... a *whole* life emanates only very indirectly, or enduring emotions directed toward objects themselves, as in the poems of Petrarch, where the whole itself becomes a kind of romantic or dramatic unity' (Schelling 1989: 211).⁸⁶

Art's decline coincided with the decline in public life, which had by now become controlled by the Church. A new 'religiosity' in modes of attendance to art emerges. What comes to dominate lyric poesy is an 'unheroic element' which causes the form to become divided 'into poems with moral, didactic, and political content... always with the preponderance of reflection and subjectivity, since it lacks any objectivity in life'. The only kind of lyric poems referring to public life are religious ones, 'since only in the church could public life still be found' (Schelling 1989: 211). Contemporary popular music, literature, drama etc., all still bear its trademarks: subjectivity, reflection, transience, fragmentation of forms, polarising individual/collective identities, 'heroic' reversals, devotion, miracle, mysticism, and moralising.⁸⁷

In this transition the very nature of what is 'epic' changes, in both art and the human telos. This is most profoundly felt in the important essence of Time and its *unifying* relation to objectivity. Closer examination of both these forms' way of worlding reality reveals why, and just how the western world's orientation to meaning eventually became *reflected* rather than *intuited* in art's particularity. The evolution of lyric and epic poesy exposes why all *great* art and its narratology appears timeless and whole (ie., metaphoric).⁸⁸ Whereas, by contrast, many

⁸⁶ The ancient idea of *Wholeness* changes (Trimarchi 2024). The part becomes a false 'whole'.

⁸⁷ See Trimarchi (2024) for how Kant's aesthetic legacy propelled all these features forward.

⁸⁸ And as Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin would describe it: 'polyphonic'.

modern narratives appear superfluously bound by succession (ie., symbol and plot). All great art is *truly* epic in the ancient mythological sense, by virtue of its unique attention to Time and Universality ('ends'). But in the modern mythology this essence in what becomes the 'romantic epic', as we will see, is transformed into episodic ideality.

As the first potency of the ideal world, Lyric poesy is dominated by reflection. *Epic* poesy (second potency) is however dominated by action or, as Schelling says, 'that which is objective *in itself*'. Its ideal is action 'in its *essential nature*' as well as *visible action*; which portrays History as an absolute image of itself. It expresses the common unity of the infinite/finite and freedom/necessity woven together as *Identity*. This identity *appears* as fate, but the ancient epic portrays action as though there is *no* fate - because there is no conflict between these common unities. People's lives and actions in antiquity emerge 'from one perspective in pure finitude, yet for just that reason also within the absolute identity of freedom and necessity' (Schelling 1989: 212).

There is, then, no *fatalism*; Homer's heroes exhibit no internal opposition to fate. Destiny does not appear as fate, but 'in the mildness of a quiet necessity against which there is as yet no rebellion'. Their worlding of reality is truly epic, because the early Greeks and their 'gods' are all *in the world* together. Everything is portrayed in the highest identity, in a united worldview. The *Homeric* epic thus falls between the lyric poem 'where simple conflict between the infinite and the finite predominates' and there is confusion between freedom and necessity; and Tragedy 'where both the conflict and fate are simultaneously portrayed' (Schelling 1989: 213). A sense of tragedy, as an overwhelming burden, is therefore absent in any *truly* Epic narrative. As Lyric poesy evolves, however, there is no full subjective resolution; life/fate remains 'unreal', because it invokes the infinite.

In the ancient epic, life and actions are portrayed as if there are 'not the slightest stirrings of the infinite'. The *image of all action* is especially timeless, because it is objective and schematic in its portrayals (like a painting). Everything seems to occur simultaneously because it focuses on the *Object* (O₂ - the whole) in comparison to the moving parts.⁸⁹ Art too appears timeless when it places all

⁸⁹ O₂ (Art's *Principle* - Object) and O₁ (*artform/work* - object) signify the 'immateriality'<->'materiality' relational tension in all art (Trimarchi 2024).

successive elements ‘purely into the object’ and maintains ‘a serene condition... floating above it immobile and unmoved by the sequential flow’. This *tension* of Time with motion is fundamental to a phenomenological experience.

Hence the true epic produces ‘the calming element, the object in contrast to the moving element’. And every idea emerges ‘as an object from within its own essential nature’ *stepping into* Time (Schelling 1989: 213). This element of rest, once transformed into progressive action, merges the particular and the universal together into one identical mass. Therefore, the *schematic* nature of the true epic form in both great literature and paintings shares in the fact that the *object* (O₁ – the particular) is *not* motionless. It only *appears* motionless in painting, if we take this artform’s limits (space, contour, colour etc.) as its *essence*. But it nevertheless is only a *subjectively* fixed moment. The object in any great painting, even still life paintings or portraits, always has some forward movement. Because of our intersubjective interaction with it, in phenomenological experience we ‘*eternalise*’ the moment empirically (Schelling 1989: 214).⁹⁰ This lingering element in painting appears to inhere in the object, but in poesy it reverts to the *subject*.

Epic poesy is driven by an internal ‘spiritual rhythm’, floating along with the object and subject, binding them together. This lends it a fundamentally *objectifying* suspension of time which is characteristic of this form. It is phenomenologically evident in the hexameter of Homer’s time, in the poetic meter of the text. Any sequence occurring in the ancient epic appears *outside* of time, making the part and whole equally absolute. This makes the beginning and end of their narratives appear accidental, producing a strong sense that there is no beginning or end. ‘The *Iliad* begins absolutely with the intention of singing the anger of Achilles’, says Schelling (1989: 215), ‘and is closed off just as absolutely, since there is no reason to end with the death of Hector’. But, as the *modern* ‘epic’ develops, a profound divergence emerges in the mythological treatment of ‘succession’.⁹¹

The suggestion Homer was not one person but, as Schelling (1989: 215) calls him - *Homeros*, a polyphony of voices of many poets who together constituted the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* over many years by oral means - the idea that ‘an entire people

⁹⁰ See Trimarchi (2024) regarding Schelling’s ‘empirical object’.

⁹¹ Fred Polak (1973) describes modern art being ‘stuck in the present’, moving with ‘the times’.

can constitute an individual' – might appear unfathomable to us.⁹² But in our incredulity we may find the origins of a modern fragmenting mythological alienation or 'detachment', later becoming '*disinterestedness*' and '*distanciation*' in Kantian aesthetics. The ancient epic's objectifying suspension of time was, through such concepts, eventually transformed into a mystical mythologising of art's object as 'a perfect moment', and the artist as a 'magician' floating above the work 'like a higher being touched by nothing'. Whereas, as previously argued, Schelling's description of the suspension of the Object (his Empirical Object), which explains this suspension *phenomenologically*, owes nothing to Kant's concepts of infinity, eternity, sublimity or 'genius'.⁹³ Rather, it simply confirms this temporal "detachment" as Scheler's 'phenomenological experience'.

When Schelling says that in the ancient epic '...[a]ll passion falls to the object itself', he places the artwork above the artist. Any allusion to 'divine' disinterest/distanciation merely misrepresents the special Homeric *manner of attendance* required of an artist to ensure objectivity in the work. In Homer, says Schelling, there is no miraculous element '*...everything*, yet for just that reason, nothing is miraculous'. Schelling's entire attitude to miracle, which he clearly argued was 'completely alien to the Greeks and the ancient epic, for their gods dwell within nature', supports this view (Schelling 1989: 217).⁹⁴ Aristotle called the Homeric epic 'miraculous', but was taken literally and really meant 'merely extraordinary'. In modern mythology, however, the "miracle" of art – over which poesy and prose find themselves 'in battle' - is idealised under the precepts of what became the inferior *modern* 'epic'. And as Schelling (1989: 228) explains, in modern poesy, things are miraculous 'only *juxtaposed* with prose in a divided world'.⁹⁵ A world the *Modern Romantic Epic* will soon come to recreate in its own image.

The Modern Romantic Epic (Intentionality, Form, and Purpose)

Artistic form, intention, and purpose naturally weave together an identity

⁹² This is in reference to Wolf's theory.

⁹³ Trimarchi (2024). Though this tendency is evident among some of the other Romantic Idealists in Schelling's Jena circle (eg., Schiller and the Schlegels).

⁹⁴ See Trimarchi (2024).

⁹⁵ Emphasis added. For how this disenfranchised and degraded modern *poetry*, see Polak (1973).

exemplar of the dominant mythology. According to Schelling, our divisive mythology, ultimately leading to prose's dominance, crystallised in the *modern romantic epic*. A form emerging from the ancient epic in the fourteenth century, exhibiting reorientations in attendance, perception, and judgement of the key factors governing Art's constructions. Contrasting Homer with Virgil and Milton's epic poetry, he shows why the latter lacks 'that particular purposelessness' in its character. A character now beginning to reflect *humanity's* 'purposeless purposefulness' (Kant's description of art, which I have reversed to account for its negation of Art's *real* 'purposeful purposelessness' - Trimarchi 2022: 270n33). 'Just as the individual or subject emerges on the whole in the modern world, so also in the epic', says Schelling (1989: 228), 'such that it lost the absolute objectivity of the epic of antiquity and is comparable to it only as its complete negation'. The construction of each epic form itself alerts us to how this epic reversal in the human telos was propelled via the subject-object polarity in the Art-Person double-unity. Tracking what features become dominant here reveals the Character of art that will henceforth manifest in the prevailing 'narrative order' of *Poesy* in modern literature, drama, tragedy, and comedy (§5).

In ancient Epic forms 'both the subject [the poet] and the object behave objectively', but the identity of indifferences can be suspended in two ways. Either such that the subjectivity or particularity is placed into the object and the objectivity or universality into the artist, or the reverse of this. *Elegy* and *Idyll* are the artforms corresponding to the former suspension; the *Didactic Poem* and *Satire* to the latter. But these also are split in orientation: elegy behaves subjectively and idyll objectively; similarly with the latter coupling, the didactic poem is subjective and satire objective. The first two of each coupling (elegy and didactic poem) lean toward the lyrical, and the second two (idyll and satire) toward the dramatic. Detailed examination reveals that each category is clearly delineated by *the mode of attendance* demanded by such subject-object orientations. This is phenomenologically self-evident in the *character* of their respective artworks. For instance, in the higher order elegies (eg., Goethe's *Elegies*) 'subjectivity is placed in the object, while objectivity is placed in the portrayal and its guiding principle'. And, similarly, in the double genre of *Comic* and *Serious Satire* the latter is more objective and hence higher order of the two.

As noted, where intentionality meets purpose various artform *hierarchies* emerge; according to meaning-value potences governed by such subject-object

polarities, and their predisposition for producing *metaphoric* meaning. One might ask: since the didactic poem ‘seeks to teach’, and ‘satire seeks to chastise’, and ‘since all beautiful art lacks external purpose’, why should we consider these artforms at all? For that matter, why, if art is purposeless, are *the most objective* forms the highest? Given both didactic poesy and satire are *necessarily* purposeful, Schelling’s explanation elucidates Art’s ‘purposiveness’ and thus *Intentionality*. Firstly, as noted in architecture, the fact *Art as principle* is purposeless does not mean it ‘cannot take as its form a purpose existing independent of it’, or some ‘genuine need’. Rather, ‘*within* itself’ an *artwork* (the exemplar) must be *independent* of such purpose, and any external purpose must ‘be *merely form* for it’ (Schelling 1989: 223).⁹⁶ (In other words, its *internal* purpose must be purposeless - as the Principle demands).

Hence while Schelling regards the *Didactic Poem* as the most improbable art – given its typically *subjective* orientation and entire basis in *knowledge* - it is still in principle achievable. What would make it so, tells us about the relation of intentionality, form, and purpose to *content*. The ‘didactic poem’ would need to suspend its *intention* in the work itself, so that it appears to exist for its own sake. But this can’t be done unless ‘the form of knowledge’ in it is ‘internally capable of being a reflex of the All’. (We have, says Schelling [1989: 223], ‘merely to determine the kind of knowledge for which this is eminently and uniquely the case’).⁹⁷ So, a didactic poem’s subjective orientation (*intention*) and reliance on knowledge (*internal* purpose) work against its possibility as art (subject to *content*) - clearly predisposing it to low order *symbolic* expression.

By contrast, though *Satire* is clearly *externally* purposeful, it can still nonetheless become art by virtue of its *inherent objectivity* (internal purpose). This is what phenomenologically makes serious satire a higher form than comic satire, lending

⁹⁶ Emphasis added. cf. Aristotle’s distinction between art and artefact (Trimarchi 2022).

⁹⁷ For example, though numerous modern protest songs might well be artful, Schelling’s explanation phenomenologically separates most from, for instance, the likes of Billie Holiday’s *Strange Fruit* (a rendering of Abel Meeropol’s poem) - because of how it involves ‘the kind of knowledge’ he stipulates. It is clearly also the presence of proper metaphor elevating this song. While attempts at the didactic poem were made in ancient Greece, we cannot know if they achieved their goal since only fragments survive. Schelling (1989: 226) singles out *De Rerum Natura* by Lucretius Carus in the first century CE, as perhaps coming close to succeeding. He, not unsurprisingly, given the rudimentary development of this form in his time, concludes that ‘contemporary authors can present not a single genuinely poetic work of this type’ in modernity. Though, as my example suggests, this is now contestable.

it a greater propensity for *metaphoric* elevation. Brief examination uncovers its truer epic qualities deferred in modernity's decline into 'efficient cause', which parabolically explains the prevalence of comic satire today.

Comic satire (eg., by Aristophanes, Aeschylus, and Euripides) was once more artful (Schelling 1989: 227).⁹⁸ But it degenerated, as Athens fell, into crudeness 'combined with wickedness and baseness' producing only 'loathing and disgust' which Schelling says, 'can never be the subject of poetic humour'. Based on half-animal/human beings (satyrs), to succeed, comic satire had to 'remove as much guilt and responsibility as possible from its subjects... [who were]... much like animals... completely sensual'. It failed in its essential purpose, however, if *the human element* was not eliminated. But this failing became popular and grew to denigrate the subject. So much so that Athens made laws against satirising individuals and the state, which eventually became unenforceable as civic decline set in. Serious satire instead 'chastised vice, particularly audacious vice coupled with power'. It focused less on sensuality and more on the intellect; and more closely resembled *Drama* (the highest *metaphoric* verbal artform) with its sustained epic, objective sensibility. The most eminent effect of this kind of satire, says Schelling, 'is based precisely on the contrasting of the universal and the particular'.

Though not completely absent, good serious satire is far less prevalent in contemporary modernity than comic satire.⁹⁹ The latter is most practiced today as 'satiric comedy' (eg., in *Stand-up*), a form of entertainment comparable with the comic satire that rose in popularity with the decline of Athens. As public life deteriorates, it is not surprising that the attention span required to sustain serious satire might diminish and be overtaken by a lower epic form which simply employs succession, novelty, sensation, and denigration by 'the basest of methods'. Simple entertainments of course have their value. But at a certain point, when all they can do is distract us from the tragedy of a 'fallen world', are we not as Neil Postman claimed merely 'amusing ourselves to death'?

⁹⁸ Schelling adds however: 'It would be foolish... to consider the comedies of Aristophanes as belonging to the genre of satire, the way one often makes *Don Quixote* of Cervantes into satire.'

⁹⁹ *Monty Python*, for instance, used both but only occasionally succeeded in serious satire. Other satiric comedy (eg., *Seinfeld*) sometimes leans toward it, but close analysis shows serious satire is unpopular, considered 'intellectual', hence subordinated by public demand (due to the decline in the public sphere).

As the *Principle of Art* fragmented along with the human telos, the same ‘grand narrative’ transformations degrading public life gradually moved our attention from ‘final’ to ‘efficient’ causes in *the particular* as well. These begin to surface in the different intentionalities separating the ancient epic/modern romantic epic forms, as I have sketched out above. However, closer examination shows why they ultimately changed *our basic conceptions* of tragedy and comedy, and how we imagine utopian and anti-utopian futures too.

5. FROM FINAL TO EFFICIENT CAUSE (THE MODERN EPIC REVERSAL)

The key difficulty with the modern epic form is that, despite retaining a ‘more or less universal’ subject matter, it is essentially subjective. As this false epic evolves subjectivity/particularity can only be placed into the object and objectivity/universality into the artist, or vice versa, by grossly artificial means. Hence, by replacing genuinely heroic characters and objective universality, the romantic principle that invaded the modern epic was one of ‘a kind of flacid, morally sentimental universality’. Beauty and Truth have no ‘objectifying suspension’ in which to realistically merge. ‘[T]he individuality of the poet plays a much greater role’, says Schelling, such that – due to this form’s predisposed standpoint of reflection - they are always in some way unremoved from the narrative. This means the object cannot develop fully within the organisation of the whole, limiting the scope of the material, ensuring any metaphoric utterance must ‘flee completely into the act (actions)’. Furthermore (Schelling 1989: 229-230):

Since such organization is actually the product of the poet himself, and not the object, it allows us to admire no other beauty save that of free choice or even caprice. In and for itself the romantic-epic content resembles a wild, overgrown forest full of strange beings, a labyrinth in which there is no guiding thread other than the mischievousness and mood of the poet.

There are, as with *early* lyric poesy, nevertheless opportunities in the *Romantic Epic* for objective, real, and expansive expression (ie., ‘plurivocity’, in Ricoeur’s terms). These sometimes appear in modern artform innovations like the novel or cinema. For instance, as the first novels were being written (in the west), Ariosto’s influential poem *Orlando Furioso* is singled out by Schelling for its use of a plurality of protagonists. The protagonist is here ‘not emphasised alone and often removed from the stage’, compared with Wieland’s *Oberon* which resorts to

‘merely... romantic, often sentimental biography in verse form’ (Schelling 1989: 228). There are ways, therefore, to revive the ancient sensibility using modern forms.

However, the problem at the heart of modern epic poesy, according to Schelling (1989: 223), is that in its *essence* it ‘arrives at its goal by means of contrasts’, and is concerned more with universalising *from* the particular than with portraying *Identity*. Its universalising tendency becomes purposefully, univocally, oriented toward *efficient* causes. It always then ‘requires of the subject that he transport himself into a world of fantasy, something the epic of antiquity never does’ (Schelling 1989: 230).¹⁰⁰ Means become ends in themselves. And in this leap of faith it is only by ‘renouncing the universality of the subject matter and seeking it in the *form*’, that we are drawn into any “objective” portrayal (ie., a *false* ‘objectivity). Form then becomes the object of dominance; the only way in which any universality or objectivity in it can approach an epic sensibility.

Briefly noting some features in the development of our modern mythological narratology unveils the phenomenological intentionality in key essences and potences which produce higher/lower meaning-values in poesy. They inform what should ideally be cultivated or avoided. What this ultimately reveals however is the various ways attention to *ends* (‘final causes’) becomes overshadowed by *means* (‘efficient causes’) in the particularity of this ‘epic’ transition; the illusion of freedom this creates; and the essential difficulties the Aesthete must now overcome.

The Novel (Fodder for Human Hunger vs ‘Epic Universality’)

Prose becomes the form of necessity for the novel, because no *poetic* meter could authentically assume the now active voice of the poet (as in the hexameter of Homer). ‘The novel’, says Schelling (1989: 231), ‘seeking to achieve the objectivity of the epic as regards form, yet with more restricted subject matter, has no other choice than prose, which is the highest indifference’. This limitation demands certain things of prose to achieve the more dramatic orientation which separation from the ancient epic required of novels. At its best, prose ‘is accompanied by a quiet rhythm and an ordered periodic structure’ which, while it ‘does not

¹⁰⁰ That is, the *lower* order modern ‘fantasy’ (see how ‘fantasy’ is distinguished in Trimarchi 2024).

command the ear like rhythmic meter... on the other hand displays no trace of coercion and thus requires the more careful cultivation'. Though in Schelling's time novels were relatively undeveloped, his greatest praise goes to works like *Don Quixote* (Cervantes) and *Wilhelm Meister* (Goethe) for how they approach 'the metaphoric'.

Given the above mentioned inherently subjectivising ideational tendencies, consider subsequent *formal* limitations on how meaning must be developed in the Novel. Firstly, *Narrative* is now the new main driver replacing the once *objective* (metaphoric) epic elements producing dramatic tension. Yet it must do this 'without fully being *Drama*'. In other words, the Protagonist must still be the 'full garb' gathering together all that is connected in the novel so as to resemble an epic sensibility as much as possible. But because the object (subject matter) is now limited, modern writers must replace the ancient epic universality with a 'relatively greater indifference toward the main object or the protagonist than that exercised by the epic poet' (Schelling 1989: 231). Hence Acts, emerging from characters, produce Events. *Dispositions*, *Attitudes*, and *Events*, inhabited by *Characters* and *Deeds* then form the basis upon which a novel may 'linger' to suspend Time as the ancient epic did. And to do this it must incline itself toward *Drama*, by turning 'action' *itself* into the Object.

Pitfalls, however, are many. Schelling provides a long list, unnecessary to detail here, that produce further hurdles for prose's limitations. Most can be read as guiding principles for the optimum construction of both the Novel and Drama. Take, for instance, in plot-driven narratives, the use of chance (Schelling 1989: 232). While permitted in the true epic, if left to *rule* the novel the element of chance causes a 'capricious, one-sided principle' to replace 'the true image of life'. For a novel to be effective, 'character and chance must play into each other's hands'. Yet if character alone dominates, as in much modern literature the subjectivising tendency that Schelling identifies as the main limitation of the modern 'epic' continually re-emerges (Schelling 1989: 234):

It follows naturally from this that almost the entirety of what one calls *novels* – as Falstaff calls his militia *fodder* for powder – is fodder for human hunger, the hunger for material deception and for the insatiable gullet of spiritual emptiness and of empty time seeking to be killed.

Nevertheless, there are exceptions which, essentially by exhibiting features associated with the true Homeric epic, show how to circumvent such difficulties.

Not losing sight of ‘the basic characteristic of the epic’, universality, is key. Particularly, organising ‘the transformation of everything dispersed in time, and yet decisively present, into a common identity’. Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* garners approval from Schelling here because ‘...[t]he theme of the whole is the struggle between the real and the ideal’. The main challenge for literature in modernity is to develop a true poetic epic sensibility for our age which can offer an ‘indissoluble mixture’ of universal references to science, religion, and art, as much as *history* now, on a larger canvas (Schelling 1989: 238).

One attempt which uniquely succeeded in achieving such ‘epic universality’ is the *Divine Comedy* of Dante. Notably, it stands alone and completely outside of Schelling’s mythological categories because it cannot be subsumed under any other genres ‘but that of its own invention’. This trilogy, he says, ‘began the history of modern poesy’ though cannot be seen as a particular work of a particular age, or stage of culture. It is ‘archetypal through universal validity’. Dante gives us, ‘not a particular model but rather the general model of a view of the universe’. It can thus only ‘categorically’ be summed up as ‘a unique medium between allegory and [metaphoric]-objective configuration’. Its form is ‘neither plastic, picturesque, nor musical’, but rather all these together in harmony. It is ‘neither dramatic, epic, nor lyrical’, but a unique combination of them all (Schelling 1989: 243, 247).

Dante’s intentionality is seamless with the work. ‘His first entrance into Hell takes place just as it had to’, says Schelling, elevated as he is by the vision of Beatrice ‘through which divine energy is conducted to him’, expressed in a single line immediately placing him *in* the metaphor (Schelling 1989: 244).¹⁰¹ The subjective and objective merge here, as in the highest potency of the verbal arts, *Drama*. But before examining how this form too fell victim to means, dwelling on Dante’s achievement which is, in a word, *historic*, permits contemplation on Art’s fragmenting journey from ancient to modern mythology, and the challenges facing artists today (Schelling 1989: 241).

¹⁰¹ The metaphor of the *Divine Comedy*, as Schelling suggests, is a complexity driven by Beatrice being the allegory of theology. His characters are both historical in themselves as well as the fact that they collectively maintain the larger metaphor (by virtue of all punishments being metaphorical). Even the fact that it is called a ‘comedy’, because it is in form the reversal of tragedy, beginning with misfortune and ending in happiness, is itself a metaphoric reversal in which theological interests and the affairs of state are juxtaposed. In all these senses, Dante *is himself* the *Divine Comedy*.

From the very beginnings of Greek poesy, in Homer we see it cleanly separated from science and philosophy, and we see this separation process continued to the point of total antithesis between the poet and the philosopher, an antithesis that tried in vain to effect harmony through an allegorical explanation of the Homeric poems. In the contemporary age the science of poesy and mythology was first, a mythology that cannot be mythology without being universal and drawing all the elements of present culture – science, religion, art itself, into its sphere and without connecting not only the subject matter of the present but all that of the past into a perfect unity. Since art requires the self-enclosed and limited, whereas the spirit of the world drives toward the unrestricted and tears down every limitation with immutable steadfastness, the individual must step into this conflict, employ absolute freedom, and try to extract enduring forms from this mixture of the age. Within these arbitrarily drawn forms he must through absolute individuality lend inner necessity and external universality to the structure of his poesy. Dante did this.

Drama: Freedom, Necessity, & Transgressions Against the Person

In *Drama*, both Shakespeare and Calderón rank with Sophocles in Schelling's estimation of artists who, like Dante, exhibit the highest standard because of two factors. Firstly their 'epic universality', and secondly the seamlessness of their intentionality with the work. The artist's intention passes over and merges with it, becoming indiscernible precisely due to its 'absolute discernible-ness'. Yet among these artists, key differences can be found. In Shakespeare, says Schelling, this 'objectivation and indiscernibleness of intention... are based only on unfathomability'; whereas in Calderón and Sophocles intention is completely transparent and 'so fused with the object that it no longer appears as intention'. Their portrayals show that 'the most perfect pattern can be perfectly presented and yet indiscernible' (Schelling 1989: 275).¹⁰²

This 'ultimate indifference between intention and necessity' in the merger of form with purpose is of course discoverable in all great art. In the best dramas, form and content interpenetrate one another so intimately as to make the

¹⁰² Schelling argues that in Shakespeare we admire 'only that element of infinite *understanding*, which by being infinite appears as reason, [whereas] in Calderón we must recognize *reason* itself'. Other passages show Shakespeare's heavier reliance on historical material, and meticulous plot transcriptions from novellas. He is though regarded by Schelling as 'the greatest creator of *character*'; who nevertheless 'knows that highest beauty only as *individual* character'. 'He was not', says Schelling (1989: 270-271), 'able to subordinate everything to it, because as a modern – as one who comprehends the eternal not within limitation, but rather within boundlessness – he is too widely involved in universality'. Thus, Shakespeare 'portrays neither an ideal nor a conventional world, but rather always a real world'.

characters' motivations and events appear more directly as the artist's *objective* epic intentionality. Modern dramas are however often too transparently coercive in this respect, with no guiding thread besides the 'mood of the poet'.¹⁰³

Drama is the merger of the two antitheses of the epic and the lyrical. It is the 'higher identity' of the two in which the infinite/finite and necessity/freedom find balance. As noted, lyric poesy is overall characterised by freedom (and reverts to the subject), whereas epic poesy is characterised by necessity (reverting to the object). In the latter, necessity itself is fate and it is therefore 'more concerned with *success* than with deed'. Whereas, within lyric poesy all conflict is resolved in the subject, hence a preponderance of 'freedom' turns action and fantasy into key elements. The ancient epic intentionality might appear more 'positivistically' coercive since it employs a narrator. But it does this because pure identity or necessity must dominate, and this is a means to call us 'back from too great a participation in the action of the characters'. This lends it *objective* quality. In great dramatic narratives, success is driven by mixing the same events that might occur in the epic with interest in the characters. Ideally, drama is then a form in which the action is 'not portrayed in the narrative, but rather is itself actually presented', and 'the subjective is portrayed objectively' (Schelling 1989: 250).

Failing this the danger is that *Events* become dominant. On the other hand, *Character* becomes dominant when event and character become inseparable. In Drama at its best, however, lyrical subjectivity merges with epic objectivity. It must portray necessity 'genuinely caught in a struggle with freedom, yet such that a balance obtains between the two'. Art (generally) is *greatest* when 'necessity is victorious without freedom succumbing... [and]... freedom triumphs without necessity being overcome'. This condition prefigures the significance of balance concerning *all* elements in *any* artform (just as in Nature). And in great drama it manifests metaphorically in and through *human* nature itself. The freedom-necessity balance in fact *defines* the Person. Because only humans have the luxury of choice, to either succumb to necessity or elevate themselves above it through their disposition (Schelling 1989: 249).

Even at the height of tragedy, then, Art is always in search of this Necessity-

¹⁰³ This is evident in any "classic" cinematic modern epic drama (eg., *The Godfather*). However, there are few, like De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*, which manage to employ a more ancient epic sensibility.

Freedom balance in *the Person* and is hence ‘utopian’ (ie., futurising) and never anti-utopian. As Schelling argues, it is *the implication* of human nature in the conflict between freedom and necessity which counts most in art. The ‘highest manifestation of human nature through art’ is therefore only possible ‘where courage and greatness of character are victorious over misfortune’. And freedom must emerge from ‘the struggle that threatens to destroy the subject... as that absolute freedom for which there is no conflict’ (Schelling 1989: 250).

Genuine artistic intentionality, in any artform, therefore achieves balance always as an orientation toward a utopian worlding. George Orwell’s so-called “anti-utopian” novels, for instance, underscore a utopian ideal. It is the indifference between this ideal and the real which drives the serious epic-satiric content forward, not transgressions against the Person. Genuinely dystopian orientation in art is, however, *necessarily* nihilist because its intentionality *purposefully* creates dissonance in the balance we seek between freedom and necessity. Favouring one or the other as an ‘efficient’ conceit for the drama. It is in such cases that human nature is often cast as *unnatural*. Portraying ugliness, on the other hand, as Schelling says is simply portrayal of the *ideal* of beauty in reverse (as negation). So, we should not confuse this (in and of itself) with a necessarily nihilistic intent.

Any “art” portraying personhood as *ideally* an antithesis of courage or greatness of character is anti-utopian. Because such transgressions against *the Person* utilise art’s Purpose and Reason for anti-collectivist, anti-social and, under the terms of Schelling’s system, *anti-Art* ends.

Tragedy and Comedy (Reorienting ‘Final Cause’)

Any such *de-futurising* attempts at artmaking set on prising apart the Beauty-Truth and Necessity-Freedom mergers, can nevertheless not produce a genuine Tragedy in true epic fashion. Schelling’s advance on the Aristotelian tragic hero assures us of this. Aristotle’s portrayal of ‘a person who is exceptional as regards neither virtue nor justice, and who does not fall into misfortune as a result of wickedness or crime, but rather as a result of *error*’, requires the tragic person to be *necessarily* guilty of a transgression. And that the ‘highest misfortune’ is to become guilty through error. But as Schelling argues this guilt must then ‘itself be *necessity*’. Which means it can only be contracted ‘not through error, as

Aristotle says, but through the will of destiny and an unavoidable fate, or by the vengeance of the gods' (Schelling 1989: 252).¹⁰⁴ Now, the greatest victory of Freedom is to 'voluntarily bear the punishment for an unavoidable transgression in order to manifest... freedom precisely in the loss of that very same freedom, and to perish amid a declaration of free will' (Schelling 1989: 254). Hence the real 'sublimity' of Tragedy lies in the *guiltless* guilty person accepting punishment voluntarily. For, 'thereby alone does freedom transfigure itself into the highest identity with necessity' (Schelling 1989: 255).

What Schelling alerts us to is that in our now all too prevalent modern nihilistic dramas (tragic *or* comic) the protagonist's motivations are invariably oriented toward an '*empirical-comprehensible necessity*' privileging means over ends. The 'poet', says Schelling, here 'tries to lower himself to the crude mental capacity of the spectators'. This 'art of motivation' consists in 'giving the protagonist merely a character of enormous breadth out of which nothing can emerge in an absolute fashion, and in which thus all possible motives can have free play'. But a protagonist is weakened when made to appear 'the playground for external determining factors'. And as Schelling (1989: 256) insists, such a protagonist 'is not tragic'.

In most modern tragedies (including Shakespeare's) the tragic hero is usually made guilty of some transgression. But Schelling insists that *genuine* Tragedy must involve *ideals* of human courage and greatness of character as its *substantive* subject and object (ie., essence). Because it is 'the reconciliation and harmony residing in... tragedy' that leaves our souls cleansed; not our indomitable resistance against, nor resignation to, an inevitable fate. It is in virtue of the fact that this 'fate' *does not devastate us*, that greatness of character emerges (Schelling 1989: 254):

As soon as the protagonist himself achieves clarity... and his fate lies open before him, there is no more doubt for him... And precisely at the moment of greatest suffering he enters into the greatest liberation and greatest dispassion. From that moment on, the insurmountable power of fate, which earlier appeared in absolute dimensions, now appears merely relatively great, for it is overcome by the will and becomes the [metaphor] of the absolutely great, namely, of the attitude and disposition of sublimity.

Anti-art, privileging means over ends, hence presents a *completely* different idea

¹⁰⁴ De Sica's *Bicycle Thieves* provides a good example of Schelling's idea of *genuine* Tragedy.

of tragedy. And since, as Schelling says, ‘the highest morality’ too is expressed in this balance between necessity and freedom upon which Tragedy rests, the *morality* of our contrived ‘final causes’ in art are also in question. Because modernity lacks the kind of fate that the ancient mythology engendered, in the quiet mild necessity of a united worldview (or at least ‘being able to set it in motion’), our aesthetic privation takes on a moral dimension (Trimarchi 2022). Contemporary dramas, which often present ‘great transgressions without thereby suspending the noble element of the morality involved’, deprive us of Reason (Schelling 1989: 267). And by invariably placing ‘*the necessity of the transgression*’ into the hands of indomitable or weak characters, they leave us no reasonable way of reconciling *our* ‘fate’. Instead, we project our ‘will to power’ over it in fantasies of ‘being in control’. And name *this* ‘Art’.

Just as limiting the modern Imagination like this does not produce genuine Tragedy, neither can it produce genuine Comedy. Though related, Comedy and Tragedy, and their meaning-value essences and potences, can be clearly distinguished phenomenologically. Tragedy is the first true manifestation of drama. Comedy is the second because it follows tragedy, as its reversal. In tragedy, necessity or identity are the *object* and freedom or difference are the *subject*. This subject-object relation is simply reversed in comedy (Schelling 1989: 263). What diminishes the power of *both* is not realising the real significance of the albeit different relation between Reason and Ends in each. Neglecting *why* these are critical, we may not fully appreciate what, *in their synthesis*, these forms together have to offer contemplating the ‘mystery of *all* life’.

Schelling’s prescription for *real* comedy reveals why fate is an essential ingredient. ‘Every reversal of a necessary and decisive relationship posits an obvious contradiction or absurdity within the subject of this reversal’, he says. Certain kinds of absurdities ‘are *unbearable*’, because they are either ‘theoretically perverse and ruinous’ or practically disadvantageous. In Comedy’s reversal, firstly ‘an *objective* and thus not really theoretical absurdity is posited’; and secondly ‘the relationship within that absurdity is such that the objective is not necessity but rather difference or freedom’ (Schelling 1989: 263-264).

Necessity insofar as it is the objective element, however, appears only as *fate* and only to that extent is terrible. Since, then, all *fear* of necessity as fate is simultaneously suspended through this assumed reversal of the relationship, and

since we assume that in *this* relationship of the action no genuine fate is even possible, a pure enjoyment of the absurdity in and for itself becomes possible...

But because particularity ultimately becomes meaningless in an objective relationship to necessity, 'the highest fate' can be made present in Comedy. This is what makes comedy itself 'the highest tragedy' (Schelling 1989: 264). The *highest* comedy therefore is when the greatest universal *contrast* between freedom (falling to the subject) and necessity (falling to the object) occurs.

In this relation we also distinguish *true* comedy from mere novelty or frivolous sensual titillation. A difference often lost today in paying little attention to how we intuit *Reason*. Comedy arises when, witnessing no genuine fate is possible in the contrast between freedom and necessity, we become tense and prepare to confront any absurdity defying comprehension. But, noticing immediately 'in this tension the complete nonsense and impossibility of the whole affair', we relax: 'a transition expressing itself externally as laughter' (Schelling 1989: 264).

Reason and 'final cause' are thus *necessarily* built into our responses in *both* Tragedy and Comedy. They are obtained *automatically* in cognition via the natural impulse *to reconcile freedom and necessity*. Not, in comedy for instance, via *sensual* stimulation eliciting laughter. Otherwise tickling would qualify as comedy. Yet the modern construction of the *character* of Art I have portrayed above – degrading personhood, and the relation of means to ends as it does - is so common in contemporary mainstream drama, literature, music, and visual arts, that we may well wonder where real tragedy and comedy went. And with it, the highest Aristotelian virtue: *Contemplation*. The 'postmodern gaze' that aimlessly revels in irresoluteness, for which materialist counter-obsession provides the only possible antidote, has effectively replaced them with alienation or distraction. But as we can see, only nihilism lurks beneath this kind of artistic intentionality, leaving no possibility of 'soul cleansing'. And no way to 're-world the world'.

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The aesthetic privation produced by the modern mythology presents an illusion of choice. Comedy is often reduced to mere frivolity, and Tragedy can only treat the element of morality essentially symbolically; leaving us incapable of logically linking either back to ethics. Tragedy, by disabling contemplation of the meaning of transgressions against the Person, reduces ethics to 'moralising',

leaving many confused as to what a ‘serious person’ is.¹⁰⁵ Comedy, though offering some respite, no longer helps us distinguish why play is not an end in itself and cannot be taken so seriously. With fate replacing destiny and made to appear meaningless, contemporary dramas usually make a reductive mockery of ‘morals’. While romantic comedy or action narratives in novels and films compete as amusements. All are increasingly served up via sterile, disembodied, virtual-world imaginaries.

As the highest expression of the modern epic (in theatre, cinema, or literature), Drama is predicated on the juxtaposition of freedom and necessity in a divided world; and as such it has been made ‘fit for purpose’ in modernity. Contemporary drama is thus inevitably highly prone to accentuating the element of fantasy. Not the higher order fantasy which Schelling identifies as the essential precursor of imagination: a re-productive imagination capable of moving humanity beyond circular reasoning. But mere ‘phantasy’, *in-formed* dramatically via all manner of extreme portrayals and combinations of ‘character’ and ‘act’, only providing fodder for our appetites and aversions. Everywhere, meaningless plot devices like the ‘MacGuffin’ feature in modern storytelling.¹⁰⁶ There is little real choice or advancement in the narrative order of modern life, though ‘choice’ and ‘progress’ are what ‘the many’ are led to believe they possess in a multiplicity of consumables.

What Aristotle’s *Poetics* had deemed ‘extraordinary’ in Art, became “miraculous” in modernity; producing merely predictably subjectivised dispositions, attitudes, and events. But this conception of art can only produce the “creative” market-driven environment we have become accustomed to as ‘entertainment’. Though the modern epic reversal presents great challenges for the Aesthete today, Drama can still be a very powerful force. Because, combining both verbal and non-verbal arts, it is the only genuinely *metaphoric form*: ‘it does not merely mean or signify its objects, but rather places them before our very eyes’ (Schelling 1989: 261). And, in the hands of great dramatists, this metaphoric power can be harnessed to re-orient our quest. To find our true place in Nature,

¹⁰⁵ See Trimarchi (2022) for Aristotle’s definition of a ‘serious person’ and how we should understand Play.

¹⁰⁶ The ancients’ *deus ex machina* (‘send in the gods’) is now largely replaced by the ‘MacGuffin’ - defined as an object, device, or event used for character motivation; but which is insignificant, unimportant, or irrelevant in itself - in fact, originating as ‘trivial or worthless’ meaning lying at the root of some story.

through tragic or comic polyphonic narratives.

What is needed for this, however, is an ‘ancient epic’ sensibility toward Destiny, the Person, and Art, capable of returning us to Reason under a New Mythology.

CONCLUSION

Long before Nietzsche, Schelling identified Art and Humanity’s joint meaning crisis in the aesthetic alienation associated with the modern mythological orientation toward reality. Many have since made this connection with the rise of scientism, rampant capitalism, and polarisation fuelling nihilism, war, overextension, and now an imminent global ecological existential crisis. All collapsing civilisations experience similar conditions, but we have for the first time *as a totality* reached irreversible turning points that could make our home on this planet uninhabitable. Creating a sustainable future relies on prudent self-government. Which in turn relies on an ability to reconcile higher vs lower values in making judgements. To recognise *real* ends in themselves, vs means *mistaken* as ends; in other words, ‘the good’ of internal vs external ‘objectives’. This accounts for Art’s real purpose because aesthetics, as C. S. Peirce argued, is that science ultimately directing all such discernment to do with ‘human conduct’.

Our contemporary aesthetic experience has been described by the philosopher Bernard Stiegler as a ‘catastrophe’, with ‘the seizure of control of the symbolic by industrial technology’, making it ‘both the weapon and the theatre of economic war’ (Howells & Moore 2013: 119). Stiegler goes beyond Adorno or Horkheimer to admonish modern ‘cultural industries’, identifying the mechanisms which have replaced our aesthetics with conditioning, ‘producing alienation and anomie on a massive scale’ under the ‘imperatives of marketing’. With art making and its admiring reduced to utility, the strength of conviction in our imaginaries lapses into mere hapless novelty (‘phantasy’). And because of the swarming effect on semiosis in Nature, manifesting naturally enough as it does in humanity (eg., ideas ‘going viral’), it matters not whether people *engage* with “art”. Aesthetic sensibility is habituated *by association* via the ‘general aesthetic’, making what Stiegler describes all pervasive in our habitus.

Art is however *our ultimate way of valuing*, of making propositions opening up realistic possibilities. As Aristotle says, in art production as in life, ‘correct reasoning’ can be applied to on one hand *permit* ‘the proper choice of means to

an end' which is given. And on the other *require* deliberation according to what is 'advantageous in relation to the end' (Aristotle 2011: 283). A genuinely utopian proposition/ideal makes virtuous *purpose* - not manipulative means - the object. Art is separated from the 'general aesthetic' by such purpose (enacted purposelessly in praxis); hence a *genuine* mythology, though *affected* by both, is only *consecrated* in the 'collectivising intent' at the heart of art's universalising claim on us. Which is why it is important to distinguish them, and the opposing ways universalising occurs in the ancient and modern mythologising.

In antiquity destiny took on an objective epic sensibility which allowed people to take full possession of themselves. As the modern mythology evolved, through the development of the *Romantic Epic*, fate became subjectivised, and an indomitable hubristic personality now presides over a fragmented form of 'individuality'. A scientific worldview took hold, unable to account for human *Spirit* and our cosmological relation to Nature and History.¹⁰⁷ The Kantian/Hegelian/Heideggerian so-called 'demand' which Art makes on us, in fact propelled a 'modern epic' reversal of the relation between means and ends in our mythologising. This favoured speculation aligned with deeply held assumptions implicit in a manipulative 'emotivist' ideology driving the human telos. Modern fantasy developed to assuage these assumptions often with dystopian imaginaries which, in artmaking and life, separated Beauty from Truth and Freedom from Necessity.

I have previously argued Schelling's *Principle* of art retrieves the ancient sensibility by putting the individual back in relational context with humanity as a whole, without succumbing to the historicisation of Art or the Person. And why an *ahistorical, ontological, cosmological* 'process metaphysics' of Art challenges the modern way of worlding (Trimarchi 2024). Extending this argument, here I have shown how 'natural laws' circumscribing construction of *art in the particular* turn on the sharp contrast in reality produced by these two modes of mythologising. In its 'material' as well as 'immaterial' particularity, Art's more *realistic* claim on humanity reaches for a far deeper *responsibility to respond* to both the natural world and our manufactured creations. The artwork only reveals higher meaning

¹⁰⁷ As Gare (2011) claims, Hegelian reactions to Kant leading to hyper-rationalism 'had reduced nature to an "other" posited by Spirit' which 'dissolved the individual into a cipher of Reason'.

phenomenologically in its *productivity of interaction with knowledge*, as long as this is not in any way mediated by symbol. Its particular truth lies more in the ‘how’ of an artwork’s origin, than the ‘what’ of its empirical contents. Accounting for this means shifting awareness to the genuine artistic intent present in it, which simultaneously directs us to unhistoricisable ‘generalities’. That is, the indifferences in polarities of nonconscious/conscious, necessity/freedom, beauty/truth etc., relevant to the particular *essences* and *potences* constituting the inherent limitations of each artform. Under the terms of this alternative grounding to Hegel’s aesthetics, we can summarise what Schelling calls upon us to attend to regarding the ‘objective sensibility’ of any artwork.

First, we must question the artwork’s ‘universality’ *in reality*. Because only insofar as its propositional or disclosing ‘universal’ or ‘identity itself’ is *transformed into the particular*, is it real. The ‘ideal unity’ of the artwork only becomes real by *negation*, as the privation or the *limitation* of reality in *form*. But because all form is mediated by ‘technologies’ which produce its ‘materiality’ we must learn to pay attention to its ‘*immateriality*’ (non-formal qualities) in order to gain a clearer perspective of how we as active subjects become indispensable to the *objectification* of its form. This requires cultivating a habitual attention to the formation of art which aligns with an ethical intentionality that is *realistic* (in other words, looking for the person/public nexus in the work which speaks to human conduct and self-control).

Heraclitus says ‘He who does not expect will not find the unexpected, for it is trackless and unexplored’.¹⁰⁸ At the outset, therefore, we need to be equipped to distinguish the action of gestalts (‘general aesthetic’) from that producing higher meaning in thought processes. This means habitually actively seeking *Reason* in affordances moving us *beyond concept*, producing ‘the metaphoric’. And looking for those adding possible futures and pasts to our intuited knowledge of the subject matter via the implicit actantial structure. Hence using the individual parts to bring the artwork’s wholeness to life is key. The artwork’s ‘*whole*’ must be represented metaphorically, not empirically or *mediated by* symbol. All of its parts should not represent a single feature, rather *the wholeness of its object’s existence*. Higher value in any form is expressed via application of greatest energy into the *essential* parts which inform the ideal. As we absorb proper metaphor in poetic

¹⁰⁸ From Diogenes Laertius, 1964, IX, §5 (cited in McGilchrist 2010: 268).

speculation, it is not that we merely reflect upon an image, rather *we relive a process of transformation which embodies reasoning itself*.

Though the artwork is definitely *not* a ‘person’ (rather, a theory), thinking of it as such instead of a ‘thing’ here is useful. Because, like *the Person*, art is the unification of all its ‘acts and deeds’ in *an idea* - which we can *only* intuit. By taking it out of time, exhausting the infinity of its *whole* meaning - all its parts relative to the whole (person<->Public/art<->Art) - we approach its *absolute* portrayal. The universal drawn into the particular portrays the whole *within* the part and all parts within the unity of the whole.

In portraying *the Object* (universal) metaphorically like this, we are automatically attending to its metamorphic properties - the interaction between parts and wholes in becoming. A state of activity set before our eyes, as Paul Ricoeur says. Therefore, there are *necessarily* lower and higher levels of this activity which an artwork displays. A focus on the schematic (parts *as* wholes) can trick us into only rendering or perceiving lower order meaning such as ‘imitation’. As the parts become more related to the whole, allegory emerges. Eventually, at the highest point of merger of the universal into the particular, as all schematic, allegoric and metaphoric meaning dissolves into one ‘absolute’ idea (which now breathes new life into all its parts to produce optimum possibility), the artwork becomes a disclosing *be-ing*.

In Heidegger’s terms, the object is ‘worlded’. Or, using our ‘person-artwork’ analogy, *the Object* (whether in a still life/landscape/historical painting, poem, or film) ideally takes on a form consisting in embracing *the idea of a person* that has ‘dispersed into the individual gestures and moments of life’.¹⁰⁹ The artwork collects the composite of this idea into *one* moment, ‘materialising’ the portrayal which, as Schelling says, is now ennobled by the *Principle* of art. From form and formlessness, *objectivity* arises. The object portrayed becomes more like the essence of the real object itself. More like the *idea* of the object (its Ideal ‘being’), than its mere materiality portrayed in any one of its individual moments. This way, the object obtains a *narratology*, a ‘narrative form’ which transforms its momentary symbolic significance into at least allegorical, and at best metaphoric,

¹⁰⁹ As noted in Trimarchi (2022), importantly, a person can *never* be an object, lest it be degraded. Nor can an artwork be anthropomorphised.

dimensions of enhanced meaningfulness.

This is how, via art's praxis, we idealise anything to make it 'more real than reality itself'. Its essential nature, 'worlded' like this, finds *Balance*. The 'drama' of it is necessity genuinely caught in a struggle with freedom, where neither is victorious without succumbing to the other.¹¹⁰ Which unfolds as a metaphor for human nature itself (no matter what the object). In this 'drama' we notice what binds *the person* to art, because *only humans* have choice, and we must take sides in this struggle. In every artwork, therefore, we can either find the *ethical intentionality* corresponding to a proposition about human conduct and self-control, or not. Genuine art can *never* be anti-utopian because in it any foreboding projections must always return to the greatest character and courage of *the person* (in either Tragedy or Comedy).

Furthermore, this ultimately governs what subject matter is suitable for artistic inquiry. And, since consciousness and hence Reason are at their highest expression in humans, the highest 'style' - or more precisely, Winkelman's *highest simplicity* - is what affords most transparency of Balance and Reason simultaneously. We should not however confuse simplicity with mere 'deconstruction'. 'Minimalism' for instance only projects meaning if the style itself is not the subject of but the means to project it. That is, like any artistic *style*, if its ultimate focus on the particular actually *does* draw universality into it. To achieve this, it must remove from the object that which *does not belong* to its *essence*. Since this is the only way to approach the ideal element (ie., via the *limitation* of reality), *not* via the elevation of the particular to the universal as so much postmodern 'conceptual art' attempts to do.

Finally, because humans are naturally driven to seek 'pure identity' in activity, the artwork needs to impose variety or diversity to avoid uniformity (which is why parts are as important as the whole). But to find this identity, the artist needs to transcend nature in search of that expression of 'soul' in a work *which cannot be taken from experience*. Because everything in Nature (the 'general aesthetic') appears accidental, how the artist distinguishes genuine art for us - from the accidentality of personal experience (or objects like waterfalls) - is by drawing our attention

¹¹⁰ What aestheticians might call a "principle" of 'counterpoint' in various artforms, is really simply this in *all* genuine artworks.

away from this, toward only the necessary. There should be no doubt about the attribution of significance to any individual part of the artwork.¹¹¹ Similarly, as a whole, if an artwork's empirical-historical comprehensibility is necessary for its *understanding*, this puts the burden on the observer (hence accidentality).¹¹² All such tendencies in praxis reinforce the subjectivizing of art, running counter to the *collectivising intent* inherent in *Art as Principle*.

Thus, reaching the end of a film, where the main character's particular psychology and myriad personal experiences have hitherto mattered not an iota to us, except via some obscure chance of personal self-recognition (and reflective self-legitimation), we are naturally left feeling empty.¹¹³ Meaning is drained from any artwork if the fundamental characteristic of epic sensibility – universality – is abandoned. Since drawing *particularity* into universality like this cannot possibly produce in *the Object* a 'transformation of everything dispersed in time, and yet decisively present, into a common identity'. This *false* universalising tendency has nevertheless become "art's" signature in modernity.

To conclude, any future mythology of art, to be able to make the deeper claim on us it once did, must rise above *personality* (the affectation of 'individual' or 'part') without losing 'the person' – that ideal tied to an expression of the Other. This is the only way to address Humanity and Art's joint meaning crisis. Furthermore, if any global 'civic humanism' is possible, it must become that 'religion' which binds art with science and history in nature. All melded in a universal field of significance for the *utopian* quest of Human Ecology which art is empowered to mythologise. On the other hand, if we through art continue to reduce *value*-experiences to values *of* experiences, proliferating the idealising of *particularity* as

¹¹¹ This, as argued in Trimarchi (2022, 2024), is discovered in the activity of 'key affordances' in the actantial structure of the work.

¹¹² Further to this of course is the understanding that, as Schelling says, great art delivers higher meaning through mood and disposition – thus by non-literal and largely pre-cognitive means. This is why meaning emanating from Merleau-Ponty's 'obscure zone' can be identified as directing us toward an object which is a *way* of feeling rather than the *content* of feelings.

¹¹³ The exteriorization of the interior via art, or the domination of the outside by the inside, as earlier argued belies a tendency to emphasise subjectivity. When this kind of inquiry becomes the main subject in any artwork, self-consciousness appears in the content and the artists' intentionality is revealed as self-defeating because it has exclusively become a tool for such domination to be realised. *Hamlet* is a case in point where this was avoided by imposing variety or diversity to avoid uniformity. Unfortunately, not following Shakespeare's example has led to an overabundance of solipsistic navel gazing in contemporary drama, especially in cinema, where lower values are doggedly pursued to no meaningful end.

universal, we will continue to trace art's value back to theoretical measures, norms, and principles that are self-defeating and degrading of art. A 'normative' re-assessment of its connection to ethics and logic – as an aesthetics of meaning – under Schelling's framework instead offers a possible foundation upon which to create a new and genuinely progressive, realistic, future mythology.

Schelling's aesthetics surpassed both Kant's and Hegel's transcendental idealisms, because his rejection of both idealism and realism, materialism and spiritualism – those dualisms embedded in the 'dogmatising' metaphysics of Kant and Fichte, and the 'immanent' metaphysics of Kant – are evident in his system of art. His more speculative form of metaphysics – arguably owing much to his contemplations on art - as Arran Gare says, was capable of generalising 'features of experience to frame a comprehensive account of all domains of reality'. While Hegel grounded art in history, Schelling's 'synthetic' approach to reasoning (combining abductive, deductive, and inductive means) located it in the speculative dialectics of Whitehead's later development of 'process philosophy'. The nature of 'rationality' upon which art, in this mode of attendance, can obtain an 'objective' foothold is evident in the complexity science revolution and its re-establishment of natural philosophy.

Schelling's system therefore offers the best way, perhaps the only way, to move beyond the modern mythology and simultaneously develop art's higher meaning-value. Equally, it provides a defence for art as 'a science of Mind' (*Wissenschaft*) - integral to, yet separate from, philosophy. Realising thought does not progressively unfold from logically implicit contents, bringing the *inherently synthetic* nature of the reproductive imagination to light, reveals how we can best enhance it. Rather, thought begins with 'genuine opposition between thought and something opposing it or other factors within thought' (Gare 2011: 42). Thus Art's ontological, teleological, oppositional character - producing understanding as 'productivity' *and* 'product' of thought - makes it fundamentally unlike any other science. Its particular purchase on *thought* raises its status as our penultimate means for self-actualisation. A unique claim on the human telos, capable of re-orienting our destiny.

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