

Aesthetic Investigations

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Artists, Dabblers, Dilettantes. The Modernity of Hegel's concept of 'work of art'.

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Abstract: The essay argues for the modernity of Hegel's concept of the 'profane work of art'. (1) The first part rejects four standard objections to the modernity of Hegel's concept of 'work of art'. (2) The second part deals with the function of the physical form of the artwork. (3) The third part emphasizes (in discussion with prominent 'Hegelian aesthetics') that the profane art after the so-called 'End of Art' is absolutely free in its contents. (3) For Hegel, the artists of all eras have to have the technical skills to embody an interesting content adequately in the different physical materials of the arts. This distinguishes the artist (in contemporary art as well as in the art of past epochs) from dabblers and dilettantes. (4) So, the fourth part briefly outlines what an 'adequate embodiment' could be. (5) Without discussing details, the essay at the end draws the following conclusion: Hegel's aesthetics are not outdated because of his concept of the profane work of art. The profane work of art is created as an adequate physical embodiment of an interesting content. An adequate physical embodiment is (i) clear, but also (ii) complex and puzzling, and it is (iii) technically perfect. And the leading thesis is that all great works of art (and especially the great works of art of our time) are well described by this concept.

Hegel delivered his lectures on aesthetics in 1818 in Heidelberg for the first time.¹ Since then, nearly 200 years have passed. The artworks, which Hegel knew and cites as examples, are even older. Nevertheless, this essay argues for the modernity of Hegel's concept of the 'work of art' by claiming that this concept can be helpful for distinguishing between successful and failed contemporary art.

I. FOUR STANDARD OBJECTIONS TO THE MODERNITY OF HEGEL'S CONCEPT OF 'WORK OF ART'

Those who argue for the modernity of Hegel's concept of art expect opposition. *Prima facie*, four arguments seem to refute the thesis of the modernity of Hegel's concept of 'art'. Some will argue that Hegel's aesthetics are fixed on the ideal of beauty. In contemporary art, however, the abhorrent and disgusting belong self-evidently to the repertoire. Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* and Ravenhill's *Shopping and Fucking* are examples in place. Others will argue that Hegel's aesthetics are so much in the service of religion, that 99% of contemporary art would have no chance to be designated by Hegel as 'works of art'. Still others will say that Hegel was a Classicist—who cares today for the statues of antiquity? One could finally argue that according to Hegel art found its 'end' since the Reformation. Hegel's concept of 'work of art' is to be up to date? Nothing less than that! Thus, the objections could be summarized.

1. Are Hegel's aesthetics fixed on the ideal of beauty?

The very first sentence of Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* declares: "These lectures are devoted to Aesthetics. Their topic is the *spacious realm* of the beautiful; more precisely, their province is *art*, or, rather, *fine art*".² But as soon as you read further, you will notice, that Hegel repeatedly chooses examples of—as we would phrase it—'ugly art'. This irritating discrepancy has often been noted.³ To resolve this problem, some point to the fact that Hegel's lectures were edited posthumously by Hotho. Hegel himself would have faced ugly art, whereas Hotho still adhered to a Classicist ideal of beauty.⁴ This interpretation, however, runs contrary to the fact that the introduction was written by Hegel himself and it is here where he makes the beautiful the object of his lectures.

For the Oxford Hegelian Bernard Bosanquet, the lectures represent two different layers of Hegel's aesthetics.⁵ According to Bosanquet, The early Hegel adhered to the concept of beautiful art following the early Schelling. Later, he turned to a dialectic view of beauty and ugly. Bosanquet writes: "The fact is that Hegel's notion of beauty is so positive throughout, that he is not led to devote any special treatment to what, as its negation, falls outside his track of inquiry".⁶ When German Hegelians such as Rosenkranz and Weisse discovered the ugly for the aesthetics some years later, according to Bosanquet they only developed a potential of Hegel's aesthetics that Hegel hasn't seen himself, but that could already be found within.

But Bosanquet's interpretation runs at least against two counter arguments. The first objection is that Hegel was not interested in the fulfilment of a desire for pure beauty (as Bosanquet also says), but rather in the embodiment of the truth: For Hegel a work of fine art is 'das sinnliche *Scheinen* der Idee'.⁷

Even more important is a second objection. In his lectures on aesthetics, Hegel does not position the aesthetically ugly as the negation of beauty. A work of art is 'beautiful' according to these lectures if it embodies the 'concrete truth' of a time adequately. Therefore, those works of art which do not embody this truth adequately are opposing beauty.⁸ The opposite of metaphysical beauty in art is failed art, but not the aesthetically ugly art. In fact, there isn't any discrepancy within Hegel's aesthetics if you distinguish between metaphysical beauty, formal beauty, and aesthetic beauty. (i) A work of art is beautiful in an aesthetic sense if it sounds harmonious or looks charming and pleasing. (ii) According to Hegel, within the physical form of the work of art may be nothing except what is in an essential relationship to the content and what expresses the content.⁹ Thus, one could say that a work of art is beautiful in a formal sense if its physical form of the work of art adequately embodies its content.¹⁰ (iii) But Hegel is interested in the metaphysical beauty, and a work of art is beautiful in a metaphysical sense if it adequately¹¹ embodies the concrete truth of a time.¹² The 'concrete truth of a time' is the sum of the religious interests of whole epochs.¹³ The crucial point is that such a content is *adequately* embodied if the physical form or shape of the artwork derives from and follows the content. *This means that metaphysical beauty even must be ugly in an aesthetical sense if ugliness corresponds to its metaphysical content.* Hegel explicitly says that a tortured Jesus on the cross should not look beautiful, because this would not be an *adequate* embodiment.¹⁴ On the other hand, works of art have to be beautiful in an aesthetical sense, if their content requires a beautiful form. For Hegel, this was the case with the works of art in the Greek antiquity, which were beautiful even in an ideal sense. Hegel deals in his lectures on aesthetics with works of art that are metaphysically beautiful, which can be aesthetically beautiful or ugly regarding their content. The first sentence of the *Vorlesungen* speaks of metaphysically beautiful art that can be both beautiful and ugly in an aesthetic sense. A fixation on aesthetic beauty does not exist in Hegel's thinking; the opposite is the case. Because only a fixation on aesthetic beauty would contradict my thesis of the modernity of Hegel's concept of art, the first possible objection to my thesis is rejected.

2. No place for modern secular art in Hegel's aesthetics

A second objection says that there is no place for the modern secular art in Hegel's aesthetics, because Hegel's works of art must embody religious contents.¹⁵ As I already said, the metaphysical beautiful work of art for Hegel has to embody the religious interests of entire eras. Moreover, Hegel brings up almost exclusively religious works of art as examples: In the context of the Symbolic art he mentions amorphous shapes of nature deities; in the context of the Classical art he mentions the stone statues of the Olympian gods; and in the context of the Romantic art form he discusses paintings of the Virgin

Mary and Jesus Christ. So the second objection seems to be true. But there also is the so-called ‘profane art’ after the end of the metaphysical art!

The age of profane art begins with the Reformation. The point is: profane art is no longer devoted to the representation of truth.¹⁶ It is no less art than is the metaphysically beautiful art (see below section 1.4). But profane works of art have no longer to embody religious contents. As Hegel says, a profane work of art is *free* to embody *any* content that the artist considers to be *interesting*. Hegel’s metaphysical fine art is in fact committed to religion, while secular art can embody any content. So the second objection to my thesis is also rejected.

3. The objection of Classicism

By pointing to profane art, you can also refute the third objection of Classicism.¹⁷ The art which represents the ideal of beauty, according to Hegel, is the art of ancient Greece. Their stone statues were metaphysically beautiful in an ideal sense, because they were perfectly beautiful in a formal sense, and, thus, also in an aesthetical sense: They embodied the religious interests of Greek antiquity in aesthetically beautiful forms as a perfect unity of form and content. Classical or Neo-classical art, however, is profane art, which does not even copy the art of antiquity but the profane art of the Renaissance: The Classicist Winckelmann admires Raphael’s ‘Dresdener Madonna’ and Michelangelo’s ‘David’ and not the art of ancient Greece itself. Hegel is not a Classicist because he declares the stone statues of the Greek gods as embodiments of the ideal of beauty and not the profane Classicistic art. Thus the third objection is refuted.

4. Art has reached its ‘End’

One could finally argue that there cannot be full-fledged works of art in modernity because art has reached its ‘End’ with the Reformation, according to Hegel. (i) Firstly, this ‘rumour’ (in German: ‘Gerücht’) is against Hegel’s dialectical view on history.¹⁸ According to this view, something that has once evolved from the historical necessity of a time, does not just disappear, but goes with a new era into a new stage. The wheel of history is never simply turned back. So after the so-called ‘End of Art’ remains, what had lifted the work of art over the natural objects at the beginning of the symbolic art form: that works of art are created (and not found) to embody adequately a content in a physical form (in other words: to be beautiful in a formal sense). Therefore, there is art after the so-called ‘End of Art’, but it has changed its function: It is no longer obliged to embody the absolute, because that happens elsewhere now (in religion and finally in philosophy). (ii) Because there obviously was very successful profane art after the Reformation, it would secondly have been obviously false, if Hegel had claimed that there cannot be art in the full sense of the term after the ‘End of Art’. In fact, he explicitly writes ‘the name of works of art should not be withheld’ to the productions

of profane art after the art of the Romantic art form.¹⁹ That Hegel is not further concerned with profane art, although he obviously has appreciated and admired it, can simply be explained by the fact that his aesthetic is not a general theory of art, but a theory of the metaphysically beautiful art as part of its philosophy of the absolute spirit.²⁰

II. THE PHYSICAL FORM

The first part refuted four objections to the thesis of the modernity of Hegel's concept of 'work of art'. The modernity of Hegel's concept of art will be explained now by a very short reference to some other so-called 'Hegelian aesthetics'.

1. The *Estetica* of Benedetto Croce

The *Estetica* of the Italian Benedetto Croce from 1902 is read as 'Hegelian aesthetics' because it is part of a philosophy of mind.²¹ The leading thesis is that art is the lowest mental activity as an intuitive formative activity.²² The raw materials for the formative activity of art are feelings. The result is 'expression' as 'formed feeling'.²³ This expression Croce also calls an 'artwork'. The crucial point is: according to Croce such an artwork does not necessarily have a physical form. For Croce, physical forms are merely a 'memory aid' for the reconstruction of the original mental activity.²⁴ For Hegel, however, the physical forms as adequate embodiment of the content are indispensable for his concept of 'work of art'. Art is not just a mental activity; there have to be physical artworks. For Hegel, every work of art has a physical form.

2. John Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics

In Anglo-Saxon literature, John Dewey's pragmatist aesthetics *Art as Experience* of 1934 are referred to as 'Hegelian aesthetics', because they are influenced by Croce's aesthetics and by the aesthetics of the Second Oxford Hegelian (see 3.2). In fact, however, Dewey's aesthetics are not interested in the work of art, but in the aesthetic and the ordinary experiences.²⁵ He discusses works of art only additionally as one of many possible physical embodiments of human experiences: Dewey speaks of factory buildings and tidy rooms.²⁶ According to Hegel, however, artworks, unlike factories, are created for the sole purpose of embodying their content adequately. Unlike factories, artworks have no other function than the adequate embodiment of a content. Ready-made objects are no objection because they are also created in a certain sense by exposing everyday objects (such as urinals) in a museum in an aesthetic style. To draw a first conclusion: According to Hegel, a work of art is something physical that was created for the sole purpose of its physical form embodying its content adequately.

III. THE CONTENT

This raises two further questions. The first question is whether a work of art must have a special content. The second question is what an adequate embodiment could be. Again, I will explain my position by reference to some other so-called ‘Hegelian’ theories of art. I’ll start with the question of content.

1. Socialist Realism

According to Hegelian aesthetics of Socialist Realism, art has to embody the socialist utopias of a better world.²⁷ On the one hand, Hegel’s examples of profane art prove that Hegel himself appreciated political art.²⁸ On the other hand, the aesthetics of Socialist Realism is a relatively clear call for censorship. This runs contrary to Hegel, because according to Hegel (as has been said already) the profane works of art are absolutely free in their contents. The socialist theory of art exposes an interesting sort of possible content for art, but one cannot oblige profane art generally to this one content according to Hegel.

2. The aesthetics of Bernard Bosanquet

There is a similar problem in the aesthetics of Bernard Bosanquet. In contrast to Croce, Bosanquet emphasizes strongly the indispensability of physical embodiment. Nevertheless, he runs contrary to Hegel in one important respect. Bernard Bosanquet writes, that Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics* starts with “man’s universal need to set the seal of his inner being on the world, in order to recognize himself therein”.²⁹ The crucial point is: For Bosanquet, the ‘inner being’ is identical with the feelings of the people. So, they oblige the artwork to embody intense feelings. Intense feelings undoubtedly have always been very important in art: What would the theatre be without jealousy, and what would music be without enthusiasm or pathos. But according to Hegel, art is ‘born of the Spirit’. In contrast to the beautiful in nature, the metaphysically beautiful art and the profane art have their origins in mental activities. That means that you have to think about the content of a work of art.³⁰ For Adorno, the documentation of real feelings is a ‘foreign toxin’ in art³¹ On the one hand you can think and feel at the same time, and on the other hand you can think about your feelings—that’s what you should do according to Bosanquet, if you enjoy art. Therefore, a work of art, which embodies an intense feeling, can also be a challenge for the thinking. But according to Hegel the profane art should be absolutely free in its contents. And so art should not be obliged to embody intense feelings and nothing else.

3. Adorno’s aesthetics

The same argument is to be turned against Adorno’s aesthetics. According to Adorno’s posthumously published aesthetics, art is both ‘autonomous’ and ‘fait social’. Because art is ‘autonomous’, it can’t be fixed by concepts what

art really is.³² So the theory of art can say, what art is, but it can't say, what it will be or what it should be.³³ But art also is 'fait social'. That means, that art also is the product of the society in which it is created. Both mean that the art (according to Adorno) is a free instance for subtle critique of society.³⁴ Undoubted social and political criticism is a very important function of profane art. But, again, it has to be emphasized that you cannot impose criticism on profane art, because, Hegel argues, profane art is absolutely *free* in its content.³⁵ To draw a second conclusion: According to Hegel, profane art after the 'End of art' is absolutely free in its content.³⁶

The content may be a religious or critical or enthusiastic or utopian or classicistic content, but it has not necessarily to be like this. According to Hegel everything can be the content of a profane work of art. In fact, he specifically mentions flowers, trees and ordinary cooking pots.³⁷ The only important thing is that the content is in any way interesting for the people of the time. And this has the very important consequence that the profane work of art has to be interpreted. In metaphysically beautiful art the question 'what is the artist trying to tell us?' has no place, because it is clear according to Hegel, that the metaphysically beautiful artworks embody the religious interests of the people of an era. But because profane art is free in its content, the question for the meaning of an artwork arises very clearly. In profane art, the question of the meaning of an artwork is not only legitimate but even central for the reception.

IV. THE ADEQUATE EMBODIMENT

That means, however, that there is no specific content that could make the works of art valuable—unlike in Hegel's metaphysically beautiful art before the End of Art. So now the following question arises: If it is now not the content that makes a work of art into a 'work of art'— what else could it be? In my eyes, the answer is clear: The adequate embodiment of the content is crucial. Hegel leaves no doubt that profane art after the End of Art is subjected to this requirement as well as the metaphysically beautiful art before the End of Art. But what exactly is an adequate embodiment?

Surprisingly, for this question there seems to be a broad consensus between the different Hegelian aesthetics: A physical form embodies its content adequately, if it evokes associations that guide the interpretive thinking towards the direction of the content. I think that Hegel would have agreed: the already mentioned example, that a tortured Jesus may not look aesthetically beautiful, confirms this thesis in principle. The same applies to the other examples discussed by Hegel. In details, however, the different Hegelian aesthetics set different priorities.

1. Socialist Realism

For the aesthetics of Socialist Realism, most important is the clarity and general comprehensibility of the embodiment. They claim a clear relation between ugly physical forms and the decadence and the evil of the capitalistic societies on the one hand, and between beautiful and sublime physical forms and the socialistic good and the utopian on the other hand. In the background are probably at work the dialectical aesthetics of Rosenkranz and Weisse, written soon after Hegel's death. The guiding question of the '*aesthetics of the ugly*' of Karl Rosenkranz from 1853 was why there can be ugly art when the generating of beauty should be the task of art? Rosenkranz's answer is based on the premise that the evil finds its adequate physical embodiment in ugly forms.³⁸ But why ugly art? Rosenkranz's answer is that ugly art produces a dialectical desire for the beautiful, and in a second step this desire for the beautiful produces a desire for the good. The aesthetics of Socialist Realism has joined this conviction. In my eyes, however, it is hard to imagine that you will look for beauty if you see something that is very ugly or cruel.³⁹ A person who sees the film *Django Unchained* will probably be repelled by the, as yet unseen, brutality of the protagonist. Perhaps his imagination is excited when he wonders whether he would also practice vigilante justice if he were to live in a lawless society. But I can't imagine that he will feel a desire for an abstract good. A second objection is that bad people are not necessarily ugly and good people are not necessarily beautiful. Dr. Mengele was aesthetically a very attractive person, but he committed horrible crimes in Auschwitz concentration camp. The most important objection is that despite of the necessary conventionality of the aesthetic signs, the embodiment must also be 'unseen' in the sense that it arouses curiosity. Only an interesting form evokes curiosity, interpretative activity and thinking; and only an interesting form embodies an interesting content adequately. But only an unseen physical form can be an interesting form in art. This means that the physical embodiment may not be schematic because a schematic embodiment is banal and boring and makes every interpretation superfluous: the artwork has failed.

2. Adorno

Particularly, Adorno emphasizes the importance of an unseen and puzzling form in art. According to Adorno, beyond all clarity of the physical embodiment there must also be a mystery. I think that Hegel would agree again. For Hegel, you have to think about the content of a work of art. The interpretation of the artwork is intellectually only interesting when it is difficult. That means that the physical form also must hide and disguise the content. According to Adorno the physical embodiment must also be a 'puzzle'. There have to be tensions and fractures, because banality is boring. How art at the same time can give clear associations and be puzzling explains Adorno in his book *Alban Berg: Meister des kleinen Übergangs*.⁴⁰ In a central scene

of the opera *Wozzeck*, the protagonist Wozzeck shaves his Captain. Meanwhile the Captain is talking: He says that there will soon be a North-South wind. A North-South wind is nonsense. And that's why Berg composes an interval that is nonsense in any key at this place. Wozzeck responds like a machine. Again and again he repeats the same sentence "Yes, Sir Captain" (in German: "Jawohl, Herr Hauptmann"). The associations are very clear: A North-South wind is nonsense, and Wozzeck is acting as a machine in this scene. The evoking of associations is very clear, but it is not simple or banal, because you need well-trained ears and even some musicological knowledge to understand your own associations. To summarize: As Adorno correctly emphasizes, beyond all clarity the physical embodiment must also be a puzzle, because you have to think about the profane work of art as about the metaphysical art according to Hegel.

3. The perfect technical design

But a particularly important third aspect is often neglected in Hegelian aesthetics. This important third aspect is the perfect technical design of the physical embodiment. It might not be important in the first Symbolic art form but it is already important in the Classical and Romantic art forms, and it is particularly important in profane art. According to Hegel, the physical form of every artwork has to derive from and follows the content: Within the physical form of the work of art "may be nothing" except "what is in an essential relationship to the content and what expresses the content".⁴¹ This means that within the form there should be nothing that is superfluous because it does not embody the content. But this can only succeed if the artist is technically perfect. Errors and oversights would contaminate the form and distract from the content. What Hegel at the beginning of his lectures says about the metaphysical fine art is (according to the dialectical principles) also preserved in profane art. It is significant that Hegel only demands that the profane artist has the technical skills needed to treat the physical material of his art.⁴²

Both Adorno and Bosanquet emphasize the importance of the artistic craft for successful art.⁴³ But while Adorno is particularly interested in the dialectical relationship between art and society, Bernard Bosanquet, in his *Three Lectures in Aesthetics* of 1915, focuses very specifically on the question of whether and to what extent a theory of art can define any technical rules for artistic creation. The reason is that the Second Oxford Hegelian is not only influenced by Hegel, but also by the English art historian John Ruskin, who taught painting, design and drawing in some famous Colleges in Oxford. Therefore, the Second Oxford Hegelian realized the importance of technical perfection for the difference between good and failed profane art.

One of Bosanquet's examples is Homer's song on the golden war shield of Achilles created by the divine Hephaistos. For Bosanquet, the song is "perhaps the earliest aesthetic judgement which Western literature contains".

He quotes Homer as follows: “Behind the plough the earth went black, and looked like ploughed ground, though it was made of gold; that was a very miracle of his craft”. It is to emphasize that for Bosanquet the ‘miracle’ is not that we can recognize symbols and pictures. The “miracle of craft” is that the “mind possesses a magic by which it can extract the soul of the actual thing or event, and confer it on any medium which is convenient to him, the wall of a cave, or a plate of gold, or a scrap of paper.”⁴⁴ For Bosanquet the miracle of craft is that an artist is able to form the physical material of his art so that we feel to be on a field if we see a golden plate. It may sound stuffy, but in my eyes this third aspect of the technical perfection is a very central feature of all successful art since great artworks from different genres and periods all have this one common feature: that they are technically perfect. If a pianist is playing wrong notes, you will be distracted from the composition because you will feel compassion with the pianist. If he screwed with the piano stool for too long, the audience laughs. The result is failed art.

The Germans say “Kunst kommt von Können” (a translation might be: “art is based on skill”). You will not become automatically a good pianist by practising the piano a lot. But you will not become a pianist at all if you don’t practise the piano. The genius of Mozart is not a counter-example, because Mozart had been practising the piano already as a baby! Take the artwork *The Diaoyu Islands* of Ai Wei Wei as an example.⁴⁵ You can read on a sign that the Diaoyu Islands are unoccupied until today. But the Chinese government will destroy the natural paradise very soon because oil was found. The leading idea or the ‘content’ of the artwork is clear: Ai Wei Wei’s islands are made of stone (marble), because this physical material is highly resistant. It is very beautiful because the untouched nature of the islands is very beautiful. The idea to embody the islands in stone seems to be simple. But Ai Wei Wei took a special marble: He took the very precious marble of the quarry from which the marble for the Forbidden City of the Chinese Emperors in Peking and for Lenin’s grave were taken. You have to see this if you want to understand this artwork. Perhaps the content is interesting only for the Western world, but not for Chinese people. Nevertheless, more important is the fact that the marble is perfectly designed. Even though some people say the content is simple, in my eyes it is really great art because of its technical perfection. You would admire Ai Wei Wei’s critical thoughts and his refined ideas for physical embodiments if you were to visit the exhibition. But above all, you would admire his perfect craftsmanship—and I think that is true for all great art beyond all differences in content and form.

V. CONCLUDING

Certainly, I should discuss in more detail what is an interesting content and an adequate embodiment. But unfortunately, there is no opportunity to go further. An essay can be only an impulse of thought and a brief sketch. So my last and final conclusion is: Hegel's aesthetics is not outdated: his concept of the profane work of art is still relevant. The profane work of art (1) is created (2) as an adequate physical embodiment (3) of an interesting content. An adequate physical embodiment is (2.i) clear, but also (2.ii) complex and puzzling, and it is (2.iii) technically perfect. My thesis is that all great works of art since Hegel's End of Art, and especially the great works of art of our time, are beyond all differences in details well described by this Hegelian concept of a 'profane work of art'. The good art of Social Realism is as technically perfect as Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* or as Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Julia*. These artworks are 'profane works of art' according to Hegel's concept, and they are 'good artworks' because they are beautiful in a formal sense, that is that they physically embody an interesting content both adequately and technically perfect.⁴⁶

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NOTES

1. Gethmann-Siefert 1998, 31.
2. Hegel 1975, 1. The German original: "Diese Vorlesungen sind der Ästhetik gewidmet; ihr Gegenstand ist das *weite Reich des Schönen*, und näher [...] die *schöne Kunst*" (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 11).
3. Jung 1987, 123; Zelle 1987, 11.
4. Gethmann-Siefert 1977, 127-149; 129.
5. For Anglo-Saxon Hegelianism generally and Oxford-Hegelianism specifically see Raters 2005, 251-323.
6. Bosanquet 1917, 355.
7. Hegel 1986b, vol.13 151f. Engl. "Therefore the beautiful is characterized as the pure appearance of the Idea to sense." (Hegel 1975, 111).
8. Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 133f.
9. "Im Kunstwerk ist nichts vorhanden, als was wesentliche Beziehung auf den Inhalt hat und ihn ausdrückt." (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 132), Engl. "In the work of art nothing is there except what has an essential relation to the content and is an expression of it." (Hegel 1975, 95). See also: "Denn die Kunst ergreift diese Form weder, weil sich dieselbe so vorfindet, noch, weil es keine andere gibt, sondern in dem konkreten Inhalte liegt selber das Moment auch äußerer und wirklicher, ja selbst sinnlicher Erscheinung." (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13 101f.), Engl. "For art does not seize upon this form either because it just finds it there or because there is no other; on the contrary, the concrete content itself involves the factor of external, actual, and indeed even sensuous manifestation." (Hegel 1975, 71). "Aus diesem Grund allein sind Inhalt und Kunstgestalt ineinandergebildet." (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 102), Engl. "For this reason alone are content and artistic form fashioned in conformity with one another." (Hegel 1975, 71).
10. An adequate embodiment is not per se a perfect embodiment or a perfect unity of content and form. In fact, this could happen only once in the history of mankind at the time of classical art form: According to Hegel, the unity of content and form has been so complete that the Divine was present with and worshiped in the stone statues of the gods of ancient Greece.

- According to Hegel, the certain spiritual characters of the Olympic gods have become bodily in the stone statues. (Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 83). But an embodiment may also be adequate if it is not such a perfect unity of form and content.
11. Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 50
 12. Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 21.
 13. Die Kunst scheint “zuzeiten den höchsten und absoluten” Bedürfnissen “Genüge zu tun, indem sie an die allgemeinen Weltanschauungen und religiösen Interessen ganzer Epochen und Völker gebunden ist.” (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 50), Engl. “art seems to proceed from a higher impulse and to satisfy higher needs, at times the highest and absolute needs since it is bound up with the most universal views of life and the religious interests of whole epochs and peoples.” (Hegel 1975, 30). See also: “Der absolute Geist kann nicht in solcher Einzelheit des Gestaltens expliziert werden; der Geist der schönen Kunst ist darum ein beschränkter Volksgeist, dessen an sich seiende Allgemeinheit” in “eine unbestimmte Vielgötterei zerfällt.” (Hegel 1986a, vol. 10, 442), Engl. “In such single shapes the absolute mind cannot be made explicit: in and to art therefore the spirit is a limited natural spirit whose implicit universality, when steps are taken to specify its fullness in detail, breaks up into an indeterminate polytheism.” (Hegel 1971, 294).
 14. “Christus gegeißelt, mit der Dornenkrone, das Kreuz zum Richtplatz tragend, ans Kreuz geheftet, in der Qual eines langsamen Todes hinsterbend, läßt sich in den Formen der griechischen Schönheit nicht darstellen.” (Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 153), Engl. “Christ scourged, with the crown of thorns, carrying his cross to the place of execution, nailed to the cross, passing away in the agony of a torturing and slow death—this cannot be portrayed in the forms of Greek beauty.” (Hegel 1975, 538).
 15. As Rosenkranz did 148 years before, Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, also, sees a religious prejudice in Hegel. (Gethmann-Siefert 1984, 344). Rosenkranz wrote in 1836: “So bildete sich das Vorurtheil, als sei es der Hegelschen Ästhetik nicht um das Schöne, sondern um die von den Kunstbilden verhüllte Wissenschaft zu tun. Sie gestehe dem Schönen kein eigentümliches Gebiet zu, sondern erblicke in ihr nur eine geschickte Maskierung logischer, ethischer und theologischer Kategorien.” (Rosenkranz 1836, 184). English translation by P. Naderer: “Thus, the prejudice has been formed, that Hegel’s Aesthetic was not dealing with beauty itself but instead with science being masked by those art images. It would not allow the beauty a domain of its own, but rather sees in it a cleverly made disguise of logical, ethical and theological categories.” Hegel’s *Enzyklopädie* explicitly says that the metaphysically beautiful work of art has to embody the religious beliefs and hopes of an era. (Hegel 1986a, 371).
 16. Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 235f.
 17. See Kuhn 1966, 15-144, without accusing the publisher Hotho. See also Gethmann-Siefert 1983, 238, 242f.
 18. ‘Gerücht’ is the subtitle of Geulen’s book on the discussions after Hegel’s alleged ‘End of Art’. See Geulen 2002.
 19. In German: “Nach diesen Seiten hin dürfen wir den Erzeugnissen dieses Kreises den Namen von Kunstwerken nicht vorenthalten.” (Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 224), Engl. “In view of these aspects we may not deny the name of works of art to the creations of this sphere.” (Hegel 1975, 596).
 20. See Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 226ff.
 21. Croce 1964.
 22. Croce 1964, 1.
 23. Croce 1964, 355.
 24. Croce 1964, 89-106.
 25. Dewey 2008, 1981ff. See also Raters-Mohr 1994.
 26. Dewey 2008, 98–114.
 27. See for example Kagan 1974, 14, 180, 156.
 28. Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 255ff.
 29. Bosanquet 1917, 346.
 30. “Die Schönheit aber ist nur eine bestimmte Weise der Äußerung und Darstellung des Wahren und steht deshalb dem begreifenden Denken, wenn es wirklich mit der Macht des Begriffs ausgerüstet ist, durchaus nach allen Seiten hin offen”. (Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 127), Engl. “But Beauty is only a specific way of expressing and representing the true and therefore stands open throughout in every respect of conceptual

- thinking, so long as that thinking is actually equipped with the power of concept." (Hegel 1975, 92). See also Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 242; Hegel 1986a, 377.
31. "Dokumentation real vorhandender Gefühle, das Wieder-von-sich-Geben psychischen Rohstoffs ist ihr [der Kunst] fremd. Vergebens, abstrakt die Grenzen ziehen zu wollen zwischen ästhetischer Fiktion und dem Gefühlsplunder des Kitsches. Als Giftstoff ist er aller Kunst beigemischt; ihn aus sich auszuschneiden, ist eine ihrer verzweifelten Anstrengungen heute" (Adorno 1970, 355), Engl. "The documentation of actually existing feelings, the recapitulation of psychical raw material, is foreign to it. It is in vain to try to draw the boundaries abstractly between aesthetic fiction and kitsch's emotional plunder. It is a poison admixed to all art; excising it is today one of art's despairing efforts." (Adorno 1997, 239). See also Brecht 1978, 'Das epische Theater'.
 32. "Kunst hat ihren Begriff in der geschichtlich sich verändernden Konstellation von Momenten; er sperrt sich der Definition." (Adorno 1970, 11). Engl. "The concept of art is located in a historically changing constellation of elements; it refuses definition." (Adorno 1997, 2).
 33. "Die Definition dessen, was Kunst sei, ist allemal von dem vorgezeichnet, was sie einmal war, legitimiert sich aber nur an dem, wozu sie geworden ist, offen zu dem, was sie werden will und vielleicht werden kann." (Adorno 1970, 11f.). Engl. "The definition of art is at every point indicated by what art once was, but it is legitimated only by what art became with regard to what it wants to, and perhaps can, become." (Adorno 1997, 2f.).
 34. "Um inmitten des Äußersten und Finstersten der Realität zu bestehen, müssen die Kunstwerke, die nicht als Zuspruch sich verkaufen wollen, jedem sich gleichmachen. Radikale Kunst heute heißt so viel wie finstere, von der Grundfarbe schwarz." (Adorno 1970, 65). Engl. "To survive reality at its most extreme and grim, artworks that do not want to sell themselves as consolation must equate themselves with that reality. Radical art today is synonymous with dark art; its primary color is black." (Adorno 1997, 39). See also Menke 1991, 191–216.
 35. I agree with Rüdiger Bubner who wrote in 1980: "Die [kritische] Theorie weiß, daß Werke kritisch eingreifen, denn sie weiß, daß die Autonomie der Werke dem verblendeten Weltlauf einzig Parolie bieten ... Sie weiß deshalb auch, was wirklich avantgardistisch vorwärts weist und was allem modernem Anschein zum Trotz sich in falscher Rückwendung verliert. ... Die Vorbestimmtheit einer Erkenntnis der Kunst, die die tatsächliche Erfahrung überflüssig macht, ist in meinen Augen die innerste Grenze der kritischen Ästhetik." (Bubner 1989, 90). Translation by P. Naderer: "The [critical] theory knows that works of art intervene critically because it knows that the work's autonomy exclusively defies the fatuous course of the world. Therefore it knows as well about things really pointing forward in an avantgarde fashion and about those losing themselves while falsely turning backwards on the other hand. ... The predestination of knowledge about art, which would make the actual experience redundant, represents, in my eyes, the innermost threshold of critical aesthetics."
 36. "Die Gebundenheit an einen besonderen Gehalt und eine nur für diesen Stoff passende Art der Darstellung ist für den heutigen Künstler etwas Vergangenes, und die Kunst dadurch ein freies Instrument geworden, das er nach Maßgabe seiner subjektiven Geschicklichkeit in bezug auf jeden Inhalt, welcher Art er auch sei, gleichmäßig zu handhaben." (Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 235). Engl. "Bondage to a particular subject-matter and a mode of portrayal suitable for this material alone are for artists today something past, and art therefore has become a free instrument which the artist can wield in proportion to his subjective skill in relation to any material of whatever kind." (Hegel 1975, 605).
 37. Hegel 1986b, 139f.
 38. Rosenkranz 1990.
 39. Rosenkranz 1990, 35.
 40. Adorno 1977.
 41. Hegel 1986b, vol. 13, 132.
 42. Hegel 1986b, vol. 14, 197, 235.

43. Adorno writes: “So gewiß Kunstwerke mehr sind als ihre Verfahrensweise, die im Wort ‘Technik’ sich zusammenfaßt, so gewiß haben sie objektiven Gehalt nur so weit, wie er in ihnen erscheint, und das geschieht einzig kraft des Inbegriffs ihrer Technik. Deren Logik ist der Weg in die ästhetische Wahrheit.” (Adorno 1970, 419f.). Engl. “However certain it is that artworks are more than the quintessence of their procedures, which is to say their ‘technique’, it is just as certain that they have objective content only insofar as it appears in them, and this occurs solely by the strength of the quintessence of their technique. Its logic leads the way to aesthetic truth.” (Adorno 1997, 282).
44. Bosanquet 1968, 49f.
45. See the exhibition ‘Evidence 2014’ Gropius Bau Berlin.
46. I thank Mr. Peter Naderer for his careful correction-work and for his creative translations.

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