ARISTOTLE, HEGEL AND MIMESIS

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BY

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ABSTRACT

The topic of this thesis is the concept of artistic mimesis (imitation) as treated by Aristotle and Hegel. Aristotle's Poetics has been viewed as the paradigmatic statement of the notion of mimesis as the basis of art, and particularly, that of tragedy. In contrast, the entire inclination of the Hegelian aesthetic is held to be such as to place it far from any sympathy with the mimetic school. Hegel's idealism, with its credo that the material realm is only intelligible as an embodiment of what is spiritual, and hence, that art must be a second creator of the world in order that mind can be consciously present in art, is bound to reject any notion of mimesis which requires an adherence to a servile mechanical and static reproduction of nature. It is my intention to defend the Aristotelian theory of mimesis from the Hegelian charge that due to its non-creative and purely naturalistic orientation, imitation stands as an inadequate basis for the production of true art.

That Hegel leans toward an almost undeviating adherence to the insular view that mimesis is little more than illusionistic mimicry, and as such, sure anathema to his view of the essential nature of art, can be readily seen. Critical passages in the Philosophy of Mind (PM) and the

Berlin Aesthetics: Lectures On Fine Art (LFA), are indicative of a definite dismissal of both inferior and positive aspects of the mimetic theory of representation. I intend to examine the validity of Hegel's reduction of mimesis to that which is unacceptable to the domain of worthy art, and to attempt to demonstrate how and why characteristics proper to Aristotelian mimetic theory need not be, one and all, rejected by Hegel.

In Chapter One, I focus on the Aristotelian statement of imitation in the Poetics, and I concentrate on the idea of the tragedian as an inventive maker of plots, one who is concerned with fostering the recognition of universals. Chapter Two presents an examination of the notion of imitation as the basis of literary art. Here I present the reader with some idea of the divergent views and connotations that have evolved in imitation theory. In Chapter Three, I examine Hegel's philosophy of geist, the role consigned to nature in contrast to the self-conscious, and the evolution of art as insight into the Absolute. A critique of Hegel's textual treatment of imitation is the primary subject of my fourth chapter.

In both Chapters Four and Five, I point to the narrow mindedness of the view of mimesis as copy or mimicry. Mimesis can be artistic activity that is creative and synthetic. Finally, the fifth chapter considers the possibility of any common ground between the Aristotelian

and Hegelian ideas of mimesis and I argue that Hegel errs in his analysis and that he is blind to various elements and aesthetic characteristics of which imitation is composed.

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CHAPTER ONE

ARISTOTLE'S VISION OF MIMESIS

An Introduction to Mimetic Theory

The notion of artistic mimesis (imitation) was well established prior to the date of Aristotle's treatise on the art of poetry (c. 330 B.C.). The Aristotelian reply to the Platonic rejection of mimesis in Book X of the Republic is a systematic response to an interpretation of a theory of art to which allusions had been made by such early Greek writers as Homer (8th century B.C.), Xenophon (c. 430-350 B.C.), the historian and author of Memorabilia ("Recollections of Socrates"), and the Old Comedy playwright, Aristophanes (c. 450-385 B.C.).[1] Among the most cited, and perhaps the most unintentionally misleading, statements of mimesis is the somewhat later account of Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.), in whose Natural History is presented an account of the artist Xeuxis's production of a deceptive tableau to rival reality. Another contemporary artist, Parrhasius, is said to have painted drapery so seemingly real that a patron attempted to

turn it back so as to view the art work he anticipated beneath.[2] From antiquity onward, accounts abound of mimesis as the production of counterfeit likenesses, the formation of images designed to look like something else which they are not, the making of only phantasms or pictures, not things. Perhaps more so than any other theory of artistic representation, mimesis has endured a wide range of interpretation by both its proponents and its detractors. The latter have often regarded mimetic theory as requiring art to be the literal and unyielding duplication of an object's external and limiting aspects, with no allowance for personal and creative contribution on the part of the artist. For its detractors, mimetic art is mere mimicry, and it is confined to technique.

That art should aim to copy with minute accuracy a subject's external characteristics is certainly questionable. Reflection on the issue ought to inform us that artistic attainment should and does go beyond the domain of what reduces to indiscriminate duplication. Any purported aesthetic experience whereby there is some uncertainty as to whether the object before us pertains to the realm of artistic creation or to that of the empirical world, may best be described as imposing a state of inadvertent "neglect" upon the spectator. Plato points out that such treatments are intellectually bereft; one cannot learn anything from such representations vis à vis the forms, and in addition, they

lack the utility associated with the original object. However, one can agree with this Platonic criticism and still be sympathetic toward mimetic theory.

My intention is not to evoke the Platonic debate that a highly naturalistic representation, e.g. that of a schooner, is useless, in a practical sense, in comparison with the materially-existing schooner, nor do I wish to summon the argument that the artist knows less about his subject than does a nautical engineer.[3] The utility that I am considering here is of an epistemological nature and, as such, it is close to the enterprise of both Plato and Aristotle. It is perhaps best illustrated using the instance of tragic drama qua the representation of human misfortune. Aristotle, like all who are sympathetic to a refined view of mimesis, recognizes that any drama that simply throws at our feet an image of human downfall, serves only to abhor us.[4] We can derive none of the genre-specific pleasures from the observation of it, especially those pleasures of deriving knowledge. Its experience is no more pleasurable to the observers of the drama than to those who actually experience the misfortune. In addition, because of our removal from the actuality of events, we cannot experience any of the knowledge gained from hindsight that may come to those who suffer from extreme misfortune. In the inferior imitation of tragic events, we cannot partake in any of the experiential knowledge that may come dearly to protagonists, nor can we infer truths - of

human nature or otherwise - from the observation of them. Only vicarious experience can yield us the kind of mediated knowledge that comes from recognizing the general in the particular event. Such induction is entirely dependent upon the situation having been laid out in a specific, artistic manner. What is implied by this proper layout of events, is discussed below.

In Chapter 24 of the Poetics, Aristotle credits Homer in the following manner, "...[he] more than any other has taught the rest of us the art of framing lies [fallacies] in the right way."[5] This is to say that the world represented by mimesis may be assumed to be true because the portrayal of it is characterized by great verisimilitude. The consequent (the mimetic product) being so convincing, the antecedent (the subject of mimesis) is erroneously assumed to be true. Characterizing them as lies, Plato condemned the narrative and dramatic forms of poetry because they possess qualities of arbitrariness and are unreal. In contrast, Aristotle recognized that one may learn something from fictions properly constructed within the order of art.

The statement of A.K. Coomaraswamy in his The Transformation of Nature in Art, supports the Aristotelian view of mimesis:

> True art does not enter into competition with the world: it relies on its own logic and its own criteria, which cannot be tested by standards of truth or goodness applicable in other fields of activity.[6]

The Platonic Repudiation of Mimesis

The Poetics is generally conceived to be a rebuttal to the Platonic denunciation of artistic mimesis in Books III and X of the Republic. Aristotle's conception of mimesis challenges that of his predecessor, and the root of this parting of company lies in the much more encompassing differences between the two thinkers. It is beyond the scope of the thesis to examine in detail the discrepancies between Plato's and Aristotle's views of poetry. One need only point to Aristotle's rejection of the Platonic notion that particulars are incapable of yielding universal knowledge. In his Poetics, Aristotle presents tragedy as the means by which particular human actions can be represented in such a way that their universal significance is discerned. For Aristotle, proper imitation is a means by which embodied form is recognized.[7]

As it figures in the Platonic philosophy, the notion of mimesis is by no means confined to an invective against artistic production. As R. McKeon points out in his critical essay, "Imitation and Poetry", Plato's Timaeus is an exposition of the doctrine that the entire existence and activity of the temporal, phenomenal and sensible world - the realm of becoming - is an imitation of the realm of being.[8] A divine Demiurge is seen as ordering the physical world in

conformity with the best possible pattern, i.e. the immortal and intelligible archetype of the forms. The Demiurge's configurations are of existing elements, and there is not a creative quality imputed to his workings.

The versions of mimesis put forth in the Timaeus and the Republic, two crucial Platonic works in which mimesis is set forth, give evidence of a dialectical view of the concept. At one level, mimetic activity is held to be instrumental in all workings of the universe - including such human enterprises as the pursuit of knowledge and virtue - and it represents the imitation of true reality. At another, it is the feeble imitation of imitations, and as such serves as the questionable basis of the enterprise of representational art.

Within the formulation of mimesis found in the Timaeus, we would find art, naturally enough, as an instance of human enterprise. Here, imitation qua art must differ from the production of wan copies of contingent things. Inspiration, or artistic genius, is not foreign to mimesis: the poet, in his madness, gives embodiment to transcendent entities.[9] However, Plato stresses that, like a seer, the artist does not understand the meaning of the things which he views.[10] Never does Plato assign to the poet the role of purveyor of true knowledge.

What then, is the nature of Plato's grounds for doubting the integrity of artistic mimesis? His first answer is that mimesis is an act of masquerading: y passes itself off as x.

If recognized as such by all individuals, mimesis would be relatively harmless. However, it is a problematic fact that mimetic products are taken seriously by some who accept them as reality. The unwary are induced to take the artifact for the natural object from which it has been copied. Instead of widening sensibility, art is narrowing it.

Plato writes of Homer and his Iliad:

> [The poet may] speak in the character of Chryses and [try] to make us feel that the words come, not from Homer, but from an aged priest.... Where he is delivering a speech in character, [the poet] tries to make his manner resemble that of the person he has introduced as speaker.... [But] if he makes no such attempt to suppress his own personality, the events are set forth in simple narrative.[11]

Mimesis can lead to harmful psychological identification of the spectator with the dramatis personae.[12] Similarly, the poet is his characters, in the sense that he pretends or appears to be them, and he who pretends to be another cannot be himself.[13]

Elsewhere (Bk. X) Plato claims that mimesis is responsible for the epistemological weakness or inferiority of the artistic object produced; we cannot learn from an object that is a mere shadow of that which is imitated. The poet knows little but the external appearance of things and he offers little for the intellect:

> The art of representation, then, is a long way from reality; and apparently the reason why there is nothing it cannot reproduce is that it grasps only a small part of any object and that, only an image.[14]

For Plato, in order for x to be known by us, we must surpass its individual particularities and arrive at the knowledge of its idea. The particular is only real relative to the form of which it is an incomplete and deficient reflection. The forms are more concrete than any particular embodiments of them. Ideas exist independent of any imitations of them. Artistic mimesis takes this impoverishment (that is, the inadequacy of x compared to its idea) a degree further, since mimetic products are select representations of what are already particular reflections. The relationship of thing to form is reduplicated, with the result that the mimetic object is twice removed from reality.

The Platonic metaphysic is clearly evident in Plato's appraisal of the nature of artistic mimetic activity. As much as any particular, the mimetic product cannot be a perfect copy of its model. There is no one to one correspondence of details. Were a particular a true rebirth of its form, it would cease to be the particular. Similarly, only to the extent that external features and characteristics are reduplicated is an artistic product a copy of its original. Hegel would state that the mere externality of an object is being reproduced. This is expressly why mimetic creations are seen to be deceptive and of dubious worth. Furthermore, drama is seen to be such that human life is represented, not with a view to the truth, but with a view to arousing audience interest and emotion.[15]

The Platonic rejection of mimesis on the ground that its products represent a two-fold abstraction from reality may be viewed simply as a fait accompli, as an essentially metaphysical argument that focuses upon the dismissal of mimetic production. However, it underscores a closely aligned question of utility.

Plato does not deny that the products of mimesis may be attractive and enticing to us, although the Platonic doctrine of the forms does preclude their possessing true beauty. Moreover, as a consequence of Plato's theory of ideas, mimetic productions cannot be attributed any valid utility or purpose. For Plato, little, if any, virtue can lie in activity whose offspring are characterized by inauthenticity viz. their inability to possess the inner structure and essential nature of which only their models and their model's prototypes can claim. In the tenth book of the Republic, Plato set forth an argument which points to the futility of a purely imitative art. It is pointless to create slavish, external and non-instructive duplicates of objects which are themselves secondary and derivative. Art regarded as such is rather self-defeating activity.

In his Poetics, Aristotle has to defend mimesis against Plato's charges and show it to be other than the mere duplication of imperfect reality. If this cannot be done, the notion of imitation might just as well be abandoned.

Mimesis in the Poetics

Reduced to its simplest nature, mimesis might be said to be the use of a model, and literature is the art which imitates with words, in prose or in verse. However, a duplication of the antecedent object is not what is stressed in the production of the mimetic creations of poetry. In the Poetics, dramatic poetry is ranked higher than other art forms (e.g. portraiture, still-life and landscape), because these tend to be regarded as lending themselves to mimicry. Drama is not imitation in any of its impoverished forms, rather it is such that "the imitators...represent the whole story...as though they were actually doing the things described."[16] The Aristotelian definition of mimesis as drama foremost stresses that the manner or mode of imitation is characterized by the presence of characters. Furthermore, tragedy is dramatic poetry of a specified length - its time frame approximating a single day - that imitates "serious objects in a grand kind of verse", so as to excite in its auditor the characteristic tragic emotions of pity and fear and to produce their pleasurable and beneficial relief.[17]

Aristotle's means of distinguishing drama by an absence of narration is an additional way of stressing mimesis as the imitation of human action. As he is an imitator, the dramatic poet must, in a sense, forget himself and rather, "bring on"

his characters. As was seen above, this view differs significantly from that of Plato. Similarly with regard to the dramatic actors, Plato considers them and their effect upon the audience. Insofar as he deals with individuals in his treatment of drama, Aristotle focuses on character and makes only passing mention of the players. It is the character who is in a direct and intimate relationship to the object of mimesis (i.e. human action). Thus, by the criterion of the direct expression of human truths that surpasses mere narration, drama is seen to be the highest form of mimesis. Tragedy, apart from its "serious" nature and its characteristic effects, towers over comedy because its agents are better than in actual life. What is implied in the latter criterion must be determined later.

The conclusion we have reached so far is that the Poetics strives to present an apologia for tragic poetry as an instance of mimetic creation that transcends mimicry.

The Aristotelian Notion of Pleasure and the Pleasure of Mimesis

In Chapter 4 of the Poetics, Aristotle attributes the origin of poetry to a natural instinct for, and pleasure in, mimesis. It will be shown that the Aristotelian conception of the nature of pleasure can shed light upon mimesis insofar as pleasure is seen to be a state that accompanies specific activity.

The treatment of pleasure is found in the tenth book of the Nicomachean Ethics. Aristotle's formula for defining any one thing is to determine its genus and differentia. Pleasure does not contain the concept of activity, rather, it is a sensuous state that accompanies activity.[18] Pleasure, then, is a species, so to speak, and for each activity there is a particular and proper pleasure.[19] There is a causal connection between activity and pleasure; pleasure is a byproduct of activity, but it is not in itself activity. Pleasures are derivative in nature, and they differ in kind as do the activities that are their sources, and which they intensify and complete.[20] Being so, pleasure is not good in itself, therefore any good to be found in mimetic activity (i.e. creation) must stem from a source other than the pleasure it affords.

It is clear that pleasure is judged in terms of the quality of its activity. As activities differ, so do the corresponding pleasures. As mimetic creations differ in terms of the tenor of the activity of imitating, so will the consequent pleasures. It might be supposed that the pleasures of a single species (e.g. mimesis) are identical, but such is not the case.[21] Any element of poetic mimesis that could be deemed philosophical - that is, insofar as it can show us universals - will cause us, as rational beings, the most pleasure.[22] Furthermore, the Nicomachean Ethics encourage the suggestion that mimesis as activity is brought to its finest

level by those who engage with pleasure in its execution.[21]

To the Hellenic mind familiar with Plato, there would be a tendency to regard imitation as defensible only insofar as it served as playful activity and a means to teach the young the customs and protocol of the adult world. That any "play-acting" might, by the devices of artistic selection, discrimination and economy, be regarded as a legitimate avenue for the attainment of knowledge, is a notion that, although in accordance with Aristotelian thought, needs to be carefully presented.

In the opening section of Chapter 4, Aristotle states that poetry has its origin in the natural instinct for imitation and the pleasure derived from such activity. Such pleasure is based on recognition and learning. That one should take delight in the imitation of that which in real life would be unpleasant or even painful, is perhaps the paradox of art and its experience.

Although the subject matter of imitation may be a natural object (e.g. Aristotle's example of a cadaver), the representation itself is distinct from any natural object and needs be so. The enjoyment stemming from the representation of a dead body is the enjoyment of mimesis as such; it is not any beauty of the natural object that one appreciates. Although all may not possess an intellectual make-up similar to the artist, all respond intellectually to his representations. Once again, Aristotle does not dwell on the

artist, as his method is to analyze the product of artistic activity, nor does he dwell on poetic inspiration or genius. However, the intellectual element, as well as a delight in imitation, is assumed at both poles of producer and spectator. All men crave to know. Man learns by imitation, says Aristotle, and even if one is not actively engaged in the making, one will still respond intellectually to its result. All this is in glaring contrast to the flavour of Book X of Plato's Republic, which sees the artist or poet as knowing nothing but the external appearance of things; the artist offers little for the intellect. In Aristotle, the perception of the art work takes on a significance just as important as the production of the work.

Aristotle views mimesis as a type of representation from which we can learn, and since learning is a source of delight to man, he accounts in this way for the popularity of Homer and dramatic poetry.[4] In viewing a mimetic object, we delight in the picture presented and concurrently gather meaning from the representation therein. Tragedy brings on the intellectual pleasure that is intrinsic to all imitation, and in fact, heightens such a state by means of the manner of the imitation. Important, representative individuals speak and perform deeds before us.

How is it that one can learn from a mimetic creation of dramatic poetry if, by nature, a good play is supposed neither to depict its object naturalistically, nor strive to

didactically instruct? Aristotle avoids such criticisms in his statement of the characteristic features of an adequate plot. It is the realistic yet non-narrative framing of human action and reaction.[25] The message in Chapter 4 and Chapters 9 to 13 is that a mimetic representation is not an independently intelligible construct that, possessing meaning in and by itself, need not refer to some external thing for its ultimate import. In mimetic production, the creative faculties of the poet present as fiction specific truths or meanings of which we have had some indication in the practical world, but do not yet know in any thorough way. This is in no sense mystical or visionary, it is a statement of the case that imitation, especially as poetry, is a representation, (literally a "presenting again") or reproduction of human events, the significance of which cannot clearly be seen (or seen at all) in the confused immediacy of the actual thing. Art creates a logic, but this logic is not falsely imposed, rather, it is what is brought forth by a well-made plot.

Tragic drama engages us completely in that which others have thought, felt and done. Such vicarious experience leads to virtue no less than does a moral tenet requiring that one place himself in the realm of <u>praxis</u> of another. We are indeed being Aristotelian in maintaining that one may indeed be improved by means that are far from pedagogical.

For Aristotle, knowledge is always of the universal, and yet the particular is significant precisely in such a context.

Worthy imitation is the means by which we can view the embodied forms. As a vehicle for learning, mimesis entails the crucial element of recognition. In worthy drama, recognition compensates for a deficiency that is evident in ordinary, immediate experience. Often, we are distracted from recognizing universal significances by the sheer volume of particularities that are encountered in real life.

Recognition

As with all art, the features portrayed in drama (e.g. character, action and emotion) must strike us as true so that the recognition of the model of the imitation affords us pleasure.[26] Representations are enjoyed precisely because of the comparisons made by the spectator. In terms of learning, recognition refers to more than the realization that a model is being adequately imitated. At this juncture of the Poetics (Ch. 4), we could argue that, in viewing imitation, one is learning universals, and such is what Aristotle later states to be the feature of tragic mimesis.[27] If one recognizes an individual or an action, and identifies it, not with another particularity, but with some more general characteristics, then one is learning. This is pleasurable because ones sees that he is coming to appreciate a greater scheme of things: an aspect of the nature of mankind rather than that of one individual, a general tendency toward a certain sort of action

rather than a single inclination; the complexity of human relations rather than that of a specific relationship. For Aristotle, Plato's forms are embodied forms. Recognition is seeing something again for what it really is.

The :tistic selection that is characteristic of mimetic representation would disentangle the process of recognition and learning from any confusion that might impede it in the observation of events of real life. Such a view is in keeping with Aristotle's statement that tragedy is more philosophical than history (gua chronology that emphasizes the particularity of events), because it tells us in a more direct manner of general principles of human nature.* The effectiveness and the plausibility of dramatic representation are brought about by devices proper to the art.

Although mimetic representation need not be naturalistic in its portrayals, it nonetheless requires that what is depicted strike us as true, so that recognition of the model affords us an intellectual pleasure. We enjoy viewing accurate representations of things. Pleasure stems from a comparison of ideas; we enjoy the resemblance between art and nature. More importantly, we enjoy deriving new conclusions from what is familiar. It is in this sense that we learn from recognition. In recognizing x, we see it not simply as x identified, but as a certain kind of thing. It is quite different - both experientially and epistemologically - to resee an object. In this "second viewing" we delight in being

able to view an object as something that reflects other persons, action and events. But beyond the immediacy of such particularities, the necessity of how and why they are as they are is made evident. A particular embodies the general as an example thereof. The mimetic representation reveals x not simply as a particular, but in its essential nature. We understand x better as when we understand a particular through its universal, and we also see x in relation to other instances of the same general or universal kind of thing. In a worthy mimetic representation, the particularity and the universality of x are engaged in a fruitful interplay.

If we merely recognize the resemblance between subject and mimetic representation, we are not making any significant discoveries about a familiar subject. Recognition implies precognition; however, the real emphasis is upon the new light in which a familiar object is cast.[29] The work of art brings what is already known into a sharper, epiphanic focus. Aristotle's brief remark in Chapter 4 that unless one has already seen the represented object, "his pleasure will not be in the picture as an imitation of it", is a key to appreciating the unity of what often appears to be a fairly fragmented text.[30] The statement not only summarizes Aristotle's belief that worthy mimesis brings about a special sort of recognition, it also anticipates what is in appearance only, a set of ad hoc prescriptions overseeing how a playwright should deal with problems that may arise in the

portrayal of character, thought, time, place and spectacle. Aristotle is much more than a critic of his Age's drama.

It will be seen that recognition is a function of a well-constructed plot, realistic in the sense that it shows clearly the features that matter in particular realities, features which if merely copied or reported inventorially, might be observed, but would more probably be overlooked.

The Generic, Organic Unity and the Representation of Universals in Tragedy

Aristotle draws one distinction between real objects and the objects of mimesis by pointing to the fact that the heroes of tragedy may be mythical figures, men of history or entirely fictional. In other words, imitation depicts particular types rather than particular individuals. In Chapter 13, it is emphasized that Greek drama took the limited chronicles of a few ancient Houses, and from them produced a multitude of distinctive compositions." Traditionally, great dramatists had handled given material in such a way as to produce specific and distinctive illuminations of human action. We can never be in doubt of the artist's attitude toward specific, chosen detail; we can never be unaware that the details add up to something significant. In Chapter 15, Aristotle states that the practice of portraiture should be followed in the representation of serious dramatic character:

"[We should] reproduce the distinctive features of a man, and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is."[32] Whereas a Platonist could conceive of an artist dwelling upon the possible reproductions of the perfect, ideal bed, the Aristotelian focus is ever upon that which furthers the moral betterment of man. Tragedy idealizes character by portraying its personae as conducting their lives in a manner more rarefied than real life is lived.

It is the artist's license to perfect where nature has fallen short. Character should be better than the average man, and Aristotle criticizes Euripides for lowering this standard. A character need be no meaner than dictated by the plot. It is the good and not the bad in the character Oedipus, that leads us to see his fate as tragic. Apparently then, the tragedian's ennobling treatment of his subject entails an active imposition upon nature of a standard or ideal. There exist important considerations beyond the artist's grading, classifying and selecting of empirical events to the end of a disclosure of a pre-existing logic or design, imminent but hidden amidst the particularities that surround us. Throughout the centuries, the exposure of this hidden, idealist order has been taken up by a multitude of poets and painters.[33] Yet it is manifest throughout the Poetics - from Aristotle's declaration of the inadequacy of chronology qua drama, to his insistence that a work be characterized by unity of time, of place, and most critically,

of action - that the criterion for artistic selection is not to be found hidden within nature, and hence it cannot be exposed and figure as an object for imitation. An artistic production that is characterized by the Aristotelian unities cannot be labelled an imitation in any of the term's impoverished senses. The unity is imposed by the artist; it cannot be sought out and copied.[34]

We need further to examine the representation of the generic - of a class of things - as it is seen to be the proper end of Aristotelian mimesis.[35] In his "Imitation and Poetry," McKeon defines "type," a label often associated with the tragic hero. "The essential selected from the actual is the typical, and the image which embodies or expresses it is called a type."[36] By rendering clear the nature of a class of men - a type - rather than simply offering us a treatment of a select instance, tragedy can avoid the charge of mimicry. It would be absurd to suppose one could copy with minute, enumerative accuracy the external characteristics of a class of objects. If, however, the tragedian produces a discernible embodiment of type, who is at the same time a flesh and blood character, then his artistic enterprise can no longer be viewed as the duplication of particulars. The tragedian creates non-natural objects which typify non-natural things. Such objects are exemplary or analogical because what they imitate is what can be known of their objects intellectually. Aristotle saw the works of Sophocles as the superlative

imitation of the actions of great men; he was a playwright sympathetic to the vision that to dramatize is to portray the general. It must be pointed out that the type figure of drama cannot be reduced to an allegorical figure. Nothing could be more concrete than the dramatic character, yet through him, the universal is portrayed. The tragic character is the embodiment of the singular or particular as seen through the playwright's and the observer's awareness of his universally significant character. Moreover, whereas the allegorist will invent imaginary worlds and stock figures such as Fortitude and Kindness, the tragedian presents a picture of realistic men and their deeds.

Whether the object is of the realm of art or that of politics, an important Aristotelian consideration lies in the constitution of the unity of an object. Once this integrity or completeness is recognized, it is an important means by which we might define an object. A dilemma arises, however, when we consider that the recognition of unity is problematic. How are we to know what constitutes the unity of x, how are we to know that it is complete? The telos of an object - the "thisness" of it - denotes that it is complete, thoroughly made and perfected. Elsewhere (De Anima), telos is recognized by Aristotle by means of a thorough acquaintance with the properties of an object. No doubt Aristotle was attending to this in his setting forth in the Poetics of the logos (the laws or constitutive elements) of tragic drama.

As it bears upon unity, the term "organic" is adopted in the Poetics in the twenty-third chapter of the Poetics. Overt references to the characteristics of the term are also made in the sixth, seventh and eighth chapters.[37] Defined negatively, any element whose omission or inclusion effects no essential difference to a poem is not an organic part of the whole. Overabundance of detail is death to poetry. Once again, the notion is brought forth that the poet omits the contingent and focuses upon what is the single and essential tragic action, the figures of which are a type of individual.

The exclusion of irrelevant detail - a testimony to organic unity - is a decisive factor in the determination of a dramatic work as realistic rather than naturalistic, as a true creation rather than a simulation. Aristotle's insistence that a plot possess a recognizable beginning, middle and end places his view of drama far from the perspective of the 19th century naturalist.[38] Tragedy's preoccupation with unity of action (i.e. the presentation of a single story) also contributes to a better understanding of mimesis. Moreover, Aristotle's concern with singularity of plot points toward necessity and probability of action. That a plot is singular in nature means precisely that each of the incidents of which it is comprised must result from what had gone before, and must certainly, or at least probably, cause what follows. The unity of form in tragedy is attained by making the content of the plot universal. In presenting a

story as one whole, the artist is creating an unity above and beyond the presentation of a collection of incidents or sequence of events. Such is implied by the reference in Chapter 7 to the "orderly, well-proportioned and economic arrangement of part" (i.e.incidents) to the end of producing a whole (i.e. the plot). This reflects Aristotelian teleology: parts are treated in light of the whole, and the latter is not simply the sum of the former.

In exercising economy - the arrangement of parts to what is proper - the artist is an agent exercising his uniquely human and rational capacities. Aristotle's reference to the order and magnitude-dependent beauty of any whole composed of parts points to the idea that one can derive pleasure from viewing the structural unity of a well-constructed tragedy.[39] However, such pleasure is obviously not peculiar to tragedy or to art. It is a subsidiary intellectual pleasure of the type which accompanies any appreciation of a well-proportioned, economical thing. However, the well-constructed and unified representation is the means by which the recognition of the tragedy of x is brought about, so clearly the two sorts of intellectual pleasure occur together.

It may be the case that the pleasures which are characteristic of art - and the particular pleasure of tragedy - are heightened for the observer because of his awareness of artful and economic organization. Moreover, the economy of mimetic representation aids in the emotional identification

with the hero, as well as the subsequent experience of the characteristic tragic emotions of pity and fear. We can share in the emotions of Oedipus all the more because of the playwright's exclusion of extraneous circumstances of royal life that might tend to weaken our feelings of identification. In addition, the spectator's recognition of the inevitability of the downfall - rendered so evident precisely by virtue of the economy of mimesis - will increase his capacity to feel for, and with, the tragic character.

The tragedian possesses the artistic freedom to render probable and necessary, the sequence of events constituting the action of the plot. Necessity and probability are erected by art. The dramatist must demonstrate how and why the action could take place, how the possible - more than the historical - is probable or necessary. Each incident must result (or probably result) from what has gone before it, and must cause (or probably cause) that which follows.

Aristotle's statement that the impossible probable is preferable to the possible improbable requires that the appearance of a supernatural figure be critically favoured over the impossible and contrived appearance of a long-lost heir to the throne.[40] Such a statement is a vindication of inventive art as distinguished from the recording of actual events.

In the Aristotelian philosophy, universal form is encountered solely in concrete particulars. We encounter

being in particular things. Universals are the concern of all sciences, and poetic drama need not be excluded from the domain of scientific enterprise.[41]

The truths made manifest in truly dramatic poetry are not universal simply to the extent that they communicate ethical truths which transcend time and nationality and which stand true for all mankind. The focus of a drama is unique and particular, yet any abstraction from it is in the true sense universal in that it is repeatable and discernible in other actions and objects. We can continue to learn indefinitely. Universals exist in the intellect. Their being is of another order than that from which they are drawn, and they possess a permanence irrespective of the occasion from which they arise. We are able to hold a notion abstracted from its datum, identify it and marshall it in a different context.[42] Universal, then, can be applied. It is in this critical aspect that one can most significantly state that tragic drama yields universal truths.

Mimesis and Plot

In the ninth chapter of the Poetics, Aristotle states:

> It is evident . . . that the poet must be more the poet of his stories or Plots than of his verses, inasmuch as he is a poet by virtue of the imitative element in his work, and it is actions that he imitates. And if he should come to take a subject from actual history, he is none the less a poet for that; since some historic consequences may very well be in the probable and possible order of things; and

it is in that aspect of them that he is their poet.[43]

One is a poet by being a maker of plots - one makes the fall of King Oedipus by creating, not executing, an imitation of it. Plot, or the "combination of incident", is what a poet makes of a particular, perhaps known, story.[44] In the creative construction of plot, in giving form to the specific events and actions of the storyline, the poet is imparting to the drama, its arché, its principle or "life and soul."[45] In tragedy, the mimetic process is not so concerned with the presentation of incident, objective fact or character, as with the setting forth of structured action demonstrating universals. This insistence upon the primacy of plot is implicit throughout the Poetics, and the distinction is always maintained between that which is imitated (i.e. particular action) and the structure and synthesis of plot.

Chapters six through nine of the Poetics imply that a good tragedy should not leave us in doubt about the artist's attitude toward detail. We should always be aware that specifics add up to something. Any worthy plot exists as a pattern. The pattern is composed of realistic details. The details, often singly, but most critically in combination, possess a universal element. As expressed by G. Else in Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, "[the plot is] the structure of events in which universals may come to expression.[46]

The tragedian is the maker of the plot because he has so selected its incidents as to show how and why they necessarily occur or probably occur. One notes in the preceding excerpt from the ninth chapter of the Poetics, that Aristotle has demonstrated that historical material can indeed be "made" by a poet insofar as historical events can lack probability - and may well seem impossible - until the poet "makes" the events by establishing a necessary, logical order.

Besides stating the possibility of real events as the focus of universal tragedy, Aristotle assures us that character and event can easily be entirely invented.[47] This supports my point that Aristotle holds a truly refined view of mimesis. An object of imitation need not materially exist prior to, or independent of, the artist's work. Mimesis need not imply copying. The making of a plot transforms the chosen object of representation into a new entity that possesses a superior unity of structure and a universal validity. It is these elements that are recognized by the rational observer of drama. The tragedian's activity is seen by Aristotle as being creatively synthetic. The playwright adds crucial elements to the set of events so as to allow us to grasp its universal meaning rather than its simple, empirical sequence.

Aristotle explicitly states that imitation in tragedy involves active making, and making gives birth to something new. Copying is entirely derivative and there is no synthetic element to it. Mimesis cannot in one act involve both

creation and copy. Although mimetic activity can admit of simple copying, that which is superior and associated with the communication of universals cannot be so.

It is quite problematic to consider it the task of the tragedian to reproduce without selection, and to set forth as his plot that which is taken from indiscriminate observation of a set of human events, deeds and responses. Foremost one is struck by the question of how such an artist could ever arrive at the creation of a drama characterized by the universal; it would represent some sort of miracle if a plot of universal import were to be produced. In order for the tragedian to produce worthy artistic creation, he must know in advance what constitutes a beautiful and epistemologically worthy model of his mimetic activity. In any capacity as a mere copyist he would not be capable of such discernment.[48]

Conclusion

The application of the Aristotelian scientific method is evident throughout the Poetics, as first principles and derivative inferences are set forth. The first principle or generic property of all poetry is mimesis, further characterized by the differentiae of the objects, mode and manner of imitation.[49] I have suggested that the aesthetic term mimesis (imitation) is often associated with the reproduction or duplication of visible or otherwise external

qualities of a model. Imitation is often associated with the most superficial production of likenesses of nature. It has been demonstrated, however, that in the Aristotelian treatment of mimesis qua tragedy, the simplistic conception of imitation is not applicable.

Excellence in imitation does not mean the exacting reproduction of every last detail or quality of that which is the object of the activity. Worthy mimetic creation possesses a unique function; it does not attempt to rival nature, and in a most positive sense, it is not judged by standards applicable to nature.

I have shown that Aristotle distinguishes between mere copying and poetic creation in his emphasis upon : 1) the intellectual function of worthy mimetic production insofar as it can reveal the generic norm; 2) the necessity and probability of the action of the plot as opposed to empirical events of life or history; and 3) the unique unity of a tragic plot that serves the end of fostering in its observer a special sort of recognition. In mimetic production of this higher sort, the distinction between art and nature is deliberately set forth. There is a re-emergence of nature in a new and differing experience of it, and that which is an image of nature is designed to provide us with a richer meaning.

I have put forth the idea that although mimicry or copy figure as an instance of imitation, it does not and cannot

account for all mimetic activity. Although at risk of being anachronistic in our terminology, it might be said that for Aristotle, tragedy strives to be realistic rather than naturalistic. Tragedy possesses an organic unity such that irrelevant and inconsistent detail is excluded. Art is a setting of limits, a demarcation in the portrayal of the realm of nature. In a tragic plot, a set of human actions and responses is framed in such a way that we might view it in a sharpened focus.

Aristotle advises that "...the poet should say very little in propria persona as he is no imitator when doing that."[50] There is the suggestion in the Poetics that the directness of the dramatic mode of imitation - the absence of narration, the immediacy of the relation of character to a specified action - contributes to the appointment of tragedy as a superior art form.

It is clear that Aristotle distinguishes the truth of fiction (i.e. poetic truth) from the truth of fact.[51] As imitator, the poet must represent things either as they were or are, as they are said or thought to be or to have been, or as they ought to be.[52] The Aristotelian emphasis on the imitation of "things" (and in tragedy, of human action), underscores the Aristotelian belief that finite things are fit objects of knowledge. Aristotle brings Plato's forms down to earth. It naturally follows that the proper object of mimesis is such finite things.

In this chapter I have sought to establish mimesis as activity above and beyond the static reproduction of the outside world. The tragic poet augments and alters his subject matter. He imitates without duplicating in a slavish way, and he reshapes the material of experience into a more unified and knowledge-yielding form. My second chapter will focus upon interpretations of mimesis some of which remain faithful to, while others diverge from, that of Aristotle.

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

[1] See Aristotle, On Poetry and Style, trans. G.M.A. Grube (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), p. xix of the preface.

[2] For additional examples of the possible deceptive nature of mimesis, see A.K. Coomaraswamy, The Transformation of Nature in Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934), pp. 32-34. Hereafter, TTNA. I will further discuss the issue of imitation as deception in Chapter Two.

[3] Plato points to the issue in his Republic, trans. F.M. Cornford (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), Bk. X, Ch. XXXV, pp. 326-333. Hereafter, Republic.

[4] It is clear that Aristotle does not approve of all tragic drama. It is the creative treatment of the subject matter and the critical framing of this action as the plot that decides the intellectual worthiness of the work. See Aristotle, "De Poetica", in R. McKeon ed., Basic Works of Aristotle, (New York: Random House Inc., 1941), Ch. 14, 1453b, 9-11. Hereafter, Poetics.

[5] Poetics, Ch. 24, 1460a, 20-21.

[6] TTNA, p. 25.

[7] In addition, whereas Plato saw emotion and reason as being incompatible, Aristotle saw that this is not so. Reason and emotion are seen as complementary elements of the soul. Note also that Plato's and Aristotle's criteria of what constitutes proper imitation qua tragedy would also differ. Aristotle offers us a specific, in-depth treatment of the elements of admirable mimesis of human action.

[8] R. McKeon, "Imitation and Potery," in Thought, Action and Passion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 115. Hereafter, TAP.

[9] Ibid., p. 257.

[10] Plato, Apology, trans. G.M.A. Grube, in S.M. Cahn ed., Classics of Western Philosophy (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1977), 22[b], p. 44.

[11] Republic, Bk. 3, Ch. IX, p. 81.

[12] Republic, Bk. 10, Ch. XXXVII, pp. 337-338.

[13] Republic, Bk. 3, Ch. IX, pp. 82-83.

[14] Republic, Bk. 10, Ch. XXXV, p. 328.

[15] Republic, Bk. 10, Ch. XXXVI, pp. 334-337.

[16] Poetics, Ch. 3, 1448^{a}, 22-23.

[17] Poetics, Ch. 5, 1449^{b}, 10-14 and Ch. 6, 1449^{b}, 27-28. It should be noted that I have not undertaken a lengthy discussion of mimesis from the vantage point of tragedy and its pleasurable purgation of spectator emotion. The emotional effect of tragedy is often a primary focus of important discussions of Aristotle and mimesis. However, I have chosen to treat mimesis at the level of cognition. This is not to say that mimesis does not operate at once within the arenas of emotion and reason or that there is no link between the two elements. Both Aristotle and Hegel recognize that tragedy is effective at two levels. See W.W. Fortenbaugh's Aristotle On Emotion (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 9-22 for a discussion of the relationship between emotion and cognition.

[18] Aristotle, "Ethica Nicomachea" in Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon, trans. W.D. Ross (New York: Random House, 1941), Bk. 10, Chs. 3 and 4. Hereafter, NE.

[19] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 4, 1175^{b}, 20-25.

[20] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 3, 1173^{b}, 32; Ch. 4, 1175^{a}, 20-23; Ch 5., 1175^{a}, 35.

[21] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 5, 1176^{a}, 1-12.

[22] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 7, 1177^{a}, 20-25.

[23] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 5, 1175^{a}, 30-35.

[24] Aristotle, Poetics, Ch. 4, 1448^{b}, 12-18.

[25] Chapters 9 through 13 are the specific loci of the Aristotelian treatment of the constitutive elements and effects of the tragic plot. As will be seen below, the plot is the decisive element by which a tragic chronicle becomes a tragedy per se, rather than a mere chronicle of woeful facts or events.

[26] It should be noted that the term "model" is used in the sense of a model for a portrait - it is the original, so to speak. However, in the Aristotelian conception of mimesis, the model is more of a type-figure than a specific or particular individual. See Poetics, Chapters 13 and 15.

[27] This is the focus of Chapter 9 of the Poetics.

[28] Aristotle, Poetics, Ch. 9, 1451^{b}, 5-12.

[29] Poetics, Ch. 4, 1448^{b}, 18-20.

[30] Loc. cit.

[31] Poetics, Ch. 13, 1453^{a}, 17-21. The Choephorae or Libation Bearers of Aeschylus and the Electra of Sophocles are an example.

[32] Ibid., Ch. 15, 1454^{b}, 10-12.

[33] Many poets have been influenced by the Neoplatonic idea that the artist must strive "to recognize the mathematical code in which the secret of the beautiful is supposed to be enshrined." See Richard Bernheimer, The Nature of Representation: A Phenomenological Inquiry (New York: New York University Press, 1961), pp. 8-11. As recently as the nineteenth century, the New England transcendentalist poets, including H.W. Longfellow, Walt Whitman and James Russell Lowell viewed nature as "a symbol and analogue of mind, and...an education for the poet who can read her hieroglyphics." See Michael Moran, "New England Transcendentalism" in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. P. Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), Vol. 5, p. 479.

[34] Unity suggests a pattern or completeness that proceeds from an external, intelligent overseer, i.e. the playwright. The plot is made up of events the sequence of which was created by the playwright. In real life, such events would likely occur in a differing sequence, taking place over several weeks and in scattered locales. The playwright differs from the annalist who, in a sense, copies a specific time frame by including in his representation, all that occurred in it.

[35] An arrestingly simple example of the generic distinguished from the specific is offered in Ch. 23 at 1457^{b} 12-14: "Ten thousand" is a particular large number. The generic is represented by "a large number." Here, "ten thousand good deeds" is an instance of a transference from species to genus because the particular number is a metaphor for the idea of many deeds.

[36] TAP. p. 204.

[37] In the sixth chapter, the definition of the action of tragedy numbers among its qualities, that of "completeness in itself" (1449^{b}, 25). In Chapter 7, tragedy's imitation of

action is described as being "whole" and "complete in itself" (1450^b, 24-25). In the following chapter, Homer's Iliad and Odyssey are said to resemble tragedy in their being based upon, "one action, a complete whole, with (their) several incidents so closely connected that the transposal or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole" (1451^a, 28-35).

[38] Poetics, Ch. 7, 1451^a, 26-34.

[39] Aristotle, Poetics, Ch. 7, 1450^b, 35; 1451^a, 5.

[40] Poetics, Ch. 24, 1460^a, 26-27.

[41] NE, Bk. 10, Ch. 9, 1180^b, 15-23.

[42] Note the similarity of this thought to Aristotle's statement of the constitutive and intentional nature of mind, its capacity to be "a positive state like light." See De Anima, Bk. 3, Ch. 5, 430^a, 16.

[43] Poetics, Ch. 9, 1451^b, 27-33.

[44] Poetics, Ch. 6, 1450^a, 3-5.

[45] Poetics, Ch. 6, 1450^a, 38.

[46] G. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 320.

[47] Poetics, Ch. 9, 1451^b, 19-26.

[48] In addition, R. McKeon has pointed out what should be an obvious inference from the Poetics. If mimesis were no more than mechanical reproduction then "there would be no need for the elaborate analysis which constitutes the body of poetic poetry" (TAP, p. 215). Also McKeon points to Aristotle's comment that many defects in poetry may be traced "to a too literal adherence to an existent model" (p. 218). See Poetics, Ch. 25, 1460^b6-1461^a9.

[49] Poetics, Ch. 1, 1447^a, 13-18.

[50] Poetics, Ch. 24, 1460^a, 7-8.

[51] See especially the sixteenth chapter of the Poetics.

[52] Poetics, Ch. 25, 1460^b, 10-15. See also Ch. 2.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF MIMESIS

Introduction

In the text of the Poetics, the term mimesis, or imitation is not specifically linked with the term nature. It is difficult to pinpoint when the term became part of the body of jargon associated with aesthetic theory. An early allusion to the imitation of nature is found in Shakespeare's Hamlet. The hero remarks that drama is such that "[its] end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as't (sic) were, the mirror up to nature".[1] In its broadest aesthetic sense, nature can refer to any aspect of reality, whether empirical or ideal. The terms "nature," and " the natural," need not confine mimesis to the enumerative portrayal of actual empirical data, although, as we have seen, some elements of the mimetic tradition do reduce to such. Far from such naturalistic leanings,[2] a considerable body of writers who refer to mimesis view nature as the universal or ideal nature of things, the generic or typical. This idea is most

certainly compatible with the Aristotelian mimetic theory, and it strives to be so. Although Aristotle does not explicitly refer to mimesis in terms of nature, his formula and the neoclassical theories are, in some respects, identical.

Among the varying developments in imitation of nature theory, some movements remain loyal to the Aristotelian formulation, while others deviate far from the classical idea. This chapter presents an overview of some of the most constructive and some of the most pernicious developments in mimetic theory since the sixteenth century. An examination of these varying formulations of art's imitation of nature theory will aid in rendering clear the climate of thought immediately prior to the time of Hegel.

The idea of art imitating nature needs to be examined with a view to understanding its various aesthetic susceptibilities. In presenting interpretations of mimesis alien to that which in Chapter One, and later in Chapter Five, I argue to be the true - and essentially Aristotelian - model, the stage is set for both the examination of the Hegelian denial of mimesis, and the justification of what will be put forth as the proper view of imitation.

To the end of presenting negative conceptions of mimesis (i.e. mimesis as activity that is essentially non-creative and unsympathetic to the communication of universal truths), we need to consider several movements in the mimetic tradition. In these instances, imitation does not necessarily reduce to

copying, yet in each case, its direction tends away from the classical view of the universal and its disclosure. Of great significance is the 17th and 18th century view that that nature which art imitates is stark empirical reality. This outlook maintains that art should imitate or closely follow what is "natural" - i.e. the specific individual in commonplace circumstances, the familiar and the immediate, the literal rather than the representative. Such a view is a considerable obstacle to the Aristotelian view of mimesis. As well, this literal view of nature gua art is implicative of the anti-classical tenet that stresses the value of prosaic content over form in art.

"Imitation of nature" represents a view of art requiring the composition of two critical elements. These ideas must mesh in order to produce truly superior creations. Any given imitation can be good or bad according to its creator's selection and treatment of material. If a spectator is to draw new conclusions from the portrayal of what is familiar to him, the artist must pay close attention to both what he isolates to be transfigured into a universal representation and how this is carried out.

Historical Conceptions of Mimesis

The Neoclassical Tradition - Art's Portrayal of the Universal

Among the principle interests in neoclassical theory is the question of the relation of art to reality. Traditionally, neoclassicists asserted that it is the function of art to represent that which is universal. This almost amounted to an axiom. In mimetic theory, the idea of art imitating universal nature can reduce to at least three expressions: a) the universal as the generic, b) the universal as average or that which generally prevails, and c) the universal as the ideal. Clearly, these persistent and widespread formulations are inseparably connected, and are characterized by common elements because they are extensions of the general neoclassical standpoint. In the following sections each of these interpretations of the focus of mimesis will be examined.

Mimesis as Imitation of the Generic

In his A Defence of Poetry (1821), the Romantic poet Shelley (1792-1822) exhibits pronounced leanings toward classicism. Here, among other neo-Aristotelian statements,

Shelley pronounces that Greek tragedy is superlative drama because it

> ...[gives us] a mirror in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin guise of circumstance, stripped of all but that ideal perfection and energy which everyone feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires and would become.[3]

Moreover, drama ". . . should be as in King Lear, . . . universal, ideal and sublime."[4] That a poet and critic, typically regarded as romantic and hence opposed to classical poetics, should voice such classicist concern for poetry's expression of the universal points to the manner in which tendencies for which schools stand manifest themselves in eras and doctrines customarily designated by others. It is improper to approach the huge corpus of literary criticism produced in the last three hundred years and expect to draw fixed and rigid divisions between concurrent literary movements.

The interpretation of mimesis as naturalism (i.e. mimicry) is only one facet of mimetic theory. Recurrently in aesthetic theory, "nature" implies the general nature of a class or species, and especially, the representative characteristics of man as he exists everywhere and at all times, purged of particular and contingent circumstance and characteristic. The idea of art imitating nature - nature qua the generic type - as well as variations therein, is evident in such Enlightenment writings as those of Samuel Johnson (1709-1784),[5] Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), [6] and G.E.

Lessing (1729-1781).[7] These authors typify the neo-Aristotelian imitation theory of the 18th century.

Johnson is well-known for the preface to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare's works. Here, he speaks of the dramatist's work as "a faithful mirror [sic] of . . . life," and of Shakespeare as the poet of "general nature" who should be admired for his portrayal of universal, truthful characters rather than particular men.[8] For Johnson, realism is the depiction of the typical rather than the accurate and minute copying of the empirical. Throughout his critical writings, Johnson makes reference to that which follows from what we would call naturalism. He states that superior drama cannot coincide with a simplistic portrayal or narration of the incidental and the particular. Individual human interests and sentiments may well be portrayed in drama, yet their selection must be biased toward a representation of general human tendencies.

This classical viewpoint is widespread and lasting in Johnson's writings. In an earlier fictional work, Rasselas (1759), Johnson uses the character Imlac as a mouthpiece for his essentially Aristotelian criterion concerning the proper subject matter of dramatic poetry. Here, the poet is an "interpreter of nature," who views the particular and concrete as representative, and who sets the singular against the generic idea of which it is a realization.[9] Johnson writes:

> The business of a poet . . . is to examine not the individual but the species; to remark general

> properties and large appearances. . . . He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, such as to recall the original to every mind, and he must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked and another have neglected.[10]

A summary statement of the ideas put forth by Sir Joshua Reynolds in the third and seventh of his fifteen discourses before the Royal Academy (1769-1790), will further illustrate the Enlightenment conception of imitation of nature as the mimetic representation of the generic. Apart from Reynolds' renown as a critic of painting, his remarkable sensitivity toward art in general, and toward mimetic poetry and its creation, justifies his inclusion in our discussion.

In numerous respects, Reynolds' third discourse might well be the work of a Johnson, Lessing or any neoclassicist critic of literature. Reynolds insists that in all facets of art, he who is truly innovative will be he who always compares the particular members of any set of objects, discerns their common attributes and their accidental characteristics, and then further abstracts to arrive at the idea of that which constitutes their essence.[11] It is a paradox, says Reynolds, that the artist should "learn to design naturally [i.e. faithfully] by drawing his figures unlike . . . any one object."[12] Reynolds thus denies the idea of <u>mimesis</u> as mimicry or copy, and he extends the denial to painting as well as to poetry. Throughout the third lecture, Reynolds voices his belief that an artist should endeavour to reduce the

accidental discriminations, the variety of nature, to a portrayal of generic qualities.[13]

Most pertinent to the present discussion is Reynolds' linking of superior painting and poetry through their common eschewal of art's seducing its observers into regarding art object and natural object as essentially interchangeable.[14] In his seventh discourse, Reynolds maintains that that nature which is the province of artistic imitation cannot be particular; we cannot appreciate the generic essence of a class of things by exposure to a nature in which no two individuals are the same. In art, "the general idea . . . ought to be called nature; and nothing else, correctly speaking, has a right to that name".[15]

Echoing Johnson and Reynolds' rejection of the individual and the topical are the writings of G.E. Lessing in his Laokoon (1766), and in his collection of dramatic reviews known as the Hamburg Dramaturgy (1767-1769). Yet, in at least one instance, Lessing's focus upon the universal in poetry can be seen to deviate from that of his neoclassical contemporaries.

In his Laokoon, Lessing attacks descriptive poetry, be it the genre of drama or the epic. He argues against the prevalent notion that the more poetry provides us with deeds and ideas that might be rendered in painting, the greater it stands as a work of art.[16] This notion, known as ut pictura poesis, a Renaissance doctrine whose original defenders were

Horace and Plutarch, is rejected on the grounds that mechanical description must be avoided in all facets of poetry. One cannot form a conception of a whole from a mere listing of characteristics. In the imitation of human action, we need to be able to abstract actively the characters' motivations, desires and attitudes. Lessing's preoccupation with the universal in poetry - especially in tragic drama - is an Aristotelian preoccupation with logical necessity of portrayed action. We are reminded of the ninth chapter of the Poetics, and its statement that the degree of universality of plot is dependent upon the necessity and probability of its content, i.e. the sequence of actions and reactions. The dramatist is concerned "...with events that are rooted in one another, that form a chain of cause and effect."[17] To this end, the playwright must concentrate on the hidden organization of the plot, as this will culminate in its "inner probability."[18] Lessing's adherence to Aristotelian directives is for the most part constant; at the same time he is sensitive to pertinent issues in the aesthetic debate of his time. We have made note above of Lessing's denial of the 18th century ideals of descriptive poetry as well as his rejection of the re-emergence of the idea that poetry should emulate painting. However, it will become evident that Lessing falters in his commitment to the view that poetry imitates the universal.

Mimesis as Imitation of Average Types

We have been discussing the idea of an imitation of nature in art, where nature represents the general, essential or generic character of a certain type of thing. In view of Lessing's predisposition toward Aristotelian tenets, it is remarkable to note one statement in the Hamburg Dramaturgy concerning the characteristics of nature for imitation in worthy dramatic representation. Lessing explicitly states that the tragic character is an average character, "a general character [in which] a certain average, a certain mean proportion has been taken from many or all individuals."[19] Traditionally, the generic had not been equated with the average. Following from this, the portrayal of the essential characteristics of a class of things cannot be executed if the qualities in question have been derived from an average - a mere overview of numerous members.

The generic can be said to be that part of the definable essence of a thing which belongs also to other things. As type, it is exclusive of the differentiae of the individual. Aspects of the universal, or generic qualities, of the virtuous man are what is embodied in the particular characters of tragedy. Such is not "an average taken from many or all individuals," for two reasons.

First, the generic characteristics of a class can be said to belong to the order of the intellectual rather than the empirical, since they exist as a set of induced concepts. A particular is said to fall under, or be subsumed, by its genus. A particular falls under a generic grouping by virtue of its approximating a set of specified qualities. This is evident throughout the Aristotelian philosophy and its concept of tragedy. Art imitates types as immanent in nature, but the type itself is nonetheless ideal, and it stands before us as an intellectual entity. The genus is the essential definition or essence of a class of things. As such, the generic distinguishes the class by means of a unique idea. The idea serves to bring together entities which resemble one another, and to separate them from those which they do not resemble. In contrast, an average is taken from an aggregate of natural individuals. An average is a particular description, and as such it has no independent existence. The generic will encompass a variety of averages, or as Lessing calls them, "mean proportions," whereas the degree to which an average approximates generic traits may vary.[n] Averages are not universal, they measure the degree to which x approximates being y, as opposed to that which x could fully be, i.e. y.

Second, Aristotle sees character as only realised in action. The mere representation or portrayal in a character of what are average qualities is not a full presentation of character. Rather, a character is a performer of action who

possesses specific qualities, but who has universal significance. Most importantly, and by Lessing's own admission, proper dramatic representation is of universals - the necessary and the probable. Drama concerns itself with "individuals and particulars so related to each other that they reveal laws of action and connection."[21] This is by no means foreign to the generic, but it need not apply to an average character. Tragedy is seen by Aristotle as a mimesis of action which tells of universals.[22] Here, the universal is defined in terms of the action which a man of a particular character would necessarily or probably carry out, not simply what he does do. Lessing's average character is reached from a consideration of what most often prevails in the realm of daily praxis. Such a character is not a universal character; it is not what Aristotle sees as a noble type of man.

That Lessing should equate the portrayal of a universal type with the portrayal of some sort of mean among specimens is problematic. It is especially perplexing in view of his invectives against descriptive poetry and his insistence that dramatic plots be characterized by necessity and probability. Regrettably, the format of the text of the Hamburg Dramaturgy[23] does not allow us to pursue Lessing's thought to any great length; it is not evident why Lessing should lapse into empirically-derived notions of mimesis. It appears that aspects of the classical conception of imitation of nature are

reiterated and underscored by Lessing, while the idea of nature as the generic is re-interpreted.

Lessing's concept of the tragic character qua average type represents a variation in the idea of aesthetic nature as a type or ideal form. In fact, this variation represents a shift in focus toward the representation of empirical reality. Already, it is evident that the mimetic tradition implies, by turns, a representation of types rather than single entities, and also the portrayal of concrete particularities.

Mimesis as Imitation of the Ideal

Of those theories of mimesis which view the proper object of imitation as non-particular or universal, a dominant formulation views aesthetic nature (that nature which is imitated), as ideal or imperfectly realised in empirical reality. Here, the act of mimesis cannot be one of copying external form or contingent feature. First, it is postulated that the object of mimetic activity exists neither materially nor in any one entity. Subsequently, mimesis is interpreted as an attempt to follow closely the most salient features of a strictly intellectual archetype. Imitation takes place in the context of the choice of an ideal model and the attempt to render clear its meaning. Second, image and model are radically dissimilar, not simply in terms of the multiple ways

by which we view any mimetic product as distinct from its natural object, but also by virtue of the ontological, i.e. ideal, status of that which the artist takes as the object of his activity.

Obviously, the interpretation of mimesis as having objects that are ideal, circumvents the standard charge that the observer of a mimetic representation may be deceived and mistake the artifact for the natural object from which it has been "copied." While one accusation concerning the harmful nature of mimetic representation is avoided, another accusation is underscored: namely, a Platonic charge that the art work stands as a weak, deficient and imperfect notion of its model. In defining mimesis as representation of the ideal, an incongruity is implied between that which is represented and that which represents. The plastic representation cannot conform to its model.

However, such a charge is undermined by a consideration of the non-plastic art form, poetry, and especially its non-narrative or dramatic genre. A particular criticism of mimesis, applicable to the more material arts, cannot be marshalled against mimetic poetry. Neither the object nor the medium of poetry is material, and this elevates mimesis far from the domain of the empirical, the externally-focused or the illusionistic.

As well as being a fundamental tenet of neoclassicism in general, the notion of an idealized or perfected nature

becomes a significant feature of various formulations of mimetic theory. The idea of idealized nature is closely aligned with, yet distinct from, the notion of universal nature as the generic. A requirement that art imitate the generic or characteristic features of a type of thing facilitates, or easily passes into, a demand that art represent nature as it should be, as judged by aesthetic or moral standards.[24] In contrast to Lessing's representation of an empirically-derived average, an ideal representation of x portrays x, not as it usually exists, but as it should or ideally may be. This idea of an imitation of what should be is directly Platonic. In the Republic, Plato proposes his political state as an ideal model for human imitation but not for human attainment.[25]

The notion of literature imitating the ideal was widely expressed in Hellenic theory, and it persisted in other early approaches, for example, that of Plotinus in the third century. It endured throughout the Neoplatonism of the Middle Ages, and is to be found in strains of the aesthetics of the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries, especially in the works of such writers as Sidney. The theory continues into the 17th and 18th centuries in the works of such authors as Dryden and Reynolds.[26]

As ideal, mimesis can be seen as an imitation of an elevated and enhanced nature - la belle Nature.[27] As such, mimesis may entail a selection from, and embellishment of,

existing reality, a purposeful selection from nature to the end of disclosing a perfected nature above and beyond all singular natural instances. Similarly, there may be an appeal to an ideal imposed on nature by the artist, an ideal which is assumed to be affirmed by a complement in a parallel, but perfected world. This formulation, with its affinity to Neoplatonism, was first given formal statement by Plotinus.[28] The idea of an inner conception of the artist being confirmed by another reality figured in the aesthetic theory of the later Renaissance. In the late 18th century, it began to resurface in the thought of some of the early Romantics.[29]

Some ramifications of the interpretation of mimetic nature as ideal require explication. As manifest in all too many instances of mimetic production, the la belle Nature view is objectionable on the grounds that its representations will lack that organic unity which we saw in Chapter One as being integral to all worthy mimetic creation. They stand as mere assemblages of arbitrary characteristics rather than as unified wholes. Like Xeuxis' creations, such representations fall short of the realm of knowledge - yielding representations. As we have seen above, this shortcoming may surface in tragic drama in the form of an episodic plot.

Despite its shortcomings, the notion of mimesis as a selection from, and perfection of, nature reaffirms an important point that was made in the first chapter. It was indicated that those forms of mimesis which are to be

commended are such that the criteria for the selection of natural objects and events lie outside the realm of the natural. A praiseworthy imitation of nature involves an imposition from the artist of a judgement concerning the suitability of natural objects and events as models, and most importantly, of the need for their refinement and alteration. Likewise, the playwright does not imitate the order which is intrinsic to his plot and which constitutes its nature, rather, it is his pre-eminent task to construct it. This order is an ideal construct; it proceeds entirely from the mind of the artist. The poet devises the logical structure of the dramatic sequence. The order is conferred, not copied, and in this lies an essential distinction between art and reality.

He who held a simplistic conception of artistic mimesis might charge that this formulation of ideal mimesis cannot be seen as an act of imitation, since it involves an extensive intellectual imposition upon the natural order. Yet such is exactly what mimesis represents in its most laudable form - the selection from nature of material from which one fashions a non-natural and universal representation. The superlative mimetic artist separates the form from the matter of some objects of experience and imposes that form on something else. Thus, imitation is not simply copying an original model. Rather, imitation is a particular, yet universal, representation of an aspect of things.

The notion of imitation as ideal has been developed and refined in the writings of a diverse body of thinkers.

The Elizabethan essayist and poet, Sir Philip Sydney (1554-1595), puts forth as statement of mimesis as imitation of ideal nature in his A Defence of Poesie (1585). The poet and especially the dramatist strive to imitate nature, but not in the sense of representing the world as it empirically exists. Rather, the artist "figures forth" a nature of a higher order, re-creating in his mind the world as it may have existed in the Divine Creator's.[30] This Christian interpretation possess an obvious affinity to the Platonic doctrine of the Demiurge that is presented in the Timaeus. In addition, Sydney insists that mimesis must "borrow nothing of what is, hath been or shall be; but range only . . . into the divine consideration of what may be and what should be."[31]

A later statement of the same is made by John Dryden (1631-1700) in his work "A Parallel Betwixt Painting and Poetry" (1695). Dryden states that imitation is of "an elevated idea of nature," and poetry is "not only a true imitation of nature, but of the best nature . . . of that which is wrought up to a nobler pitch."[32] In terms of the delineation of character in tragedy, Dryden echoes Chapter 25 of the Aristotelian Poetics, and maintains that the audience must be presented with "...images more perfect than the life of any individual . . . all the scattered beauties of nature united."[33]

Finally, we should stress that since the time of Plato, it has been widely accepted that the act of imitation is incompatible with the ideal. It is thought that an imitation of nature cannot stand as an ideal perception of nature, first, because universals cannot be copied, and second, because that which amounts to a finite reproduction of the individual or the particular, cannot express the universal.

Mimetic activity may reduce to the questionable enterprise of counterfeiting the external features of particular objects. However, we have seen that mimesis can also figure as the production of particular - yet faithful - embodiments of what are seen to be generic, universal and ideal aspects of nature.

Aesthetic Nature as Empirical Reality

The outlook that the proper concern of mimesis be with the realm of the empirical has consistently played a leading role in the debate concerning the nature and worth of imitative art. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, aesthetic theory vacillated between the belief that mimesis should properly focus upon that which is ideal, and alternatively, that it rightfully concentrate upon the reproduction of that which is immediate. At times in the 18th century, there existed a strong movement toward blatantly naturalistic mimesis. Together, the 17th and 18th centuries

stand as an encapsulation of the relentless debate between those who characterize mimesis as the portrayal of the factual, and those who consider its primary nature to be intellectual.

Despite the pronounced naturalistic strain evident in a fair proportion of the writings of that time, it needs to be stressed that the empiricist formulation of mimesis need not reduce to the servile reproduction of particulars. Empirical nature may refer beyond simple, external features or characteristics. In fact, a proportion of empirically inclined statements of mimesis can be seen to possess a remarkably Aristotelian flavour. For instance, a prevalent conception of empirical mimesis identifies that nature which is imitated with that which is probable, or more prosaically, that which can be anticipated. As will be seen, this is especially applicable in terms of the representation of general human nature. Many 17th century and early 18th century playwrights, Joseph Addison (1672-1719) among others, insisted that the portrayal of the particular and the commonplace be characterized by consistency and probability, or, at the very least, by the unified presentation of fact.[34] Aristotelian dictates, focusing upon the inner consistency of dramatic portrayals, can be seen to be applied to what would otherwise be descriptive, and enumerative poetry.

A demand that human life be represented fully, and that the world of sense be described in a fairly exacting manner,

need not entail that all the contingent features of the objects in question be recreated. In the enterprise to portray fully, we need not recreate objects as though they were tangibly before us; a perceptive representation of an object does not require its literal reproduction. An imitation of empirical reality must not be equated with the reproduction of all particularities. A superior poet is capable of faithfully portraying natural objects, while in the same act, bringing forth an intellectual content.

Expressions of Empirical Mimesis

For the better part of the 16th and 17th centuries, human nature, and especially its emotional elements, was interpreted as a fitting focus of mimetic activity. S.J. Barnet points out that, "in the 18th century, the ability of a character to respond emotionally (usually tearfully) to acts of benevolence or malevolence was called sensibility."[15] Such an interpretation of mimesis appears to stand at a great distance from that view which sees nature-for-imitation as generic or somehow ideal. However, the focus upon the concretely human retains some classicist elements.

As a fitting subject of mimesis, human nature should not be a parading forth of particular human predicaments and behaviours. Rather, mimesis should be the representation of human nature as it is widely understood. Aristotle would

stress that probable human responses to universally recognized situations are what are to be brought forth.

John Dryden and Samuel Johnson embrace the theory that imitation should focus upon human nature and behaviour. In the preface to his Rival Ladies (1664), Dryden pronounces that imitation is "a representation of the world and the actions in it, . . . a picture of human life and humours."[36] Furthermore, those plots are applauded which represent human action and reaction such that the spectator "rests satisfied that every cause was powerful enough to produce the effect it had."[37] Plainly, an element of Aristotelianism is evident in Dryden's work. Necessity and probability must characterize plot, yet concurrently - and this represents the divergence from the classical view - plot is an "imitation of Humane [sic] life, where manners, passions and habits are imitated . . . as if some ancient Painter [sic] had drawn them."[38] Dryden frequently alludes to the importance of drama, and especially tragedy, as an exacting portrayal of emotion expressed under a variety of circumstances. The imitation of human life and passion stands as the very definition of poetry.[39] Likewise in 1781, Johnson sees imitation as "a just representation of things and persons as if they really existed, of actions that could be performed."[40]

Of singular importance in these writings is the dual emphasis upon realism and factual accuracy, and the attention to classical tenets concerning the portrayal of action and

character. In a manner which is necessary and probable, actions takes place and both character and spectator emotion is evoked. The careful focus upon emotion, its almost logical demonstration, is certainly novel. In past aesthetic theory, the portrayal of emotion was regarded as best restrained. In later theory it would, at times, be granted full license; some movements would consider emotion to be the telos of poetry.

No examination of a shift in emphasis in mimetic theory can be complete which does not take into account the increasing emphasis in Criticism upon the role of imagination. Frequently, mimesis and imagination are considered to be inimical, yet particularly during the Enlightenment, a significant number of theorists view imagination as an integral element of imitation. Here, creative imitation is regarded as the standard of artistic mimetic activity.

In his preliminary discourse to the Encyclopaedia, D'Alembert challenges the disparaging judgement that imitation represents mere artistic parrotry or a conjuring act of little artistic or intellectual merit.[41] Echoing Dryden and Johnson, D'Alembert proclaims the fitting focus of mimetic poetry to be "the careful examination of Nature and the grand study of Mankind."[42] Imitation of Nature is put forth as the definitive principle of art, while poetry - the primary imitative art - figures as imitation which appeals to Imagination rather than being solely dependent upon sensory images.[43] Espousing Lockean theory, D'Alembert asserts that in imitating nature,

the artist summons from memory a manifold of past impressions, and then, by virtue of the inventive faculty of imagination, synthesizes a variety of data to arrive at a final, particular and created image. This mimetic-imaginative image is similar to, yet distinct from, those impressions which are the direct object of our ideas or senses.[44]

D'Alembert's commentary on the role of imagination in mimetic art is significant as a transitional attitude since it stands midway between two significant movements in the history of aesthetic theory. D'Alembert affirms elements of the classicist position when he insists that the poet must strive to follow nature. The poet must remain detached from his work and he must conform with established prescripts governing artistic production. Simultaneously, D'Alembert embraces a theory of imagination without compromising his fundamental adherence to a theory of mimesis. At no point in the Preliminary Discourse is the view put forth that Imagination and the display and evocation of emotion should be given free rein, or that little regard needs to be given to such long prevailing notions as economy and organic unity.

When D'Alembert explicitly links imitation with imagination - or to use his term, invention[45] - the attitude is not atypical. The thought is assumed by that theory of mimesis which regards mimetic enterprise as lying in the execution of meaningful and essentia reproductions of nature rather than the production of static copies. D'Alembert's

writings are unique because surprisingly few authors have attempted to elucidate the idea of mimesis in terms of imagination. Rather than focussing upon the imaginative amplification of the natural model, the mimetic process has been treated in terms of the requisite reduction and omission of the extraneous detail of nature. While emphasizing the efficient and concise treatment of action and detail, Aristotle makes fleeting reference only to imagination or genius.[40]

D'Alembert emphasizes that imagination does come into play in mimesis, yet his writings exhibit an air of cautiousness; "inventive genius" (i.e. imagination) cannot be invoked to too great a degree for fear that the idea of a faithful imitation of nature will be violated."[41] An overabundance of imaginative content soon leads to complete fabrication and this is foreign to the Aristotelian ideal of the careful use of a model. Moreover, any great emphasis on imagination can be associated with a demand for visual vividness in poetry. We are brought back to the idea of ut pictura poesis, or the requirement of poetry that the spectator be able to envision the manner in which King Oedipus speaks, or walks or dresses.

D'Alembert's writings exhibit a recognition of the need for a prudent concert in the play of imagination and the adherence to classicist dictates that oversee the production of unified dramatic plots. D'Alembert refers to the

Aristotelian Poetics in its capacity as a set of directives for the careful production of superior plots. D'Alembert is ever mindful, as was Aristotle, that one cannot be schooled in the creation of dramatic plot in the same manner as one can be trained to the production of anvils. "The laws or rules written concerning imitation . . . aid only those who see."[28]

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) is a near contemporary of D'Alembert whose works illustrate a contrasting attitude toward imagination. Burke's Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1759), is relevant to our purpose only insofar as it is indicative of the vast array of 17th and 18th century ideas concerning the nature and focus of drama. Far removed from the ideal that drama rightfully imitate human action, Burke maintains that the sole enterprise of imagination, and poetry itself, lies in the arousal of sympathy and pity. "The enterprise of poetry," writes Burke, "is to affect rather by sympathy than imitation."[29]

Increasingly the traditional formulation of mimesis begins to break down. A brief examination of the prevalence of naturalism and the significant role of empiricist philosophy will complete our overview of the historical conceptions of mimesis.

Mimesis as Naturalism

A pronounced movement toward naturalism became evident in the late 18th century. We have seen evidence of a naturalistic interpretation of mimesis in the writings of Lessing. The outlook was most certainly favoured by such 17th century authors as Corneille (1606-1684) and Rymer (1641-1713). The elevation of naturalism in drama is also apparent in the critical writings of such 18th century figures as Diderot (1713-1784),[50] Baumgarten (1714-1762)[51] and Warton (1722-1800).[52] This is not to say that the above are, one and all, avowed naturalists. However, it is the case that many of the works of these writers bear more than a trace of the naturalistic perspective. Baumgarten's Aesthetica is not naturalistic in its outlook. Here, the artist is seen as one who imitates nature without copying it, and he creates a world amplified by the addition of feeling. However, coherence is conferred through a focus on a specific theme. Yet in the Reflections On Poetry, Baumgarten maintains that in order to avoid the lifeless depiction of human types, drama must present character as "a completely particularized representation . . . embracing a lifelike manifold of external properties."[53] Baumgarten stands as one instance of an adherence to mimesis that verges on blatant naturalism. As was evident above, the shift in focus is associated with what

is seen as a need to portray and evoke emotion. It is clear that naturalism and emotionalism are closely linked. In the works of 19th century playwrights and theorists, naturalism and emotionalism would be explicitly fostered as an aesthetic principle.

Diderot's advocacy of naturalistic mimesis is all-embracing, and his position figures as one of a small number of modern statements that maintain that mimicry should pass into deception. Diderot writes, "the perfection of a spectacle consists in such an exact imitation of an action that the spectator, deceived without interruption, imagines that he witnesses pathetic action itself."[51] Once again, any tendency toward intellectualization in drama is dismissed; there is a denial of the need to focus beyond the specific and on to general truths. Naturalistic devices are the means by which powerful emotional effect is elicited.

How are we to account for the late 17th and the 18th century attentiveness to the empirical and the non-general? Certainly, by the time of Diderot, it had become conventional to regard the previous centuries' preoccupation with Rationalism as a spurious enterprise. Metaphysics came to be regarded as fraught with pitfalls, and its speculations were seen as leading to error. The rationalist perspective was most scrutinized where it concerned itself with the undertakings of science, the individual's attitude toward the natural realm around him, and the realm of praxis. The

empiricist maintains that nature and man cannot be regarded in abstract or generalized terms that evoke what is beyond the given. We know with certainty only individual things and the existence of "higher truths" is denied. Any general concepts we hold are seen to be derived from experience and most especially, sense experience.

Regarding mimesis, the empiricist programme implies that the concept of aesthetic nature qua generic or ideal is an abstraction that cannot be tolerated. The re-emergence of the ideal of descriptiveness in mimetic poetry is due to the empiricist emphasis on sense experience and the interpretation of that which is immediately at hand. Poetry is seen to present representations that are visually vivid and this is seen to be the case irrespective of the non-sensory nature of poetry. Mimetic poetry, especially the non-narrative genre of drama, must move away from the goal of conveying universals. Drama should concentrate on that which is most immediate and most familiar to its spectators and auditors. The individual, the topical, and even the national interest are seen to be fitting subjects of representation."

Conclusion

Both "imitation" and "nature" have been subject to a wealth of interpretation. Numerous sorts of poetic creation have been hailed as instances of mimetic production. Both particulars and universals have been declared to be the object of imitation. Imitation itself has been seen as either the painstaking copying of all facets of an object or as the exclusion of everything except the defining features of a class of objects.

The desire to faithfully reproduce or be true to nature has been conceived to imply: a) the pursuit of the generic or of the ideal; b) the representation of an average type; c) the painstaking depiction of particular or empirical aspects of a chosen model; d) the portrayal of features of general human nature; and e) the evocation and display of emotion. In this chapter, mimetic theory has been examined and it has been demonstrated that mimicry alone is not sufficient to define imitation.

Believing that in being too faithful to particulars one is being untrue to nature, the neoclassicists champion the idea that particularities and individual detail must be overlooked in favour of general truths. In reply to this, others insisted that the attempt to portray general truths can result in nothing but the production of stiffly abstract and

one-dimensional representations that are ultimately meaningless and which leave us unmoved and unenlightened.

The impact of the growing emphasis on the representation of the empirical, as well as the emergence of the ideal that the end of poetry be to evoke emotional response, resulted in an undermining of the primacy of the neoclassical views of mimesis. In the various Romantic schools, the emphasis on the emotional would be matched by the necessity that art express the personal nature and feelings of the artist. Thus, with aesthetic theory moving further from the idea of the portrayal of the objective and the generic, the doctrine of Aristotelian mimesis and its various requirements was regarded as an inadequate and stifling vision of artistic representation.

The third chapter of the thesis will examine the aesthetic theory of Hegel and will attempt to lay the groundwork for his critical treatment of mimetic theory.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

[1] Hamlet, III, ii, 22-23.

[2] I use the term "naturalistic" here in the 19th and 20th century context of "naturalistic" versus "realistic". See S. Barnet et al., Types of Drama (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), pp. 699 and 702. Hereafter, Types.

[3] Percy Bysshe Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry", in B.R. McElderry, Jr. Ed., Shelley's Critical Prose (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 16. Hereafter, A Defence.

[4] A Defence, p. 14.

[5] As put forth in the tenth chapter of Johnson's, "The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," in C. Peake, ed., 'Rasselas' and Essays (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967). Hereafter, Rasselas. See also Johnson's famed "Preface to Shakespeare".

[6] See the third and seventh of Reynold's discourses to the Royal Academy in: Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fifteen Discourses On Art (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1928). Hereafter, Discourses.

[7] Gotthold E. Lessing, Hamburg Dramaturgy, trans. H. Zimmerman (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), Nos. 94 and 95. Hereafter, HD.

[8] Samuel Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare," in C. Kaplan ed., Criticism: The Major Statements (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 254.

[9] Rasselas, Ch. 10, p. 23.

[10] Loc. cit.

[11] Discourses, III, p. 30.

[12] Loc. cit.

[13] Discourses, III, pp. 31-34.

[14] Discourses, III, p. 37.

[15] Loc. cit.

[16] Gotthold E. Lessing, Laokoon, trans. E.C. Beasley (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914), Ch. 16, pp. 91-92. See also Ch. 21.

[17] HD, No. 30. See also Nos. 24 and 34.

[18] HD, No. 32 and 19.

[19] HD, No. 95.

[20] We could borrow from Linnaeus and state that it is not the average which makes the genus, but the genus which gives the average. See Ernst Mayr, The Growth of Biological Thought (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1982), p. 177.

[21] Humphrey House, Aristotle's Poetics (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1964), p. 81.

[22] See Poetics, Ch. 9, 1451", 5-10.

[23] Hamburg Dramaturgy consists of a set of reviews and commentaries of productions of the National Theatre in Hamburg from 1767 to 1769. Lessing's thought on dramatic theory is scattered throughout his reviews of the works of what are now obscure German playwrights.

[24] It should be noted that in terms of the ethical life of man, the portrayal of ideal types qua truly virtuous characters has at all times been regarded as possessing as indispensible value for practice.

[25] Richard McKeon, "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity" in R.S. Crane, ed., Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1952), p. 153. Hereafter, Critics and Criticism. The author refers to Plato's Statesman, 293E and writes, "the nature of the imitation of true government is explained by recourse to an image or figure in which the King is represented as pilot and physician." True government is the form or ideal model of government and actual city-states imitate it.

[26] Reynold's Discourses have been mentioned above. See this section for discussion of Sydney and Dryden.

[27] Many references have been made to an ideal imitation of la belle Nature or selected nature. Both Cicero (De Inventione) and Pliny the Elder (Nat. Hist.) mention instances of such: the illustrious Xeuxis is said to have selected the fairest arm, leg, face, etc., of the most becoming virgins of Crotona so as to render a single representation of an eminently beautiful figure. See also the Republic, Bk. 5, Ch. XVIII, pp. 177-178. In the famous Encyclopaedia of Arts and Sciences (1751-1765), Jaucourt (vol. xi, 42), defines la belle Nature as "nature embellished and perfected by the arts for

use and pleasure. The artist makes a choice of the most beautiful parts of nature to form an exquisite whole, which would be more beautiful than nature itself." Such is not direct imitation, but rather the mimetic representation of nature as it should be. See Jean Le Rond D'Alembert, Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot, trans. R.N. Schwab (New York: Bobbs-Merill, 1963), p. 38.

[28] Vernon J. Bourke, "Plotinism" in D.D. Runes, ed., Dictionary of Philosophy (Totowa: Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1979), p. 240.

[29] See A.O. Lovejoy, "On The Discrimination of Romanticisms" in Essays In The History Of Ideas (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1948), pp. 229-242, passim. Hereafter, Romanticisms.

[30] Sir Philip Sidney, A Defence of Poetry, ed. J. Van Dorsten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 12, 23-25. Hereafter, Of Poetry.

[31] Of Poetry, p. 26.

[32] John Dryden, "A Parallel Betwixt Painting and Poetry" in G. Watson ed., Of Dramatic Poesy, (London: G.M. Dent & Sons, 1968), II, 193-194. See also 183-186; 191, 195 and 199-202. Hereafter, A Parallel.

[33] A Parallel, p. 194. See also p. 184. The entire essay abounds with references to nature as ideal.

[34] M.C. Bradbook, Themes And Conventions of Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 168-171.

[35] Types, p. 704.

[36] John Dryden, "Preface to the Rival Ladies," in J. Kinsley and G. Parfitt eds. John Dryden - Selected Criticism (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 1.

[37] Loc. cit.

[38] John Dryden, "1667 Preface to Fables Ancient and Modern, Translated Into Verse" in J. Kinsley, ed. Poems and Fables (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 526. Hereafter, Fables.

[39] Fables, pp. 525, 528, 531. See also "1670 Preface to Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr: a Tragedy" in Kinsley and Parfitt (1971), p. 96.

[40] Samuel Johnson, "The Life of Pope," in G.B. Hill ed. Lives of the English Poets III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), p. 255.

[41] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 65.

[42] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 62.

[43] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 43, p. 37.

[44] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 37-38, p. 51.

[45] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 41, p. 53.

[46] Fifty years after D'Alembert, Kant champions the Imagination for the role it plays in the aesthetic judgement. Imagination, the faculty that allows for the synthesis of data, presents the understanding (verstand) or the faculty of concepts, with the sensuous form of an object. The sensuous form of an object is what has been synthesized by the imagination without having been resolved into a concept. When the understanding encounters the form, the result is a disinterested pleasure that is prior to conceptualization. This is the aesthetic judgement. The aesthetic judgement is described as a sense of satisfaction that is akin to seeing an end realized. Kant heralds the aesthetic judgement as a bridge between the disparate realms of scientific thinking (analysis) and moral judgement (rationality or freedom). See Immanuel Kant, The Critique Of Judgement trans. J.C. Meredith, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), ss. 16 to 17, pp. 72-80.

[47] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 42.

[48] Encyclopaedia of Diderot, p. 43.

[49] Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Inquiry Into The Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (Menston: Scholar Press Facsimile, 1970), Sec. XVI, pp. 80-82.

[50] Translated passages of Diderot's writings on drama are to be found in Rene Wellek's A History of Modern Criticism - 1750-1950 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), I, 47-61, passim. Hereafter, Modern Criticism.

[51] Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, The Aesthetica and The Reflections on Poetry, trans. K. Aschenbrenner and W. Holther (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), Sec. 7-11, 13-20, pp. 39-45 and pp. 76-81. Hereafter, Aesthetica and Reflections.

[52] Joseph Warton, An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1974), II, 165-168, 172, 173.

[53] Reflections, p. 22.

[54] Wellek Modern Criticism, I, 47.

[55] Lovejoy points to the popularity of 18th century poetry that championed the specific folklore and beliefs of individual nations. See "Romanticisms," p. 250.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HEGELIAN PHILOSOPHY AND THE ROLE OF ART

Spirit and its Freedom

The pivotal term in the Hegelian philosophy, spirit (Geist), cannot be restricted to a single, rigid definition. To say that spirit refers to the religious and intellectual climate of a particular era or culture is accurate, and it would be appropriate to state that spirit figures in any of the legion of rational constructs, and psychological and emotional states to which any individual may lay claim. A multitude of connotations is implicit in the concept of spirit, nonetheless all have their origin in the Hegelian concepts of consciousness and freedom.

Central to the theory of spirit is the contention that it is as a thinking and self-conscious subject that man is distinguished qua man.[1] Philosophy proper must begin with the realm of mind, of thinking, for there is no aspect of human life that is not thoroughly pervaded by the dimension of thought; there is not anything one can touch or view that is

not distinct from the natural standpoint.[2] For Hegel, thinking describes the entire dimension of human subjectivity, and all of human history may be viewed as an evolution of human self-consciousness or spirit - a realization of that which constitutes the essence of being rational.[3]

Subjectivity (self-consciousness) is a universal condition of all human consciousness; human experience is immediately pervaded by a subjective, mental dimension. That everything is for an "I" is an immediate and universal dimension of anything about which one can speak.[4]

The self-conscious subject is the first principle of philosophy. Thinking is self-consciousness. Nothing can escape the subjective dimension in every human experience and thought. Thinking pervades all one's experience and must do so. Everything one encounters is transformed into a c[illegible]tent of self-consciousness. Thought, then, is neither passive nor abstract, it is the self-determining activity of a self-conscious being. Thought is activity by which one makes everything one encounters one's own.[5]

So far, we have seen Hegel make the claim that self-consciousness determines the sphere in which it functions. This capacity for self-determination is explicitly equated with freedom, and freedom is generally regarded as the inherent principle or essence of thought and of spirit.[6] In the Aesthetics, Hegel defines freedom in the following manner: "on its purely form[illegible]ide, [freedom] consists in this, that

in what confronts the subject there is nothing alien and it is not a limitation or a barrier."[7] The theme of freedom appears throughout the various stages of the philosophy of spirit,[8] and it is not too much to say that Hegel's thought is a doctrine of man as free, free insofar as he is able to liberate himself, to make the world his own, "in knowing and willing, in learning and actions."[9] Freedom is the theme of all art, religion and philosophy - they are the attempt to hold this ideal before consciousness. In art, the consciousness of freedom is manifest in images or concrete and displayed universals; in religion, it is translated into spiritual worship, and in philosophy, freedom is conceptually comprehended.

Hegel's philosophy sets out to discern the logos of freedom, to expose its dynamic as a principle of logic, nature and spirit.[10] The true standpoint of philosophy presupposes the freedom of thought. Such a view implies that distinction between consciousness and objectivity - thought and that which is thought about - is an illusion. It is this that constitutes the standpoint of speculative, critical philosophy.

It is Hegel's belief that in thinking, thought sets before itself its own content. The principle of the unity of thought and being is a principle of freedom. This is the freedom of thought to determine its own domain.[11] The Hegelian philosophy of the absolute is a philosophy of identity; it is

based upon the premise of the unity of thought and being. This is the meaning of the statement, "what is reasonable is actual and what is actual is reasonable."[12]

It is critical that we ascertain what is at issue in the statement that there exists a unity of thought and being.[13] In the third subdivision of the (Enc.) Logic, Hegel asserts that the world as a rational order and thought as a rational process are the same thing; any distinction is a distinction made in thought.[14] Such traditional categories as substance, causality and necessity are taken to be categories of thought. They are concepts. There is no such thing as being, reality and appearance, except as conceptual distinctions or as functions of the apprehending act of the "I". What the world is, then, is an objective world, not a world of appearances.[15]

The proper object of thought is taken to be a concept (Begriff), rather than a thing.[16] Thinking is not directed toward something alien to itself. The idea of a unity of thought and being has a significant impact upon the dualism of subjectivity and objectivity. Traditionally, reality is viewed in a dualistic fashion: experience is characterized by a subjective factor and an objective element and the two are fundamentally independent. With Hegel, objectivity is taken to imply the idea of an object which is, in itself, a self-dependent totality. An object is not that which is other to an "I", but rather, it is that which is other to itself and yet contains itself in itself.17 The Hegelian element of

freedom is patently evident here, insofar as reality is taken to be self-dependent.

The Unity of Thought and Being

Any thorough examination of Hegel's treatment of the fundamental unity of thought and being (i.e. the freedom of thought), must consider the dialectical nature of the movement of thought. Of the three movements of thought, the dialectic is seen to be the sceptical movement.[18]

We have seen that Hegel sees thought as self-determining and free activity. In being so, thought determines its own concepts and categories. Thinking is not dependent upon an alien element generating the categories as given forms which thought must somehow "find".[19] In such a scheme, thought could neither know from whence the categories came, nor could it fathom their meaning and ascribe them any necessity. It is Hegel's belief that the true necessity of every rational category resides in the fact that what is other to it is implicit in it. Every category is a demonstration of the unity of thought, being and their difference.[20]

Hegel is acutely aware of the need to recognize that the fundamental unity of thought and being is a mediated unity.[21] When the unity of thought and being is unreflectively viewed as immediate, the profundity of the insight is lost and it becomes a contingent and trivial standpoint.[22]

The Hegelian philosophy represents a systematic recapitulation of the primary truth of the world as a mediated unity or as dialectical. The world and the System are expressions of the triad of immediacy, difference and unity in difference.

The dynamic of the dialectic is such that coming to be and passing away are seen to be moments of a single process. In the thought of change (becoming), the fixity of the opposite poles remains presupposed, nonetheless the elements do translate into each other. The entire Hegelian system moves in this fashion. One commences with a category that immediately breaks down into its opposite, this in turn breaks down, and one arrives at a point where the previous concepts are sublimated (aufgehoben) or set aside by a more concrete and comprehensive view.[3]

It is critical that we consider how art is associated with the dialectic. Art represents an aesthetic apprehension of the unity of thought and being; in art the absolute is represented in the sensuous or the form of nature. Religion, whose form is picture-thinking, dwells on the spiritual order as transcendent to nature. Philosophy deals with a whole. In philosophy, the principle common to spirit and nature - the idea - is given the form of thought. To frame it in a thoroughly dialectical fashion, art focuses upon the simple givenness or the natural element of the absolute. Religion emphasizes the negation of the natural by the spiritual.

Philosophy entertains the concept of unity and difference of nature and spirit.[24]

The Relation of Spirit to Nature

Having outlined the fundamental enterprise of the Hegelian system, I will turn to a consideration of the realm of nature, and its relation to spirit. Only then is it possible to assess adequately Hegel's view of art's recasting of nature.

The Realm of Nature

The Logic, Part One of Hegel's Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, concludes with a consideration of the idea as absolute. From this, the system dialectically turns to a consideration of that which is completely outside of the realm of thought, i.e. nature. In the opening pages of the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel writes, "God reveals Himself in two different ways: as Nature and as Spirit."[25] And again, he states in the following section that, "Nature is the Idea in the form of otherness."[26] The doctrine of the idea asserts that it is only through nature that the idea can come into its own. It is only through nature that spirit can come into being. The idea implies a necessary going out of itself of everything in it as an other. This other - the natural

dimension - is ever present in everything as an expression of the relationship in which it figures as the self-externalization or self-manifestation of the idea. This is to say that nature is forever created. "Nature is the Idea in the form of having been posited by absolute spirit. In this sense we call nature a creation."[27]

The Christian doctrine of creation permeates Hegel's philosophy of nature. As God, the idea exists in a strictly subjective form. Since a subject is only complete in relation to an object, God in his perfection cannot remain a solely other worldly being. He must become at once subjective and objective. The first step towards such an integration lies in God's transformation of Himself into something that is solely objective, i.e. nature. In essence, what this is, is God's negation of Himself as the divine idea.[28] Nature stands to the idea as its product, its self-externalization. It is reason that dictates to nature, not nature to reason.

A contradiction arises when we attempt to discern the essence of nature. Nature is finite being or pure externality, yet it also represents the absolute. It is necessary that God create nature. We are brought back to the unity of thought and being. The relation of God to His other - to the Son - is the theological expression of this fundamental unity.[29]

Insofar as nature is creation, its fundamental principle lies in self-externality.[30] What this means is that nature

owes its existence to the fact that it is the externalization of something that is other to it. Hegel repeatedly emphasizes that what is natural is not external to us or to spirit; it is external to itself. In a sense the philosophy of nature is a reflection of nature upon itself, since man is very much a part of nature. By virtue of the fact that nature figures as the expression of the Idea as external existence, nature is not independent of spirit. It followss that natural objects are always, implicitly, mental objects, insofar as they represent an objectification of the mind of their creator.

Any order that exists in nature is not imputed to it by us. Science does not give to nature its laws. Rather, the principles of the natural order (i.e. nature's laws) are the working out of an order through the particulars of nature itself. Nature is an external order dominated by the principle that its order is the expression of an underlying unity. Nature does not simply happen to exist, and to exist in certain structures. Nature is created in a free and divine act. What this implies about nature itself is that it is not free and not self-determining. Nature is a created or caused principle and hence it is characterized by necessity." Nature is bound by its own laws; everywhere nature is confronted by its own barriers and its own self-externality."

The Sublimation of Nature

Hegel conceives spirit as the sublimation or the overcoming, of nature.[33] What freedom is at its most immediate level is a negation of the natural and as such, it is an affirmation of spirit over nature. In the realm of spirit, the focus is upon the return of the idea from its self-alienation in nature to an ultimate existence as self-consciousness. Nature is not wholly other to spirit. It exists as that which is contrary to spirit, and as such it is also spirit's counterpart. The two terms must be grasped simultaneously. In spirit nature exists as ideal. This entails that nature is contained in spirit as a dialectical moment of the higher reality that is spirit.[34]

The most telling evidence of nature's condition as something that must be overcome by spirit can be seen in Hegel's conception of nature as parallel to the middle term in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.[35] Nature figures as the manifest deity which is nonetheless set aside and overcome in the scheme of divine economy. The overcoming of nature is not a discrete event. The overcoming of nature is implicit in the very essence of nature.[36]

At issue in the realm of spirit is how the overcoming of nature that is implicit in nature becomes actual in man. The movement from the philc ophy of nature to the philosophy of

spirit begins from the standpoint of man as the supreme creation or product of nature. Man possesses the potentiality for the ultimate sublimation of nature. In man, spirit is fully and completely developed. Man alone is self-conscious and only man is characterized by both a natural finitude and a potentiality to comprehend a world of external truth.

The three stages of spirit, subjective spirit (psychology), objective spirit (praxis) and absolute spirit (spiritual knowledge), stand as successive realizations of the movement to sublimate nature. Only in the realm of the absolute do we fully realize how nature is sublimated in spirit. Absolute spirit must transform nature into the explicitly free.

The Relation of Art to Nature

The doctrine of absolute spirit examines how and why art, religion and philosophy exist as the self-consciousness of freedom. As the three forms are in dialectical relation, so too are the individual phases of each form organically and dialectically linked. As the first movement of absolute spirit and the preview of philosophy, art stands as the initial expression of the absolute in its eternal process of coming to a full realization of itself.[7] As such, art is the first medium by which the self-conscious subject can appreciate his being at once within and apart from nature.

Hegel believes that with worthy art, one apprehends far more than sense imagery. The sense world, the natural, is represented in art so as to allow for an explicit recognition of the idea.[38] Art is the rational structure of the world framed in an image. Aesthetic treatment of the world is always to the end of revealing the idea. It is this reconstitutive feature of art that accounts for its appeal to the knowledge-seeking intellect. The subject's desire for knowledge of the absolute is, in part, a desire for concrete insight into the essence of man. The subject seeks an affirmation of himself as a being who can freely stand over and against nature as an agent capable of ideal action.[39] When art focuses upon the human, it strives to reveal man as an agent. So too in its treatment of the non-human elements of nature, art's intent is to reveal the idea implicit therein.

The aim of art is the representation of the supersensuous, and the achievement of this representation is co-ordinate with the appearance of beauty. In the Aesthetics, Hegel equates artistic beauty with the "ideal,"[40] and defines it as "the Idea in determinate form."[41] As the sensuous presentation of the idea, the beauty of art must be distinguished from the contingent beauty of nature. In contrast to art, the beauty of nature cannot stand as the end-product of a deliberate and focused attempt to create an embodiment of spirit. The beauty of art is beauty consciously produced by man, by self-conscious spirit. True artistic

success entails the artist overcoming the intransigence of the natural materials that he uses. It is in this sense that the artist is said to be a genius.[42] That which, from the outset, stands as an object of higher reality than nature cannot but produce a higher beauty.[43] Art is beautiful because it is reflectively generated by spirit, "...it sets forth only what has been formed in harmony with Spirit."[44] Nature possess beauty merely "as a reflection of the beauty that belongs to Spirit."[45]

Art's fusion of the natural and the spiritual is evidence of the freedom of spirit to provide the means for a recognition of the idea in a medium that is foreign to it. What art demonstrates is nature set free to embody the idea.

The beauty of nature is not free.[46] The importance that the Hegelian view of nature holds for the interpretation of mimesis will become evident in Chapter Four.

The Dialectic of the Three Stages of Art

Notwithstanding the Hegelian system's universal statement of art as an entity more spiritually developed than external reality, attention must be brought to the fact that many of the Berlin lectures were devoted to an examination of art's specific forms. For Hegel the various art forms - what are today known as "mediums" - are logically subsumed under three dialectical stages of artistic development. Such a treatment

bears witness to the Hegelian concept of art as a dialectical and dynamic process by which increasingly adequate embodiments of the idea are generated. It is to these specific stages of art that our attention must now turn.

The symbolic, classical and romantic stages of art typify the dialectical progression of the idea. The transition of one stage into another is a necessary movement.[47] No single stage would exist if not for its relation to that which it precedes and follows; the various phases of art's overall development and history are organically related. This speculative outlook bears a considerable influence upon Hegel's treatment of the art world.

As noted by C. Karelis in his prefatory essay to Hegel's Introduction to the Aesthetics. "...an empirical method [of aesthetics] . . . arranges works in historical sequence and tries to grasp the essence of art by abstracting common features..."[48] In contrast, the approach of the Aesthetics is primarily logical and systematic, and it is only derivatively historical in its focus. Systematic and historical approaches, although parallel, need to be distinguished.[49]

What must be called to mind in order to understand the essence of the three stages of art is that the initial stage must give way to a second stage. The third stage or synthetic term of the dialectic, is more advanced than the two phases undergoing negation and eventual synthesis. Nonetheless, the third stage only exists as the transformation of the second.

One understands the attributes of a particular phase in reference to its antecedent; the excellence of a particular art form is due to its overcoming of the inadequacies of that which precedes it.

Symbolic Art

Art's progressive disclosure of absolute truth coincides with a progressive acquisition of insight into the idea. Major modifications to man's conception of the absolute conclude with significant qualifications being made to the existing aesthetic order. Hegel feels that primitive art is largely inept in its portrayal of the absolute because early man's idea of the absolute is vague and abstract.[50] As one commentator notes of the earliest artists, "they struggle to find the proper way of expressing a conception that their age can only barely intuit."[51] Ambiguity and misrendering of the absolute is a result of the symbolic age's inability to grasp the relation of spirit to nature.[52] The symbolic artist is ignorant of the fundamental freedom by which spirit exists in distinction from nature.

Symbolic art exists as the initial interpretation of religious consciousness. When man begins to be conscious of both his separation from nature and nature's existence as the expression of some pervasive but unknown spiritual meaning, then art appears as the attempt to render this consciousness

objective.[53] However, it is precisely because of early man's ignorance of the nature of that which lies behind external reality that the first artistic expressions of the divine are inadequate. Symbol (natural form) and that which is to be symbolized (spiritual meaning), are not adequately distinguished. Hence, art either does little else than copy external reality,[54] or else it figures as conceptually unlimited - and hence fantastic - expression of an unknown content.[55] Temporally, symbolic art is the art of the pre-classical East. Hegel especially associates symbolic art with Egyptian architecture.

Symbolic art is problematic because it is essentially ambiguous. The ambiguity stems from the immediacy of the fusion of natural form with ideal content. Since there is no distinction of form and content, the universal principle (spirit) appears as fragmented, and it is confused with natural and par ·ılar meaning. The spiritual meaning of symbolic art is never explicit, because it is always buried or hidden in the artifact. Ambiguity is evident in the age's inability to distinguish the ideal meaning from the immediate natural object and its immediate and natural significance. In symbolic art, spiritual meaning remains in immediate, undifferentiated fusion with contingent form.

Classical Art

When the realization is reached that an age's comprehension of the idea is inadequate, then artistic shortcomings can be overcome. The classical stage of art stands as a negation of the symbolic stage because it overcomes the dominant ambiguity of the earlier phase. Chronologically, classical art is the art of Greek antiquity. The Greek artist clearly recognizes that there is a distinction between artistic meaning and shape, and in this recognition he possesses a freedom that permits him to seek an appropriateness of shape to meaning. Symbolism does not reflect such freedom. Symbolic art is such that meaning remains immediately fused with form.

Classical art overcomes the ambiguity of the symbolic stage's form-content fusion in two ways. First, a definite conception of spirituality exists for the classical artist to embody. This is a result of advances in the philosophical activity of the Age.[56] Secondly, form-content ambiguity is overcome by way of a recognition that the human figure is alone adequate to give external embodiment to the Age's conception of divinity.[57] The symbolic artist is plagued by the inability to isolate a concrete entity capable of indicating adequately and solely the presence of spiritual meaning in the world. On the other hand, the classical artist

discerns the human form as adequate to the task of expressing spirit. Sculpture is the pre-eminent art form of the classical age; sculpture is able to rectify the helplessness of symbolic art to provide insight into spirit.

The elevation of sculpture to the apex of art is based on the realization that in sculpture, external form does not retain any independence over and above its relation to the meaning it expresses. Sculpture is the most beautiful art form: "nothing can be or become more beautiful."[88] It is necessary to elaborate on Hegel's concept of beautiful art. Hegel sees beauty as the adequate unity of the natural and the spiritual.[89] This is what constitutes a true aesthetic object, and such beauty was only fully realized in Greek art.[90] Whereas, "beautiful" is usually seen to apply as a standard for all art, Hegel uses the term in a very specific way within the range of aesthetic forms. For example, romantic and symbolic art art not strictly speaking, "beautiful art."[91]

In sculpture, that which is portrayed and that which portrays, achieve a unity more complete than that which is found in any other art form; there is a complete and conscious interpenetration of meaning and shape.

Although exalted in beauty, classical art occasions its own downfall. The perfect unity of content and form that is evident in classical art naturally results in a greater attainment of spiritual insight than would otherwise occur. There is a progressively greater focus on the spiritual

content itself until it becomes the primary focus. The result is that man begins to regard the plasticity of classical art as being inadequate.[2] Intellectual and emotional features of man cannot be expressed in an art form the beauty of which is predominantly formal.[3]

Classical art dictates that the human form is alone adequate, yet clearly this tends toward the reduction of the spiritual to the human. Classical art implies a potential submerging of spiritual content in the form of the human. Viewed in such a light, symbolic art may even be said to be more spiritual - if only in an abstract way - than classical art.[4] This points to a critical and inherent inadequacy, not only in classical art, but in art itself, even in its most advanced stage.

Hegel stresses that the spiritual cannot be adequately expressed in the material, yet it is not inconsistent to say that classical art remains nonetheless paradigmatic of the aesthetic enterprise to figure the spiritual sensuously. However, this is precisely the limit of classical art, since in it the spiritual has reality only in the idealized human form.

Romantic Art

Romantic art stands as the synthetic stage of art's dialectical progression, and as such, it is most free. As the

art of the Christian West, romantic art includes painting, music and poetry. Romantic art is predominantly characterized by an eschewal of physical form as a means of insight into spirituality. Obviously, the romantic art of painting continues to pay need to external form. However, romantic art presents us with introspective image of man's psychological and emotional character. Romantic art stands as the artistic recapitulation of the Christian belief in man as self-conscious spirit that is present in the actual world.[65]

That which is the focus of romantic art cannot be expressed by architecture and sculpture. There is no three-dimensional form adequate to the romantic enterprise. In its endeavour to externalize the divine element of man, the romantic art of painting is superior to sculpture. Painting has the capacity to represent both concrete action and emotion.[66] In this respect, painting is the first art form capable of the representation of the dynamic and variegated life of man gua spirit.[67] However, as with other visual art forms, painting is limited by its material nature. In painting, the portrayal of psychological states is dependent upon such contingencies as the artist's execution of facial expression. Similarly, painting's representation of action is incomplete. Painting is incapable of the depiction of a sequence of events.[68] As an essentially static art form, painting can do no more than imply the presence of spiritual reality.

Music sets aside many of the restrictions that impede the visual arts. The inherent nature of music is such that its sensuous form, sound, stands free of external shape. In other words, music does not depend on a natural body for its communication of an idea."[69] Hence, music is capable of the representation of a wealth of aspects of the inner life of man.

Poetry figures as the sole art form capable of a significant advance beyond music. The form of poetry is language, and for Hegel, this asserts poetry's status as a liberated art form. Poetry is the culmination of romantic art because it is romantic art's most free and versatile formulation. Poetry stands as the first instance of artistic activity capable of explicit and direct treatment of the absolute as it exists in relation to man.[70] Poetry is the pre-eminent art form for the expression of the relation of man to God. Poetry can extend its reach in infinite directions. Poetry can portray a multitude of facets of subjective spirit. Poetry is capable of a communication of complexities and subtleties that elude the plastic arts. Poetry expresses concrete human action, ideas, character and emotion. In the highest form of poetry, drama, human action is directly and immediately portrayed so as to allow us to recognize the action's implicit ideality. Spiritual truth can be deduced from a carefully wrought, teleological presentation of events.[71]

As essentially non-material in form, poetry is for Hegel "incompatible with the original conception of art, with the result that [it] runs the risk of losing itself in a transition from the region of sense into that of the spirit."[2] Poetry ranks above the other arts in that it represents aesthetically the truth of spirit, which must include explicitly the significance that the spiritual is not identical with the sensuous. Poetry expresses the cognition that the spiritual transcends sensuous embodiment.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused on various aspects of the freedom of spirit in its relation to nature. Nature has been seen to be the self-externalization of the idea and an act of creation that is characterized by necessity. Spirit stands as the sublimation of nature and man stands to nature in a relation of a self-conscious detachment. Art is the spiritualization of nature. Only in art can the natural stand as a valid cognition of the absolute.

The focus of the fourth chapter will be Hegel's textual treatment of the theory of mimesis. His treatment will be seen to be greatly influenced by his view of nature and his view of art as spirit in the guise of nature.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

[1] Hegel's Philosophy of Mind, being Part Three of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), trans. by William Wallace, together with the Zusatze in Boumann's text (1845), trans. by F.B.A. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), s. 381 Zusatz. Hereafter, PM.

[2] Hegel's Logic, being Part One of the Encycolopedia of the Philosophical Science (1830), trans. W. Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), ss. 2, 5 and 12. Hereafter, (Enc.) Logic.

[3] PM, s. 381 Zusatz.

[4] Loc. cit.

[5] (Enc.) Logic, ss. 20-23. Note that Hegel maintains that the "I" is both the subject and the medium of thinking. In s. 20, Hegel points out that when one says "I", he intends to mean himself in his existential reality. However, upon reflection, one cannot intend one's own particularity, since all minds are capable of the attempt to do so. Hence, the self-referential act is also a universal standpoint. The standpoint of subjectivity is itself a link between particularity and universal experience.

[6] (Enc.) Logic, ss. 23-24. See also PM, s. 382 Zusatz.

[7] G.W.F. Hegel, Aesthetics - Lectures On Fine Art, 2 vols, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), I, p. 97. Hereafter, LFA.

[8] For example, In the realm of objective spirit - the realm of praxis - there is the striving, on a moral and political level, to produce an order or system of freedom consistent with the rational freedom of man. Ultimately, however, human laws and institutions are seen to be inadequate embodiments of freedom. What is required is "a still higher confirmation and sanction" than that which can be offered in the dictates of a particular, individual and finite state. (LFA I, p. 99).

[9] LFA I, p. 98. The term "Idealism" refers to this free making of the world by spirit.

[10] Hegel sees logic as the activity by which thinking subjectivity turns its focus inward, with a view to discerning the categories or forms which inhere in thought itself. See (Enc.) Logic, s. 19 ff. and s. 24.

[11] In the note to s. 115 of the Logic, Hegel writes, "Identity, as self-consciousness, is what distinguishes man from nature, particularly from the brutes which never reach the point of comprehending themselves as 'I', that is, our self-contained unity . . . . In connection with thought, ... the main thing is...true Identity, which contains Being and its characteristics ideally transfigured in it."

[12] (Enc.) Logic, s. 6.

[13] One of Hegel's many statements of this identity is to be found in the Zusatz to s. 381 and s. 414 of PM. See also (Enc.) Logic, s. 163 Zusatz.

[14] Loc. cit.

[15] Hegel credits Kant with having revolutionized metaphysics in his insistence that it is reason which dictates to nature, and not vice-versa. The universal form of things is to be found in the subjective act of consciousness. Kant properly identifies thinking as the freedom of self-consciousness, and yet, he also postulates the noumenal world. For Hegel, thinking cannot be free when something exists over against it. Such a dualism leads to the conclusion that it is impossible to know truth. See Zusatz to ss. 40, 45 and 60 of the (Enc.) Logic.

[16] For Hegel, the concept refers to a thing only insofar as it is mediated by, or raised into, thought. A Hegelian concept of x neither refers to a mere psychological image of x, nor does it refer to "a mere sum of features common to several things" ((Enc.) Logic s. 163). Rather, the concept of x is a comprehension of x - it is what x is in itself. Moreover, since it is brought forth as a pure act of mind, the concept possesses its own inherent logic. Once again, we are made aware of the sheer independence of spirit.

[17] (Enc.) Logic ss. 193-194. Hegel notes here that the unity of thought and being - subject and object - is the question at hand in the ontological Argument.

[18] The other two movements of thought are abstraction and speculation. See (Enc.) Logic ss. 81-83.

[19] In the (Enc.) Logic, Hegel criticizes the categories of thought ascribed to both the metaphysical and the critical standpoints.

[20] In the (Enc.) Logic's "Doctrine of Being", the dialectic of being, nothing and becoming is put forth as the first figure of the movement of thought. The concept of being is the primary abstraction of thought - it is simple and

indeterminate immediacy. In the attempt to formulate what being means, it becomes evident that it is completely without content, and hence, it is identical to the thought of nothing (ss. 86-87). While a distinction between being and nothing must be recognized, it is not possible to think the one without passing into the other. What is totally without determination is the same whether it is said that it is or it is not. The movement from the thought of being to that of nothing is not one of simple identity, however, since one can at least intend a distinction. Hence, one arrives at the mediating concept of becoming (Change). Becoming describes the transition, the collapse, of being into nothing and nothing into being. Becoming represents the first instance of the dialectical movement of thought (s. 88). The movement of being to nothing is the abstract distinction of Verstand. Becoming is the dialectical movement of negative reason. Dasein is the first truth of speculative thought.

[31] (Enc.) Logic, ss. 61-66. See also the entire "Third Attitude of Thought to Objectivity: Immediate or Intuitive Knowledge" (ss. 61-78).

[32] Worse still is the tendency to lapse into some of vague mysticism whereby anything can be said to exist as absolute. Even Romanticism, with its creed that the unity of thought and being is somehow mediated by feeling, sustains an element of ambiguity. A mere assertion of the identity of self-consciousness and reality has no determinate meaning. It figures as an empty identity, or it can possess any arbitrary content. Ultimately, the assertion is meaningless.

[33] The previous notions are nonetheless contained in the third formulation; they exist in it as ideal moments.

[34] One reference to the three moments of absolute spirit can be found in the PM, s. 572.

[35] Hegel's Philosophy of Nature, being Part Two of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830), trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), Zusatz to s. 246, Remark. Hereafter, PN.

[36] PN, s. 247 Zusatz.

[37] Loc. cit. See Also LFA I, p. 92.

[38] To frame it in non-theological terms, the positing of nature represents the movement of thought into otherness. It is the realization of the second movement of the dialectic.

[39] Much of modern philosophy has been the attempt to reduce the truths of Christianity to the realm of thought.

[30] PN, s. 247.

[31] Hegel writes, "Since the inner being of Nature is none other than the universal, then in our thoughts of this inner being we are at home with ourselves." Here, Hegel is contrasting the theoretical and the speculative approaches to nature (PN, Zusatz to s. 246, Remark).

[32] PN, s. 248. See also Remark and Zusatz to the same. Cf. PM, s. 381 Zusatz.

[33] (Enc.) Logic, s. 96 Zusatz. See also PN, s. 247 Zusatz.

[34] PM, s. 381 Zusatz.

[35] PN, s. 247 Zusatz.

[36] As nature progressively unfolds (the inanimate - vegetative life - animal life - man), each stage represents the externality of nature being overcome. In the organism, for example, externality is sublimated by individuality. That teleology (life) exists in nature is evidence of the movement of the idea. See PM, s. 381 Zusatz. See also PN, s. 337 Zusatz.

[37] The nature of the process is always assumed to be eternal rather than historical.

[38] As J. Kaminsky notes of art's material form and spiritual content, "It is Hegel's belief that it is of the very essence of knowledge to go from the observable to the non-observable, from the immediate to the mediate, from the explicit to the implicit." See Kaminsky's work, Hegel on Art - An Interpretation of Hegels Aesthetics (New York: Comet Press, 1962), p. 8. Hereafter, Hegel on Art.

[39] LFA I, p. 93.

[40] LFA II, p. 613.

[41] LFA I, p. 106. In the PM, Hegel writes: "Beautiful art has for its condition the self-consciousness of the free spirit - the consciousness that compared with it the natural and sensuous has no standing of its own: art makes the natural wholly into the mere expression of spirit, which is thus the inner form that gives utterance to itself alone." (s. 562).

[42] LFA II, p. 775.

[43] LFA I, p. 2.

[44] LFA I, p. 29. Of course, Hegel is idealizing art here in that he is referring to the highest artistic achievements.

[45] LFA I, p. 2.

[46] Hegel on Art, p. 68. In his opening remarks to the chapter of the classical stage of art, Kaminsky observes that the eminence of mind over nature is at issue in many of the Greek myths. Kaminsky writes: "Greek mythology regarded the change of men into flowers or other forms of nature as a misfortune and a humiliation . . . . Not nature, but man...(was seen to be)...the best vehicle for the commands of the Absolute."

[47] LFA I, p. 22.

[48] Hegels Introduction to Aesthetics, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. xxxviii. Karelis's statement refers to the Hegelian critique in LFA I, p. 21.

[49] As noted in the chapter section entitled, "The Unity of Thought and Being," speculative philosophy embarks from the standpoint of the freedom of thought. The aim of speculative thinking is to organize everything as a self-determining whole, and thus philosophy, including aesthetics, is by nature systematic.

[50] LFA I, pp. 76-77.

[51] Hegel on Art, p. 43. Kaminsky draws attention to the fact that Hegel's conception of art is not over and beyond history. It is not at odds with the Hegelian system to speak of a cultural and historical progression of art. However, with regard to the progressive nature of art's adequacy to embody the idea, the historical outlook must be purged of any element of contingency or external necessity. It must be emphasized that the primary movement of the idea is logical. The problem of the interrelation of historical development and logical dialectic is a universal problem in the understanding of Hegel's philosophy. The Phenomenology of Mind stands as the prime example.

[52] PM, s. 562. See also LFA I, pp. 301-302.

[53] LFA I, p. 315.

[54] In this case, Hegel observes that, "individual things in concrete reality are...in their sensuous existence...directly regarded as divine manifestations." (LFA I, p. 338).

[55] LFA I, pp. 336-338.

[56] During the Greek age, hitherto unparalleled advances in philosophy led to the formulation of explicit conceptions of the relation of nature to that which lies behind it. The absolute is articulately defined in the Greek order of gods. In turn, Greek artists were able to produce superlative plastic representations of the absolute. In its highest phases, Greek art reflects the Platonic and Aristotleian philosophies of man qua participation in spiritual truth. The unity of meaning and shape achieved by Greek art presupposes the classical age having overcome the symbolic age's sense of the alien character of spiritual meaning.

[57] LFA I, p. 78.

[58] LFA I, p. 517.

[59] LFA I, p. 95 and p. 101.

[60] LFA I, p. 517.

[61] LFA I, p. 334, p. 340, p. 526 and p. 574.

[62] LFA I, p. 442, pp. 494-496. This would apply as equally to spectators as to artists.

[63] LFA II, pp. 705-706.

[64] This is especially true once classical art had degenerated into Roman statuary.

[65] LFA I, pp. 505-506.

[66] LFA I, p. 546. See also LFA II, p. 763 and pp. 788-789.

[67] LFA II, p. 815.

[68] LFA II, p. 854.

[69] LFA II, pp. 890-891.

[70] LFA I, p. 331.

[71] LFA II, p. 983.

[72] LFA II, p. 968.

CHAPTER FOUR

HEGEL AND MIMESIS

Introduction

"Those arts which produce images are the imitative arts, and imitation may be said to be the presentation of the form of a particular thing in a medium other than its original matter."[1] This formulation of mimesis, sums up the approach to artistic activity that was examined in sections of Chapter Two, and to which Hegel takes exception. Hegel views mimesis as fundamentally restricted by its very nature; imitation is seen to be confined to the communication and understanding of particulars. In its attempt to represent the supersensuous by means of a mirroring of material reality, imitation is viewed as an overly ambitious enterprise.

This chapter examines the predominantly negative treatment of mimesis found in the Introduction to Hegel's Berlin Lectures and it interprets the analysis in light of the Hegelian philosophy. Such a critical approach will prove to be fruitful since the brevity of the textual treatment of

mimesis poses difficulties.[2] Moreover, it is a characteristic of the Lectures that much of Hegel's philosophy is assumed rather than stated. As a result of this, many crucial passages of the Introduction are susceptible to being read as an unfocused and somewhat vitriolic attack upon mimetic theory. The reader of the Introduction is given no indication of the extent of Hegel's familiarity with the ongoing debate concerning mimesis. No doubt Hegel had read Plato and Aristotle, and if one considers the profound scope of his knowledge of art history and criticism, it seems likely that he had encountered the neoclassical statements of imitation that figured in the two centuries preceding his own. It is clear, however, that Hegel is determined to distance himself from any perspective of mimesis whereby the representation of external and material aspects of reality is presumed to be the primary aim of art.

The discussion begins with an examination of the ideal as an anti-mimetic construct. This is followed by a consideration of the implicit (i.e. systematic) and explicit (i.e. textual) grounds by which Hegel dismisses much of the mimetic tradition.

The Hegelian Ideal As Anti-Mimetic

Hegel views imitation as being in fundamental opposition to the ideal. The ideal exists as the fusion of spiritual

content with natural form. The primary characteristic of the ideal is that it is the sensuous expression of the Absolute.[3] Artistic beauty is geist contemplating geist in an object.[4] The ideal is foremost a reflection of that which is the divine basis of all reality, whether that reality be self-conscious or natural and determined. In Hegelian aesthetics, the relationship of the work of art to nature must always be of secondary importance when compared with its essential and necessary relation to an order of ideal truth. The primary aim of artistic representation is the conscious expression of geist - the spiritualization of nature. Hegel regards mimesis as being incapable of yielding the ideal. The beholder of imitative representations encounters crude reproductions of particular aspects of external reality. In lieu of the mechanical reproduction of empirical phenomena that are not free - and hence not beautiful - the true artist is intent upon materially expressing the Idea. It is in the form of beauty that this rational intention of the artist is recognized by the observer.

Hegelian art stands as a transformation of nature, a transformation which renders the freedom of geist into material form. As such, art cannot admit of a static and formal imitation of nature. It is from this standpoint that Hegel's dismissal of mimesis must be viewed.

When Hegel states that the ideal is a reflection of the Idea, he means that art's beauty originates, or proceeds from,

the Idea rather than from nature.[5] The artist strives to express that of which external reality is a mere sign. In doing so, the artist cannot offer static reproductions of that which the Idealist regards as appearance. Hegel sees imitative representation as futile mimicry of what is in itself external, determined and characterized by an absence of self-consciousness. Art's aim is to disclose the Idea, and any representation of nature must be a means to this end.

As ideal, art addresses geist in a direct fashion. It is a marked feature of the Introduction of the Lectures that Hegel regards art as cognitive, as self-consciousness directed toward self-consciousness. The worthy artist, always conscious of the dynamic and pervasive nature of geist, strives to produce something addressed to reason: something that is known, rather than something that is simply seen or felt. In part, this is what is implied in the Hegelian doctrine that art exists as a mediation between sheer externality and the truth of thought. Art lies far beyond any photographic representation of the particular and sensible. For Hegel, art is always essentially rational.[6] What this means is that art is a testimony to the freedom of subjectivity (thinking) to shape nature into products of its own.[7] Art is a way of comprehending the world and its comprehension is not restricted by the way in which the natural order exists. The artist creates his "own" entities, and yet these entities can become "mine". Fine art is, "the

first reconciling middle term between pure thought and what is merely external, sensuous and transient, between nature and finite reality and the infinite freedom of conceptual thinking."

Clearly, then, Hegel's philosophy precludes the acceptance into his System of any interpretation of mimesis as a process of simply copying external and unfree nature. In later sections of the chapter, it will be shown that Hegel often regards imitation and copying as interchangeable terms.

The Problematic Nature of Mimesis: Unresolved Dualism

Insofar as Hegel deems art to be a moment of the absolute, art's relation to truth is well demonstrated. When Hegel states that art is a legitimate and necessary stage of the dialectic of geist, he is speaking of art defined qua ideal. Whereas the ideal approximates a complete interpenetration of spiritual content and material form, Hegel would criticize mimetic representation because of the unresolved dualism inherent in the relation of imitated object and likeness. By definition, mimesis bases artistic activity in a paradigm or external model which the artwork reveals or portrays. The most telling evidence of the inadequacy of imitation would be seen by Hegel to lie in the fact that a mimetic representation is derivative; it figures as a

secondary term in a relation between something that is and something made to look like it. Hegel undoubtedly shares Plato's conception of mimesis that is found in Book X of the Republic. Mimesis is seen to be such that "it attains only a small part of [its] object, and the part it attains is not the object itself but an image."[9] It is evident that grounds exist for a dismissal of mimesis specifically from an idealist's point of view.

When Hegel directs his argument toward the dichotomy that figures in mimetic representation, he does so to stress the ontological insignificance of imitative art. This perspective is anticipated by the attitude toward unity and unresolved dualism reiterated throughout the three parts of the Encyclopaedia, and especially in the Logic. It is the nature of the dialectic that we embark from a standpoint of dualism, only to find that this opposition must be overcome. Hegel constantly strives to unite the two terms of any unresolved dualism. For example, the Idea is viewed to be the unity of subject and object; thought and reality are logically the same. Hegel regards unresolved dualism as leading to the conclusion that it is impossible to know the truth.[10] Any form of knowledge that ultimately does not ground a dualism in a unity fails to achieve genuine knowledge. Imitation would be inadmissible in Hegel's aesthetic as far as it presupposes a permanent disjunction of original and likeness.

Hegel would view the mimetic dualism as forever relegating art to a status secondary to the nature it imitates. For Hegel, it fixes art in an intolerable relation whereby it possesses no integrity or independence above and beyond its existence as an image of something external to itself. Mimesis would be rejected because it elevates nature to a position whereby it is prior to and transcendent of the work of art. For Hegel, genuine art cannot be essentially derivative, and above all it cannot be so in relation to that which geist strives to overcome (i.e. nature). For Hegel, imitation places art in the shadow of a non-artistic reality. The mimetic image owes its existence to the paradigm, but the paradigm remains existentially indifferent to the existence of the image. This subordination is decidedly opposed to the Hegelian ideal.

Hegel defines the ideal as the coalescence of spiritual content and material form and , as such, neither of the two elements can be abstracted from the other without risk of sacrifice of the ideal itself. Hegel requires that art "use the given forms of nature with a significance which art [itself] must divine and possess."[11] The ideal stands as an unequivocal assertion of the absolute autonomy of geist in its form as art. The ideal is an assertion of the certainty that unresolved dualism is to be transcended.

Insofar as mimesis defines art in terms of something outside itself, it stands as an inversion of the Hegelian

order. Hegel regards art's imitation of nature as an upending of the speculative viewpoint that true ontology proceeds from thought to reality rather than from reality to thought. The latter approach is assumed to be incapable of yielding anything more than "description and that classification of things that stems from connections made only by understanding [Verstand]."[12] A Hegelian critique of mimesis would point to imitation as being analogous to art's setting forth from the standpoint of verstand. This clearly contradicts the Hegelian archetype of art as a free moment of the Absolute. Art must be regarded as truly self-grounding.

So far, the chapter has examined the implicit basis for Hegel's repudiation of mimesis. It is to the text of the introduction to the Lectures and its section entitled, "The Aim of Art" that our attention must now turn.

The Treatment of Mimesis in "The Aim of Art"

One of the key features in the opening statements of "The Aim of Art" is the emphasis Hegel places on the catholicity of belief that art is mimetically based. So he writes:

> the principle of the imitation of nature...[is] a prevalent idea...commonly thought...[to constitute] the end of art.[13]

It is from this vantage point that Hegel first sounds the anti-mimetic themes that reoccur throughout the section. The case against mimesis commences from a standpoint of

scepticism. While maintaining that such grounds cannot exist, Hegel embarks on a deliberate search for reasonable grounds for the acceptance of mimesis as the end of art. The specific context in which the critique of imitation occurs is one in which Hegel presents himself as considering the possibility that mimesis does figure as the essence of art. Then, upon critical examination of what the position entails, he concludes that imitation cannot yield true art.

Immediately, mimesis is defined in the following manner.

> Imitation, as facility in copying natural forms just as they are, in a way that corresponds to them completely, is supposed to constitute the essential end and aim of art, and the success of this portrayal in correspondence with nature is supposed to afford complete satisfaction.[14]

In light of the all-encompassing nature of Hegel's repudiation of mimesis, no redeeming feature can be found - either in favour of content or form - that can reinstate mimetic representation. On the grounds that it merely strives to do no more than copy nature with minute accuracy the external characteristic of the model, Hegel categorically dismisses imitation. Mimesis is taken to be misguided in terms of both that which it sets out to represent (i.e. nature) and the naturalistic means by which such representation is carried out.

> The imitation of nature completely dissolves into the presentation of a portrait, whether in plastic art, painting or descriptive poetry . . . [It is] an intentional approach to the contingency of immediate existence, which, taken by itself, is unbeautiful and prosaic.[15]

To a similar end, Hegel's statement that "mimesis is supposed to afford complete satisfaction", implies that the pleasure that mimesis affords is not comparable to that which follows from the presentation of the Idea.[16] Hegel points out that the pleasure one takes in hearing the accurate imitation of a bird's song soon wanes.[17] This reiterates Hegel's assertion that art's domain should extend beyond the mind's comparison of likeness to object. Such comparison serves only to reinforce empirical perceptions.

To the extent that imitation is viewed as mimicry, Hegel's argument against the mechanical nature of mimetic representation is reinforced by a variety of considerations. Of the "facility in copying natural forms just as they are," Hegel notes the following:

> This definition contains, prima facie, only the purely formal aim that whatever exists already in the external world, and the manner in which it exists there, is now to be made over again as a copy, as well as man can do with the means at his disposal.[18]

Passages of this sort are characteristic of many sections of "The Aim of Art", and they illustrate Hegel's conviction that imitation stands as the painstaking - yet fruitless - repetition of the external form of prosaic reality. Art's true objective is seen by Hegel to be the presentation of the truth of geist, and in fact, this truth is presented to us in the form of particular things and events. However, art must not function as a simple extension or augmentation of one's

immediate experience of the world.[19] Because that which art imitates is already immediately present to us, mimesis cannot significantly add anything to it. In Hegelian terms, mimetic art is lacking its own, specific spiritual content. Imitation deems the formal aspect of representation to be pre-eminent over that which ought to be prior.

In view of Hegel's estimation of the dynamic quality of true artistic representation, an attempt in art to follow the example of nature in a singular and rigid manner might well be labelled artistic inertia. Hegel refers to mimesis as being activity that is "superfluous."[20] In both characterizations, inertial and superfluous, the manner in which external nature is treated by the artist and the perceived by art's observers is such that it is unaltered from that of the empirical consciousness. We are brought back to the attitude of verstand, an attitude that is foreign to the Hegelian conception of art as the ideal.

The Insignificance of Mimetic Representation

Our earlier discussion of Hegel's views concerning nature and art lead us to expect him to treat mimesis as a trivial and meaningless undertaking. This expectation receives support in those passages that deal with the fundamental nature of the mimetic process. Immediately after his statement that imitative art is redundant, Hegel further

claims that such artistic activity is also presumptuous. Imitation, he says, is akin to "a worm trying to crawl after an elephant."[21] Hegel argues the point in the following way.

> Mimesis falls far short of nature. For art is restricted in its means of portrayal, and can only produce one-sided deceptions, for example a pure appearance of reality for one sense only, and in fact, if it abides by the formal aim of mere imitation, it provides not the reality of life but only a pretence of life.[22]

Two points are of interest here. First, Hegel has brought us back to the idea that imitative art is essentially derivative and characterized by an unresolved dualism. Imitative art is powerless to produce anything more than visually vivid and anatomically correct reproductions of external models. The second consideration is closely aligned to the first, and it focuses on the fact that that which is produced by imitation does not so much as possess the utility and integrity of the original, natural object. The imitative representation is neither a work of nature nor a work of art.[23]

Ultimately, Hegel aligns himself with the essentially Platonic stand that imitation yields counterfeit entities or superficial likenesses that "provide not the reality of life but only a pretence of life."[24] In attempting to copy nature, mimetic art falls short of nature because it is incapable of reproducing all of the diverse aspects of the selected natural object. The artistic representation is not adequate to its object, and a fundamental alienation of content and form

prevails. Mimesis, then, is a "conjuring trick," capable of producing no more than essentially facile descriptions of "something like nature."[25]

In both Platonic and Hegelian philosophy, it is held that "to understand the image we must know the reality; but to know the reality, we must dispose of the images."[26] Such is the case whether the reality in question is the realm of appearance that is so often construed to be the real world, or the truth of geist. Images - and especially copies - are ultimately dispensable.[27] In imitation, appearance is put in place of appearance; nature itself is appearance and is an other to geist. It is with this in mind that Hegel twice refers to mimetic art as "mere imitation."[28] Art should not attempt to rival reality. Precisely because a work of art can be distinguished from nature, it is seen to be a product of geist.[29] When art strives to slavishly follow nature, it is abrogating the inherent principle of self-determination that is seen to permeate geist at its every level. Viewed as naturalistic copying, imitation stands far from Hegel's conception of true art.

To judge from "The Aim of Art", Hegel was deeply impressed with the strength of some of the established, historical claims against imitative art. Within the space of a single page, Hegel alludes to mimesis 1) as an act of copying external nature, 2) as nothing more than portraiture or pictorial representation, 3) as an attempt to dupe the

observer into believing representation is reality, and 4) as the artful but tedious repetition of mundane and empirical detail.[30] To support his claims, Hegel cites from antiquity the notorious account of the deceptive grapes of Xeuxis, and he reiterates the point with examples from African, Turkish, and modern German works.[31] It is evident from the tone of this section of the text that Hegel does not truly believe that imitative art succeeds in deceiving us that art is reality. Nonetheless he firmly maintains that the careful approximation of empirical reality - the production of a second nature - cannot be seen to be the legitimate end of artistic creation. Hegel summarizes his view of imitation:

> Instead of praising works of art because they have deceived even doves and monkeys, we should just precisely censure those who think of exalting a work of art by predicating so miserable an effect as this as its highest and supreme quality.[32]

Naturalistic imitation is seen to be destructive to art's essential feature of appealing to contemplation. When in art reality is simply re-presented, the conquest of geist over matter is not asserted. In its relation to the immediate, there must be a certain aesthetic distance that characterizes art. Otherwise, we are unable to see beyond the finite.

Further Rejections of Mimesis

It has been shown that an inherent feature of mimesis is the disjunction of the representing and represented object.

This dualism prevails irrespective of any judgement concerning the value of mimetic representation. If mimesis is taken to be the defining principle of artistic activity, then the representing object (i.e. the image) is held in higher esteem than that which is represented (i.e. nature). With imitation, we are placed at the mercy of a natural object. Yet for Aristotle, mimesis is an activity wherein the object of imitation is supplied by nature, the form of the natural thing or action is imitated, and yet the mimetic product stands as a heightened and universal representation of reality. The imitation is free from any element of contingency or improbability.[33] Whereas one may be misled or confused by a particular object or event, its imitation can function to illuminate reality.

A negative conception of mimesis focuses on the ontological inadequacy and remoteness from truth of that which exists solely as a copy of a given particular. The imitation is a reflection of that which in itself is an other to the realm of truth. As Idealists, both Plato and Hegel adopt this stand, and prior to any reference to imitation that he makes, Hegel anticipates his rejection of mimesis when he stresses that neither by its content, which is universal, nor its form, which is particular, can art exist as a fully adequate revelation or expression of geist. Mimesis itself is challenged because it is viewed as presenting an insurmountable obstacle to the communication of the truth of

the idea. Imitation ultimately communicates both a particular form and a particular content. Nothing is to be gained from the artist simply striving to imitate nature. The fashioning of copies of nature can no more bring forth genuine knowledge than can one's everyday experience of nature and the ordinary world.[34]

Insofar as mimesis is seen to consecrate the particular, Hegel maintains that we might just as well abandon the endeavour and simply observe real things and events. Naturalistic mimesis must be seen to be problematic because it portrays nature in a literal manner, and few natural objects are capable of significantly communicating spiritual truth.

Despite Hegel's predominantly negative view of mimesis, his attitude toward the mimetic relation of representation and object appears at times to waver. Charles Karelis observes that in Hegel's stage of classical art - especially statuary - he admits the possibility of a fully adequate correspondence of natural form and spiritual truth.

> In the lectures [Hegel] occasionally leaves it open whether purification of actual forms [by art] is necessary even for the art whose task is to show [the finest] correspondence [of form to content], namely what he designates "classical art"; perhaps examples of such a correspondence were once available for copying in the real world and had only to be chosen.[35]

Karelis directs our attention to the following passages from the Lectures.

> If [the artist] takes, as a model, nature and its productions, everything just presented to him, it is not because nature has made it so, but because it has made it right; but this "rightness" means something higher than just being there.[36]

> It is superfluous altogether to ask whether in existent reality there are such beautiful and expressive shapes and countenances which art can use immediately as a portrait for representing . . . Of course, you can argue for and against, but it remains a purely empirical question which, as empirical, cannot be settled. For the only way to decide it would be actually to exhibit these existing beauties, and for the Greek gods, for example, this might be a matter of some difficulty...[37]

> This sense for the perfect plasticity of gods and men was pre-eminently at home in Greece. In its poets and orators, historians and philosophers, Greece is not to be understood at its heart unless we bring with us as a key to our comprehension an insight into the ideals of sculpture and unless we consider from the point of view of their plasticity not only the heroic figures in epic and drama, but also the actual statesmen and philosophers.[38]

Despite the differing context and tone of these passages, it is relevant to pose the question of whether Hegel would reject mimesis were it that ideal objects somehow existed naturally and prior to the transformations affected by art. Under such conditions of the Idea being fully immanent in nature, we could dismiss Hegel's criticism of mimesis that censures it for placing us at the mercy of natural - and non-spiritual - objects. Yet if circumstances were such that one need only to choose and copy ideal models in order to yield ideal representations, then once again mimesis could be accused of being a superfluous activity. Once again Hegel could point to imitation's preoccupation with external form

and state that "there is no longer a question of the character of what is supposed to be imitated, but only of the correctness of the imitation."[39]

A similar line of objection is followed in the passages that follow the discussion of the comparative failure of a mimetic likeness. Here, Hegel claims that to maintain that imitation selects the beautiful from among the ugly objects of nature is to introduce a distinction that is derived from a purely subjective estimation not open to adjudication.[40] There is no appropriate objective criterion by which to decide the degree of beauty in the objects of nature.[41] It is individual taste alone which can appreciate the beauty or charm of natural objects. Hegel rejects the idea of the artistic integrity of nature (and especially the 19th century Romantic view of nature itself as art) because of his belief that the principle of freedom is not truly discernible in nature.

The creative imagination of the artist is deemed to be freer and richer than anything in nature. As creative, art undertakes to disengage the truth of geist from the imperfection of the natural world. Art strives to invest geist with a form that is more elevated and pure than nature, and which is created by geist itself.[42] It is to Hegel's anti-mimetic view of art as creativity that our attention must now turn.

As Creation, Art is Opposed to Imitation

The true aim of artistic activity is seen to be the self-articulation of geist. It is in the creative activity of the artist that elements of truth and sensibility can be ideally fused. Geist creates art and geist possesses consciousness of itself and its own development.[43] As ideal - as the unity of imagery and thought - art is a specific mode by which one comes to know and to assimilate reality.[44] Art is a form of mastery over the external world.

Hegel's break from the mimetic tradition entails a rejection of what is seen to be the static nature of imitative art. Art must transform the empirical world; it cannot simply conform to it. For Hegel, the essence of art is that it is creative; art is distinguished from nature by creation. The self-conscious artist is aware of his ability to exercise freedom in the natural realm. He can re-create nature at will. The artist stands as a second creator of the world. Geist is aware of itself as able to create and as being intentionally free from the constraints that govern nature. Nature itself limits freedom, but the artist is free to create according to an idea.[45]

Hegel states that it is "the freedom of production and configurations that we enjoy in the beauty of art."[46] The wellspring of free artistic production is the imagination, "the illustration of spirit itself."[47] Specifically,

imagination (Vorstellung) is seen to be that faculty of mind that stems from sense perception, but which "allows particular ideas to subsist along side one another without being related."[48] In contrast to imagination, thinking "demands and produces dependence of things on one another, reciprocal relations, logical judgements, syllogisms, etc."[49] Clearly, imagination demonstrates freedom in a manner distinct from that of thinking. Furthermore, imagination is distinguished from the faculty of recollection insofar as the former is capable of producing something new; "it allows the universal to emerge on its own account."[50] In describing imagination as the illustration of geist, Hegel is calling attention to art's function as the sensuous appearance of geist, as an appearance which defies the imputation of being a mere copying of nature.

Imagination is seen to be "indispensable for every beautiful production, no matter to what form of art it belongs."[51] Art which results from the free production of imagination occupies a middle ground bridging the truth of thought and "the far-flung conditions and arrangements of the real world."[52] Whereas Hegel dismisses mimesis as being a passive mode of naturalistic representation, imaginative creation is seen to be the sole means by which the freedom of geist can be given an adequate, sensuous form.

Nowhere does Hegel state that there is no interplay between art and nature. Nature provides art its forms, but given externalities do not comprise art's primary focus."

Any attempt to naturalize art overlooks the freedom of creation that Hegel sees to be integral to true artistic production.[54] Hegel does not dismiss all imitative characteristics from artistic activity but only that they are such as to determine the meaning of the work of art.

Art yields its own reality, and Hegel stresses that we must resist approaching it in terms of some external norm. Genuine art strives to overcome any separation or dualism of self-conscious subject and object. This is achieved when works are created in which man recognizes his essential self. In creation, there is an integration of expression and thought.

> The universal need for art is man's rational need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes again his own self . . . . This is the free rationality of man in which all acting and knowing, as well as art too, have their basis and necessary origin.55

The treatment of mimesis that looms large in the Introduction to the Lectures is explicitly hostile toward imitative art.[56] Repeatedly, Hegel points to mimesis as copying; imitation is the mechanical and dreary transcription of a nature that inverts the true order of artistic creation by dictating to art instead of being shaped by it. In light of the rest of the work, it is clear that Hegel is intentionally being one-sided and dogmatic in the early sections of the Lectures. He wishes to emphasize early his point that the copying of nature cannot be held up as the end

of art.[57] Yet in later sections, it is evident that Hegel applauds art's realistic representation of nature. After all, the ideal does represent by means of the forms of nature. However, the ideal differs from blind copying insofar as the ideal is produced under the direction of geist; the ideal is produced under the direction of the artist's conception of the ideal.[58] The artist dictates to nature, nature does not dictate to the artist, yet the artist does have to be a keen observer of nature and he must follow natural forms in his work. In a sense, nature is the artist's teacher.

In the section of the Lectures that deal with early Italian Renaissance painting, Hegel praises the growing trend toward artistic realism.[59] Figures begin to appear less stiff and more life-like and individual. Hegel does not applaud realism for its own sake, but rather as it expresses the discovery of a greater suppleness in nature which the artistic geist is able to make use of in its more exalted apprehension of the ideal content of art.[60] What art demonstrates is nature set free to embody the idea. As the stages of art progress, and insight into the ideal is refined, the intractability of the natural forms that art employs is gradually overcome.[61] Once this has taken place, the artist can afford to be more natural in his representations; there is less chance of a misinterpretation of the artist's intent. Nature is no longer so foreign to the spiritual content that the artist seeks to express in natural form.

> The subject matter itself demanded the naturalness of the way the [human] body appeared, and also the portrayal of specific characters, actions, passions, situations, postures and movements.[2]

Nonetheless, art does not "filch nature"[3] (i.e. provide realistic images) for the sake of anything other than "furnish[ing] us with the things themselves, out of the inner life of mind . . . . the abstraction of the ideal appearance for purely contemplative inspection."[4]

It is in the context of the proper end of realistic interpretation that Hegel so uncompromisingly aligns himself against mimesis in the early pages of the Lectures.

Conclusion

Hegel rejects mimesis because of his view that it relegates art to a dependence upon that which is an other to geist. The mirroring of natural particularities alone cannot qualify as the sensuous representation of the Idea. Insofar as it is seen to do no more than copy nature, mimesis is regarded as an enterprise at once redundant and presumptuous. For Hegel, art does not passively reflect a pre-constituted model. Art brings forth its own originals. Hegel feels that in the identity of spiritual content and sensuous form that is evident in a created work, the unresolved alienation that was seen to prevail between mimetic image and model is overcome.

In its final chapter, the thesis will return to crucial aspects of Aristotle's defence of mimesis. From this vantage point, we will consider the limits of Hegel's position and look to the possibility of a common ground existing between the Hegelian and Aristotelian standpoints.

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

[1] Critics and Criticism, p. 167. McKeon states this formulation of imitation in order to draw attention to simplistic interpretations of the aim of mimetic art.

[2] In the LFA, Hegel's treatment of imitation (Nachahmung) is concentrated in less than five pages of the introductory section entitled, "The Aim of Art." See LFA I, pp. 41-46.

[3] LFA I, pp. 82-83, See also LFA II, pp. 623-625.

[4] Hegel writes, "The universal need for art...is man's rational need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes again his own self." (LFA I, p. 31.) See also LFA I, p. 26 and p. 29.

[5] LFA I, p. 70, pp. 90-94, pp. 106-111.

[6] LFA I, pp. 31-32.

[7] LFA I, p. 5.

[8] LFA I, p. 8.

[9] McKeon, Critics and Criticism, p. 152. McKeon is paraphrasing Plato's argument.

[10] Charles Karelis, "Hegel's Concept of Art: An Interpretative Essay," in T.M. Knox, trans., Hegel's Introduction to Aesthetics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. xv-xvi. Hereafter, An Interpretative Essay.

[11] Hegel, PM, s. 558.

[12] Ovsiannikov, M.F. and Srednii, D.D., "Hegel's Aesthetics and the Contemporary Struggle of Ideas," Soviet Studies In Philosophy 8 (Spring 1971), p. 376. In the endnote to s. 45 of the Logic, William Wallace quotes Goethe, "Reason takes delight in developing, understanding wishes to keep everything as it is." See Enc. Logic, p. 311.

[13] LFA I, p. 41.

[14] LFA I, pp. 41-42.

[15] LFA I, p. 596.

[16] LFA I, p. 42.

[17] LFA I, p. 43.

[18] LFA I, p. 42.

[19] Hegel remarks that what is offered to us in any mimetic representation we may behold just as well in our gardens, houses "or in matters within our narrower or wider circle of acquaintance" (LFA I, p. 42).

[20] LFA I, p. 42.

[21] LFA I, p. 43.

[22] LFA I, p. 42.

[23] LFA I, p. 43.

[24] LFA I, p. 42.

[25] LFA I, p. 43.

[26] Critics and Criticism, p. 156.

[27] We are again remined that the entire enterprise of art is only the first moment of the Absolute.

[28] LFA I, pp. 42, 46.

[29] LFA I, pp. 29-30.

[30] LFA I, pp. 42-43.

[31] The Turks and Africans are reputed to shun the production of pictoral images of any sort, including portraiture. Buttner's monkey is reported to have destroyed a book containing expensive plates when it attempted to eat the insect illustrated therein (LFA I, pp. 42-43).

[32] LFA I, p. 43.

[33] See Poetics, Ch. 2, 1448^{a}, 1; Ch. 24, 1460^{a}, 26-27; Ch. 25, 1460^{b}, 7-11.

[34] LFA I, p. 19.

[35] An Interpretative Essay, p. xxxiv.

[36] LFA I, p. 164.

[37] LFA I, p. 173.

[38] LFA II, p. 719.

[39] LFA I, p. 44.

[40] LFA I, p. 44.

[41] Loc. cit.

[42] LFA I, pp. 40-41.

[43] LFA I, pp. 39-40.

[44] See LFA I, p. 8, pp. 12-13, pp. 50-51, p. 55, p. 152 and p. 163. See LFA II, pp. 626-627, p. 1202 and p. 1236.

[45] LFA I, p. 5.

[46] Loc. cit.

[47] LFA I, p. 89.

[48] LFA II, p. 1035.

[49] Loc. cit.

[50] LFA I, p. 40.

[51] LFA I, p. 90.

[52] LFA I, p. 193.

[53] LFA I, p. 45.

[54] LFA I, p. 43.

[55] LFA I, pp. 31-32.

[56] LFA I, pp. 41-46.

[57] This point will be examined further in Chapter Five.

[58] See PM, ss. 557-558.

[59] LFA II, pp. 876-879. For the use of realism in other art forms, see LFA I, pp. 252 ff.

[60] See my Chapter Three, pp. 85-86, and pp. 89-91. See also LFA I, pp. 594.

[61] LFA I, p. 27 and p. 63. See also LFA II, p. 775.

[62] LFA II, p. 877.

[63] LFA I, p. 163.

[64] Loc. cit.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARISON OF THE ARISTOTELIAN AND HEGELIAN VIEWS

Introduction

In this last chapter, I continue to examine the positions of Aristotle and Hegel in order both to defend the Aristotelian idea of mimesis, and to point out the similarities that exist between the two conceptions of the essential nature of art. It is important to reiterate the Aristotelian understanding of imitation as activity that can take place on two levels. At its worst, imitation merely records empirical entities, while at its highest level, mimesis figures as the artistic representation of universal truth. In light of this, I continue to point to Aristotle's designation of worthy mimesis as art that appeals to sense, to what Kant, Hegel and others would call understanding and also to reason.[1] Such a focus will begin to demonstrate that Aristotle and Hegel are not in complete opposition to each other, since they both regard art as a material and concrete expression of human rationality and thought.

Although Aristotle's treatment of mimesis and Hegel's can be seen to issue from two different contexts, they are not entirely antithetical in terms of their authors' views concerning the universality and the ideal nature that necessarily characterize art. Hegel professes to dismiss imitation as an inadequate means of accounting for artistic representation, yet he and Aristotle concur on more than one point concerning the essence of what art seeks to interpret and to translate into material form. In order to demonstrate this, we must examine the extent to which Aristotle and Hegel can be said to agree on the nature and function of art. Finally, we must examine the degree to which Hegel underrates mimesis, while at the same time recognizing its most important aspects.

A Defence of Aristotle's View of Mimesis

Aristotle sets out to demonstrate that mimesis can lead to a certain type of knowledge. A well-constructed plot is a presentation of a complete action, the incidents of which are seen to be probable and necessary in relation to life.[7] To say that the universal is discernible in a plot is to say that the particular has become significant and expressive of the general. It is a heightened and artistically presented particular that is instrumental in disclosing a universal meaning or significance. Expressed Platonically, what we

encounter in mimesis is embodied form. Significant qualitative alterations to the natural order are made by the artist, and these alterations lead to a type of observer response (i.e., the recognition of universals) that differs from what is elicited when one encounters nature itself.[3] Mimesis stands not as copying, but as a transformation of nature.

In his emphasis on the nature of the plot and the kind of recognition it fosters, Aristotle addresses the intellectual character of mimetic art.[4] Clearly, Aristotle views imitation as capable of addressing thought as much as it does the senses. In an instance of inferior poetic representation, the likeness merely conforms to the individual natural object and is nothing more than visually vivid to the mind's eye. Such a likeness does not significantly add to our knowledge of the subject matter. In contrast, the primary focus of the Poetics is that which both proceeds from, and appeals to, sense and reason.[5] Expressed in these terms, the Aristotelian conception of art is like Hegel's belief that geist is present in art. This is important because it points away from imitation as the copying of particular things and it stresses that mimesis can produce art that is clearly distinct from nature. Such art appeals to man's capacity to critically examine and to compare, to make judgements and to seek out cause and effect.

Aristotle proposes that the central criteria for distinguishing poetic imitation from simple narrative representation lie in the necessity and the unity that characterize the sequence of events that make up the plot. This premise dominates the eighth, the ninth and the twenty-third chapters, and it is assumed throughout the Poetics and its advocacy of mimesis as a means by which one can view embodied form.[6] However, of equal importance in our discussion is Aristotle's statement in Chapter 25 that imitative poetry - whether epic or tragic - will suffer if the poet attempts to follow too closely all the features of the chosen model.[7] A poet is a "maker of likenesses"[8] who nonetheless creates something unique. The structure of the plot casts new light on the particular incidents and characters that are represented and it allows them to be perceived as having universal significance.[9]

The universal quality of tragedy cannot be traced to the particulars that are imitated, but rather to the form or unified structure of events that is created by the dramatist. A particular human situation becomes something that reflects other human situations. In this kind of imitation, a universal is expressed despite the fact that the framework in which it exists is concrete. Clearly, Aristotle rejects any assumption that the universal must be linked with abstraction. What is recognized in tragedy is what is known intellectually rather than what is merely observed. It is this capacity of

mimesis to communicate knowledge directly that accounts for Aristotle's statement that a well-made tragic plot is the highest form of poetic art.[10]

Each type of poetry is seen to imitate in its own way,[11] but in all instances of worthy mimetic creation, the artist is seen to reshape and alter the material of experience in order to produce a work that is truer and more representative than any singular natural object or sequence of events. It is this aspect of mimetic creation that can be aligned with the Hegelian idea that art must be an expression of human freedom. Aristotle's emphasis on the ability of the artist to imitate without duplicating is nothing less than a statement of the freedom and the power of the intellect to bring forth the forms from that in which they reside but are obscured. As it is taken up by the mimetic artist, nature can express the spiritual.

The Aristotelian idea of mimesis as a disclosure of universal truth calls into question any conclusion that imitation is nothing more than simulation and description. We saw in Chapter Two that the idea of an imitation of nature eventually came to allow for almost any type of representation, and ranged from exacting naturalism to the mirroring of the artist's sentiments. In the century immediately preceding Hegel, aesthetic opinion was divided between the ideas of imitation as the representation of the ideal and as the reproduction of more prosaic realities. As

I noted in Chapter Two, imitation was often associated with the portrayal of the most prosaic action and sentiment. Yet it is clear that Aristotle equates worthy imitation with the communication of truth. In his disregard of imitation's fundamental insight, Hegel - or any detractor of mimesis - is guilty of slighting a view he might well embrace. It is necessary then, to emphasize those features of Aristotelian mimesis that are not hostile to the Hegelian aesthetic.

It was made evident in Chapter One that the treatment of mimesis we encounter in the Poetics does give heed to creative invention. When Aristotle refers to genius and its prominence in the making of plots, he is alluding to the artist's capacity to represent the natural object in a synthetic and ampliative way.[12] The tragedian adds to the subject matter important elements that no particular natural object or action in its singularity could reveal. Richard McKeon points to this when he refers to imagination as "the faculty of conceiving past and future and of construing artificial objects."[13] The playwright adds to, takes away from, and otherwise transforms the action that he imitates. In mimesis, the differences between the likeness and the natural object are as many as the similarities. Imitation fashions images from natural objects, but the images are qualitatively distinct from their models. For Aristotle as well as for Hegel, art must "use the given forms of nature with a significance which art must divine and possess."[14]

Provided that the essential act of recognition is still possible, Aristotle's treatment of imitation renders unimportant any demand for an exact correspondence of likeness to natural object. As it is presented in the Poetics, mimesis is truly creative because it is a refashioning of nature that readily calls upon imagination in its framing of the incidents that make up the plot. Moreover in Chapter Four of the Poetics, the important element of recognition implies that there is an affinity of what we apprehend in the work with what we may have known or will know elsewhere at another time. It is a feature of Aristotle's vision of mimesis that the play of imagination evident in the artist's act of poetic making can be placed alongside the play of recognition that Aristotle sees as being entailed when an observer encounters a superior mimetic likeness. An element of continuity is evident when one considers the artist's and the observer's experiences of the art work and their past or future apprehension of other things and events, whether real or fictional. What the artist puts into the work, and what the observer comes away with, can be applied in other situations. Thus, an important idea of objectivity or knowledge is present in Aristotelian mimesis. This serves to distance the theory far from the rank of representation that presents us with "technical tricks, not works of art."[15]

It is evident from the above that Aristotle shares with Hegel some major beliefs concerning the rational nature and

intellectual value of art. It is to their common ground that our attention must now turn.

The Common Ground Between Aristotle and Hegel

Not only do Aristotle and Hegel envision art as stemming from rationality and appealing to it, they are in agreement concerning what it is that art addresses (i.e., universal truth).[16] Each philosopher points to the artist as one who brings together a rational or spiritual content and a natural form. A.O. Lovejoy expresses this when he refers to the artist as "a spokesman of the reason...who to reason - to what is fundamental and constant in the generic constitution of others - he [the artist] must appeal."[17] Aristotle focuses on both the intellectual and the emotional responses to a mimetic work; imitation yields universal truths and leads to specific, intellectual pleasures.[18] Similarly, Hegel ranks art as a movement of the Absolute. Art possesses the same content as religion and philosophy and as such, art is a means by which man grasps the significance of his existence.[19] Both Aristotle and Hegel set out by assuming a universal human nature or innate sensibility that, in Aristotle's words, "delights in gathering the meaning of things."[20] It is these universal characteristics of man that allow for the possibility of art being meaningful to all men in all eras.

This is what is implied both in Hegel's affirmation of art as geist seeing geist,[21] and in Aristotle's comprehension of art as the means by which one can recognize universals. This is perpetual and unchanging in worthy art and it is the case irrespective of any particular artistic embodiment.

Aristotle and Hegel also point to the necessity of superior art being characterized by organic unity and economy. Aristotle repeatedly indicates that it is the ordered design and the organic unity of the arrangements of the plot's incidents that confer upon tragedy much of its element of universality.[22] Similarly, Hegel insists that drama should foremost be characterized by, "the truly inviolable law [of the] unity of action."[23] Each thinker criticizes excessive detail - and in the case of drama, the inclusion of non-essential circumstances and happenings - because it impedes the communication of truth.[24]

It is important here to reiterate Aristotle's point that works characterized by organic unity and economy are possible at the hand of the mimetic artist. This challenges Hegel's criticism of imitation that it places us at the mercy of the natural object.[25] Aristotle does not see the artist as being passively caught up in the recording of something over which he exercises little or no control. For Aristotle, mimetic art is characterized by its own norms and its own prescriptions and these principles are not expected to prevail in the

natural order. Hegel expresses the same beliefs, but he does not include mimesis in his considerations.

Aristotle's scientific deduction of the principles of mimetic creation stems from his critical examination of the fruit of what was an established and thriving literary movement.[26] Similarly, although Hegel's aesthetic doctrine is derived from his system, and art stands in it as a movement of the Absolute, it is nonetheless markedly evident in the Lectures that Hegel is as much an art historian and critic who scrutinizes individual art works as he is a rigorous philosopher. Hegel repeatedly illustrates his arguments with examples from the history of architecture, sculpture, painting, music and the theatre. The authors of the Poetics and Lectures do not attempt to construct and defend aesthetic theories solely on theoretical grounds.

In terms of its capability to comprehend and communicate the truth of geist, mimetic art would be judged by Hegel to be no more capable of grasping truth than the primitive or Symbolic stage of art. Symbolic representations are seen by Hegel to be stiff and obtuse depictions of nature." Similarly, because it merely photographs nature, mimesis cannot interpret nature or the truth that dwells in nature only implicitly. Apart from Xeuxis and Rosel," Hegel does not call up any instances of art works that he feels are inferior because their makers were acknowledged to be imitators of nature. However, we are nonetheless in a position to say that

when Hegel observes highly naturalistic works which he feels cannot qualify as being ideal, he covertly points to them as illustration of his position that mimesis is the passive copying of natural particularities, and that it is incapable of yielding art that stands as the free spiritualization of nature.

We saw in Chapter Four that Hegel does not reject the use of extensive realism in art, and that at times he applauds artists for employing it.[29] Art provides vivid and disinterested scenes of the world around us.[30] Yet in these instances, Hegel does not explain how or why these works ultimately differ from Aristotle's conception of art at the hands of makers of mimetic likenesses. Both Hegel and Aristotle reject art that tries to copy rather than to make use of nature's forms, but Hegel cannot acknowledge that mimesis can be anything else but the production of facsimiles of nature. Hegel points to mimesis when he wishes to deride the representation of nature, but he makes no reference to it when he is acclaiming art's use of natural forms in its conveyance of truth.[31]

It has become evident that Aristotle and Hegel are in agreement concerning some of the components of a truly laudable work of art. Most basic is their common belief that art must foremost communicate truth or universals and do so while assuming a natural form. Art must do much more than simply resemble nature. Further, Hegel can be seen to

advocate some of the most characteristic elements of Aristotle's aesthetic when he insists that an art work must be characterized by necessity and unity of action.

Common elements exist in the theories of two thinkers who, at first sight, appear to be opposed. In the following sections, the thesis will consider if Hegel, who overtly rejects mimesis, can be seen to advocate any elements of the Aristotelian view of imitation.

Appraising Hegel's Treatment of Mimesis

At one point in his treatment of mimesis in the Introduction to the Aesthetics, Hegel writes:

> The imitation of nature, which indeed appeared to be a universal principle and one confirmed by high authority [i.e. Aristotle], is not to be adopted, at least in this general and wholly abstract form . . . . the aim of art must lie in something still other than the purely mechanical imitation of what is there.[32]

This comment is one of several that attests to Hegel's conviction that imitation cannot be held to be the end of art. In a previous section, Hegel states that since imitation is a principle that pertains solely to the formal side of art, "objective beauty itself disappears when this principle is made the end of art."[33] Two pages later, Hegel states that

> naturalism . . . . as such [is not] the substantial and primary basis of art, and, even if external appearance in its naturalness constitutes one essential characteristic of art, still neither is the given natural world the rule nor is the mere

> imitation of external phenomena, as external, the <u>aim</u> of art.[34]

These three statements indicate that Hegel's criticisms of <u>mimesis</u> are aimed in two directions. First, the criticisms focus on the shortcomings of <u>mimesis</u> as artistic activity that is nothing more than copying, and second, the statements denounce <u>mimesis</u> as that object for the attainment of which the artist acts. It is to the issue of <u>mimesis</u> as the end of art that Hegel most takes exception.

Hegel acknowledges that insofar as one is concerned with the form of an art work, fidelity to nature is required. At one point in the Introduction, Hegel even applauds the imitation of nature - although in doing so, he refers to "naturalism in general" - as an antidote against the arbitrariness evident in much of the art of his time.[35] This comment is surprising, especially in view of his scathing remark earlier that <u>mimesis</u> resembles a worm in the wake of an elephant.[36]

Nonetheless, Hegel emphasizes that in relation to an art form such as poetry, the principle of the imitation of nature can only be upheld if it were to have various conditions attached to it.[37] What this means is that imitation is seen to be adequate as a means of giving form or shape to the truth manifested in poetry, but it is not responsible for the presence of the spiritual content of the work. Imitation is incapable of yielding truth. However, imitation is capable

of providing "regular, immediate and explicitly fixed sequences of nature,"[38] and this is something which art unquestionably requires. Hegel feels that imitation cannot alone constitute a work of art, but it does stand as the basis of all artistic production, since art represents the idea under the form of nature. Constantly, Hegel assumes that imitation cannot significantly alter external nature, and that for the most part, imitation only follows nature.

Hegel is advocating his view that imitation simply records nature when he states,

> [Imitation is art that] takes for its subject matter, not the inherently necessary, the province of what is complete in itself, but contingent reality in its boundless modification of shapes and relationships.[39]

Imitation is addressed as a context or "mere environment" in which it is possible that the ideal can come to be, but in itself, mimesis is incapable of producing the beautiful.[40] Couched in terms as prosaic as those which Hegel employs, no one could credit imitation with anything more. In terms of the representation of human action and character, imitation is nothing but the production of portrait-like images of "man's daily active pursuits in his natural necessities and comfortable satisfaction, in his casual habits and situations."[41] This outlook is far from Aristotle's conception of mimesis as the representation of human action that the observer is compelled to see as being necessary and universal.

We saw in Chapter Four that Hegel does not object to art's production of faithful and life-like representations of things and events. However much these representations may allow us to stand back and disinterestedly view a natural image as the artistic actualization of geist,[42] Hegel cannot grant to mimesis anything other than a subordinate and passive role in the creation of these instances of the ideal.

Mimesis cannot yield beauty because beauty is seen to be a product of geist's capability to recreate nature freely and self-consciously. For the most part, mimesis is seen by Hegel to do little more than to follow nature passively. At best, imitation provides the formal element or background from which the artist attempts to address his audience. Insofar as it is simply defined as the realistic representation of nature, Hegel does not deny that mimesis plays a role in the creation of art. However, by defining imitation as nothing more than a means of arriving at the ideal, Hegel denies it a primary role.

When Hegel is debating whether mimesis can yield truth and if it can be justified as the basis of art, he argues that if this were the case, it would nonetheless be impossible and undesirable to "exclude from poetry all purely arbitrary and completely fanciful inventions."[43] This statement is indicative of Hegel's disregard of Aristotle's affirmation of mimesis as the production of inventive likenesses, likenesses that are creative and which spring from "art, [not from]

constant practice."[44] If Aristotle teaches anything in the Poetics, it is that an act of mimesis generates from the natural world something new. Such artistic production is impossible without the creative embellishments provided by the imaginative genius of the artist. The amplification and enhancement of the natural order that one delights in in a plot is wholly the work of the playwright.

When Hegel refers to mimesis as "enthusiasm for copying merely as copying,"[45] He is expressing his belief that imitation should not be seen to be the end of art. Since for Hegel, "the principle of imitation is purely formal,"[46] that is, since imitation is restricted to giving to art its natural forms, it cannot be granted anything other than a secondary role in Hegel's aesthetic scheme. The ideal content is what is pre-eminent in any art work, and the form in which this is clothed is important, but it is not primary.[47]

Even though Hegel severely criticizes mimesis, and often times equates it with mimicry, he nonetheless retains a commitment to realism, and in doing so, he admits that imitation can play a legitimate role in artistic creation.[48] However, artistic creation itself is not seen to lie in imitation.

So far, Hegel's various attitudes and assumptions concerning mimesis make it difficult to reconcile his view with the Aristotelian vision of mimesis as the creative

production of a new embodiment of universal and necessary truth.

Hegel asserts that when mimesis is put forth as the end of art, the technical accuracy of the imitation takes priority over any concern with what is being imitated; no criterion is provided for what is a fit object of imitation.[49] However, in this objection, Hegel is overlooking two important points that were stressed by Aristotle. First, Aristotle requires that the objects imitated in tragedy (i.e., actions carried out by specific agents) be better than what prevails in the world.[50] Aristotelian mimesis is the imitation of actions and deeds that are seen to be probable and necessary, and it is this feature of Aristotle's view that provides a rejoinder to Hegel's charge that mimesis leaves the choice of fitting objects of representation open to the whims of subjective taste.[51] Second, Aristotle points out that unless one can recognize an imitation as a representation of something he has encountered before, then the pleasure he will experience will be secondary and due to "the execution . . . . or some similar cause."[52] More importantly, Aristotle, sees the recognition that mimesis fosters as being such that it does not require a stringent one to one resemblance of the imitation with the original. Aristotelian recognition is far more significant than the simple recognition of a likeness between a randomly chosen object and its imitation. The Aristotelian artist brings about a new recognition of the original. The original

is now seen as embodying a universal significance and therefore as being worthy of the enhancement of its singularity which genuine artistic mimesis is able to bring about. It is this feature of mimesis that raises it above mimicry.

It is obvious from his objections above that Hegel does not see that Aristotelian mimesis entails an act of creating something new out of an already known story." Mimesis is not a formula for the passive production of works; it is not a formula that simply requires that a suitable content be scrupulously sought out to be shaped without addition or alteration into an effective and pleasing work. It is immediately clear in the Poetics that it is the treatment of the subject matter and the crucial framing of the action of the plot that determines the excellence of a tragedy. A tragedy is not tragic because ineffably tragic events were selected for representation.

Hegel frequently charges that imitation is at fault because it intentionally places us in relation to a natural object whereby this unadulterated object is undeservedly glorified. This recalls the point made in Chapter Four of the thesis, where it was suggested that Hegel might not object to mimesis if it were the case that the Idea was truly indwelling in nature and if there was not an immense gulf between the two realms. In such a setting, a description of ordinary external reality would qualify as the creation of the Ideal." In fact,

there is evidence that Hegel saw mimesis as a fully satisfactory means of accounting for the beauty and the integrity of the plastic and dramatic arts of ancient Greece.[55] In the imitation of the physical form and the heroic deeds of the Greek heroes, geist had found a shape adequate to its expression. Hegel writes:

> When the spirit has grasped itself as spirit, it is explicitly complete and clear, and so too its connection with the shape adequate to it on the external side is something absolutely complete and given, which does not first need to be brought into existence by way of a linkage produced by imagination in contrast to what is present . . . . This is the point of view from which to consider the idea that art has imitated the human form. According to the usual view, however, this adoption and imitation seem accidental, whereas we must maintain that art, once developed to its maturity, must of necessity produce its representations in the form of man's external appearance because only therein does the spirit acquire its adequate existence in sensuous and natural material.[56]

In the above excerpt from the Aesthetics it is the case that Hegel is primarily speaking of classical sculpture. Since sculpture is the art that most concentrates on the external form of man, Hegel's observations can be construed to be a defence of imitation that is simply the copying of an existent reality (i.e., the human figure). In fact, Hegel did construe the age of classical Greek art as being such that its artists had an ideal content before them which they had only to transcribe in their works.

However, in a subsequent section, where he discusses art forms other than the plastic, Hegel's position subtly

shifts.[57] Although he maintains that the content of these arts is already present in Greek religion and praxis, such that the artist "seems only to execute [formally] what is already cut and dried on its own account,"[58] he nonetheless admits that the artist, "does not simply copy or adhere to one fixed type, but is at the same time creative of the whole."[59] Hegel amplifies this by pointing to the fact that because the artist is so submerged in the content of his age's art, he is able to give himself fully to the side of form and in doing so, he represents the content in such a careful and refined way that both form and content are further developed and the content can be made most manifest.[60] On this account, Hegel maintains that the Greek experience of art was, and is, unparalleled. Greek art absorbed Greek religion; the content of art and of religion were largely one and the same,[61] and within such a setting, mimesis is seen by Hegel to be a completely adequate means of disclosing truth. In imitating the human form and the human deed[62] - the outward and the inward life of man - the Greek artist was seen by Hegel to be capable of producing art that fully expressed divinity and which was never surpassed.

Hegel's reference above to the Greek artist as an imitator who is nonetheless creative, sets an important precedent. Here, Hegel is admitting that the imitation of a content that may be characterized as being ideal before it is given external shape is more than the careful and industrious

translation into sensuous terms of an especially suitable prototype or content. The dynamics of Greek art were seen by Hegel to be such that the content (Greek religion) was accessible and open to immediate and direct communication so that it could simply be presented again. These representations figured as the world's finest art. In this context only, Hegel acknowledges that imitation can be characterized by elements of true and free creativity.

When Hegel proclaims that mimesis is adequate to account for the art of the Classical Stage because art's content was so ubiquitous in Greek political, religious and moral life that it had only to be spelled out artistically, he is stressing the pervasive significance and influence of that age's artistic/religious content more than he is acclaiming mimetic art. Imitation can be said to be playing a passive role. Against a claim that Symbolic Art is imitative in the same manner as Classical Art, Hegel would reply that such is not the case. Hegel viewed Symbolic artists as having only the vaguest perception of what it was that they sought to embody in their works.[a] Given Hegel's belief that imitation is copying, an artist could not imitate what is not immediately present before him. Therefore, the age of Symbolic Art does not allow for imitation. In art's final stage, its content is seen to go beyond what can be adequately expressed as the Ideal, let alone be simply imitated. The content of Romantic Art is such that the full truth to which

art points in its sensuous form can only be grasped in philosophy; the content of Romantic Art is that which is ultimately posed conceptually.[N] In Romantic Art, there is no longer any room for mere imitation.

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[1] See my Chapter Four, pp. 111-112 and pp. 114-115. See also fn. 46 to my Chapter Two.

[2] Poetics, Ch. 9, 1451^{b}, 1-15.

[3] Poetics, Ch. 4, 1448^{b}, 4-24.

[4] As we saw in Chapter One, the discussion of plot dominates Chapters Six to Fourteen of the Poetics. See my Chapter One, pp. 7-8, pp. 13-15 and pp. 17-21.

[5] This point is illustrated beautifully in the Poetics in the opening section of Chapter Four. Here, Aristotle points to the rational origin and development of poetry.

[6] Poetics, Ch. 8, 1451^{a}, 16-35; Ch. 9, 1451^{b}-1452^{a}, 10; Ch. 23, 1459^{a}, 17-30.

[7] Poetics, Ch. 25, 1460^{b}, 15-1461^{a}, 9.

[8] Poetics, Ch. 25, 1460^{b}, 9.

[9] It will be recalled that Aristotle sees the universal as having no other existence than its embodiment as the particular (see my Chapter One, pp. 5 and 25-26). It is in this context that one can speak of the universal or representative significance of the particular action seen in tragedy.

[10] The twenty-sixth chapter of the Poetics proclaims tragedy to be artistically superior to epic poetry.

[11] The first three chapters of the Poetics further classify types of poetry by the means, object and manner of their imitation. See also pp. 10, 14, 20 and pp. 25-31 of Chapter One, above.

[12] See pp. 25-31 of Chapter One and pp. 50-51 and pp. 60-61 of Chapter Two, above.

[13] TAP, p. 161. This description of imagination is attributed to Baumgarten.

[14] PM, ss. 558.

[15] LFA I, p. 45.

[16] See Poetics, Chs. 4, 7 and 9. These chapters illustrate the fact that the Poetics focuses as much on the intellectual nature of one's experience in perceiving an art work as it does on the production of that work. Something similar is stated in LFA I, pp. 7-9.

[17] Lovejoy, A.O., Essays In The History Of Ideas (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1948), p. xii.

[18] See my Chapter One, pp. 17-18.

[19] LFA I, pp. 101-104.

[20] Poetics, Ch. 4, 1448^{b}, 17.

[21] For statements of art as geist seeing geist, consult LFA I, p. 434 and LFA II, pp. 626-627.

[22] Poetics, Ch. 7, 1450^{b}, 20-40; Ch. 8, 1451^{a}, 30-35 and Ch. 23, 1459^{a}, 17-21.

[23] LFA II, p. 1166. Hegel discusses the dramatic unities of time, place and action in pp. 1164-1167. Of the unity of action, Hegel writes, "True unity can only be grounded in the total movement [of action], i.e., given the determinate nature of the particular circumstances, the characters, and their ends, the collision is displayed as conforming with the characters and their ends" (p. 1166).

[24] See LFA I, pp. 276-277 and LFA II, pp. 981-982 and pp. 985-986 for expressions of this belief.

[25] See pp. 102-105 and pp. 108-114 of the fourth chapter of the thesis, as well as those sections of the third chapter that focus on Hegel's attitude toward the natural order.

[26] In the Poetics, Aristotle refers to the works of such dramatists as Sophocles, Euripedes, Aeschylus and Aristophanes. The writings of the poets Homer, Timotheus and Epicharmus are also mentioned.

[27] See my Chapter Three, pp. 86-89.

[28] LFA I, pp. 42-43.

[29] See pp. 120-123 of the fourth chapter of the thesis.

[30] LFA I, pp. 598-599.

[31] A good example of Hegel advocating realism while rejecting mimesis lies in his statement that, "we delight in a manifestation which must appear as if nature had produced it,

while without natural means it has been produced by the spirit; works of art enchant us, not because they are so natural, but because that have been made to appear so natural" (LFA I, p. 164). See also LFA I, p. 596.

[32] LFA I, p. 45.

[33] LFA I, p. 44.

[34] LFA I, pp. 45-46. Note how "the given natural world" is assumed to be the primary focus of all mimetic activity.

[35] LFA I, p. 45.

[36] LFA I, p. 43.

[37] Loc. cit.

[38] Loc. cit. Despite the fact that here Hegel is speaking positively about mimesis, we are somehow reminded of the handy, but facile "technical tricks" to which he earlier referred (LFA I, pp. 43-44).

[39] LFA I, p. 595.

[40] LFA I, pp. 595-596.

[41] Loc. cit.

[42] LFA I, pp. 596 and 598.

[43] LFA I, p. 46.

[44] Poetics, Ch. 1, 1447a, 19.

[45] LFA I, p. 44.

[46] Loc. cit.

[47] As Hegel moves up through the stages of Symbolic, Classical and Romantic art, and as the types of art become increasingly adept at communicating the truth of the idea, the emphasis on form is diminished.

[48] Note the passage already cited from LFA I, p. 45.

[49] LFA I, p. 44.

[50] Poetics, Ch. 2, 1448a, 1-20. See also Ch. 13 and Ch. 15.

[51] LFA I, p. 44.

[52] Poetics, Ch. 4, 1448[b], 20.

[53] Aristotle also points out that the events of a plot can be entirely fictional.

[54] See pp. 116-117 of my Fourth Chapter.

[55] Loc. cit. Note the passages quoted from the Karelis text.

[56] LFA I, p. 434.

[57] See the section entitled, "Position of the Productive Artist in Classical Art," LFA I, pp. 438-440, especially p. 439 where he speaks of Homer and the Greek tragedians.

[58] LFA I, p. 439.

[59] LFA I, p. 440.

[60] Loc. cit. See also LFA I, p. 20. I use the term "manifest" to indicate Hegel's perception of classical art as being such that in it, geist best reveals itself in sensuous form.

[61] LFA I, pp. 77-79. See also LFA I, pp. 437-439 and LFA II, p. 655.

[62] LFA I, p. 435.

[63] LFA I, p. 438.

[64] LFA I, p. 7.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the endeavour to find in Hegel's writings any major vindication of mimesis has met with limited success. Without a doubt, Hegel recognizes that by definition, all art may be regarded as mimesis, and he judges imitation to be admissible as a means to the creation of the ideal. Ultimately however, imitation is relegated and confined to the side of form, and as such, imitation cannot be set forth as the end of art. The end of art is seen to be the spiritualization or overcoming of nature; art's end is the creation of something new and spiritually significant out of natural forms and Hegel does not see mimesis as capable of achieving this.

Hegel sees mimesis as being fundamentally restricted. Mimesis is taken to be confined to the communication of particulars. Imitation is a mirroring of natural realities and if it attempts to represent the supersensuous, it stands as an overly ambitious enterprise. For Hegel, mimesis can function as a means of setting forth what is immediately present to us, however it cannot significantly augment or interpret nature. The imitation of nature makes no appeal to contemplation. If an artist strives to simply present nature again, then geist's principle of self-determination and its

sublimation of nature are not evident and no true art has been created.

Aristotle views mimesis in a manner that differs dramatically from Hegel, yet in it he shares with Hegel the belief that the gratuitous production of a second nature is a questionable artistic accomplishment. Aristotelian mimesis is creative activity whereby the form of a natural thing or action is imitated and yet the end product stands as a heightened and universal representation of reality. Imitation depicts types rather than particular individuals. In tragedy, the artist imitates types as imminent in nature, but the type itself is nonetheless ideal and it stands before us as intellectual entity for our recognition and our contemplation.

The tragedian possesses the artistic freedom to render probable and necessary the sequence of events which constitute the action of the plot. Necessity and probability are erected by art. Aristotelian imitation of nature entails an imposition from without - from the artist - of a judgement concerning the suitability of natural objects and events as models, and most importantly, of the need for their refinement and alteration. This view is far from Hegel's conception of imitation as the passive copying of nature.

For Aristotle, the best knowledge is knowledge of the universal. The particular is significant precisely in this context. From the proper mimetic representation of

particulars, one is able to derive new conclusions from what is familiar.

Hegel fails to take account of the fact that Aristotleian mimesis is imitation which is guided in how it reproduces by the fact that the original and particular subject matter, whether real or fictitious, has been seen by the genuine artist in a very special way. The artist raises the particular out of the realm of particularity and he brings it to a new and important level as the embodiment of an idea. The subject matter is elevated so as to become an embodiment of what is necessary and probable in human life. The artist creates something that is ordered and unified and which has meaning for the human mind. What differentiates mimesis from mimicry is the artist's vision of the potential to take the particular and creatively transform it into a particular representation that possesses universal significance for all who observe it.

Hegel dispraises imitation because he sees the risk of it as representation wherein the natural dictates to the artist rather than the artist freely using nature. Aristotle too sees that mimesis can be problematic, however his concerns differ from those of Hegel. Aristotle agrees with Plato that imitation may not yield knowledge and that it may be deceptive or be used for the wrong purposes. However, of greater concern to Aristotle is Plato's complaint that mimetic likenesses are copies of copies. In his philosophy, Aristotle

brings Plato's forms down to earth. In his Poetics, Aristotle more than succeeds in presenting worthy imitation as artistic activity that rises above mere copying and which is endowed with genuine intellectual or cognitive insight.

Hegel all but states that he has examined the Poetics and he does acknowledge that imitation figured as the first accepted theory of the end of art. It is perplexing that Hegel does not acknowledge the wide gulf that lies between the simplistic notion of imitation that is associated with Xeuxis and the sophisticated and multi-faceted argument that is the Poetics. Hegel does not address the many ways by which Aristotle so successfully redefined mimesis.

It seems that Hegel's view of imitation fixates on either the simplistic statements of imitation that precede Aristotle or those impoverished expressions of it that figured in his own time.

Mimesis can measure up to Hegel's conception of art and it can figure as geist addressing geist. Had Hegel read Aristotle more attentively, and had he been able to judge mimesis impartially, both apart from his System that he sees as being compromised by imitation, and apart from the climate of aesthetic opinion that held mimesis in ill-favour, he would have viewed imitation as capable of yielding universal truth.

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