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Source: *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (June 2011), pp. 178-194

Published by: College Art Association

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23046592>

Accessed: 13-12-2017 18:50 UTC

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Hegel's Contested Legacy: Rethinking the Relation between Art History and Philosophy

Jason Gaiger

It is widely acknowledged that the ideas of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel played a vital role in the formation of the modern discipline of art history and that his attempt to discern underlying structures of meaning in the historical development of art provided an important stimulus for figures such as Alois Riegl, Heinrich Wölfflin, and Max Dvořák. However, it is equally widely accepted that Hegel's own theory of art—including the highly problematic notion of a historically unfolding “world spirit” (*Weltgeist*)—is bound up with a set of metaphysical commitments that are no longer tenable today. To speak of Hegel's contested legacy is thus to invite the question whether there remains anything to contest in the work of a philosopher whose last public lectures on aesthetics were given in Berlin in 1829. As long ago as 1907 Benedetto Croce published a book with the title *What Is Living and What Is Dead in Hegel's Philosophy*.¹ In the intervening century numerous efforts have been made to salvage isolated elements that can be put to use within an alternative theoretical framework. Nonetheless, it is scarcely controversial to claim that the challenge to construct a complete system of knowledge, in which the place of art is secured in advance by a “science of logic,” no longer compels conviction.² If speculative idealism has collapsed as a coherent philosophical project, it would seem that the *Lectures on Aesthetics* can be quarried for critical insights concerning particular artworks, and perhaps for more general claims concerning the changing cultural and historical functions of art, without having to engage with the substantive body of ideas through which these insights were generated. On this view, whatever recognition might be accorded to Hegel as one of the “founding fathers” of the discipline, his work belongs to art history's history rather than to its present concerns.³

This assessment of Hegel's significance—typified by Hans Belting's observation that a workable “aesthetics of content” must first be “severed from its dogmatic mooring in Hegel's ‘system’”—remains dominant among art historians.⁴ By contrast, there is an exceptionally vigorous debate taking place among philosophers, for whom the question of Hegel's contemporary relevance has, if anything, gained in impetus over the last two decades. The guiding thread for understanding this new critical approach is to be found in Jürgen Habermas's assertion that Hegel was the first philosopher for whom modernity itself became a philosophical problem.⁵ According to this interpretation, Hegel's relevance to us resides in his recognition that under the specific historical conditions of modernity, that is to say, after the rejection of all merely external claims to authority, be it in the form of religious doctrine or brute political power, reason must find a means of grounding its own claims to rationality without recourse to prior suppositions: the refusal to obey any external authority without examining its warrant or entitlement also extends to

reason itself. For Habermas and other contemporary philosophers, Hegel's analysis of the sociality of spirit, or *Geist*, should be understood as an explanation of how we are both subject to the claims of reason and yet also responsible for instituting the norms and values through which reason becomes active in our lives.⁶

It is not difficult to see that this reconstruction of Hegel's views also has profound consequences for his theory of art. Rather than reading the lectures on aesthetics as a colorful but improbable set of illustrations to the march of the world spirit, philosophers such as Martin Donougho, Dieter Henrich, Stephen Houlgate, and Terry Pinkard have focused on the underlying problem of art's status and function in relation to other forms of knowledge and experience.⁷ In the words of Robert Pippin, perhaps the leading exponent of this approach, Hegel is “the art theorist for whom the link between modernity and an intensifying self-consciousness, both within art production and philosophically, about art itself, is the most important.”⁸ A reassessment of Hegel's aesthetics is particularly timely in light of the new critical editions of his work that have been published in Germany. As we shall see, access to the original auditors' transcripts of the lectures provides an insight into Hegel's philosophy that is strongly at variance with the version presented by his critics and offers us a fresh opportunity to reconsider his views.

Before going into Hegel's philosophy, it is useful to look at the reasons for the comparative neglect of Hegel's aesthetics within the discipline of art history. Ernst Gombrich's critique of Hegel as the proponent of a mystifying theory of art that is immune to correction by empirical evidence still commands widespread assent, even though few contemporary art historians accept Gombrich's conception of properly “scientific” knowledge or his contention that the appropriate model of inquiry is to be found in the writings of Karl Popper.⁹ Gombrich's blanket identification of Hegel with a “metaphysical” tradition of thinking in which agency is attributed to hypostatized entities, whether it be the “spirit of a people” (*Volksgeist*) or the “will to art” (*Kunstwollen*), and his condemnation of this tradition as a form of “mythmaking” that accords explanatory value to unitary principles are rooted in his conviction that “the habit of talking in terms of collectives, of ‘mankind,’ ‘races,’ or ‘ages’ . . . weakens resistance to totalitarian habits of mind.”¹⁰ This formulation is clearly indebted to Popper's analysis of the rise of totalitarianism and his denunciation of Hegel in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.¹¹ However, it is also decisively shaped by Gombrich's experience of exile and the need to work through the inheritance of the Vienna school of art history. Gombrich had already questioned the “facility of the correlation” between artworks and the “spirit of the age,” as well as the “unreflecting assumption that one can make an inference from one to the other,” in a review of an essay by Ernst Garger, which he

published in 1937 when he was just twenty-eight years old.¹² The current resurgence of interest in the writings of Riegl and other Vienna school art historians affords a vantage point from which to question some of the simplifications of Gombrich's account, and the ways in which Gombrich's ideas in their turn have been simplified, while acknowledging the entanglement of art and politics in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century art history.

I draw on recent "nonmetaphysical" interpretations of Hegel's philosophy—whose advocates include Anglo-American analytic philosophers such as Robert Brandom and John McDowell as well as philosophers working within the so-called Continental tradition—in order to sketch out the lineaments of an alternative and, I hope, more productive reading of Hegel's lectures on aesthetics.¹³ Far from vitiating his position, the identification of unresolved—and potentially irresolvable—tensions between, for example, the concept of art and its historical manifestations or between art's sensuous nature and its rational content lends his work much of its contemporary interest and helps to secure its relevance to a period in which traditional frameworks and narratives have lost their hold. The most challenging, but also potentially the most rewarding features of Hegel's aesthetics become apparent only if we address his claims concerning the deep historicalness of art, and we should therefore resist the temptation to adopt a fragmentary or atomistic approach to broader questions of meaning. This allows me to address the relation between art historical and philosophical inquiry and to investigate whether the "fateful division" inaugurated by Hegel resides not, as Belting maintains, in the separation of the historical study of art from contemporary problems and concerns but in the separation of art history and philosophy, which once worked so closely together. The dispute over the correct interpretation of Hegel's ideas thus has broader implications for art historians working today, for it bears not only on the discipline's troubled relation to its past but also on its relation to other, contiguous fields of knowledge that reside on the fault line between historical and theoretical understanding.

Conceptions and Misconceptions of Hegel's Philosophy

Critical responses to Hegel's philosophy have been sharply polarized since the division into right and left Hegelians in the years immediately following the philosopher's death in 1831.¹⁴ The philosopher who was lauded for discovering the "rational in the real" through his investigation of the organization of the Prussian state and the doctrinal claims of Protestantism—which characterized him as an unquestioning apologist of the status quo—was also identified as the most acute analyst of the "contradictions" of modern society, whose dialectical method and radical "sublation" (*Aufhebung*) of Christianity provided the resources for a revolutionary overthrow of established values. Ludwig Feuerbach declared that he had succeeded in turning Hegel's method of critical analysis back against speculative idealism, while Karl Marx famously insisted that he had placed dialectics on its feet, whereas Hegel left it standing on its head.¹⁵ Both thinkers emphasized the radical historicism and implicit social critique that was contained within the apparently static confines of Hegel's system. Their interpretation pictured Hegel as a

dynamic and potentially destabilizing thinker whose ideas could be deployed *against* the forces of reaction and conservatism.

The powerful influence exerted by Hegel's philosophy throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is due, at least in part, to the way in which subsequent movements—including, besides Marxism, existentialism, phenomenology, pragmatism, and, more recently, deconstruction—sought to define themselves through opposition to his work, thereby setting in train a complex process of rejection and retrieval. As Katerina Deligiorgi has astutely observed, the reception history of Hegel's thought "is shaped not only by those who saw themselves as preserving his teachings but also by those who criticized them."¹⁶ This also holds true for the discipline of art history, which emerged in its modern form in German-speaking countries in the wake of Hegel's aesthetics. The "critical historians of art," to use Michael Podro's helpful term, remained deeply indebted to Hegel's ideas while at the same time subjecting his approach to far-reaching criticisms.¹⁷ It is difficult now to tease apart the various strands that linked together Hegelianism, Neo-Kantianism, and overtly empiricist stances. The charges that idealism had cut itself adrift from the natural sciences and that it was inadequately responsive to historical facts were countered by the material richness of Hegel's philosophy and its success in identifying meaningful patterns of order within an otherwise overwhelming mass of data. In seeking to "go beyond" Hegel, the critical historians of art drew freely on a wide range of intellectual resources with the aim of extending as well as correcting his conception of art as the product of a historically specific constellation of ideas and values that is nonetheless subject to its own "immanent" processes of development.

One of the reasons why Gombrich's narrative of the Hegelian origins of art history has proved so enduring is that it imposes a retrospective sense of order on a densely compacted set of theoretical and methodological debates. The central task of his essay "In Search of Cultural History"—first delivered as a lecture in 1967—is to show that the discipline of art history is constructed on Hegelian foundations that could no longer bear the weight of the edifice they were intended to carry.¹⁸ Gombrich identifies a roster of art historians, including Jakob Burckhardt, Erwin Panofsky, and Johan Huizinga, as well as Riegl, Wölfflin, and Dvořák, who rejected the idealist premises of Hegel's metaphysics but nonetheless continued to operate with his theory of history. If Gombrich is right that the very project of *Kulturgeschichte*, or cultural history, "has been built, knowingly and unknowingly, on Hegelian foundations that have crumbled," there remains a theoretical deficit at the heart of the discipline that can be made good only by extirpating the last remnants of Hegel's philosophy and constructing a more robust explanatory framework.¹⁹ The model for this is to be found in Popper's interpretation of the "logic of scientific discovery," in which falsification through empirical evidence plays a key role in establishing the validity of scientific knowledge. At the same time, Gombrich places faith in more localized studies in which attention is fixed on the achievements of individual artists rather than broad historical periods.²⁰

It is unsurprising, then, that Gombrich's arguments are

directed for the most part at Hegel's philosophy of history rather than the lectures on aesthetics. He puts forward a number of powerful criticisms of Hegel's "exegetic method," focusing in particular on the problematic idea of a unified "spirit of the people" that is revealed in the religious views, cultural life, and moral commitments of a particular nation or society as well as in its political constitution, legal system, and characteristic modes of thought. The recognition that these different elements are interconnected in myriad ways should not, according to Gombrich, lead us to make the unfounded and deeply misleading supposition that "all aspects of a culture can be traced back to one key cause of which they are manifestations."²¹ The twin Hegelian postulates of the "spirit of the age" and "the spirit of the people" rest on the assumption "that everything must be treated not only as connected with everything else, but as a symptom of everything else."²² What makes this assumption "metaphysical" rather than "a genuinely scientific search for causal connections" is its "a priori character."²³ Drawing on Popper's lines of reasoning in *The Poverty of Historicism*, Gombrich contends that the deficiencies of the holistic approach become obvious once we acknowledge that "there is no necessary connection between any one aspect of a group's activities and any other."²⁴ This insight forms the basis of Gombrich's lifelong attempt to identify and slay the metaphysical "giants" that he believed had emerged from Hegel's philosophy: "aesthetic transcendentalism," "historical collectivism," "historical determinism," "metaphysical optimism," and "dialectical relativism."²⁵

Gombrich is primarily concerned with the afterlife of these ideas in the discipline of art history. However, given the weight that Gombrich places on the concept of "spirit," it is worth pausing to examine the complex role that this term plays in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel's observation in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* that "spirit is essentially active; it makes itself into that which it is in itself, into its own deed, its own creation" can be recast in more acceptable form by translating the German word *Geist* as "mind" rather than spirit. On this "nonmetaphysical" reading, Hegel is simply reminding us that the social and cultural world is the product of human decision making and that our character and identity are formed, at least in part, through the institutions that we create.²⁶ But when he goes on to say that "it is the same with the spirit of a nation; it is a specific spirit which makes itself into an actual world which now exists objectively in its religion, its rituals, its customs, constitution and political laws," he seems to posit the existence of an independent force or power that exercises agency on a supra-individual level. Hegel frequently speaks of "reason" and "spirit" as if they were objective forces that are somehow "realized" through human actions. This provides the basis for what Houlgate terms "the infamous Hegelian Absolute which is supposed to be the all-powerful puppet master governing history and using human beings as the vehicle for its schemes." Houlgate contends that this is "an absolute fiction" and, furthermore, "Such an Absolute does not exist in Hegel's philosophy but only in the minds of his critics."²⁷ Hegel's formulation of the manifestation of reason in nature and history, or what he terms "the Idea," describes not a

"transcendent power" but rather "the rationality that is *inherent* in the world itself: the world's own immanent logic."²⁸

An alternative strategy, pursued by Pippin, is to concede that Hegel does make highly problematic metaphysical claims about the nature and activity of "spirit." When it comes to specific problems concerning, for example, the nature of moral action or the exercise of agency within norm-governed social institutions, though, he consistently furnishes an explanation "in terms internal to the topic at issue" rather than relying on his conception of the "unfolding of the Absolute."²⁹ Following this interpretation, Hegel's view of "spirit" as an extrapersonal force can safely be set to one side since it has no practical bearing on the issues that really matter. I will return to these issues, but for the moment it is important to note the powerful dissenting voices in contemporary Hegel studies and the philosophers, including Frederick Beiser, Sebastian Gardner, and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, who argue for the indispensability of Hegel's metaphysical commitments.³⁰ Beiser, for one, contends that the nonmetaphysical interpretation represents an illegitimate "domestication" of Hegel's ideas and that "the tendency to read the *metaphysical* themes and issues out of German idealism" removes precisely those elements that are "challenging to our own ways of doing philosophy."³¹ What gives these debates their sense of urgency is the notion that Hegel's analysis of the "sociality" of the norms, practices, and institutions within which rational choices are made affords a genuine alternative to methodological individualism and thus offers a "live" set of possibilities for philosophers working today.

At least initially, these larger theoretical questions do not appear to have any direct bearing on Gombrich's analysis of the deleterious consequences of Hegel's ideas for the development of art history. His diagnosis of the persistence of Hegelian modes of thinking—or what he terms "Hegelianism without metaphysics"—rests on the understanding that the critical historians of art, while rejecting Hegel's account of the operation of reason in history, continued to assume that there is an underlying unity that links all the manifestations of a culture: attempts to replace the world spirit with the "will to art" (Riegl), the "history of vision" (Wölfflin), or changing "conditions of production" (Marx) only reproduce the same problems in a different guise.³² Once we relinquish the Hegelian model and examine the empirical evidence, we are forced to accept that even the most homogeneous societies contain considerable internal diversity, that the spheres of science, jurisprudence, and politics overlap and diverge in unpredictable ways, and that the various arts rarely develop in tandem with one another.³³ Having learned from the mistakes of our predecessors, we can place art history on a secure empirical footing and finally lay to rest the specter of its Hegelian past.

As so often with Gombrich, however, the coherence and persuasiveness of the story he wants to tell is belied by the acknowledgment of greater complexity, which is pushed to the margins but never fully suppressed. Although he appears to put forward a rallying cry for a "return to the facts," he recognizes that the facts cannot speak for themselves and that without some "principle of relevance," the historian is confronted with an "infinite array of documents and monuments." Indeed, "history could not be written at all" without

a “preconceived idea” that enables us to discern order and meaning rather than simply accumulating isolated units of information.³⁴ The task of the art historian is not merely to describe the empirical diversity of artworks but to analyze the underlying visual and conceptual schemata through which artists at different historical periods have represented the world. Contrary to what we might expect, in these passages and elsewhere in his work, Gombrich relies on what is, perhaps, the key insight on which Hegel's philosophy is based: the realization that the mind plays an indispensable role in the structuring of experience and that we therefore need to challenge all claims to “immediacy.”³⁵ Gombrich's richly informative and wide-ranging investigations into topics as diverse as the psychology of pictorial representation and the interplay of tradition and innovation in historical learning processes rest on the contention that there is no perception without conception: seeing and knowing are inextricably bound up with each other in visual experience.³⁶

The Hegelian provenance of these ideas—which received their classic formulation in Hegel's critique of “sense certainty” in the opening section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—is obscured by Gombrich's uncritical acceptance of the consistently right-Hegelian interpretative approach he found at work in art history.³⁷ Starting out from the mantra “one does not argue with the Absolute,” he maintains that Hegel's entire philosophy should be understood as “an extension . . . of the Christian interpretation of providential history.”³⁸ This interpretation depends on a strongly metaphysical reading of the relation between Hegel's *Science of Logic* and his practical philosophy, which supposedly “repeats its essential and inevitable dialectical steps as an ascent through the logical categories.”³⁹ Gombrich assumes that Hegel worked out his views in advance in accordance with the exigencies of his system and then simply “applied” the results to the various domains of art, science, morality, and so forth. He concedes that Hegel “displayed much skill and even poetic gift in presenting the development of the arts as a logical process accompanying and reflecting the unfolding of the spirit.”⁴⁰ However, it is only when the “clattering of his conceptual mill falls silent” that his “genuine love of art” can come to the fore.⁴¹ The underlying assumption here is that philosophical reflection distorts or obscures our purportedly more natural responses to art and that Hegel's attempt to grasp the interrelation between different domains of experience is driven by a spurious search for unity, in which he imposes the order he claims to discover.

Gombrich's criticisms of Hegel are deeply entangled in recent German history and his dual assimilation and rejection of the methods of the Vienna school of art history in which he was trained, but which in the work of figures such as Josef Strzygowski and Hans Sedlmayr had been tainted with racism and right-wing ideology.⁴² For Gombrich, not only Hegel's ideas but also those of Riegl are to be viewed through the lens of their subsequent adoption and reinterpretation by art historians who gave their support to National Socialism. His willingness to evaluate earlier thinkers on the basis of their inheritance in art history is made explicit in *Art and Illusion*, where he grounds his assertion that “[t]he ‘will-to-form,’ the *Kunstwollen*, becomes a ghost in the machine, driving the wheels of artistic development according to ‘in-

exorable laws,’ ” not through study of Riegl's writings but through reference to Sedlmayr's revisionary account of the “quintessence” of Riegl's teaching.⁴³ Gombrich finds there in summary form the doctrines he spent a lifetime opposing, including the statement that “spiritual collectives” possess independent reality and that there is such a thing as the “meaningful self-movement of the Spirit which results in genuine historical totalities of events.”⁴⁴ In a review of a Festschrift published for Sedlmayr in 1964, Gombrich presented a forceful critique of the method of “structural analysis,” contending that “failure to speak out against the enemies of reason has caused enough disasters to justify this breach of Academic etiquette.”⁴⁵

Together with colleagues such as Otto Pächt and Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg, Sedlmayr had sought to turn Riegl's ideas into a rigorous “science of art history” that would disclose the structural principles underlying the formal organization of individual works of art as well as larger processes of historical change. The ambiguities attendant on Riegl's notion of *Kunstwollen* were to be replaced by the more neutral analysis of “structure,” but Sedlmayr also declared that this elusive concept should be understood in terms of “objective spirit,” with its strong Hegelian resonance, and that it possessed the character of a “supra-individual will” with its own reality and “power [*Kraft*].”⁴⁶ Already in 1936, in a critical review of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, a journal edited by Sedlmayr and Pächt as a vehicle for disseminating their ideas, Meyer Schapiro had observed:

The authors tend to isolate forms from the historical conditions of their development, to propel them by mythical, racial-psychological constants, or to give them an independent, self-evolving career. Entities like race, spirit, will, and idea are substituted in an animistic manner for a real analysis of historical factors.⁴⁷

The concept of a *Volksgeist* had been introduced by Johann Gottfried Herder in the eighteenth century as a means of combating the complacent assumptions of classicist aesthetics. His emphasis on the distinctive character of a people, as manifested in its art and social structures, was intended to give due weight to cultural diversity by showing that there is no single normative standard that can be used to evaluate other cultures, which are guided by their own ideals and values.⁴⁸ Subsequent history has shown, however, that romantic notions of “organic community,” including the construal of a specific national character, readily lend themselves to ideological exploitation. Detached from their original context and combined with ideas of historical progress, concepts such as *Volk* and *Geist* were used to endorse aggressively expansionist enterprises and to give pseudoscientific support to the belief in cultural superiority that Herder had sought to undermine. In the writings of Sedlmayr and other members of the second Vienna school of art history, the project of *Geistesgeschichte* (cultural history) was allied to strongly reactionary tendencies that were explicitly anti-Semitic and racist.

It would thus appear that Gombrich's view of the dangers of appealing to “unitary principles” was borne out by events. Nonetheless, we need to be wary of retrospective generalizations and of placing too much weight on the problematic

concept of “influence.” It is noteworthy, for example, that Pächt continued to defend a structural interpretation of Riegl’s ideas long after his exile to England as a Jewish refugee in 1937, and that Riegl himself—unlike his contemporary Strzygowski—showed little susceptibility to notions of racial purity or pan-German nationalism.⁴⁹ In an article published in the *Burlington Magazine* in 1963, Pächt challenged Gombrich’s supposition that art history could dispense with the consideration of broader historical structures while at the same time presenting a more nuanced rendition of Riegl’s approach that emphasized the empirical basis of his work and the extent to which his ideas arose from the close study of objects in his capacity as a museum curator.⁵⁰ Pächt accepts that the concept of *Kunstwollen* has extrapersonal connotations, but he contends that it provides an answer to a genuine problem insofar as it allows the analysis of “deeper-lying changes” that cannot be explained on the level of individual volition. Gombrich’s famous observation, “There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists,” has its correlate in Croce’s contention that “there is, strictly speaking, no history of art, only individual artists.” For Pächt, the upshot of such radical individualism is that everything becomes a matter of subjective decision, an “arcanum of pure art,” in which “the artistic genius intervenes as a *deus ex machina*.”⁵¹

More recent studies, such as those by Jaś Elsner and Christopher S. Wood, have stressed the tension between Riegl’s detailed visual examination of individual objects and his attempt to solve “much larger problems about the cultural meaning of art itself.”⁵² The rehabilitation of Riegl’s reputation in the English-speaking world has much to do with recognition that the question of how we move from the scrutiny of individual artworks to broader arguments and generalizations, or what Elsner terms “the big picture,” cannot be circumvented.⁵³ Pächt’s assessment of Riegl’s significance, and his defense of what he terms a “hybrid type of enquiry,” is thus closer to contemporary approaches than Gombrich’s highly partisan critique.⁵⁴ Rather than identifying a single lineage that leads from Hegel to Sedlmayr, art historians have begun to produce a more differentiated account that is attentive to internal controversies and disputes. At the same time, however, the return to Riegl has revealed that there are substantial methodological problems that still remain unresolved. Elsner’s observation that “our generalizations inevitably leap beyond what is strictly provable by the precise analysis of something so particular as a specific object or set of objects” raises, once again, the problem of induction, which so troubled Popper.⁵⁵ Drawing on the insights of David Hume and other empiricist philosophers, Popper argued that universal affirmative propositions cannot be inferred from an accumulation of facts, no matter how consistent the evidence may appear, for we cannot rule out the possibility that a counterinstance might arise.⁵⁶ Popper’s solution to the problem rests on the principle of falsification, according to which only hypotheses that are falsifiable by experience count as scientific. Since knowledge arises not from the confirmation of a hypothesis but from the correction of error, the principle of falsification affords a *via negativa* that can be used to assess the status of any claim to knowledge or duly scientific methodology.

The limits of this principle—at least in its application

outside the domain of the natural sciences—can be seen by considering Popper’s strictures on what counts as legitimate social and political theory. He rejects as nonscientific efforts to understand social change through the behavior and action of collectives, on the basis that social phenomena must be grasped in terms of individual choices and decisions, since these alone are susceptible to causal explanation, prediction, and testing—and, hence, to “falsification.” Not only does he rule out holistic forms of “understanding” (*Verstehen*), he also discounts the existence of meaningful methodological differences between the social and natural sciences. Despite his criticisms of the specific doctrines of logical positivism and his resistance to the use of the term, Popper can still be characterized as a “positivist” insofar as he remained committed to the three basic tenets identified by G. H. von Wright: the fundamental unity of science, the establishment of the exact sciences as a model for the others, and adherence to a restrictively nomological, or law-based, theory of explanation.⁵⁷ Equally contentiously, Popper holds that any presentation of the conditions for good government is potentially open to corruption and misuse, and that philosophers such as Plato and Hegel directly contributed to the emergence of totalitarianism by attempting to provide a positive theory of what constitutes a just society. Here, too, Popper proposes the adoption of a *via negativa*: the only legitimate criterion for democracy is the ability to *remove* an unwanted government. While it is now widely accepted that this is a necessary condition for a genuinely democratic society, few would agree that it is a sufficient condition or that we should forsake any endeavor to articulate a substantive formulation of constituent elements such as justice, representative power, or the rule of law.

Since many of the contemporary misconceptions about Hegel’s philosophy derive from Popper, it is important to recognize the tendentious and deeply misleading character of his approach. In a devastating analysis of the chapter devoted to Hegel in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Walter A. Kaufmann has shown the extent to which Popper allowed his political convictions to override his methodological scruples.⁵⁸ He puts forward three principal charges. First, rather than reading the original texts, Popper relied on the book *Hegel Selections* edited by Jacob Loewenberg and published by Scribner’s in 1929; besides seeming to be unaware of passages and, indeed, entire works, that are not included by Loewenberg, he pays no attention to the original context from which the isolated sections are taken, even where this decisively changes their meaning. Second, he deploys the method of composite quotation, stringing together sentences and phrases from different contexts and even different works, to attribute views to Hegel that are quite at variance with those he actually held or that mislead insofar as Popper omits Hegel’s own caveats and qualifications.⁵⁹ Third, he relies on a concept of “influence” that derives from the logically fallacious principle *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (A occurred, then B occurred, therefore, A caused B). In claiming that Hegel represents “the missing link” between Plato and fascism, he not only ignores Hegel’s defense of the modern constitutional state in his *Philosophy of Right*, he also fails to examine whether official Nazi ideology actually made use of Hegel’s complex and demanding philosophical writings. Kaufmann

points out that “Hegel is rarely cited in Nazi literature, and, when he is referred to, it is usually by way of disapproval. The Nazi’s official ‘philosopher,’ [Alfred] Rosenberg, in *Der Mythos des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, mentions, and denounces, Hegel twice.”⁶⁰ Kaufmann’s arguments are supported by detailed historical studies by Shlomo Avineri, Franz Grégoire, Henning Ottmann, and others who have sought to expose as a “myth” the notion that Hegel was an apologist of the Prussian state and a totalitarian theorist.⁶¹ This is not to deny, of course, that Hegel’s ideas, like those of other major thinkers, have been subjected to ideological distortion. Many of the key elements of his philosophy—including his conception of historical progress, the role of the nation-state, and his emphasis on the unity of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*)—are open to both interpretation and misinterpretation, and they have been taken up by protagonists from both wings of the political spectrum, sometimes in disastrous ways. The problem with Popper’s account is not that it is unremittingly critical but that it shares the same flattening out and reductive isolation of certain aspects at the expense of others that characterize the worst aspects of this reception.

Gombrich’s declaration in *Art and Illusion* that he would “be proud if Professor Popper’s influence were to be felt everywhere in this book” now represents a major impediment to the acceptance of his ideas.⁶² His commitment to a properly “scientific” model of art history undoubtedly had beneficial effects, allowing him to break with the early-twentieth-century preoccupation with questions of style and to build close links with current research in the natural sciences, including, above all, the psychology of perception. His demonstration of the complex interrelation of conceptual and perceptual elements in the making and appreciation of art still forms an indispensable starting point for current research in the philosophy of depiction.⁶³ Moreover, as I have already observed, his actual practice as an art historian was far more sophisticated than his official pronouncements would seem to indicate. James Elkins’s contention that Gombrich’s work is not connected to contemporary art history—put forward in an essay published in 2002, a year after Gombrich’s death—already seems dated in light of the renewed interest in “visuality” and theories of the image, or what in Germany is termed *Bildwissenschaft*.⁶⁴ Gombrich’s insistence that art history must be answerable to Popper’s analysis of the “logic of scientific enquiry” was intended to secure the methodological rigor that he believed was lacking in the “mythmaking” and “simulacrum of explanation” provided by Hegel and the Vienna school. However, the resulting traduction of a rich and varied tradition of thought created a highly distorted picture of art history’s history, leaving a theoretical vacuum that had to be filled by other means, and it also relied on a conception of art historical research that was inadequately responsive to the distinctive forms of inquiry appropriate to the human and social sciences.

The deleterious consequences for Gombrich’s own theory of art can be brought out by considering his response to the work of Michael Baxandall, whose book *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy* begins with the statement, “A fifteenth-century painting is the deposit of a social relationship.”⁶⁵ In an article on the critical reception of the concept of the “period eye,” Allen Langdale observes that Baxandall’s

undertaking to develop a more socially responsive art history “worrying Gombrich and other scholars for whom the Period Eye invoked the *Zeitgeist* and all its ominous associations.”⁶⁶ According to Langdale, the reasons for this can be traced back to a fundamental difference in approach that is all the more marked because of the apparent continuity with Gombrich’s interpretation of the “beholder’s share.” Whereas Gombrich treats “artistic production as a practice sealed off from other social activities,” isolating the study of psychological processes from other factors, Baxandall “integrates painting by embedding it in a much greater number of and broader range of social practices, activities removed from the world of visual art, though not removed from the world of visibility.” As a result, Baxandall “had to confront the labyrinth of problems his project generated: the individual versus the collective, the innate versus the conditioned, and so on.”⁶⁷ Langdale overstates the contrast, but his discussion usefully reveals the difficulties attendant on Gombrich’s attempt simply to excise from art history the historical “collectivism” and “determinism” that he identified with Hegel’s philosophy. Unless the field of inquiry is artificially narrowed to exclude a richer, more social account of artistic activity, these Hegelian themes are likely to reemerge, not as “metaphysical errors” but as genuine problems that a socially embedded history of art needs to address. Similar issues are at stake in the hostile reception accorded to Svetlana Alpers’s *The Art of Describing*, which was portrayed by the adherents of a more narrowly “iconological” interpretation of seventeenth-century Dutch painting as a regression into Hegelianism, characterized by “holism” and “the habit of thinking in collective terms.”⁶⁸

In his lecture “Hegel and Art History,” delivered in 1977, Gombrich offers a more sympathetic version of the discipline’s debt to Hegel, even portraying himself as a “run-away Hegelian” in a note added to the English translation.⁶⁹ Although he refers to Hegel’s *Lectures on Aesthetics* as the “founding document of the modern study of art,” he maintains that if art history is to “free itself of Hegel’s authority,” it is necessary to work off this inheritance by subjecting it to critical examination. The influence of Popper is not hard to discern in his contention that “[t]he genuine scientist does not seek to confirm his hypothesis—he looks primarily for counter-examples. A theory that does not encounter any resistance, does not have any scientific content. The danger of Hegel’s inheritance lies precisely in the seductive ease of its application.”⁷⁰

Gombrich’s reminder that we should be wary of the unquestioning deployment of any thinker’s ideas contributes an important corrective to the reliance on Hegelian forms of “explanation” by some members of the Vienna school. It can be argued, however, that Gombrich’s own treatment of Hegel, like that of Popper, substitutes one highly simplified reading for another and that his ready dismissal of an entire tradition of thinking possesses the same “seductive ease” as the views he rejects.

The fatal lack of traction in Gombrich’s analysis of Hegel’s legacy can be brought into relief by comparing his conception with the more complex view of Hegel developed in Continental Europe in the period before and after World War II. Although my discussion focuses on Germany, it is

important to realize that there was an equally strong critical engagement in France. The publication in 1929 of Jean Wahl's *Le malheur de la conscience dans la philosophie de Hegel* marks the beginning of a distinctive interpretative tradition in which the figure of the "unhappy consciousness" was accorded a key role in understanding Hegel's theory of modernity—a figure that has recently resurfaced in T. J. Clark's *Farewell to an Idea*.⁷¹ Alexandre Kojève's celebrated seminars on Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, held in Paris in the 1930s, were attended by many of the leading figures in French thought, including Raymond Aron, Georges Bataille, André Breton, Jacques Lacan, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. For contemporary art historians, the central point of reference is undoubtedly the work of Judith Butler, whose research into the controversies surrounding the Hegelian "subject of desire" in twentieth-century French thought laid the foundation for her investigation of "performativity" and the construction of social identity.⁷² At the same time, many of Hegel's ideas also made their way into art theory through more subterranean routes, such as the close engagement with the phenomenological tradition by artists and critics in the 1960s who explored the relevance of the concept of "embodiment" and the dialectics of "subject-object relations" to recent developments in painting and sculpture.

In Germany calls for a "return" to Hegel were more explicitly political in orientation. Motivated by the need to offer a viable alternative to the crude reflectionist account of art that was promoted by orthodox Marxism, or at least the version that was dominant in Eastern-bloc countries, proponents of Western Marxism, including Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse, sought to recover the critical impetus of dialectical thinking. This recognizably left-Hegelian approach placed great emphasis on key Hegelian concepts such as "mediation," "contradiction," and "determinate negation" while, at the same time, rejecting Hegel's effort to reconcile conflicting tendencies within the realm of thought. Adorno, for example, explicitly contrasts the "unreflected copy theory" upheld by those who "administer the dialectic in its materialist version" with the "critical ferment" contained in Hegel's philosophy.⁷³ Defining dialectics as "the unswerving effort to conjoin reason's critical consciousness of itself and the critical experience of objects," he contends that the superiority of Hegel's dialectical method lies in its ability to preserve "the distinct moments of the subjective and the objective while grasping them as mediated together."⁷⁴ Adorno's target here is not merely orthodox Marxism, with its rigidly deterministic framing of the relation between mind and world, but also Popper's positivist "logic of science," for which "objective truth is what is left over when the so-called subjective factors have been removed."⁷⁵ Hegel's core insight—adumbrated in Gombrich's acknowledgment of the crucial role of cognition in visual (and other) experience—is that we have no access to the world undescribed except through specific frames of reference, and that we therefore need to reflect critically on the subjective dimension of even purportedly neutral knowledge claims.

The reception of critical theory within the discipline of art history created a moment in which it was possible to undertake a revised assessment of Hegel's legacy. The recuperation

of speculative and dialectical thinking by a later generation of art historians who had read and been deeply influenced by the work of thinkers such as Benjamin and Adorno provided ample resources to challenge the theistic, quietist, and panlogistic interpretation of Hegel's philosophy that Gombrich had done so much to establish. Just six years after Gombrich gave his lecture "In Search of Cultural History," Clark observed in *Image of the People* that works of art never simply "reflect" ideologies or social structures and issued a call for a "history of mediations" that takes into account the intricate processes of conversion and relation that link specific forms of representation to concrete social circumstances.⁷⁶ Clark's insistence that "[i]n art history . . . it is precisely the Hegelian legacy that we need to appropriate: to use, criticize, reformulate" opened the way for a renewed engagement with dialectical thinking.⁷⁷ However, despite the institutional consolidation of the social history of art and the establishment of the so-called new art history, Clark's attempt to "disinter" Hegel's philosophy was, for the most part, unsuccessful. Careful historical studies, such as those by Margaret Iversen, Hubert Locher, and Michael Podro, have greatly enriched our understanding of the nineteenth-century origins of the discipline but they do not seem to have displaced the orthodox picture of Hegel, which is still disseminated in art history textbooks and is regularly set up as an easy target for criticism.⁷⁸

Podro's work, in particular, showed that it was possible to combine a critical and intellectually probing approach to the philosophical underpinnings of art history with sensitivity to the distinctive interests and concerns of an earlier tradition of thought. It is all the more striking, then, that theoretically sophisticated art historians such as Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey, who have initiated an important set of debates on the appropriate methods and conceptual frameworks for the study of visual culture, continue to describe Hegel in terms virtually indistinguishable from those employed by Gombrich over forty years ago.⁷⁹ In her book *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History*, Holly contends that Hegel "postulated an 'Infinite Spirit' or 'Idea' behind history that works itself out dialectically through time by manipulating human actors caught in its path."⁸⁰ Iversen rightly observes that Holly "seems to have read Hegel through the lens of hostile critics who tend to caricature his philosophy" without stopping to ask "why anyone should hold such a bizarre view" or whether we might still have something to learn from Hegel's "mind-formulated" account of the social world.⁸¹ In his 1998 essay "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious," Moxey also rehearses the standard criticisms of Hegel, reproducing many of Gombrich's arguments verbatim, but he embeds them in a post-structuralist perception of truth as something "constructed" rather than "found." Despite his assertion that the historiography of art remains essentially Hegelian and that art historians need to sustain their resistance to the working of the discipline's "Hegelian unconscious," Moxey refers directly not to any of Hegel's own writings but only to texts by Gombrich and other art historians.⁸²

Before delving further into the question of why Gombrich's image of Hegel still retains its hold, I want to investigate whether this account corresponds to the views that Hegel actually put forward in his lectures on aesthetics.

1 Franz Theodor Kugler, *Hegel während einer Vorlesung*, 1828, lithograph on paper, 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ × 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (19.5 × 24.7 cm). Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 462-103 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by BPK, Berlin)



Examination of the original sources will enable me to identify some of the core interpretative issues at stake in current reassessments of Hegel's philosophy and to show that these bear on problems that are of direct concern to art historians working today.

Normativity and the Exchange of Reasons

Any reconsideration of Hegel's views on art must begin with the discovery and ongoing publication of the original auditors' transcripts of his lectures on aesthetics. As Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, Helmut Schneider, and others have shown, close investigation of these texts casts doubt on the reliability of the posthumous edition on which most of the extant literature is based and, further, it decisively modifies our understanding of key elements of Hegel's philosophy.⁸³ Hegel first lectured on aesthetics in Heidelberg in 1818, though at this stage he still treated art and religion together. After his move to Berlin he dedicated four separate lecture courses to aesthetics, in 1820–21, 1823, 1826, and 1828–29. Auditors' notebooks or transcripts (*Nachschriften*) survive for all of these, in some cases in multiple versions, and publication has proceeded apace since 1995.⁸⁴ Note taking seems to have been a highly developed skill that was prized by university students: not only were transcripts circulated among those who could not be present, but also in some cases they were preserved in expensive bindings and placed for safekeeping in private libraries. The survival of transcripts of the same lecture series by different hands, and of transcripts of lectures on other topics for which Hegel's own notebooks remain, allows a check on their accuracy. The published editions of the transcripts clearly mark the presence of lacunae and deploy a system of brackets to show where interpolations have been made. Although the transcripts vary in quality, they give a remarkably vivid picture of Hegel's prac-

tice as a lecturer, which can be placed alongside the famous lithograph by Franz Kugler, based on his own drawing "from life [*nach der Natur*]" of 1828 and reproduced in his *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei* of 1837 (Fig. 1).⁸⁵

Hegel did not publish any of his lectures in his lifetime; the versions that appeared in the *Werke* edition, or "complete works," organized by "an association of friends of the immortalized [philosopher]" between 1832 and 1845, were reconstructed from his notes and from those of his students and were subject to varying degrees of editorial intervention. The work that most of us know as the *Lectures on Aesthetics* was put together by his student Heinrich Gustav Hotho, who had known Hegel since 1822 and attended many of his lecture courses.⁸⁶ After Hegel's death he took over his lectures on aesthetics at Berlin University, and in 1832 he was offered a post in the painting section of the newly built Altes Museum. An insight into Hotho's views, or at least the views by which he wished to be identified, is furnished by his application letter for this position, addressed to the minister of culture, Karl von Altenstein: "as the highest goal of science I have set myself the task of treating aesthetics only in the closest connection with art history so that a justification and guarantee of universal aesthetic principles can be provided through the historical development of the arts."⁸⁷

The tension between historical and systematic approaches to art was far from resolved at this time. As James J. Sheehan has shown, it played an important role in the design, building, and organization of the Altes Museum and led to an acrimonious split between Alois Hirt, who had first called for the establishment of a public art museum in Berlin, and others on the committee, including Wilhelm von Humboldt, Carl-Friedrich Rumohr, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, and Gustav Waagen, who argued that the selection and display of works should be based on aesthetic rather than historical consider-

ations. In the end a compromise was reached: the collection of antiquities was arranged thematically on the first floor, in accordance with Schinkel's insistence that the purpose of the museum was to teach people about beauty, not the history of art, while the paintings on the second floor were placed in broadly chronological order.⁸⁸

It is in the context of these debates that Hotho began the task of editing Hegel's lectures for publication. It took him nearly four years to prepare the first volume of the *Lectures on Aesthetics*, which finally appeared in 1835, followed by two further volumes in 1837 and 1838. The result of his editorial labors runs to nearly sixteen hundred pages in the modern German edition and is incomparably larger in scale than any of the surviving transcripts and lecture notes. A measure of comparison is given by the printed version of Hotho's transcript of the 1823 lecture series, which is just over three hundred pages long and is free of the numerous repetitions and the forced transitions between the various parts that make the published edition so unwieldy. Hotho was able to consult Hegel's notebooks, which are now lost, as well as several other student transcripts alongside his own.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, questions about the authenticity of his edition were raised as early as 1931 by Georg Lasson, who pointed to discrepancies between the published text and the available sources, noting, for example, that the claim that art is "the sensible appearance of the idea [*das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee*]," on which so much weight has been placed, is not to be found in any of the extant transcripts.⁹⁰ These questions have been given renewed prominence by the research of Gethmann-Siefert, the leading figure behind the publication of the transcripts and the fiercest critic of Hotho's editorial practice, which she judges "unreliable to a high degree."⁹¹ Gethmann-Siefert maintains that "Hegel's original conception is only to be found in the lecture transcripts" and that "the basis for contemporary discussion of Hegel's aesthetics should no longer be the text published by Hotho, but rather the sources for the Berlin lectures."⁹² Her assertions have not gone unchallenged, and Hotho continues to have his defenders on both stylistic and substantial grounds.⁹³ However, it is now generally accepted that while Hotho's edition remains a valuable historical document, not least because it was through this text that Hegel's ideas were made available to later readers, the published transcripts must be consulted as an indispensable supplement and corrective.

Far from being an obscure problem, of interest only to committed Hegel scholars, the status of the textual sources for the lectures is a matter of central importance, for many of the arguments put forward by both supporters and critics of his work are based on the heavily edited reconstructions that were published by his followers after his death in an attempt to secure the dominance of the Hegelian school. The new critical editions of his lectures on topics such as natural philosophy, religion, and world history, which make the individual lecture courses available for the first time, differ markedly from the *Werke* edition, in which the lectures were presented as a definitive exposition of Hegel's views. Peter C. Hodgson's observations concerning the lectures on the philosophy of religion bear close comparison with Gethmann-Siefert's analysis of the lectures on aesthetics:

The *Werke* edition presented his lectures on the various topics of philosophy as part of a completed, consistent, unitary system, but we now know that Hegel lectured with an innovative spirit, unwilling ever simply to repeat what he said before. . . . Far from imposing an abstract, a priori schema on the history of religions, Hegel approaches this topic as an experimental field in which a variety of interpretative strategies must be tried out.⁹⁴

Gethmann-Siefert contends that when Hotho began editing Hegel's lectures on aesthetics he sought to counter the challenge posed by the rival systems of "speculative aesthetics" that had been developed by Karl Solger and Friedrich Schelling, and that he was therefore induced to reconstruct what he described as mere "sketches and observations" into a tightly organized and structured whole. In so doing, he turned the lectures into a "closed part of a self-contained conceptual system" and obscured the tentative and exploratory manner in which Hegel presented his ideas.⁹⁵ Gethmann-Siefert also attributes to Hotho the normative assessments of individual artworks from the standpoint of the system, which seem so at variance with Hegel's recognition that the appropriate terms of evaluation are *internal* to the aims of different cultural practices. Her principal criticism is that through his editorial reworkings Hotho transformed the open-ended and discursive character of Hegel's aesthetics into a rigid and unyielding exposition of the place of art, whose very "completion" runs contrary to the spirit of the lectures.

The posthumous publication of any writer's work is likely to prove controversial, and Hotho was clearly aware that his edition of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* was exposed to potential objections. In the preface to the first volume he eloquently articulates the difficulties he had to overcome and the fragmentary state of the materials he had before him. He observes that his task was not to edit a finished manuscript for publication but rather "to fuse the most diverse and frequently contradictory materials, where possible, into a rounded whole, whilst exercising the greatest circumspection and wariness at making improvements."⁹⁶ He likens himself to "a faithful restorer of old paintings . . . who allows himself to make only those additions that are necessary to preserve what remains of the original."⁹⁷ By combining what he saw as the best elements of each of the various lecture courses and adding the interconnections needed to bring them into "harmony [*Einklang*]" with one another, he sought to present Hegel's work in the best possible light. Yet just as practices of restoration have changed over the last one hundred and fifty years, so have modern conceptions of scholarship. We now prefer to have access to the original sources, no matter how incomplete or contradictory they may be. While Hotho understands that Hegel sought to extend his account of art and to improve its exposition in each new lecture series, he never entertains the possibility that he might have altered his views. It is now very difficult to prise apart what belongs to Hegel and what to Hotho, and without access to Hegel's papers we cannot reach a definitive conclusion concerning the extent of Hotho's interventions.

Unlike Hotho's edition, which gives the appearance of a finished text that had been made ready for the printer, the

transcripts return the reader to the lecture hall. Whereas Hotho fused Hegel's arguments and ideas into a single systematic work, the transcripts enable us to examine the differences between the various lecture courses, each of which is separated by some two or three years. There we find substantial structural changes—such as the move from a bipartite to a tripartite division in the final series (a change adopted by Hotho for his posthumous edition)—as well as marked shifts in emphasis, particularly concerning the relation between art and religion. Gethmann-Siefert has urged that we view Hegel's aesthetics as a “work in progress,” subject to continual examination and reassessment over the different lecture series, for far from constructing a rigid system, Hegel treated aesthetics as a “field of philosophical experimentation” in which the heuristic potential of his theory could be tested against specific examples.⁹⁸ This claim is particularly significant in light of Gombrich's insistence that Hegel's theories are immune to correction by empirical evidence and that he shaped the available historical material to fit the “logical necessity” of an a priori conceptual structure. If Gethmann-Siefert is right, Hegel was just as interested in the way in which the close study of the art of different periods and places could confound or problematize his assumptions as in the way it could be used to confirm them.

A close reading of the transcripts also permits us to challenge a second, pervasive misunderstanding that has served as an obstacle to grasping Hegel's views: the belief that he was committed to an aesthetically conservative form of classicism. On this interpretation, although Hegel purported to investigate art from a “higher” philosophical standpoint, he shared many of the prejudices of Johann Joachim Winckelmann and other eighteenth-century “Hellenophiles.” In particular, he is accused of identifying the art of ancient Greece as an ideal against which to measure the artistic achievements of all other cultures: not only what he terms “symbolic art,” that is to say, the art of early Eastern civilizations and ancient Egypt, but also what he terms “modern” or “romantic art,” that is to say, *all* art after the high point of “classical art” in fifth-century Athens, is regarded as in some sense defective or inadequate. Hegel's famous observation that the concept of art reaches “perfection [*Vollendung*]” in ancient Greek sculpture and that “[n]othing can be or become more beautiful” is also to be found in the lecture transcripts.⁹⁹ However, he qualifies these remarks by characterizing the classical ideal as “cold, for itself, and self-contained” in contrast to romantic art, which is addressed not to the “ideal” but to the needs of other human beings. He then goes on to propose that the unity of form and content achieved in the greatest examples of classical sculpture was possible only in the context of a limited, and essentially premodern, understanding of subjectivity and that what enables this brief realization of “adequacy” is the undeveloped character of the content that is represented.¹⁰⁰ The Greek ideal of beauty cannot survive the transition, on the one hand, to the greater “inwardness” and “self-reflection” of Christianity, and, on the other, to the merely formal or universal concept of the self that is operative in the abstract system of rights and the institution of private property that is instantiated in modern legal codes.

Properly located within Hegel's more involved account of the relation between changing conceptions of subjectivity

and their “realization” or “expression” in outward form, the “perfection” of classical art turns out to be transient and unsustainable rather than yielding a timeless norm. His analysis of the “dissolution [*Auflösung*]” or “destruction [*Zertrümmerung*]” of the classical ideal prepares the ground for a pluralist outlook in which art has no given nature or essence but is simply the sum total of what has been *treated* as art.¹⁰¹ Martin Donougho, who has provided the best examination of Hegel's aesthetics in these “presuppositionless” terms, concedes that “just how far we can take this radical, non-essentialist historicising is moot,” but he insists that “the classical ‘norm,’ in both form and content, is not to be taken as normative for Hegel: the ‘Ideal’ is not *his* ideal.”¹⁰² Hegel has comparatively little to say about classical art in the lectures; he is primarily interested in what is *not* classical, that is to say, the breakdown and discontinuities of form and content that characterize both symbolic and romantic art. As Pippin has pointed out, Hegel's historical treatment of art leads him to “a most paradoxical conclusion”:

much of what we consider post-classical art (what Hegel terms “romantic” art) is treated as art in the process of “transcending itself” as art, somehow “against itself” as art, as much a manifestation of the “limitations” and increasingly dissatisfied “life” of the practice of the production and appreciation of art as it is part of a continuous tradition. (The even deeper paradox is that romantic art is all of this “*as art*”).¹⁰³

Hegel's claims that the transition to romantic art is brought about by the “progression of art beyond itself” and that the content that is to be expressed “demands more than the representational form of the artwork can achieve” introduce a tension or conflict within the very concept of art, for he insists that what is lacking in classical art is something that is lacking in art itself.¹⁰⁴ This line of interpretation, in which Hegel's judgment of the “inadequacy” and “incompletion” of romantic art tells us something about the problematic character of art in modern civil society—and the specific challenges and difficulties to which it is exposed—allows his ideas to be related directly to pressing contemporary concerns. Not just the practice of art but also its relation to other forms of human agency turn out to be radically unstable. More needs to be said, of course, about Hegel's account of the relation between art and philosophy, and his much misunderstood thesis of the “end of art.” Nonetheless, it should already be clear that the lectures on aesthetics do not present a triumphant, Whiggish formulation of the inevitable “progress” of art, guided from on high by the categories of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, as Gombrich and others would have us believe.

What, then, is the correct way to characterize the relation between art and philosophy as it is presented in the lectures on aesthetics? And how does this inform Hegel's distinctive perception of modernity? The core of his position resides in the proposition that art occupies a unique position between abstract conceptual thought and sensuous immediacy, participating in both but functioning as a “middle term [*Mittelglied*]” that brings cognition and sensibility together without giving priority to either.¹⁰⁵ His contention that art contains a “truth content [*Wahrheitsgehalt*]” affords a means of acknowl-

edging that artworks possess both cognitive and expressive value. However, this formulation is potentially misleading insofar as it suggests a merely external connection between artistic “form” and conceptual “content.” Already in the 1820–21 lecture series, he stated that “it is necessary to rid ourselves of the idea that the concept, the content of an artwork is something already thought, as if it already existed in a prosaic form. . . . Art has the purpose of bringing a not-yet-conscious concept to consciousness.”¹⁰⁶ Hegel perceives that both the making and appreciation of art are irreducible to other forms of experience and that it is therefore wrong to conceive an artwork simply as a “vehicle” for transmitting thoughts and ideas for which it supplies the appropriate external shape or cladding. As Pippin observes, art for Hegel is “an achieved form of self-knowledge; knowledge we would not, could not have, except for this realization.”¹⁰⁷

But how is this sophisticated and nondeterministic conception of the relation between cognition and sensibility to be reconciled with Hegel’s assertion that art, religion, and philosophy share the same “content” even though they articulate it in different ways? This idea, which Hegel first elaborated in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* in 1817, survives throughout the various lecture series on aesthetics.¹⁰⁸ His practical philosophy, or “philosophy of spirit,” is based on the notion that art, religion, and philosophy—in their “highest vocation”—are all concerned with bringing to reflective consciousness the conditions for the exercise of freedom that underpin rational agency. Although he maintains that the forms of “absolute spirit” differ only in the “mode” in which this deeper truth is revealed, the content that each is capable of expressing turns out to be progressively more substantial and articulate. The recognition that we are self-determining beings whose ethical existence is constituted through structures of self-relation that are sustained in the concrete practices and institutions that make up the social world is only fully realized in the modern age. There is thus a profound ambivalence underlying Hegel’s characterization of the relation between art and philosophy. On the one hand, he identifies art as a unique and irreplaceable human activity that cannot be reduced to other forms of knowledge and experience. On the other hand, he treats the sphere of art as a prior and subordinate stage in the development of humanity’s “being-for-self” whose irremediable “defect” or “limitation” lies in its inseparability from sensuous intuition. Philosophy has the task of unifying and rendering fully intelligible to modern reflective thought insights that are expressed inchoately in the form of sensuous imagery and symbolism.

The claim that art and religion have been “superseded [*aufgehoben*]” by philosophy, in the double sense of “preserved” and “overcome,” represents one of the most problematic aspects of Hegel’s aesthetics and leads directly to his notorious pronouncements concerning the end of art. As Gethmann-Siefert readily acknowledges, the lecture transcripts reveal that this argument originates with Hegel, not Hotho, as some readers had hoped, and that he held fast to his position through all four series, including the final one in 1828–29.¹⁰⁹ Rather than backtracking, he seems to have relished the provocation of his remarks, which left the composer Felix Mendelssohn wondering how—with Johann Wolf-

gang von Goethe and Bertel Thorvaldsen still alive and Ludwig van Beethoven only recently deceased—Hegel could declare that German art was “dead as a doornail [*mausetot*].”¹¹⁰

Most scholars now agree that Hegel’s thesis concerns not the “death” of art but only its “end” or “pastness,” and that his analysis of the profound historical and cultural transformations that accompany the transition to modernity is fully compatible with awareness of art’s continuing production and vitality.¹¹¹ What had changed, according to Hegel, is the meaning that individual works of art can have *for us*. Here is his presentation of the thesis in the 1820–21 lecture series:

Our relation to art no longer has the high solemnity and significance that it possessed in earlier periods. . . . As a result of our education and culture [*Bildung*], we inhabit an intellectual world rather than a world of sensuous apprehension. The representation of ideas through forms is more essential, more necessary, for those peoples for whom the universal has not yet disintegrated into particulars, for whom the life of the mind has not yet developed to this point, whereas for us the spirit of the universal, the genus, can only be identified through particulars.¹¹²

In drawing a distinction between premodern and modern forms of consciousness, Hegel exposed himself to the charge of cultural generalization and essentialism, as well as of making an implicit appeal to a narrative of historical progress. However, the declaration that art is unable to fulfill the same symbolic and unifying role that it did in the past is primarily intended as a critique of the Romantic belief that it was possible to restore the sense of unity and wholeness that had been destroyed by the “age of reason.” His target here is the work of Novalis and other leading figures of early German Romanticism, as well as artistic groups such as the Nazarenes, who offered an idealized evocation of medieval Christianity. Hegel’s rejection of this attitude follows directly from his identification of a close internal relation between modernity and the self-grounding character of theoretical and practical reason: critical reflection on normative principles and the exchange of reasons take precedence over sensuous immediacy, which cannot survive the disintegration of traditional worldviews. To put it crudely, if we want to resolve complex social problems such as the fair distribution of goods, the relation between rights and responsibilities, or the imposition of legitimate constraints on human freedom, we now rely on the deliberative model of reason enshrined in modern judicial and parliamentary systems. Although the Romantics held onto the dream that art could satisfy the unifying function once accomplished by religion, Hegel offers a hard-headed view of its limited role in modern nation-states. His observations are not uncolored by a sense of loss, but he insists that our stance toward art is characterized by “reflection” rather than veneration: we “value art and respect it,” but we “no longer see it as something final.”¹¹³

It is a remarkable feature of Hegel’s aesthetics that his declaration of the “end” of art took place at the very historical moment when the modern concept of art was gaining widespread recognition through the development of public institutions such as art museums, lending libraries, and subscrip-

tion concerts.¹¹⁴ We have already seen that the conflict between “aesthetic” and “historical” standpoints played a role in the design and organization of the Altes Museum in Berlin and that these tensions informed not only Hegel’s lectures on aesthetics but also Hotho’s approach to editing them for publication. Although the Altes Museum did not open until 1830, a year after Hegel’s final lecture course on aesthetics, the fact that Hegel delivered his lectures at Berlin University, just a short walk from the site where the museum was being built, has led some critics to identify the two projects with one another and to charge that Hegel should be held responsible for the “museumification” of art. Sheehan observes that the idea that museums should feature “visible histories of art” drew sustenance from Hegel’s philosophy while at the same time creating “new possibilities of artistic identity and new criteria for aesthetic judgment,” insofar as artworks began to be created with the museum in mind as their ultimate destination.¹¹⁵ One way of addressing this issue, adopted in different permutations by Hans Belting, Stephen Melville, and Beat Wyss, is to contend that Hegel “constitutes” art as historical by considering it from the standpoint of the present. Melville, for example, holds that:

what we now call the history of art . . . in its specific visibility becomes possible only at a certain moment within the Western tradition, and this moment is firmly moored to the name of Hegel, whose claim that art has come to an end—has become, that is, merely historical—engenders both an object and a question about our access to it.¹¹⁶

Melville’s sophisticated presentation of the problem allows him to show that the very identification of art as a discrete sphere of human activity “is thus bound up with the notion of its end; its achievement is inseparable from its pastness—art comes to presence and explicitness precisely as historical, as already overcome.”¹¹⁷ To read Hegel today, therefore, is to confront the question of art’s historicalness and the way in which this is implicated in the writing of art history.

In his book *The End of the History of Art?* Belting acknowledges that Hegel’s ideas concerning the “pastness” of art cannot be fully understood outside of his “system,” but he goes on to suggest that his views are “symptomatic of a new understanding of art itself characteristic of his epoch”; further, “On the basis of this understanding rests the entire project of the historical study of art as a scholarly discipline.”¹¹⁸ Hegel’s conception of the “emancipation” of art from its earlier religious and historical functions enabled critical reflection on art to gain “a new dimension.” However, Belting contends that by “offering art history as contemplation of past modes of human expression, modes which no longer . . . suggest a model for the future of art itself,” Hegel initiated a “fateful division” between the historical study of art and the concerns of contemporary artists and critics, thereby opening up a rupture that we are still struggling to overcome.¹¹⁹ Rather than accepting the de facto split between art criticism and empirical art scholarship, we need to recognize that “[t]he question of what art has been in history, and whether it at all resembles this historical entity in our own time, hinges on our understanding of modern art.”¹²⁰ Belting insists that he is seeking not to restore a “lost notion of unity”

but to displace a false unity that obscures “the genuine diversity of art as manifested in its ever changing roles and definitions in history.”¹²¹ Although Belting presents his argument as a straightforward critique of Hegel, the terms in which he couches his analysis suggest that he is more plausibly understood as using Hegel to think against Hegel, a strategy that has frequently been adopted by left-Hegelians as a means of recovering the “critical impulse” of dialectical thinking. Hegel’s reflections on the diversity of artistic practice, and the difficulty of subsuming this diversity under any single definition or description, provide a means of elucidating the insufficiently historical character of the concepts and categories that are available to us. On the interpretation I have defended here—which is closer to Arthur Danto’s contrasting assessment of the relevance of Hegel’s aesthetics to recent and contemporary art practice—Hegel’s claims concerning the “end of art” do not mark an absolute break with the past; rather, they are intended to broaden the question of what art means for us today and its constitution as an autonomous field of human activity, making it more forceful, challenging, and difficult to answer.¹²²

A greatly simplified and much cruder understanding of Hegel’s position is to be found in Wyss’s widely read book *Hegel’s Art History and the Critique of Modernity*.¹²³ Wyss’s presentation is organized around the conceit that the lectures on aesthetics can be reconstructed as a vast imaginary museum of art in which Hegel guides us through the various stages of art’s historical development. We are asked to picture the philosopher as he walks through the rooms of a building that houses the entire history of culture: we follow him as he passes in succession through the different stages of the world spirit—morning, noon, and evening—that correspond to his treatment of symbolic, classical, and romantic art. As the day draws to a close, Hegel leaves his museum, content in the awareness that he “had condensed the entire path of the world spirit from morning to evening in one overview.” Wyss contends that:

[Hegel’s] art history is museum-like, since the present is cut off from the past. Only what has the aura of the historical and what has been passed by the social consensus is admitted. . . . There is no room for the unexpected or the yet imagined in this concept of art.¹²⁴

Wyss’s adoption of the museum as a guiding metaphor for understanding Hegel’s aesthetics creates the very rigidity and ossification that it is designed to criticize. Far from confining art within the walls of the museum, the lectures on aesthetics require that art be understood as a *social* practice—a practice that stands in an inherently dynamic and unstable relation to other practices and institutions. What Sheehan terms the “museum age” postdates Hegel’s philosophy, but the role of the museum in shaping the modern understanding of art must be taken into account by any theory that seeks to vouchsafe a genuinely historical narrative of art’s relation to the wider social world.¹²⁵ The development of the modern art museum is a consequence rather than a presupposition of the profound historical shift that Hegel is trying to explain.

The real issue at stake in these debates, or so I wish to argue, is not the relation between art history and contempo-

rary art practice, which is, in any case, more open and dynamic than either Belting or Wyss seems willing to admit, but the relation between art history and philosophy. What Melville terms “the name of Hegel” has come to stand for a specific image of philosophy in which the pursuit of abstract generalizations is allowed to ride roughshod over the empirical evidence. It is not necessary to attribute a strong causal role to Gombrich’s particular construal of the relation between art history and philosophy to recognize that his characterization of Hegel’s aesthetics as the product of a totalizing metaphysics that is no longer answerable to the world was influential at a formative stage in the discipline’s development. Gombrich’s antimetaphysical rhetoric, his appeal to common sense, his distrust of abstract universals, and his insistence that we have to choose between the methods of the natural sciences and reliance on philosophy all signal a break with the German idealist heritage of art history. Few would now align themselves with Gombrich’s chosen alternatives, but his reductive explanation of Hegel’s legacy continues to serve as a barrier to the intensive reengagement with his work that has been such a marked feature of contemporary debates in epistemology, political theory, ethics, and philosophical aesthetics.

One of the things I have sought to show here is that art history is ill served by the tendency to treat philosophical arguments as inert material that can be used for its own purposes rather than as an occasion to think philosophically about the underlying problems and issues at stake. Unless concepts and ideas that are derived from philosophy are subject to critical examination they are likely to harden into immutable givens. The resulting loss of “resistance,” which Gombrich rightly identified as essential to genuine research, leads to the establishment of fixed rather than relative values, which can then be assimilated or dismissed as need dictates. From this perspective, the difference between Gombrich’s condemnation of Hegel and the uncritical adoption of Hegelian motifs within the Vienna school starts to narrow, insofar as both provide a merely external treatment of philosophical positions and ideas. I have defended the view that art history’s concourse with philosophy must itself be philosophical, proceeding through the asking of questions rather than the uncritical deployment of resources that are serviceable for the task at hand.¹²⁶ I would like, therefore, to conclude by asking whether the nonmetaphysical reading of Hegel presented here offers a legitimate interpretative framework for understanding his ideas or whether, as Beiser and others have proposed, it is actually a projection onto his work of our own interests and values.

Even those who are sympathetic to what Beiser terms the “puzzling Hegel renaissance” concede that the revival of interest in German idealism is closely tied to the dominance of naturalism and that it is driven, at least in part, by a desire to make good naturalism’s perceived limitations. In particular, philosophers such as Brandom and Pippin have been drawn to Hegel’s work by the insight that naturalism is unable to account for the distinctively human activities of exercising judgment and employing normative concepts. Hegel’s account of reason, agency, and mutual recognition, which once seemed hopelessly outmoded, has been shown to contain a rich set of conceptual resources that can be used to

elucidate the procedures through which norms are acknowledged as possessing authority over us and therefore as the outcome of rational reflection and choice. As Beiser points out, this point of view involves downplaying the religious dimension of Hegel’s thought as well as the overtly metaphysical ambitions of his philosophy of nature. He describes the nonmetaphysical readings as “acts of enormous interpretative charity” and claims that they can only be sustained by ignoring “the most difficult and troubling aspect of his philosophy.” According to Beiser, Hegel scholarship is faced with an unavoidable dilemma:

If our scholarship is historically accurate, we confront a Hegel with profound metaphysical concerns alien to the spirit of contemporary philosophical culture, which mistrusts metaphysics. But if we continue to interpret Hegel in a nonmetaphysical manner, we have to accept that our interpretation is more a construction of our contemporary interests than the real historical school.¹²⁷

The two horns of the dilemma are “anachronism” (interpretation in terms of our contemporary interests and concerns) and “antiquarianism” (a merely historical interest that cuts off the past from the present). To accept that we must decide between these two alternatives as a strict either/or means to perpetuate the invidious distinction between doing philosophy and studying the history of philosophy. The adoption of a strictly antiquarian standpoint isolates philosophical texts from contemporary debates, thereby barring access to potentially valuable resources that might shed light on issues that matter directly to us. Similarly, a concern with the historical correctness of our interpretations of past philosophers, informed by a close analysis of the primary sources, provides an important corrective to anachronism and the dangers of misinterpretation that this entails. It is only by sustaining both approaches that we can ensure that the use of philosophical arguments encounters adequate resistance. The question whether the nonmetaphysical interpretation of Hegel’s philosophy is legitimate can thus be answered in the affirmative, for it places his ideas within the realm of argument and contestation, where they can be handled critically rather than treated as “inert material.”

Recent work in philosophy has succeeded in bringing Hegel’s ideas into conversation with the secular and deflationary positions that characterize our own, postmetaphysical age. However, it is important to recognize that Hegel’s philosophy cannot be made simply to shed its transcendental and metaphysical dimensions. Those aspects that have been brought to the fore by philosophers such as Brandom and Pippin, who offer a strictly “horizontal” interpretation of his contribution to debates on normative authority and self-legislation—or what Pinkard terms the “infinite activity of giving and asking for reasons”—are closely entwined with deeper commitments concerning the historical truth of Christianity and the “immanent logic” that Hegel believed he could discover in both the natural and the social world.¹²⁸ Moreover, it was the metaphysical dimension of Hegel’s philosophy that arguably had the greatest impact on later thinkers. Nonetheless, I hope that I have shown that his work is susceptible to a variety of interpretations and that we need to resist the reduction of

his philosophy to a fixed set of received ideas. Hegel's claim that the study of art should concern itself with all aspects of a culture rather than treating artworks in isolation retains its relevance and requires that we engage constructively with the distinctively social form of mindedness that he termed *Geist*. The nonmetaphysical interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics is open to challenge, but the recognition that many of his problems are also our problems should allow us to address his work in a spirit of open intellectual inquiry.

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Notes

I would like to thank Lisa Florman and Cordula Grewe, whose invitation to contribute to the panel they chaired, "Art and Art History after Hegel," at the Annual Conference of the College Art Association in Los Angeles in 2008 provided the initial impetus for writing this paper. It has been much revised in response to invaluable comments and suggestions from those who heard later versions. I would like to record particular thanks to Wolfgang Brückle, Katerina Deligiorgi, Andy Hamilton, Stephen Melville, and Paul Smith. I am also indebted to the comments of two anonymous referees for *The Art Bulletin* and to the exchange of ideas with its editor-in-chief, Karen Lang. Work on this paper was enabled by the award of a Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

1. See Benedetto Croce, *Ciò che è vivo e ciò che è morto nella filosofia di Hegel: Studio critico* (Bari: Laterza, 1907). The distinction between what is "living" and what is "dead" in a system of thought is Hegel's own and goes back to his earliest reflections on Christianity and Greek ethical life. See, in particular, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "The Positivity of the Christian Religion" (1795–96), in *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 67–179.
2. Hegel described his *Science of Logic*, which was published in two volumes in 1812 and 1816, as "the system of pure reason . . . the realm of pure thought," adding that its content could be conceived as "the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature." Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1989), 50. For the German text, see Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), 44.
3. The identification of Hegel as the "father of art history" was made by Ernst Gombrich in "Hegel und die Kunstgeschichte," *Neue Rundschau*, 88 (1977): 202–19, at 202. This text, which was originally delivered as a lecture in 1977 when Gombrich was awarded the Hegel Prize of the City of Stuttgart, is translated (by Gombrich) in a revised version as "The Father of Art History": A Reading of the *Lectures on Aesthetics* of G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), in *Tributes: Interpreters of Our Cultural Tradition* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1984), 51–69.
4. Hans Belting, *The End of the History of Art?* trans. Christopher S. Wood (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 9–10, originally published as *Das Ende der Kunstgeschichte?* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1983).
5. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 43, originally published as *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985). Habermas contends that "Hegel was the first philosopher to develop a clear concept of modernity. We have to go back to him if we want to understand the internal relationship between modernity and rationality. . . ." (4). "Modernity can and will no longer borrow the criteria by which it takes its orientation from the models supplied by another epoch; it has to create its normativity out of itself" (7).
6. For a discussion of the Kantian origins of this problem, see Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860: The Legacy of German Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 67. In Pinkard's formulation, the central question is: "How can we be bound by laws we make?" See, too, Stephen Houlgate's account of Hegel's commitment to "presuppositionless thinking" in *An Introduction to Hegel: Freedom, Truth and History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005), 26–47.
7. Representative texts include Martin Donoghue, "Art and History: Hegel on the End, the Beginning and the Future of Art," in *Hegel and the Arts*, ed. Stephen Houlgate (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 179–215; Dieter Henrich, *Fixpunkte: Abhandlungen und Essays zur Theorie der Kunst* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2003); Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel and the Art of Painting," in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, ed. William Maker (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 2000), 61–82; and Terry Pinkard, "Symbolical, Classical, and Romantic Art," in Houlgate, *Hegel and the Arts*, 3–28.
8. Robert Pippin, "What Was Abstract Art? (From the Point of View of Hegel)," *Critical Inquiry* 1 (2002): 1–24, at 1. See, too, idem, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999). For a critical discussion of Houlgate's and Pippin's contrasting views on Hegel and abstract art, see Jason Gaiger, "Catching up with History: Hegel and Abstract Painting," in *Hegel: New Directions*, ed. Katerina Deligiorgi (Chesham, U.K.: Acumen, 2006), 159–76.
9. Gombrich readily acknowledged his indebtedness to Karl Popper, especially his *Logik der Forschung*, which was published in Vienna in 1935 and translated into English as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1959. For a critical account of Gombrich's reliance on Popper, see Andrew Hemmingway, "E. H. Gombrich in 1968: Methodological Individualism and the Contradictions of Conservatism," *Human Affairs* 19 (2009): 297–303. This special issue on Gombrich contains a number of valuable papers.
10. Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, 5th ed. (London: Phaidon, 1977), 16–17.
11. Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1945).
12. Ernst Gombrich's review of Ernst Garger's "Wertprobleme und mittelalterlicher Kunst" is reprinted in a translation by Michael Podro under the title "Achievement in Mediaeval Art," in Gombrich, *Meditations on a Hobby Horse* (London: Phaidon, 1963), 70–77, at 75. For a discussion, see Ján Bakoš, "Gombrich's Struggle against Metaphysics," *Human Affairs* 19 (2009): 239–50, at 239.
13. See Robert Brandom, *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing, and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); idem, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays on the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); and John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), which he provocatively describes as "a prolegomenon to a reading of [Hegel's] *Phenomenology*," xi.
14. An excellent overview of the reception history of Hegel's philosophy is provided by Robert Stern and Nicholas Walker, "Hegelianism," in *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2000); the most detailed study remains John Edward Toews, *Hegelianism: The Path toward Dialectical Humanism, 1805–1841* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
15. For Feuerbach's response to Hegel, see Toews, *Hegelianism*, 327–55. Marx's remark about dialectics is contained in the afterword to the second edition of *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (Hamburg, 1873), trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling in *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1961).
16. Katerina Deligiorgi, "On Reading Hegel Today," in *Hegel: New Directions*, 2.
17. Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).
18. Ernst Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History" (1967), reprinted in *Ideas and Idols: Essays on Values in History and in Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979), 24–59.
19. *Ibid.*, 28.
20. Gombrich refers to Popper's work in both "In Search of Cultural History," 54, and "Hegel und die Kunstgeschichte," 211. His most explicit attempt to apply Popper's "logic of situations" is to be found in *The Sense of Order: A Study in the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1979).
21. Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History," 46.
22. *Ibid.*, 46–47.
23. Ernst Gombrich, "Style," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 15 (New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1968), 352–61, at 357.
24. *Ibid.*, 358. In *Art and Illusion*, 17, Gombrich cites the following passage from Popper's *The Poverty of Historicism* (London: Routledge,

- 1957) and notes that he "cannot improve" his words: "I have not the slightest sympathy with these 'spirits'; neither with their idealistic prototype nor with their dialectical or materialist incarnations, and I am in full sympathy with those who treat them with contempt."
25. Gombrich, "Hegel und die Kunstgeschichte," 203ff., trans. idem, "The Father of Art History," 52–55.
 26. Hegel, quoted in Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel*, 21. I have used Houlgate's translation in preference to G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History: Introduction; Reason in History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 58. For the German text, see Hegel, *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969–71), vol. 12, 99.
 27. Houlgate, *An Introduction to Hegel*, 24.
 28. *Ibid.*, 25.
 29. Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 10.
 30. See, for example, Frederick Beiser, "Dark Days: Anglophone Scholarship since the 1960s," 70–90, and Sebastian Gardner, "The Limits of Naturalism and the Metaphysics of German Idealism," 14–49, both in *German Idealism: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Espen Hammer (London: Routledge, 2007); and Rolf-Peter Horstmann, "Subject, Substance and Infinity: A Case Study of the Role of Logic in Hegel's System," in Deligiorgi, *Hegel: New Directions*, 69–84.
 31. Beiser, "Dark Days," 70–71. See Gardner's contention in "The Limits of Naturalism" (44) that "the considerations which can be argued to give idealism definite philosophical advantages over naturalism are at the same time considerations which support its metaphysical rather than deflationary interpretation."
 32. David Summers observes that "Hegel without metaphysics" turned out to be Hegel with some kind of psychology or Weltanschauung or mentalities or cultural developments of 'vision.' He adds, "For Gombrich this improvement upon Hegel is a distinction without a difference." Summers, "E. H. Gombrich and the Tradition of Hegel," in *A Companion to Art Theory*, ed. Paul Smith and Carolyn Wilde (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 139–49, at 144.
 33. Several years earlier Meyer Schapiro had presented a powerful critique of holistic ("organic") concepts of style in which he decisively undermined the claim that "each style is peculiar to a period of a culture and that, in a given culture or epoch of culture, there is only one style or a limited range of styles." Schapiro drew attention to the concurrence of different styles during the same historical period and the difficulty of identifying stylistic affinities between works produced in different media. Schapiro, "Style" (1953), reprinted in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society* (New York: George Braziller, 1994), 51–102, at 53. For an illuminating study of stylistic pluralism, see Wolfgang Brückle, "Postmoderne um 1600: Haarlemer Stützitate und die Standortbestimmung der Kunst nach Vasari," in *Stil als Bedeutung in der nordalpinen Renaissance: Wiederentdeckung einer methodischen Nachbarschaft*, ed. Stephan Hoppe, Matthias Müller, and Norbert Nussbaum (Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner, 2008), 212–37.
 34. Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History," 41–42.
 35. Reservations concerning Gombrich's reading of Hegel are also to be found in James Elkins, "Art History without Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1988): 354–78. However, whereas Elkins (359) contends that Gombrich seeks to replace Hegelianism with an untheorized, and untheorizable, empiricism, and that "an empirical critique of 'Hegelianism' results in nothing other than its continued acceptance and use," I argue that Gombrich is more indebted to Hegel's ideas than he realizes. Elkins's critique is exposed to Gombrich's undoubtedly correct riposte: "I do not advocate 'Art History without Theory,' but the search for better theories." Gombrich, "Response to James Elkins," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1988): 892.
 36. For a detailed discussion of these issues, see Jason Gaiger, *Aesthetics and Painting* (London: Continuum, 2008), 38–62.
 37. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 58–66; for the German text, see Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1988), 69–78. Hegel maintains that the idea of pure apprehension without comprehension cannot withstand critical scrutiny since even the most minimal identification of qualitative differences involves a mediating capacity for discrimination and unification. For an illuminating analysis of Hegel's views, see Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 116–25.
 38. Gombrich, "In Search of Cultural History," 29, 33.
 39. *Ibid.*, 28–29.
 40. *Ibid.*, 33.
 41. Gombrich, "Hegel und die Kunstgeschichte," 209. Gombrich's observation that "it would be worth collecting these passages in a small anthology" encapsulates the view that Hegel's genuine insights can be treated independently of his philosophical system.
 42. See Ján Bakoš, "The Vienna School's Hundred and Sixty-Eighth Graduate: The Vienna School's Ideas Revised by E. H. Gombrich," in *Gombrich on Art and Psychology*, ed. Richard Woodfield (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 234–57. Bakoš (234) cites Gombrich's observation, made in the last decade of his life, that "I can say that I am a member of the Vienna School of art history." Gombrich studied under Julius von Schlosser at the University of Vienna from 1928 to 1933.
 43. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 17. Gombrich focuses on Hans Sedlmayr's essay "Die Quintessenz der Lehren Riegls," which was published as the introduction to a collection of Riegl's essays, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, ed. Sedlmayr (Augsburg: Benno Filser, 1929), at xii–xxxiv.
 44. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, 17. Gombrich is referring to Sedlmayr's "Die Quintessenz," xxxi–xxxii, where the latter lists five "false presuppositions" that need to be relinquished.
 45. E. H. Gombrich, review of *Kunstgeschichte und Kunsttheorie im 19. Jahrhundert*, by Hermann Bauer et al., *Art Bulletin* 46, no. 3 (1964): 418–19.
 46. Sedlmayr, "Die Quintessenz," xviii.
 47. Meyer Schapiro, "The New Viennese School," *Art Bulletin* 18, no. 2 (1936): 258–66, at 259. Schapiro goes on to note (260), "We reproach the authors not for neglecting the social, economic, political and ideological factors in art but rather for offering us as historical explanations a mysterious racial and animistic language in the name of a higher science of art."
 48. I discuss Herder's views in more detail in my introduction to Johann Gottfried Herder, *Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion's Creative Dream*, ed. and trans. Jason Gaiger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1–28. Herder's deployment of the concepts of *Volk* and *Geist* was influenced by Montesquieu, who employed the expression "esprit de la nation" (spirit of the nation) in his *L'esprit des lois* of 1748. For a discussion of Herder's ideas in relation to Johann Joachim Winckelmann, see Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).
 49. See Otto Pächt, *Methodisches zur Kunstgeschichtlichen Praxis* (Munich: Pretel, 1977), trans. by David Britt as *The Practice of Art History: Reflections on Method*, (New York: Harvey Miller, 1999). For an examination of Riegl's views in relation to Strzygowski, see Jaś Elsner, "The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901," *Art History* 25, no. 3 (2002): 358–79. Elsner observes (360) that Riegl's activities, both as an art historian and as "a pioneer in issues of conservation," were "tied to a genuinely multicultural politics in the context of late Hapsburg imperialism, which set him firmly apart from the pan-German nationalism and ethnically purist art history which developed rapidly at precisely this time and would soon descend into Nazism." An alternative assessment is provided by Matthew Rampley, "Art History and the Politics of Empire: Rethinking the Vienna School," *Art Bulletin* 91, no. 4 (2009): 446–62.
 50. Otto Pächt, "Art Historians and Critics—vi: Alois Riegl," *Burlington Magazine* 105 (May 1963): 188–93.
 51. *Ibid.*, 192.
 52. Elsner, "The Birth of Late Antiquity," 359. See, too, idem, "From Empirical Evidence to the Big Picture: Some Reflections on Riegl's Concept of *Kunststollen*," *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 741–66; and Christopher S. Wood, introduction to *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 9–81.
 53. Elsner, "From Empirical Evidence," 741–43. Elsner argues (747–48) that "Riegl's greatness as an art historian lies in his absolutely acute awareness of this problem and his own sense of being pulled in both directions—towards the satisfyingly described single object and at the same time the fully elaborated historical picture."
 54. Pächt ("Art Historians and Critics," 191) describes Riegl's work as "the first adumbration of that hybrid type of enquiry which later became known under the programmatic title of art history as history of the spirit of the time."
 55. Elsner, "From Empirical Evidence," 741.
 56. Although David Hume is primarily concerned with predictive inference and does not actually use the term "induction," it is generally accepted that he identified the problem in its modern form. See Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739–40), bk. 1, pt. 3, sec. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
 57. Georg Henrik von Wright, *Explanation and Understanding* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971), 4. See, too, the useful discussion by

- David Frisby in his introduction to the English edition of *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* by Theodor Adorno et al. (London: Heinemann, 1976), ix–xiii. As Frisby makes clear, although Popper denies that he is a positivist, he defines the term in ways that other participants in the debate, including Theodor Adorno and Jürgen Habermas, do not share.
58. Walter A. Kaufmann, "The Hegel Myth and Its Method," *Philosophical Review* 60 (1951): 459–86, reprinted in *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, ed. Jon Stewart (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 82–103, from which all citations are taken.
 59. Kaufmann notes (*ibid.*, 84) that "Popper's first composite quotation consists of eight such bits of which not a single one was published by Hegel."
 60. *Ibid.*, 86.
 61. See Shlomo Avineri, "Hegel and Nationalism" (1961); Franz Grégoire, "Is the Hegelian State Totalitarian?" (1962); and Henning Ottmann, "Hegel and Political Trends: A Criticism of the Political Hegel Legends" (1979), all reprinted in Stewart, *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, 109–28, 104–8, 53–69.
 62. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, ix.
 63. See, for example, Dominic Lopes, *Understanding Pictures* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and John Hyman, *The Objective Eye: Colour, Form and Reality in the Theory of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). I discuss the importance of Gombrich's work for contemporary theories of depiction in Gaiger, *Aesthetics and Painting*, 3–4, 39–58.
 64. James Elkins, "Ten Reasons Why E. H. Gombrich Is Not Connected to Art History," *Human Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2009): 304–10. The original version of this paper was written in 2002 for an online forum organized by the College Art Association; it is clearly intended to stimulate discussion, not to close it down.
 65. Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, 2nd ed. (1972; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1.
 66. Allen Langdale, "Aspects of the Critical Reception and Intellectual History of Baxandall's Concept of the Period Eye," *Art History* 21, no. 4 (1998): 479–97, at 483.
 67. *Ibid.*, 483.
 68. See, for example, Eddy de Jongh's review of *The Art of Describing*, by Svetlana Alpers, *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 14, no. 1 (1984): 51–59. De Jongh (53) refers to Popper and Gombrich to support his criticism of Alpers's reliance on "false associations and generalizations which do serious violence to historical reality."
 69. Gombrich, *Tributes*, 50.
 70. Gombrich, "Hegel und die Kunstgeschichte," 212; see, too, *idem*, "The Father of Art History," 62–63.
 71. See T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 371–73. I discuss Clark's reception of Hegel below.
 72. Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).
 73. Theodor W. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, trans. S. W. Nicholson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 8. For the German text, see Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 15.
 74. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 9–10, 7; and *Drei Studien*, 16, 14.
 75. Adorno, *Hegel: Three Studies*, 7 (translation modified); and *Drei Studien*, 14.
 76. "If the social history of art has a specific field of study, it is exactly this—the processes of conversion and relation, which so much art history takes for granted. I want to discover what concrete transactions are hidden behind the mechanical image of 'reflection,' to know how 'background' becomes 'foreground'; instead of analogy between form and content, to discover the network of real, complex relations between the two." T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 12.
 77. T. J. Clark, "The Conditions of Artistic Creation," *Times Literary Supplement* 24 (May 1974): 561–62, reprinted in *Art History and Its Methods: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Eric Fernie (London: Phaidon, 1995), 248–53, at 250. For a discussion of Clark's response to Hegel, see Martin Donougho, "Must It Be Abstract? Hegel, Pippin and Clark," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 55–56 (2007): 87–106.
 78. See Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Hubert Locher, *Kunstgeschichte als historische Theorie der Kunst, 1750–1950* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001); Michael Podro, *The Manifold in Perception: Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); and *idem*, *The Critical Histories of Art*. For a recent example of an art history textbook that provides a strong metaphysical interpretation of Hegel's aesthetics, see Michael Hatt and Charlotte Klonk, *Art History: A Critical Introduction to Its Methods* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). The authors claim (3, 37; my emphasis) that Hegel presents a "mono-causal account of history" and that "art's evolution through its various stages is ultimately caused by a metaphysical force, the Absolute Idea."
 79. See, for example, the essays collected in Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey, eds., *Visual Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991).
 80. Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984), 27–28.
 81. Margaret Iversen, "The Primacy of Philosophy," *Art History* 9 (1986): 271–74, at 271–72.
 82. Keith Moxey, "Art History's Hegelian Unconscious" (1998), reprinted in *The Practice of Persuasion: Paradox & Power in Art History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 8–41.
 83. See Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, "Ästhetik oder Philosophie der Kunst: Die Nachschriften und Zeugnisse zu Hegels Berliner Vorlesungen," 92–110, and Helmut Schneider, "Eine Nachschrift der Vorlesung Hegels über Ästhetik im Wintersemester 1820/21," 89–92, both in *Hegel-Studien* 26 (1991). Detailed information is given in the editorial essays accompanying the published editions of the lecture transcripts.
 84. Wilhelm von Ascheberg's transcript from 1820–21 is published as C. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik*, ed. Helmut Schneider (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1995). Heinrich Gustav Hotho's transcription from the 1823 series is published as Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Kunst*, ed. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1998). P. von der Pfordten's transcription from the 1826 series is published as Hegel, *Philosophie der Kunst: Vorlesung von 1826*, ed. Gethmann-Siefert, Jeong-Im Kwon, and Karsten Berr (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005). The transcription of the same series by C. H. V. von Kehler is published as Hegel, *Philosophie der Kunst oder Ästhetik: Nach Hegel, im Sommer 1826*, ed. Gethmann-Siefert and Bernadette Collenberg-Plotnikov (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2004). The only series for which there is, as yet, no published version available is the final one from 1828–29. All references to the lecture transcripts will be given by the name of the transcriber and the year of the lecture course, for example, Ascheberg (1820–21).
 85. The sheet is inscribed "Nach d. Nat. gez 1828 u. lith. von F. Kugler" (drawn from nature 1828 and lithographed by F. Kugler). Kugler's *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei von Constantin dem Grossen bis auf die neuere Zeit* was published in two volumes (Berlin: Duncker und Humboldt, 1837). For a discussion of the role played by Kugler's lithograph in the "representation" of art history, see Dan Karholm, *The Art of Illusion: The Representation of Art History in Nineteenth-Century Germany and Beyond* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004).
 86. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, ed. H. G. Hotho, in Hegel, *Werke: Vollständige Ausgabe durch einen Verein von Freunden des Verewigten*, vol. 10 (Berlin, 1835–38). A second edition, with minor changes, was published in 1842. This text provides the basis for the modern German edition, published in the Suhrkamp edition of Hegel's *Werke*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel: Hegel, *Vorlesungen über Ästhetik, Werke*, vols. 13–15 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), henceforth cited as Hegel, *Ästhetik*, followed by the *Werke* volume number. It is also the basis of the English translation by T. M. Knox, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
 87. Heinrich Gustav Hotho, letter to Karl von Altenstein, July 27, 1830, quoted in Elizabeth Ziemer, *Heinrich Gustav Hotho, 1802–1873: Ein Berliner Kunsthistoriker, Kunstkritiker und Philosoph* (Berlin: Dietrich Meiner Verlag, 1994), 254.
 88. See James J. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World: From the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of the Museum Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54–55, 79–81. Hotho's first book on art, *Vorstudien für Leben und Kunst* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1835), was published in the same year as volume one of his edition of Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics*. He became a leading figure in the "Berlin school" of art historians. See Ziemer, *Heinrich Gustav Hotho*; and Udo Kulturmann, *Geschichte der Kunstgeschichte: Der Weg einer Wissenschaft* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1981), 171–72.
 89. After completing his edition, Hotho broke up the notebook that Hegel had used for the Berlin lectures and distributed pages to friends and colleagues. A few fragments have since been recovered. See Lucia Sziborsky, "Hegel über die Objektivität des Kunstwerks: Ein Eigenhändiges Blatt zur Ästhetik," *Hegel-Studien* 18 (1983): 9–22; and Helmut Schneider, "Neue Quellen zu Hegels Ästhetik," *Hegel-Studien* 19 (1984): 9–46.
 90. Lasson's dissatisfaction with Hotho's text led him to embark on a new edition of the lectures on aesthetics, but he was unable to complete it before his death. Only the first volume was published, as volume ten

- of the Leipzig edition of Hegel's *Sämtliche Werke*. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Die Idee und das Ideal: Nach den erhaltenen Quellen neu herausgegeben von Georg Lasson* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1931). The phrase "das sinnliche Scheinen der Idee" (the sensible appearance of the idea) is to be found in the section of Hotho's edition entitled "The Idea of the Beautiful." Hegel, *Ästhetik*, 13, 151, trans. *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, 111.
91. Gethmann-Siefert, "Ästhetik oder Philosophie der Kunst," 92.
 92. See Gethmann-Siefert, "Einleitung," xvi, and "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel," 263–376, at 364–65, in *Ästhetik und Kunstphilosophie von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, ed. Julian Nida-Rümelin and Monika Betzler (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1998).
 93. For reservations concerning Gethmann-Siefert's conclusions, see Robert Pippin, "The Absence of Aesthetics in Hegel's Aesthetics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth-Century Philosophy*, ed. Frederick L. Beiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 394–418, at 395. Both Houlgate and Pippin continue to refer to Hotho's edition as the "standard text."
 94. Peter C. Hodgson, "Hegel's Philosophy of Religion," in Beiser, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, 230–52, at 232. Discussion of Hegel's philosophy of religion has been decisively modified by Walter Jaeschke's reconstruction of the individual lecture series, based on the available evidence. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Jaeschke, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1983–85).
 95. For H. G. Hotho's description of Hegel's aesthetics as mere "sketches and observations [*Skizze und Ausführung*]," see his "Vorrede," in Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, v–xv, at xii. Hotho refers to Solger and Schelling on the very first page of his editor's preface. For Gethmann-Siefert's claim that Hotho presents Hegel's aesthetics as part of a closed system of philosophy, see her "Einleitung," in Hotho (1823), xvi.
 96. Hotho, "Vorrede," vi. Hotho notes (xi), "The principal difficulty lay in the editing together and fusing [*Ineinanderarbeitung und Verschmelzung*] of the most varied materials."
 97. *Ibid.*, vi.
 98. Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, *Einführung in die Ästhetik* (Munich: Fink, 1995), 204.
 99. See Hegel, *Ästhetik*, vol. 14, 127–28, trans. *Hegel's Aesthetics*, vol. 2, 517. Cf. Hegel's claim in the 1823 lecture series, "The concept of beauty is realized in classical art; nothing can be more beautiful"; Hotho (1823), 179.
 100. "The classical ideal is cold, for itself, and self-contained [*in sich abgeschlossen*], its form is its own; it gives nothing away . . . by contrast, the external characteristics of romantic art do not exist for the ideal but for others and possess a moment of surrender to others"; Hotho (1823), 185.
 101. For Hegel's account of the "destruction of the unity of the beautiful [*Zertrümmerung der Einheit des Schönen*]," see Hotho (1823), 178.
 102. Donougho, "Art and History," 180, 191.
 103. Pippin, "The Absence of Aesthetics," 395.
 104. For Hegel's description of Romantic art as "a progression of art beyond itself [*ein Fortschreiten der Kunst über sich selbst*]," see Hotho (1823), 36. His claim that "in romantic art the content goes beyond the form, demands more than the representational form of the artwork can achieve," is to be found in Hotho (1823), 119. See, too, his claim that "classic [art] attained the highest as art; what is lacking in it belongs to the limitation of the sphere of art itself, or to art as art," in Pfordten (1826), 68.
 105. Hotho (1823), 11. Hegel claims both that art is "a product of the sensuous world that is addressed to the senses [*aus dem Sinnlichen für den Sinn*]" and that it is "a product of the mind that is addressed to the mind [*aus dem Geist und für den Geist*]" ; Hotho (1823), 7, 11.
 106. Ascheberg (1820–21), 37.
 107. Pippin, "The Absence of Aesthetics," 411.
 108. The final section of Hegel's *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (*Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften in Grundrisse*), entitled "Absolute Spirit," encompasses art, revealed religion, and philosophy. The *Encyclopedia* presents an overview of his entire philosophical system. The first edition was published in 1817, with two further editions in 1827 and 1830. For an English translation of the final section, based on the third and final edition of 1830, see G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).
 109. Gethmann-Siefert, "Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel," 373–75.
 110. Mendelssohn attended Hegel's final lecture series on aesthetics in 1828–29; he made this observation in a letter to his sisters in May 1831. It is cited by Donougho in "Art and History," 179. I have followed Donougho's translation of "mausetot," which literally means "dead as a mouse."
 111. The most important early treatments of this issue are Karsten Harries, "Hegel on the Future of Art," *Review of Metaphysics* 27 (1973–74): 677–96; Willi Oelmüller, "Hegels Satz vom Ende der Kunst," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 73 (1965): 75–94; and Dieter Henrich, "Zur Aktualität von Hegels Ästhetik," in *Stuttgarter Hegel-Tage 1970*, Hegel-Studien, suppl. vol. 2, ed. Hans-Georg Gadamer (Bonn: Bouvier, 1974), 295–301.
 112. Ascheberg (1820–21), 38.
 113. Hotho (1823), 6. Hegel goes on to say, "Our world, our religion and our culture of reason [*Vernunftbildung*] have taken a step beyond art as the highest form in which the absolute is expressed. The work of art can no longer fulfill our ultimate, absolute need; we no longer pray to a work of art, and our relation to it is of a more reflective [*besonnener*] character."
 114. On the emergence of the "modern concept of art," see Preben Mortensen, *Art in the Social Order: The Making of the Modern Concept of Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997). For a dissenting view, which challenges many of the assumptions on which this account is based, see James Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49 (2009): 1–24.
 115. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, 94.
 116. Stephen Melville, "The Temptation of New Perspectives," *October*, no. 52 (Spring 1990): 3–15, at 6.
 117. *Ibid.*, 6.
 118. Belting, *The End of the History of Art?* 11–12.
 119. *Ibid.*, 12.
 120. *Ibid.*, 38.
 121. *Ibid.*, 45.
 122. Arthur Danto first presented his version of Hegel's "end of art" thesis in a paper entitled "The End of Art" (1984), reprinted in *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 81–116. Danto proposes that Hegel's arguments are best understood not in relation to his own time but to the "pitch of self-consciousness" achieved in the work of Pop and Conceptual artists in the 1960s. The fullest statement of his position is to be found in *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). For an analysis of Danto's debt to Hegel, see Jason Gaiger, "Art as Made and Sensuous: Hegel, Danto and the 'End of Art,'" *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain* 41–42 (2000): 104–19.
 123. Beat Wyss, *Hegel's Art History and the Critique of Modernity*, trans. Caroline Dobson Saltzweid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), originally published as *Trauer der Vollendung: Von der Ästhetik des Deutschen Idealismus zur Kulturkritik an der Moderne* (Munich: Matthes und Seitz, 1985).
 124. Wyss, *Hegel's Art History*, 104.
 125. Sheehan, *Museums in the German Art World*, 83–137, dates the beginning of the "museum age" to 1830, the year in which the Altes Museum in Berlin and the Glyptothek in Munich opened.
 126. I owe these formulations to Karen Lang, whose comments helped to refine the argument as it is presented here.
 127. Frederick Beiser, "Introduction: The Puzzling Hegel Renaissance," in *idem*, *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, 1–14, at 6–7.
 128. Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860*, 367.