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Hegel and Nietzsche on the Death of Tragedy and Greek Ethical Life¹

One of the great unexplained themes in the development of German philosophy is the question of Hegel's influence on or relation to Nietzsche.² Despite the laudable recent work of Houlgate³ and others,⁴ there are still many details of the Hegel-Nietzsche relation which remain unexplored. Although Hegel's name and many of the key terms characteristic of his philosophy occur throughout Nietzsche's works, it is far from clear to what extent Nietzsche made a systematic study of Hegel's philosophy and to what extent his understanding of Hegel and Hegelianism was second-hand or derived through the filter of Schopenhauer's animosity.⁵ It is still an open question whether Nietzsche actually issued carefully considered criticisms of Hegel's thought or whether he, lacking the genuine familiarity with Hegel's philosophy, simply got in a few digs based on a sort of strawman which had been carefully cultivated by Hegel's opponents. The preponderance of the evidence seems to support the view that Nietzsche never read Hegel's texts carefully, if at all, although there is a minority view, defended most notably by Deleuze, according to which Nietzsche was thoroughly familiar with Hegel's writings.⁶ Deleuze argues that Nietzsche's own philosophy is a self-conscious criticism of Hegel based on a solid understanding of the thought of his predecessor. It has been suggested that some of these discrepancies might be accounted for by the fact that Nietzsche gradually emancipated himself from the influence of Schopenhauer and accordingly from Schopenhauer's critical stance toward Hegel. This would explain that while the early works seem markedly anti-Hegelian, the later works beginning in the 1880's seem to represent something of a *rapprochement* toward Hegel if not a full acceptance of some of Hegel's doctrines.⁷

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung for a generous research grant during the 1994–1995 academic year which enabled me to perform the research for this essay at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

2 This problem was first expressed by K. Joel in his *Nietzsche und die Romantik*, Jena 1905, 294. Cf. R. F. Beerling, „Hegel und Nietzsche“, *Hegel-Studien* 1 (1961), 229–246.

3 S. Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Criticism of Metaphysics*, Cambridge 1986.

4 D. Breazeale, „The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem“, *Nietzsche-Studien* 4 (1975), 146–164.

5 Cf. S. Houlgate, *Criticism of Metaphysics*, Chapter 2: „Nietzsche's View of Hegel“, 24–37.

6 G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, Paris 1962, 9, 223.

7 S. Houlgate, *Criticism of Metaphysics*, Chapter 2: „Nietzsche's View of Hegel“, 31–37. Cf. also S. Bläse, „Hegelianismus im Umfeld von Nietzsches ‚Geburt der Tragödie‘“, *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986), 70.

Although in the final analysis it is difficult to judge how well Nietzsche knew Hegel's texts, the question of influence might be adjudicated in another manner. Instead of analyzing the passages in which Nietzsche treats Hegel's philosophy directly, it might be more productive to seek out common themes or discussions and then to use them as a common basis for comparison. In this way, we would not be obliged to have recourse to speculation about Nietzsche's understanding or knowledge of Hegel's thought *per se*, but instead we might simply try to assess the degree to which certain central themes in Hegel's philosophy influenced Nietzsche's philosophical agenda. If we can determine that Nietzsche, in fact, was concerned with a number of the same fundamental issues as Hegel, then it would be clear that it is safe to talk about influence of some sort, even if that amounts to vague claims about certain ideas being in the air at a certain time. Moreover, a comparison of the two philosophers in terms of a specific theme might well be revelatory for an understanding of their respective methodologies and philosophical approaches.

In fact, upon careful examination, Nietzsche's texts reveal a number of points of contact with Hegel's philosophy in the form of similar discussions and themes. Despite their radically different conceptions of philosophy as a discipline and their different intellectual backgrounds and temperaments, Hegel and Nietzsche nonetheless shared many philosophical concerns, and the result of this is that they treat a number of the same issues, each in his own way and in accordance with his own methodology. In what follows, I would like to examine one of these important, yet hitherto neglected, points of overlap, specifically Hegel's view of the collapse of Greek ethical life and Nietzsche's account of the death of tragedy by the introduction of Socratic logic and rationality into dramatic art *via* the works of Euripides. It is not readily apparent in what way these two analyses can be seen as treating the same subject, and for this reason I would like here at the start to say a word about it in addition to mentioning a few methodological caveats.

We must be wary of unceremoniously extracting a given argument or analysis from the works of Hegel and Nietzsche since discussions which treat the views of these philosophers according to a specific topic, such as Greek tragedy, tend to distort the views in question precisely by placing them in a new context which is foreign to the thought of the philosopher in question. This is particularly misguided with respect to a thinker such as Hegel who consistently insisted on the systematic or speculative nature of philosophy. He tells us explicitly that to extract individual concepts or analyses out of their systematic context is to render them unintelligible since their meaning lies precisely in their systematic relation to other concepts. In the *Encyclopaedia*, for example, he says, „Apart from their interdependence and organic union, the truths of philosophy are valueless, and must then be treated as baseless hypotheses, or personal convictions.“⁸ In the famous preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel insists that philosophical knowledge must of necessity be systematic: „knowledge is only actual, and can only be expounded, as Science or as *system*.“⁹ Hegel's insistence on the systematicity of philosophy is nowhere better illustrated than with the example

8 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic. Part One of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, translated by William Wallace, Oxford 1975, § 14, dt.: *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 19, hg. v. d. Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Hamburg 1968 ff., 41.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller, Oxford 1977, § 24, dt.: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in: *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 9, 21.

at hand, i.e. his views on tragedy. Thus, if we are to appreciate Hegel's treatment of Greek tragedy, we must locate his various analyses in the context in which they appear.

Despite a number of views to the contrary, Hegel never had a theory of tragedy *per se*. He discusses tragedy in a number of different passages throughout his philosophical *corpus*, and on the basis of this one might try to reconstruct a theory, as some commentators have done, but we must first of all recognize that this is the artificial construct of the commentators and not something intrinsic to Hegel's own philosophical agenda. Moreover, if we are not to lose sight of Hegel's intentions entirely, we must first try to come to terms with the respective contexts in which he discusses tragedy. The most famous passage that is usually pointed to when evoking Hegel's purported theory of tragedy is the section „Ethical Action“ from the „Spirit“ chapter of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There Hegel gives his famous account of Sophocles' drama *Antigone*. It is, however, a grave mistake to regard Hegel's analysis there as a theory of tragedy *per se* since when we look at the role that this section is supposed to play in the „Spirit“ chapter and in the *Phenomenology* as a whole, it becomes all too clear that Hegel's discussion of drama there is in a sense only incidental and that what is, in fact, under examination is the historical collapse of the Greek *polis*. Indeed, when Hegel treats the same issue in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, he does not use the Sophoclean drama as an example at all. Far from providing us with a general aesthetic theory of the nature of Greek drama in the „Spirit“ chapter, Hegel merely uses the tragedy, *Antigone*, to exemplify a historical conflict in the form of art. For Hegel, the ethical conflict represented by the characters Creon and Antigone in the drama is provocative for Sophocles and the Greek audience of the day not because it is a profound aesthetic experience but rather because it was a genuine historical conflict which led to the destruction of the *polis* as a viable form of life. The „Spirit“ chapter of the *Phenomenology* is dedicated to examining the course of world history according to its Notion or Concept (*Begriff*). Hegel begins with an account of the Greek world and then, as in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, goes on to treat the Roman Empire, Medieval Europe, the Enlightenment and finally the French Revolution, which leads him more or less up to his own day. It is thus in the context of history that his account of *Antigone* appears. Therefore, in the section „Ethical Action“ he is not primarily concerned with the isolated issue of the nature of tragedy but rather with the much larger question of the destruction of the Greek *polis* and the Greek world generally. When we view Hegel's *corpus* as a whole, we can see that there are other discussions that have a much more plausible claim to being Hegel's official account of tragedy *per se*.¹⁰ One of these is the section „The Spiritual Work of Art“ in the „Religion“ chapter of the *Phenomenology* in which Hegel discusses the literary arts in the Greek world, treating in order epic, tragedy and comedy. For reasons given below this is one of the sections which I wish to examine in some detail.

Nietzsche discusses Greek drama in a number of passages throughout his *corpus*, but the most complete statement on the subject is clearly his early work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Although his views may have changed in the course of his literary career, I will concentrate on the analysis given there. Nietzsche was not a systematic thinker in the same way Hegel was, and for this reason extracting his analyses from various places in his *corpus* is probably somewhat less distorting than is the case with Hegel. But nevertheless, as the Nazi misap-

10 There are corresponding sections in the *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik*, in: *Sämtliche Werke* (Jubiläumsausgabe), Bd. 12-14, hg. v. Hermann Glockner, Stuttgart 1927-1940, III, 479-524.

appropriations of his work all too clearly demonstrate, grave interpretive dangers still lurk in the arbitrary excerpting of passages from their original context. There are, moreover, other interpretive hazards that we must be wary of in our treatment of Nietzsche's thought. Many interpreters of *The Birth of Tragedy* have concentrated on the work simply as a theory of tragedy and have failed to recognize fully Nietzsche's sweeping analysis of Greek culture that it contains. To be sure, Nietzsche gives there his famous theory of how Greek tragedy arose from the Bacchic choral revelries and was dominated by the Dionysian and Apollinian principles, but in addition he gives an account of what he calls „the death of tragedy“¹¹ and the setting loose of an entirely new and destructive principle in Greek life with the rise of Socratic logic and rationality. Thus, he gives an account of the demise not only of Greek tragedy but also of an entire form of Greek sensibility and art. Thus, Nietzsche's discussion in *The Birth of Tragedy* is much broader than it is often construed as being, and his account of the destruction of Greek tragedy is, upon examination, remarkably similar to Hegel's account of the destruction of the Greek *polis*.

In this essay I would like to argue that there are a number of striking, yet heretofore unexamined, similarities in the respective views of Hegel and Nietzsche on Greek drama and the collapse of the Greek world. I wish to claim that the middle section of the „Religion“ chapter of the *Phenomenology*, entitled „Religion in the Form of Art“, contains the basic conceptual structure of *The Birth of Tragedy*. There Hegel anticipates among other things the dialectical opposition between the Apollinian and the Dionysian, the hallmark of Nietzsche's famous treatment of tragedy. In the section „Religion in the Form of Art“ Hegel discusses the various forms of Greek art and their portrayals of the divine. This section is divided into three subsections: „The Abstract Work of Art“, „The Living Work of Art“ and „The Spiritual Work of Art.“ This account culminates in the destruction of Greek drama which, for Hegel, as for Nietzsche, signals the demise of Greek culture and the Greek world. I wish to argue that Hegel's analysis in „The Abstract Work of Art“ corresponds to Nietzsche's conception of the Apollinian, while the analysis in „The Living Work of Art“ corresponds to Nietzsche's account of the Dionysian aspect. Finally, the section „The Spiritual Work of Art“ brings both of these aspects together and culminates in drama, just as for Nietzsche the Dionysian and the Apollinian together constitute Greek tragedy. The striking similarities between „Religion in the Form of Art“ and *The Birth of Tragedy* have been heretofore overlooked due to the fact that most Hegel commentators have concentrated their attention solely on Hegel's analysis of *Antigone* from the „Spirit“ chapter in their account of his theory of tragedy, thus neglecting this crucial analysis in the „Religion“ chapter. The goal of the present essay is to correct this oversight.

In the three discussions in the section „Religion in the Form of Art“, various aspects of the religion and culture of the ancient Greeks are examined. Hegel's analysis covers the Greeks' achievements in among other things the plastic arts, epic and drama, and he explores other elements of Greek life which do not seem, strictly speaking, relevant to the account of religion which is the express object of study here. According to Hegel's account, all of these forms of Greek art are ultimately manifestations of religion. Hegel's intention by including Greek art in this context is to examine the way in which the divine is conceived and represented by the Greeks, and he uses their art works as an invaluable source of

11 F. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, New York 1967 [= BT], § 14, dt.: KSA 1, GT 94.

information in this regard. Thus, in this section he is not interested in art as such but only in the way in which various art forms are used to represent the divine. Although Hegel's account of drama here in „Religion in the Form of Art“ is not a theory of drama *per se*, nevertheless it does have a better claim to being one than does the account of *Antigone* in the „Spirit“ chapter. Since *Antigone* is used solely to illustrate a specific historical moment, it is merely an example which could just as well be replaced by other examples as, in fact, it is in the parallel account of the Greek world in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. By contrast the account of drama in „Religion in the Form of Art“ is a constitutive part of the content of the dialectical movement. Hegel's analysis of drama here takes place in the context of the development of the Greek religion, but this does not mean that the account here is something foreign to an account of tragedy. On the contrary, Hegel understands along with tragedy a number of aspects of Greek culture as manifestations of Greek religious life. Indeed, it is characteristic of the specialization of our own contemporary world to see art, religion and custom as separate spheres. Thus, it is only from a modern, secular perspective that the account of tragedy here seems out of place. Hegel's analysis of epic and drama in „The Spiritual Work of Art“ therefore can be taken as his official view on these subjects.

I. The Abstract Work of Art and the Apollinian

The realm of the religious consciousness of ancient Greece is that in which the individual comes to see himself in the divine which he represents in the form of a self-conscious subject. In „The Abstract Work of Art“, the first of three analyses of Greek religious consciousness, self-consciousness no longer has natural entities for its object, but rather „Spirit brings itself forth as object.“¹² Self-consciousness examines itself and conceives of the divine as a being like itself. In order to understand the Greeks' conception of the divine, Hegel examines various forms of Greek art in which the divine is manifested. He writes of the Greek sculpture which constitutes the Notion here: „The first work of art, as immediate, is abstract and individual.“¹³ A word about the meaning of the term „abstract“ in this context is in order since Hegel's use of it here is somewhat at odds with current usage in the field of art. By „abstract art“ Hegel means the idealized human forms that we find in Greek sculpture. These forms are abstract since one must abstract from the actual natural forms and their imperfections in order to arrive at them. Although in Greek sculpture the gods have human form, it is not a natural human form, but rather a perfected, idealized one. The self-conscious god is in the object of the sculpture. Although the divine is conceived as a self-conscious subject, it is still represented in the form of an object. This is the general Notion here in „The Abstract Work of Art.“

The characteristic of Greek religion for Hegel is that religious consciousness tries to see the divine in the form of a self-conscious human subject. Here the divine is self-consciously represented by the sculptor in the form of a statue that resembles a human being. The artist is wholly aware of his actions and self-consciously attempts to represent the divine in this

12 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 703 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 377).
 13 Ebd., § 705 (378).

medium. The creation of the sculpture is considered to be a divinely inspired act with the *pathos* of the artist originating from the god:

„The concrete existence of the pure Notion into which Spirit has fled from its body is an individual which Spirit selects to be the vessel of its sorrow. Spirit is present in this individual as his universal and as the power over him from which he suffers violence, as his *pathos*, by giving himself over to which his self-consciousness loses its freedom.“¹⁴

The god chooses specific individuals and makes artists out of them by inspiring them with the knowledge and skill to create. The inspired artist uses natural materials and, under the influence of the god, tries to shape them into forms of the divine: „This pure activity, conscious of its inalienable strength, wrestles with the shapeless essence. Becoming its master, it has made the *pathos* into its material and given itself its content, and this unity emerges as a work, universal Spirit individualized and set before us.“¹⁵ In the creative act, the sculptor is united with the divine from which he receives inspiration. A unity is also attained in the sculpture itself which, as a sculpture of a self-conscious divinity, has a universal element which is represented in natural materials in the concrete sphere of perception. This harmony stands at the center of the Notion which is treated here in this section.

The god, portrayed in the form of a statue, is thus an object or an individual entity in the realm of immediacy. Hegel describes this as follows, „The first mode in which the artistic Spirit keeps its shape and its active consciousness farthest apart is the immediate mode, viz. the shape *is there* or is *immediately* present simply as a *thing*.“¹⁶ The artist creates a statue of the god, and thus gives the divine an immediate reality. The essence of the god is recognized in the idealized form of the statue. The perfection of the lines and figure of the statue of the god constitutes an abstract form, i.e. abstracted from natural instantiations:

„the Notion strips off the traces of root, branches, and leaves still adhering to the forms and purifies the latter into shapes in which the crystal's straight lines and flat surfaces are raised into incommensurable ratios, so that the ensoulment of the organic is taken up into the abstract form of the Understanding and [...] its essential nature – incommensurability – is preserved for the Understanding.“¹⁷

In contrast to the Notions of „Natural Religion“, according to which the god was domiciled in natural shapes, the divine here is purged of its natural forms and, now liberated, comes forth in its true human form: „The human form strips off the animal shape with which it was blended; the animal is for the god merely an accidental guise; it steps alongside its true shape and no longer has any worth on its own account.“¹⁸ The divine is no longer only half-human, like the Sphinx in the section „The Artificer“ but rather is wholly human in form. The mysterious god which for the artificer dwelt in the sphere of the inner is now seen in the light of day, accessible to all. This purging of the natural or individual element

14 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 704 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 378).

15 Ebd.

16 Ebd., § 706 (378).

17 Ebd.

18 Ebd., § 707 (378 f.).

represents the sublation of nature and the appropriation of the object by self-consciousness: „Nature [is] transfigured by thought and united with self-conscious life. The form of the gods has, therefore, its Nature-element within it as a transcended moment, as a dim memory.“¹⁹ This constitutes the ultimate sublation of natural religion.

The idealized statue of the god, however, does not express the true essence of the artist who creates it. The statue is a universal, idealized form which cannot reflect the individual idiosyncrasies of the individual artist. Thus, although the artist may have created a beautiful statue, he does not see himself as an individual reflected in it. Hegel describes this as follows: „What belongs to the substance, the artist gave entirely to his work, but to himself as a particular individuality he gave in his work no actual existence: he could impart perfection to his work only by emptying himself of his particularity, depersonalizing himself and rising to the abstraction of pure action.“²⁰ The artistic work was performed by the particular sculptor with his hands and skill. But yet the true work is that which is inspired by the divine and in which the individuality of the particular artist plays no role. The artist must „declare the work of art to be in its own self absolutely inspired, and [...] forget himself as performer.“²¹ The recognition of the beauty of the sculpture by the general public is merely testimony to its divinely inspired nature and is in no way conceived as a reflection of the skill and discipline of the individual artist.²² The work is considered only from its divine and not from its human side. Since the artist is alienated from his project and realizes that „in his work [...] he did not produce a being *like himself*“, ²³ he must now search for another medium more appropriate for expressing and portraying the divine.

This account of sculpture as the abstract work of art corresponds in many aspects to Nietzsche's characterization of the Apollinian. In a sense the similarity here is obvious since Nietzsche defines the Apollinian explicitly as the „art of sculpture.“²⁴ But this superficial similarity becomes more profound when we examine Nietzsche's further characterization of the Apollinian principle. For Nietzsche the principle characteristic of the Apollinian is that it represents the principle of individuation: „We might call Apollo himself the glorious divine image of the *principium individuationis*.“²⁵ The Apollinian distinguishes and separates, sunders wholes and analyzes the individual parts. This aspect constitutes one of the chief points of contrast with the Dionysian, which eliminates all distinctions and all individuality and dissolves everything into a primal unity without distinction. As we have seen, the aspect of individuation is precisely the characteristic that Hegel underscores in his account of the

19 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 707 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 379).

20 Ebd., § 708 (379).

21 Ebd., § 708 (380).

22 In his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, Hegel describes this as follows: „If the work of art is the self-revelation of God and the revelation of the productivity of man as the positing of this revelation by the abrogation of his particular knowledge and will, on the other hand, the work of art equally involves the fact that God and man are no longer beings alien to one another, but have been taken up into a higher unity.“ (G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, translated by E.B. Speirs and J. Burdon Sanderson, Bd. II, London/New York 1962, 1968, 1972, 256, dt.: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, Bd. 15-16, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, Bd. II, 126).

23 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 709 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 380).

24 BT § 1, GT 25.

25 BT § 1, GT 28.

sculpture: „The first work of art, as immediate, is abstract and individual.“²⁶ The specific sculpture is a concrete empirical entity in the realm of perception, and it is constructed with specific materials. It is thus an individual thing despite its idealized or „abstract“ form: „[...] the shape *is there* or is *immediately* present simply as a *thing*. In this mode, the shape is broken up into the distinction of individuality [...] and of universality.“²⁷ The individual empirical aspect of the sculpture represents its essential characteristic for Hegel. This aspect contrasts with its universality, i.e. the abstract, idealized figure of the sculpture. The empirical object of the sculpture is individual, while its form is a universal. Thus, Nietzsche's characterization of the Apollinian as the principle which separates and divides is in a sense prefigured by Hegel's analysis of the individuality of the particular sculpture.

There is another area of overlap in the two accounts. For Nietzsche, the Apollinian is also the principle of dreams or illusion which hides the essential suffering of existence: „The joyous necessity of the dream experience has been embodied by the Greeks in their Apollo.“²⁸ The Apollinian seeks to disguise the suffering of human existence with illusions. A part of the charm of Greek tragedy is this aspect of illusion in which the audience takes delight. For Hegel, sculpture of the abstract work of art overcomes the natural and hides the natural elements which were so prevalent in the previous modes of religious consciousness. In fact, this stage is called the abstract work of art precisely because it abstracts from the natural elements: „The form of the gods has, therefore, its nature-element within it as a transcended moment, as a dim memory. The chaotic being and confused strife of the freely existing elements, the unethical realm of the Titans, is conquered and banished to the fringes of an actuality that has become transparent to itself.“²⁹ In sculpture the final elements left over from natural religion are now purged. Now the Titans as natural entities are eliminated, and a new divinity comes about which takes on an idealized human form. This purging of the natural elements corresponds to Nietzsche's understanding of the Apollinian as the principle which disguises and denies the realm of nature, death, cruelty and suffering. The abstract work of art represents an ideal and as such an illusion. This as well constitutes another part of the commonality in the respective analyses of the two philosophers.

A third similarity can be noted in the notion of lucidity or self-reflective consciousness. For Nietzsche, lucidity, cogency and discursive thought are important characteristics of the Apollinian. „Apollo, the god of all plastic energies“, he writes, „is at the same time the soothsaying god. He, who (as the etymology of the name indicates) is the ‚shining one‘, the deity of light, is also ruler over the beautiful illusion of the inner world of fantasy.“³⁰ In contrast to the Dionysian, which is immediate and unreflective, the Apollinian represents self-conscious reflection and action for Nietzsche. Hegel characterizes the abstract work of art in precisely the same terms. For Hegel this kind of art is „pervaded with the light of consciousness.“³¹ Although he is divinely inspired, nonetheless the sculptor must self-consciously set about his work and create his object. On his view, the sphere of immediacy

26 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 705 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 378).

27 Ebd., § 706 (378).

28 BT § 1, GT 27.

29 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 707 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 379).

30 BT § 1, GT 27.

31 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 707 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 378).

has been overcome, and this is the realm of „lucid, ethical spirits of self-conscious Nations.“³² We see here another point of contact between the two analyses.

These areas of overlap should suffice to establish the claim that Hegel's analysis of the abstract work of art contains some of the essential elements of Nietzsche's conception of the Apollinian. This thesis concerns merely the content of the two analyses and does not pretend to make any claims about the question of the influence of this Hegelian text on Nietzsche's thought. Although at first glance this discussion in the *Phenomenology* has little to do with Nietzsche's account in *The Birth of Tragedy* above all since Hegel does not mention Apollo in this context at all, nonetheless when we examine the actual analysis we find that in fact there are striking similarities. As we shall see, the further development of Hegel's discussion of „Religion in the Form of Art“ will bear out these similarities and develop them further.

II. The Living Work of Art and the Dionysian

The god, as self-conscious other, finds a more satisfactory incarnation in a living human subject than in an inanimate statue. Since the statue proved to be an inadequate representation of the divine, now in the section „The Living Work of Art“ the living human body replaces the motionless marble as the medium in which the divine manifests itself, and thus the very person of the believer becomes the vessel of divine agency. In the experience of consciousness, the divine inhabits the body of the individual in two different contexts. At first the god is thought to possess his devotees unconsciously in their practice of the Bacchic rites, and then in the second moment the divine is thought to dwell in the person of the athlete who, in the cultivated perfection of his body, evinces the work of the divinity. It is the first moment which will be of primary interest for our purposes.

As Hegel explains in his account of the cult, the divine is thought to inhabit the objects of nature. Here a change comes about, and the object of the cult is transformed from the products of nature to the body of the believer himself. The believer eats the meat of the sacrificial animal and drinks the sacrificial wine:

„Coming down from its pure essential nature and becoming an objective force of nature and the expressions of that force, it is an outer existence for the „other“, for the self by which it is consumed. The silent essence of self-less nature in its fruits attains to that stage where, self-prepared and digested, it offers itself to life that has a self-like nature. In its usefulness as food and drink it reaches its highest perfection; for in this it is the possibility of a higher existence and comes into contact with spiritual reality.“³³

Now in the sacrifice and consumption of these objects, the believer, who nourishes himself with these gifts of the gods, is unified with the divine. It is thus in the appropriation, consumption and enjoyment of the fruits of nature that the god enters the very body of the believer which it grants strength and nourishment, and in this way, „self-consciousness [...]

32 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 707 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 379).

33 Ebd., § 721 (386).

comes forth from the cult satisfied in its essence, and the god enters into it as into its habitation."³⁴

Through this metamorphosis from the objects of nature, the god comes out of the beyond and reveals himself in the body of the believer: „For the mystical is not concealment of a secret, or ignorance, but consists in the self knowing itself to be one with the divine Being and that this, therefore, is revealed."³⁵ In the consummation of the fruits of nature and the objects of desire, the initiate in the cult can immediately feel his unity with the divine. Just as in „The Truth of Self-Certainty“ consciousness had to destroy the object of its desire in order to confirm its own conception of itself, so also here religious consciousness must destroy the object of nature in order to confirm its sublime relation to the divinity: „[...] as a thing that can be used it [sc. divine Being] not only has an existence that is seen, felt, smelt, tasted, but it is also an object of desire, and by being actually enjoyed becomes one with the self and thereby completely revealed to the self and manifest to it."³⁶ Thus, in the Greek religion, as in the Christian religion, god is revealed.

The first form of „The Living Work of Art“ concerns the initiates of the cult of Bacchus. As we have seen, the god enters into the body of the believer *via* the fruit and wine and other natural products which are conceived as gifts which the god provides. The divine „at first enters into the objective existence of the fruit, and then, surrendering itself to self-consciousness, in it attains to genuine reality – and now roams about as a crowd of frenzied females, the untamed revelry of nature in self-conscious form."³⁷ In the Bacchic revelries the god is thought to possess the bodies of the individual revelers. Like the statue of the divine from „The Abstract Work of Art“, the body is that of a self-conscious human form, but here it is an animated living self and is thus a higher representation of the divine: „Man thus puts himself in the place of the statue as the shape that has been raised and fashioned for perfectly free *movement*, just as the statue is perfectly free *repose*."³⁸ This new representation of the divine has life and motion, both of which were absent in the unmoving statue.

Despite its improvements over the statue, this conception is nevertheless still inadequate since the divine is revealed only partially and in its immediate existence as a natural object which it inhabits: „But what is disclosed to consciousness is still only absolute [i.e. abstract] Spirit, which is this simple essence, not Spirit as it is in its own self; in other words, it is only *immediate* Spirit, and the Spirit of nature."³⁹ What is not revealed is the divine in its universality. The divine possesses the bodies of the initiates, but in their revelries the initiates are utterly incoherent and seemingly driven by a maddening force. The god is clearly at work in the bodies of the individual revelers but not the god as a coherent, self-conscious subject. The essential self-conscious element of the divine is still missing in this incarnation. Although the believer thought he could attain the universality of the divine through the act of sacrifice, the divine, as self-consciousness, is not in the product of nature, and thus by consuming the objects of nature, the believer may become possessed by some

34 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 721 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 386).

35 Ebd., § 722 (386).

36 Ebd.

37 Ebd., § 723 (387).

38 Ebd., § 725 (387).

39 Ebd., § 724 (387).

aspect of the divine but not by the essential self-conscious aspect: „[...] its self-conscious life is only the mystery of bread and wine, of Ceres and of Bacchus, not of the other, the strictly higher, gods whose individuality includes as an essential moment self-consciousness as such. Therefore, Spirit has not yet sacrificed itself as *self-conscious* Spirit to self-consciousness.“⁴⁰ What is sacrificed is a physical, natural object, and this is not the essential self-conscious element of the god.

The second moment tries to conceive of the divine in the cultivated body of the athlete. For the Greeks, the human body itself, as a product of nature, was an artistic medium to be shaped and formed. The body is to the athlete what the stone is to the sculptor or a canvas to the painter. In the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, Hegel refers to this cultivation of the body as „The Subjective Work of Art“: „This is the *subjective* beginning of Greek art – in which the human being elaborates his physical being, in free, beautiful movement and agile vigor, to a work of art.“⁴¹ The Greeks practiced, so to speak, a cult of the body, which took the form of organized athletic contests and festivals. These events were the immediate occasion at which the divine reveals itself in the individual subject. During the festival, there was singing, dancing, games and contests, all of which evidence the divine in human form: „Man shows his spiritual and bodily ability and skill, his riches; he exhibits himself in all the glory of god, and thus enjoys the manifestation of god in the individual himself.“⁴²

Despite the fact that the divine appears in the body of the believer and thus takes on a living form, this is still an inadequate representation since there is still lacking the inward aspect of the divine, namely, language. Just as in the cult a part of the god remains in the sphere of the divine and does not become incarnated in the natural world, so also here „still there yet remains for consciousness a ‚beyond‘.“⁴³ The divine can be observed in the living body of the athlete, but this living representation of the divine is still incomplete. There is no inward, divine aspect in the coherent speech of the athlete. „The moment of subjectivity“, Hegel writes, „does not appear as infinite subjectivity, it is not Spirit as such which is contemplated in the objective forms.“⁴⁴ The self-conscious Spirit, i.e. the divine as a self-conscious subject, is not revealed in the body of the athlete. Just as with the Bacchic revelers, so also here with the athlete it is precisely this self-conscious side which is still missing.

Even at first glance Hegel's account of the living work of art is remarkably similar to Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian. In fact, both thinkers analyze the same phenomenon – the Bacchic rites. The cult member in his ecstasy is Hegel's first example of the living work of art, and this corresponds straightforwardly to the Dionysian in Nietzsche, which is characterized by singing, dances, intoxication and revelries. For Nietzsche it is the satyric chorus which represents the irrational Dionysian principle. As we have just seen, for Hegel, the living work of art is characterized by nature coming forth and manifesting itself in the cult „as a crowd of frenzied females, the untamed revelry of nature in self-conscious

40 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 724 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 387).

41 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, New York 1944, 242, dt.: *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Bd. 11, in: *Sämtliche Werke*, 317.

42 G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 273 (*Philosophie der Religion*, 141).

43 Ebd., 274 (142).

44 Ebd., 274 (143).

form."⁴⁵ Here conventions and laws are put into abeyance, and free reign is given to natural impulses.

We have noted that in the previous discussion, Hegel combines aesthetics and religion since to his way of thinking these were two elements that could not be separated from Greek ethical life as a whole. For Hegel, the living work of art is a higher manifestation of the divine since a living human body is a more realistic portrayal of the living god than an inanimate sculpture. For Nietzsche as well religion and art are mixed in the origin and development of Greek tragedy. He too understands the Dionysian reveler not merely as a manifestation of a religious act but also as a work of art. The body of the Dionysian reveler is described by Nietzsche in the same terms as in Hegel's analysis, as a work of art: „he is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art [...]. The noblest clay, the most costly marble, man, is here kneaded and cut."⁴⁶ Both Hegel and Nietzsche emphasize the fact that the human body itself is used as the raw material for the work of art, and this constitutes the first similarity in the two accounts.

The Dionysian principle is one in which the differences collapse and individuals coalesce into a primal unity. The Dionysian dwells in the primal energy of untamed emotions of primal human existence without the veil of illusion. For Nietzsche the original unity of man with man and of man with nature is represented by the Bacchic revelries: „Under the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man."⁴⁷ Only when the Apollinian element of individuation was introduced was this original unity destroyed. Hegel describes the activity of the cult in the same way. It contains an „essence [...] which is *immediately united* with the self."⁴⁸ The divine possesses the body of the cult member, and thus all individuality disappears. But yet it is a single god which possesses all the cult members, and thus a higher community is established. Hegel distinguishes the universality of this communal feeling from the individuation and alienation of the sculpture. He characterizes the higher community as „the night of substance“ which is „no longer the tense individuality of the artist."⁴⁹ For Hegel, the divine dissolves the individuality of the cult members just as for Nietzsche the Dionysian dissolves the individuality of the members of the satyric chorus.

Nietzsche sees the Dionysian as representing the realm of immediate, original nature. The satyric chorus represents the primal unity that existed prior to the introduction of differentiation and alienation that came with the various aspects of civilization. In a similar fashion, Hegel characterizes the living work of art as representing „pure essential nature and becoming an objective force of nature and the expressions of that force."⁵⁰ What is manifested in the body of the athlete or the cult member are natural forces which represent the individual gods, each of which rules over his or her own natural sphere. There are thus a number of striking similarities between Nietzsche's account of the Dionysian and Hegel's account of the living work of art.

45 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 723 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 387).

46 BT § 1, GT 30.

47 BT § 1, GT 29.

48 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 720 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 385).

49 Ebd., § 721 (386).

50 Ebd.

Hegel indicates that the two moments that we have examined in „The Abstract Work of Art“ and „The Living Work of Art“ will come together in the Notion of the next section, „The Spiritual Work of Art.“ Now what is required is something that unites these two previous moments – the Bacchic revelries and the sculpture – each of which alone is inadequate:

„In the Bacchic enthusiasm it is the self that is beside itself, but in corporeal beauty it is spiritual essence. The stupor of consciousness and its wild stammering utterance in the former case must be taken up into the clear existence of the latter, and the non-spiritual clarity of the latter into the inwardness of the former.“⁵¹

On the one hand, the divine, yet incoherent, speech of the Bacchic revelers must be transformed into the coherent speech of a true self-conscious agent. On the other hand, the coherence and lucidity of the sculpture must be invested with a divine element or „inwardness.“ The two sides are brought together in literature which constitutes the subject of the next section. It is only in literature that speech displays „a lucid and universal content.“⁵² In the aspect of lucidity, the divine, as represented in literature, evinces a cogent self-conscious form, and in the aspect of universality, its divinity and spiritual depth. Something similar happens according to Nietzsche's account. Tragedy as a form of art is born out of the interaction of the two principles of the Dionysian and Apollinian. The reveling satyric chorus develops into the sober art of tragedy when individuals separate from the chorus and enter into a dialogue with it. Tragedy thus transforms the incoherent and chaotic revelries of the satyric chorus into something lucid and coherent. Thus, for both Hegel and Nietzsche, the two principles combine and bring forth something higher.

For Nietzsche, as for Hegel, the two principles stand in a dialectical relation to one another and develop in this relation into various forms.⁵³ The claim that Nietzsche had a dialectical methodology contradicts above all Deleuze's thesis that Nietzsche's philosophy is „resolutely anti-dialectical.“⁵⁴ As other critics have noted, Deleuze seems to ignore wholly Nietzsche's description of the relation of the Apollinian to the Dionysian.⁵⁵ There are a number of passages in *The Birth of Tragedy* which contradict Deleuze's claim fairly straightforwardly. For instance, Nietzsche writes, „These two different tendencies run parallel to each other, for the most part openly at variance; and they continually incite each other to new and more powerful births.“⁵⁶ Later Nietzsche traces a cursory history of Greek culture in terms of this movement:

„Up to this point we have simply enlarged upon the observation made at the beginning of this essay: that the Dionysian and the Apollinian, in new births ever following and mutually augmenting one another, controlled the Hellenic genius; that out of the age of ‚bronze‘, with its wars of the Titans and its rigorous folk philosophy, the Homeric world

51 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 726 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 388).

52 Ebd.

53 S. Blasche, „Hegelianismus“, 59-71.

54 G. Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 223.

55 Cf. D. Breazeale's criticism: „The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem“, 153-162.

56 BT § 1, GT 25.

developed under the sway of the Apollinian impulse to beauty; that this 'naive' splendor was again overwhelmed by the influx of the Dionysian; and that against this new power of the Apollinian rose to the austere majesty of Doric art and the Doric view of the world."⁵⁷

According to this passage, it is in the interaction of the two principles of the Apollinian and the Dionysian that the Greek cultural world develops. It would be obtuse to demand a detailed account of the implicit concept of dialectic that is at work here in order to compare it with Hegel's explicit statements on the subject. The claim is not that Nietzsche had a worked-out dialectical methodology which corresponds in every aspect to Hegel's, but rather that there are aspects of a dialectical method at work in Nietzsche's account here. Whatever the differences might be, the similarity exists in the fact that the two principles do not simply mutually negate each other, but instead each stimulates a change or modification in the other and both together constitute a single dialectical unit which develops in time. Thus, Nietzsche uses an explicitly recognized Hegelian mechanism – the dialectic – to explain the relation of the two terms to one another.

In addition, the culmination of the dialectical movement for Hegel is the same as for Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, it is the unity of the two artistic principles which produces Greek drama: "[...] they appear coupled with each other, and through this coupling ultimately generate an equally Dionysian and Apollinian form of art – Attic tragedy."⁵⁸ He writes further,

„If amid the strife of these two hostile principles, the older Hellenic history thus falls into four great periods of art, we are now impelled to inquire after the final goal of these developments and processes, lest perchance we should regard the last-attained period, the period of Doric art, as the climax and aim of these artistic impulses. And here the sublime and celebrated art of *Attic tragedy* and the dramatic dithyramb presents itself as the common goal of both these tendencies whose mysterious union, and after many and long precursory struggles, found glorious consummation in this child – at once Antigone and Cassandra."⁵⁹

As we have seen, Hegel's analysis traces the form of religious Spirit from sculpture to the body of the cult member and culminates in Greek drama. According to his account, Greek drama unites conceptually the preceding moments and raises them to a higher level. Just as the living body replaced the static sculpture as a more satisfying representation of the divine, so also now drama replaces the body of the cult member or the athlete. At each stage, the self-conscious divine manifests itself more adequately. Thus, although Hegel's organizational principle is the conceptual self-development of Spirit, which is a principle entirely foreign to Nietzsche, nonetheless Nietzsche sees the development of the two principles and their conclusion in essentially the same way.

57 BT § 4, GT 41.

58 BT § 1, GT 25 f.

59 BT § 4, GT 42.

III. The Spiritual Work of Art: Tragedy and Comedy and the Collapse of the Greek World

In the third and final section of „Religion in the Form of Art“, entitled „The Spiritual Work of Art“, Hegel treats what he sees as the highest representation of the divine conceived by the Greek Spirit – the divine in the form of the literary arts. His analysis here prefigures some of the central theses in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this section it is language in its various forms which is the medium in which the divine finds expression. Stories are told and enacted which portray the gods in anthropomorphic form and in constant interaction with human affairs. The portrayal of the divine in the medium of language constitutes a higher representation than the divine represented in the form of the plastic arts or in the body of the cult member. In the stories of literature and drama, the gods are conceived as living entities in contrast to the motionless statue in „The Abstract Work of Art.“ Moreover, the living representations are endowed with the gift of coherent speech in contrast to the Bacchic revelers in „The Living Work of Art.“ Here the gods resemble self-conscious human subjects more than ever before. Hegel calls this discussion „The Spiritual Work of Art“ since for the first time the divine is portrayed in a medium that is pure Spirit and wholly devoid of nature. We no longer need marble or stone or even the body of the believer or athlete to portray the divine since now language alone is sufficient.

Greek tragedy constitutes after epic the second moment of the representation of the divine in the medium of language.⁶⁰ This representation is „higher“⁶¹ than epic since, instead of a simple narrative told by a single bard, now there are living actors who play the various characters and act out the events: „[...] these characters *exist* as actual human beings who impersonate the heroes and portray them, not in the form of a narrative, but in the actual speech of the actors themselves.“⁶² Now the heroes are not abstract universal beings who dwell only in the sphere of language and in the imagination of the auditors but instead are concrete, empirical individuals on the stage. The actor replaces the bard, and his living representation of the divine is more real than that of his predecessor and is more like Spirit or a true human being.

At this stage there is a dialectical movement of knowledge and ignorance into which the tragic heroes invariably fall. The knowledge of the hero is always one-sided and based on his own essential character as a hero: „He takes his purpose from his character and knows it as an ethical essentiality; but on account of the determinateness of his character he knows only the *one* power of substance, the other remaining for him concealed.“⁶³ It is the other side, the one which remains hidden from view, which brings the tragic conflict to a head when it asserts its right. In the hero's action and its results, he sees that his purpose and the principle for which his character stands are one-sided and partial: „Consciousness disclosed this antithesis through action; acting in accordance with the knowledge revealed, it finds out that knowledge is deceptive; and being committed as regards the content of that knowledge

60 Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art*, Bd. II, translated by T. M. Knox, Oxford 1975, 1193 ff. (*Asthetik*, 526-533).

61 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 733 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 392).

62 Ebd.

63 Ebd., § 737 (394).

to one of the attributes of substance, it violated the other and so gave it the right as against itself.⁶⁴ Thus, the tragic conflict is not between a virtuous hero battling the forces of injustice, but rather, as in *Antigone*, between two principles which are legitimate and which both claim their right: „The truth, however, of the opposing powers of the content [of the knowledge] and of consciousness is the result that both are equally right, and therefore in their antithesis, which is brought about by action, are equally wrong.“⁶⁵

For Hegel, the two-world split at this level is represented in picture-thinking as „the revelatory god“ Apollo and „the Furies who keep themselves concealed.“⁶⁶ Together these two principles constitute the entirety of this sphere. Here we see explicitly the analogue in Hegel to the Apollinian-Dionysian dualism in Nietzsche. Hegel mentions Apollo explicitly with the appellation, „Phoebus“, and with the Furies describes a principle virtually identical to what Nietzsche understands by the Dionysian. Of the visible side of the dichotomy Hegel writes, „The one is the aspect of light, the god of the oracle who, in accordance with its natural moment, has sprung from the all-illuminating sun, knows all and reveals all – Phoebus and Zeus who is his father.“⁶⁷ This side, the visible truth, is, however, necessarily misleading and deceptive since it is only one side of the whole. For this reason, this aspect is simultaneously the negative aspect represented by the Furies:

„The action itself is this inversion of the *known* into its opposite, into *being*, is the changing-round of the rightness based on character and knowing into the rightness of the very opposite with which the former is bound up in the essential nature of the substance – converts it into the Furies who embody the other power and character aroused into hostility.“⁶⁸

For Hegel, while Apollo represents reflection and knowing, the Furies represent immediacy and „not-knowing“,⁶⁹ both of which are characteristics of the Dionysian for Nietzsche. It is the law of the nether world, „the power that conceals itself and lies in ambush.“⁷⁰ The known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible are thus dialectically related and constitute a single concept.

This representation of the divine ultimately proves to be inadequate due to the tension caused by the fact that the divine is responsible for both knowledge and ignorance, for what lies open and for what remains hidden. In epic the gods were compelled to recognize fate as a power that stood above them, and now here in tragedy, they gradually melt away into this impersonal concept. As we have just seen, the dialectical movement of knowing and ignorance represented by Apollo and the Furies was what led to the tragic downfall of the hero who only knows or recognizes partial truths without seeing the whole. These two principles are simply two sides of the same concept. Knowledge in its incompleteness is ignorance. This is represented in picture-thinking by the belief that Zeus stands for both

64 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 740 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 395).

65 Ebd., § 740 (396). Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, 264 f. (*Philosophie der Religion*, 133 f.).

66 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 739 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 395).

67 Ebd., § 737 (394).

68 Ebd., § 738 (395).

69 Ebd., § 739 (395).

70 Ebd., § 737 (394).

Apollo and the Furies. Zeus is on the one hand „the father of the *particular* that is taking shape in the knowing“ and is also „the Zeus of the *universal*, of the inner being dwelling in concealment.“⁷¹ Given that these concepts stand in opposition to one another and lead to the tragic fall of the hero, they are conceived impersonally as necessity or fate, which is once again associated with Zeus: „But self-consciousness, the simple *certainty* of self, is in fact the negative power, the unity of Zeus, of *substantial* being and of *abstract* necessity.“⁷² Thus, instead of the gods bending to a higher necessity as in epic, here Zeus and necessity coalesce into one. But since necessity is seen as something alien, the individual is alienated from both Zeus and the divine sphere as a whole. Despite the anthropomorphic representation of the divine, the individual sees the blind force of fate and thus Zeus as something alien and terrifying: „Necessity has, in contrast to self-consciousness, the characteristic of being the negative power of all the shapes that appear, a power in which they do not recognize themselves but, on the contrary, perish.“⁷³ The Notion of the divine ceases to be a self-conscious subject and is transformed into the impersonal, unconscious force of fate which is indifferent to the passions and sufferings of individuals. The individual is still alienated from the world and from god, and „the true union, that of the self, fate, and substance, is not yet present.“⁷⁴ This contradiction in the Notion of the divine spills over into a contradiction in the person of the actor himself. In the role that he is playing, the actor stands apart from the chorus and the public and is united with the divine which is bound up in his actions. But yet, as an actual person, the actor, like the chorus and the public, is separated and alienated from the divine and fate. There is thus a contradiction between the actor himself and the role he is playing, and in the end tragic acting becomes „a hypocrisy.“⁷⁵

While tragedy is still caught up in the dualism of the hero on the stage and the actor who represents him in the performance, this inconsistency is overcome in comedy.⁷⁶ In tragedy, the actor, while on the stage, is not who he truly is: „The hero who appears before the onlookers splits up into his mask and the actor, into the person in the play and the actual self.“⁷⁷ In comedy by contrast the individual can, by means of jokes and ironic self-reference, step out of the particular role he is playing and come forth as the individual who he really is. As a part of the humor, he is able to strip off his mask and reveal that he is the same as the spectators: „The self, appearing here in its significance as something actual, plays with the mask which it once put on in order to act its part; but it as quickly breaks out again from this illusory character and stands forth in its own nakedness and ordinariness, which it shows to be not distinct from the genuine self, the actor, or from the spectator.“⁷⁸ The actor portraying a hero or a god, as a part of the humor, shows that he is in fact an ordinary human being. Thus, even the gods are brought down to earth and made the subject

71 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 741 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 396).

72 Ebd., § 742 (397).

73 Ebd.

74 Ebd.

75 Ebd.

76 Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics*, 1199 ff. (*Asthetik*, 533 ff.).

77 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 742 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 397).

78 Ebd., § 744 (398). Cf. ebd., § 745 (398): „The divine substance unites within itself the meaning of natural and ethical essentiality.“

of satirical criticism, and the contradiction between their divine sublimity and their childish comportment is consciously brought to the fore.

With respect to the realm of Spirit, comedy criticizes the state and its institutions by means of constant contrast between the state's universal pretensions and its particular finite existence. The state „is constrained and befooled through the particularity of its actual existence, and exhibits the ludicrous contrast between its own opinion of itself and its immediate existence, between its necessity and contingency, its universality and its commonness.“⁷⁹ The civic institutions and customs are subjected to critical scrutiny with a humorous result. With this critical view towards Spirit, self-consciousness reduces everything to laughter and sets itself up as the ultimate judge: „In comedy there comes before our contemplation, in the laughter in which the characters dissolve everything, including themselves, the victory of their own subjective personality which nevertheless persists self-assured.“⁸⁰ Here in comedy everything is negated when it becomes the object of satire and criticism, and in this way „the comic subjective personality has become the overlord of whatever appears in the real world.“⁸¹ Hegel's account of the role of comedy in Greek culture here contains similarities with Nietzsche's account.

Nietzsche as well sees the move from tragedy to comedy as a symptom of the general demise of Greek culture. According to Nietzsche, Euripides was a key transitional figure in this movement: „[...] it was *Euripides* who fought this death struggle of tragedy; the later artistic genre is known as *New Attic Comedy*. In it the degenerate form of tragedy lived on as a monument of its exceedingly painful and violent death.“⁸² Like Hegel, Nietzsche understands comedy as the result of the new critical thinking and logical reasoning: „One could even learn from Euripides how to speak oneself [...] from him the people [...] learned how to observe, debate, and draw conclusions according to the rules of art and with the cleverest sophistries. Through this revolution in ordinary language, he made the new comedy possible.“⁸³ The result of the universal application of critical reasoning was a levelling effect on every opinion and belief. No longer did any given belief enjoy a inviolable status; instead, everything was able to be drawn into doubt. According to Nietzsche, the same levelling effect took place with respect to content in the transition from tragedy to comedy since in comedy the heroes are slaves and ordinary citizens and not princes, kings or nobles as in tragedy: „[...] the Aristophanean Euripides prides himself on having portrayed the common, familiar, everyday life and activities of the people.“⁸⁴ Not only did the content of drama change, but also its form was altered as comedy moved away from music and singing. For Nietzsche, comedy represents the ultimate death of Greek drama since it no longer makes any real use of the Dionysian element of music: „In the new Attic Comedy, however, there are only masks with one expression: frivolous old men, duped panders, and cunning slaves, recurring incessantly. Where now is the mythopoetic spirit of music? What still remains of music is either excitatory or reminiscent music, that is, either a stimulant

79 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 745 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 398). Cf. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics*, 1201 (*Asthetik*, 536).

80 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics*, 1199 (*Asthetik*, 533).

81 Ebd., 1202 (537).

82 BT § 11, GT 76.

83 BT § 11, GT 77.

84 BT § 11, GT 77.

for dull and faded nerves or tone-painting."⁸⁵ As we have seen, for Hegel, comedy represents the final phase of the Greek world with respect to religious thought in the *Phenomenology*. It is comedy which brings about the spiritual destruction of the Greek world at that level. Thus, both thinkers understand comedy as a part of the same force that destroyed tragedy, and thus both attribute to it more or less the same status, although for Hegel comedy represents a higher conceptual level than tragedy.

It is, according to Hegel, the Spirit of „rational thinking“⁸⁶ of Socrates and the sophists which makes possible the criticism of the theretofore accepted institutions and practices, which is the primary characteristic of comedy. Socratic rationalism posits abstract ideas of the Good and Justice and demands that finite human institutions justify themselves in terms of this lofty standard. There then arises a new sphere of the divine – the Platonic Ideas – in which the gods of picture-thinking lose their individuality and dissolve: „With the vanishing of the contingent character and superficial individuality which imagination lent to the divine Beings, all that is left to them as regards their *natural* aspect is the bareness of their immediate existence; they are clouds, an evanescent mist.“⁸⁷ The gods thus lose their colorful personalities and collapse into the world of abstract thought. Such ideas, however, are empty and devoid of any empirical content and collapse into the dialectical sophistry which, in the words of Plato, „make the weaker argument the stronger.“ In the midst of this sophistry and relativism, the individual ultimately becomes the true standard in accordance with the sophists' maxim: „[...] man is the measure of all things.“ Thus, the divine and the dreaded forces of fate are replaced by the rational self-conscious human subject:

„The *individual self* is the negative power through which and in which the gods, as also their moments, viz. existent nature and the thoughts of their specific characters, vanish [...] the individual self is not the emptiness of this disappearance but, on the contrary, preserves itself in this very nothingness, abides with itself and is the sole actuality.“⁸⁸

Personal conviction and individuality take on a meaning theretofore unknown and prove to be destructive to existing institutions and forms of life. What originally began as a new representation of the divine in the form of comedy grows out of control and turns on itself. Thus, the very principle of critical rationality that is necessary for comedy proves also to be its destruction.

With an analysis similar to that here in „The Spiritual Work of Art“, Hegel in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* attributes the introduction of reflection and critical thinking into Greek life straightforwardly to the sophists and Socrates. „With the Sophists“, he writes, „began the process of reflection on the existing state of things, and of ratiocination.“⁸⁹ The sophists undermined the traditional political debates by reducing all positions to a kind of relativism since they were able to make a plausible case for any given position:

85 BT § 17, GT 114.

86 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 745 (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 398).

87 Ebd., § 746 (398 f.).

88 Ebd., § 747 (399).

89 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 268 (*Philosophie der Geschichte*, 349).

„It was the Sophists [...] who first introduced subjective reflection, and the new doctrine that each man should act according to his own conviction [...]. Instead of holding by the existing state of things, *internal* conviction is relied upon; and thus begins a subjective independent freedom, in which the individual finds himself in a position to bring everything to the test of his own conscience, even in defiance of the existing constitution.“⁹⁰

However, the expression of rational thought and reflectivity reached its apex in the figure of Socrates: „He taught that man has to discover and recognize in himself what is the Right and Good, and that this Right and Good is in its nature universal. Socrates is celebrated as a teacher of morality, but we should rather call him the *inventor of morality*. The Greeks had a *customary* morality; but Socrates undertook to teach them what moral virtues, duties, etc. were.“⁹¹ Thus, for Hegel, Socrates was a key figure in the historical movement of critical reflection, which ultimately proved to be the undoing of Greek ethical life.

For Nietzsche as well the ultimate collapse of Greek tragedy is due to the rise of Socratic rationality. According to Nietzsche the Greek tragedy of Aeschylus and Sophocles was dominated by the poetic principle of the irrational, the Dionysian. The later tragedy of Euripides introduced a new principle which destroyed the Dionysian tragedy as a form of art in Greek life. For Nietzsche, Euripides was only a literary spokesman for a deep philosophical principle represented by the figure of Socrates: „Even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn demon, called *Socrates*.“⁹² Nietzsche argues that Socratic rationality ultimately destroys the poetry and spontaneity of all art. Socrates called everything into question and demanded of his fellow Athenians that they provide rational justifications for their beliefs and institutions. For a given belief or practice to be sound, it must survive the Socratic *elenchus*. To know only by instinct was ultimately inadequate.⁹³ Socrates put stock in knowledge and self-conscious awareness of the truth. According to Nietzsche, Euripides took the Socratic methodology and applied it to tragedy, that is, to a context in which it was profoundly out of place. Nietzsche writes, „Now we should be able to come closer to the character of *aesthetic Socratism*, whose supreme law reads roughly as follows, ‚To be beautiful everything must be intelligible‘ as the counterpart to the Socratic dictum, ‚Knowledge is virtue‘.“⁹⁴ The introduction of critical and discursive thought proved to be destructive to the nature of all art since drama had never previously required this justification of itself and it unknowingly destroyed itself in the misguided attempt to meet this requirement: „The poetic deficiency and degeneration, which are so often imputed to Euripides in comparison with Sophocles, are for the most part products of this penetrating critical process, this audacious reasonableness.“⁹⁵ For Euripides, the poet must be lucid and sober,

90 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 253 (*Philosophie der Geschichte*, 330 f.).

91 Ebd., 269 (350).

92 BT § 12, GT 83.

93 BT § 13, GT 89.

94 BT § 12, GT 85.

95 BT § 12, GT 85. Cf. BT § 14, GT 95: „Optimistic dialectic drives music out of tragedy with the scourge of its syllogisms; that is, it destroys the essence of tragedy, which can be interpreted only as a manifestation and projection into images of Dionysian states, as the visible symbolizing of music, as the dream-world of a Dionysian intoxication.“

and his art work must reflect this transparent sobriety. But according to Nietzsche, the unconscious spontaneity and intoxication constitutes the essential aspect of artistic creation, and it is precisely this which is lost in discursive thought.

The result of the collapse of the Greek world for Hegel is the movement to the atomistic individualism of the Roman world. Hegel sees the fall of the *polis* and the rise of the world empire as a result of subjective freedom and the introduction of critical and reflective thought. By the term „subjective freedom“, Hegel means the idea that it is the domain and prerogative of the individual to adjudicate what is correct and valid and that this subjective judgment is preferred over that of established custom or tradition. He writes,

„Instead of holding by the existing state of things, internal conviction is relied upon; and thus begins a subjective independent freedom, in which the individual finds himself in a position to bring everything to the test of his own conscience, even in defiance of the existing constitution. Each one has his ‚principles‘, and that view which accords with his private judgment he regards as *practically* the best, and as claiming practical realization.“⁹⁶

When reflection and criticism come about, the immediate harmony of the state and the identification of the individual with it are shattered, and the result is the alienation which Hegel sees as characteristic of the modern age. Thus, subjective freedom is the principle of the modern world. He writes, „Subjectivity, comprehending and manifesting itself, threatens the existing state of things in every department [...]. Thought, therefore, appears here as the principle of decay – decay, viz. of substantial morality; for it introduces an antithesis, and asserts essentially rational principles.“⁹⁷ Thought itself is seen to have an inner logic which takes root in Greek ethical life itself. Once reflection comes about, one cannot return to the prereflective or „immediate“ harmony of Greek life. Socratic rationality destroys immediacy and the immediate identification of the individual with the social whole, and this gives rise to a new form of life, the world state and the conception of the legal person with citizenship rights. For Hegel, the dualism between immediacy and individualism, characteristic of the ancient and the modern world, runs through the entire history of Western thought, and it is the task of his political philosophy to bring the two together. Hegel attempts to create a state which gives the individual his ethical life and identity but which at the same time allows for a clear sphere of subjective freedom. For Nietzsche as well, the destruction of Greek tragedy through Socratic rationality has far-reaching implications for Western civilization as a whole. For Nietzsche, all of Western science and technology ultimately have their origin in Socratic rationality.

Like Hegel, Nietzsche sees the development and ultimately the destruction of Greek tragedy not as an isolated phenomena but as representative of a cultural movement in the Greek world as a whole. This cultural movement is in part the Western heritage which the Romans, medieval Europe and the modern world have inherited. Socratic rationality and logic replace the traditional ancient virtues such as strength and bravery. Consistency and

96 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 253 (*Philosophie der Geschichte*, 331).

97 Ebd., 267 (348). Cf. ebd., 252 (330): „That very subjective freedom which constitutes the principle and determines the peculiar form of freedom in *our* world [...] could not manifest itself in Greece otherwise than as a *destructive* element.“

the ability to argue became the characteristics of the new hero: „Consider the consequences of the Socratic maxims: ‚Virtue is knowledge; man sins only from ignorance; he who is virtuous is happy. For now the virtuous hero must be a dialectician; now there must be a necessary, visible connection between virtue and knowledge, faith and morality.‘⁹⁸ For Nietzsche, this same spirit of Socratic logic gave rise to the natural sciences and has spread to dominate the Western world:

„Once we see clearly how after Socrates, the mystagogue of science, one philosophical school succeeds another, wave upon wave; how the hunger for knowledge reached a never-suspected universality in the widest domain of the educated world, became the real task for every educated person of higher gifts, and led science onto the high seas from which it has never again been driven altogether; how this universality first spread a common net of thought over the whole globe, actually holding out the prospect of the lawfulness of an entire solar system; once we see all this clearly along with the amazingly high pyramid of knowledge in our own time – we cannot fail to see in Socrates the one turning point and vortex of so-called world history.“⁹⁹

Here Nietzsche uses explicitly Hegelian language by referring to „so-called world history.“ Like Hegel, he sees Socrates as playing a role of world-historical importance in that it was Socrates who initiated a movement which destroyed all immediate and unreflected action and gave rise to our modern scientific and technological age. Although Socrates claimed to be searching for the good life and moral virtue with constant reflection and critical cross-examination, in fact, according to Nietzsche, he introduced a way of thinking that ultimately proved to be a destructive force. Nietzsche sees this form of Socratic thinking as characteristic of much of our own impoverished modern age: „Here we knock, deeply moved, at the gates of present and future: will this ‚turning‘ lead to ever-new configurations of genius and especially of the *Socrates who practices music*? Will the net of art, even if it is called religion or science, that is spread over existence be woven even more tightly and delicately, or is it destined to be torn to shreds in the restless, barbarous, chaotic whirl that now calls itself ‚the present‘?“¹⁰⁰ Nietzsche views with scepticism the prospects of true art and music in a technical, rationalistic age.

As this analysis has demonstrated, there are an astonishing number of heretofore unseen similarities between these two thinkers on the issue of Greek culture and art. Let us briefly review our conclusions: (1) Hegel anticipates Nietzsche’s distinction between the Apollinian and the Dionysian in his analyses of the abstract work of art and the living work of art respectively. (2) Hegel employs his celebrated dialectical methodology in order to understand the relation of the two terms to one another, a methodology which can be found in Nietzsche’s account as well. (3) The culmination of the dialectical interaction of these terms

98 BT § 14, GT 94.

99 BT § 15, GT 100. Cf. ebd.: „And since Socrates, this mechanism of concepts, judgments, and inferences had been esteemed as the highest occupation and the most admirable gift of nature, above all other capacities [...]. Anyone who has ever experienced the pleasure of Socratic insight and felt how, spreading in ever widening circles, it seeks to embrace the whole world of appearances, will never again find any stimulus toward existence more violent than the craving to complete this conquest and to weave the net impenetrably tight.“

100 BT § 15, GT 102.

is the same for both thinkers – Greek tragedy. (4) The role of comedy in the development of Greek drama is understood in substantially the same terms. (5) The destruction of Greek tragedy is attributed to the same causes by both thinkers – critical self-reflection and Socratic rationality. (6) For both Hegel and Nietzsche the result of the collapse of Greek tragedy and the Greek world has far-reaching implications for the development of Western culture and is a formative factor in the creation of the modern world as we know it. These similarities have been for the most part overlooked in the secondary literature, which is particularly surprising when we consider that Nietzsche himself recognizes his debt to Hegel, albeit in terms which can hardly be considered flattering. When, reflecting on *The Birth of Tragedy* in his autobiographical *Ecce Homo*, he says that „it smells offensively Hegelian.“¹⁰¹ Although his statement is vague with respect to exactly what of Hegel has been made use of, we have now been able to gain something of an overview with respect to the points of overlap. From this analysis it is fairly clear that Hegel in the section „Religion in the Form of Art“ anticipates a number of Nietzsche's best known theses in the *Birth of Tragedy* including the Apollinian-Dionysian distinction, for which the book is known. Once again, this Hegelian text has not been taken up heretofore by commentators seeking to establish a link between Hegel and Nietzsche.

This thesis should not be taken to imply that there is nothing whatsoever original in Nietzsche's account of Greek tragedy or that there are not significant differences between the two analyses. Nietzsche's account of the satyric chorus, for instance, has no precedent in Hegel's analysis. Another essential difference between the two thinkers can be found in their respective normative appraisals of the origin and development of tragedy. Nietzsche often speaks with a nostalgic or almost romantic tone when he discusses the „mystic feeling of oneness“¹⁰² or the „primal unity“¹⁰³ that originally existed in the Dionysian revelries and which was forever destroyed by the Apollinian principle of individuation. Humans were once at home in the world and existed in a harmony with nature, and then reflectivity and alienation set in, and mankind was exiled forever from this happy state. In the „Attempt at a Self-Criticism“ which was appended in 1866, Nietzsche refers to the *Birth of Tragedy* as „sentimental“¹⁰⁴ and has an imaginary critic ask, „what in the world is romantic if your book isn't?“¹⁰⁵ Thus, there is in Nietzsche by his own admission a sense of regret and a yearning for the past before the world had become corrupted by Socratic rationality and before true art was destroyed by discursive thinking. For Hegel, on the other hand, there is no sense of romanticism or nostalgia; in fact, he consistently criticizes just these kinds of sentiments in his contemporaries. According to his view, since the movement that he traces both at the level of world history and the history of art or religion is a necessary one, it contains its own immanent rationality. It would be an error to think that the original state is a happy one. He criticizes, for instance, the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden which has so often been the symbol of a harmonious unity between man and nature: „the state of innocence, the paradisiacal condition, is that of the brute. Paradise is a park, where only

101 F. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, translated by Walter Kaufmann, New York 1967, 270, dt.: EH, KSA 6, 310.

102 BT § 2, GT 30.

103 BT § 4, GT 39.

104 BT, „Attempt at a Self-Criticism“, § 3, GT 14.

105 BT, „Attempt at a Self-Criticism“, § 7, GT 21.

brutes, not men, can remain."¹⁰⁶ To be in an immediate harmony with nature is to be an animal without an autonomous will. To be human is necessarily to be separated from the immediacy of nature. Thus, the conception of a „primal unity“ or a harmonious paradise is not one whose loss is to be lamented and which later ages should continually pine for: „The disunion that appears throughout humanity is not a condition to rest in. But it is a mistake to regard the natural and immediate harmony as the right state. The mind is not mere instinct: on the contrary, it essentially involves the tendency to reasoning and mediation.“¹⁰⁷ The paradisiacal state of nature is instead a moment of Spirit which by virtue of its conceptual necessity must be sublated in order that true human freedom and fulfillment can be realized. In this we find perhaps the fundamental difference in disposition between the two thinkers.

This difference is, however, much less striking and much less surprising than the similarities sketched here. Most commentators have taken Nietzsche's critical rhetoric *vis-à-vis* Hegel at face value without looking behind it to see what the actual differences are in the philosophical positions at issue. The result of this has been the general notion among scholars that Nietzsche and Hegel represent the antipodes of German thought with nothing whatsoever in common. Although it is by no means established to what degree Nietzsche knew the *Phenomenology* or specifically the section „Religion in the Form of Art“, nonetheless many of the essentials of Nietzsche's own analysis of Greek tragedy and culture can be found there. With the analysis given, we can perhaps gain some small insight into the troublesome connection in the history of philosophy which will help us to forge a hitherto unseen link between classical German idealism and later existentialism. We are now in a position to appreciate the fact that, for all of his polemics, Nietzsche has more in common with Hegel than he would like to admit.

106 G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 321 (*Philosophie der Geschichte*, 412 ff.).

107 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Logic*, § 24, Addition; Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Bd. 8, Frankfurt a.M. 1970, 68 f.