

# Hegel and the autonomy of modern art: secularization, technification and spirituality

Dany Erick Cruz Guerrero\*

Department de Cadencias Humana's, Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya.

**Corresponding Author:** Dany Erick Cruz Guerrero, Department de Cadencias Humana's, Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya.

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## Abstract

A brief philosophical reflection is proposed on the critical method with which Hegel articulates art and religion to support the complex notion of spirituality that organizes and structures the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. The importance of the Hegelian critical-methodological treatment of art, artistic creation and, above all, the work of the artist is highlighted because this treatment has an impact on the emergence of the concept of absolute spirit that accentuates the idea that the historical process of art underpins the self-learning of the spirit. The study allows us to affirm that, according to Hegel and specialized criticism, in effect, art achieves true autonomy with respect to religion only when it consolidates its constitutive knowledge and diversifies its disciplines.

**Keywords:** Art, Religion, Spirituality, Absolute, Hegel.

## 1. Introduction

The objective of this essay is to demonstrate, briefly and succinctly, that the passages of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* in which Hegel reflects on art and religion, there is an implicit underlying philosophy of art that has repercussions on Hegel's understanding of spirituality [1]. Indeed, in these passages one perceives Hegel's effort to concatenate the ideas of the necessary formation of art and the onto-historical emergence of its disciplines as the consolidation of a process of learning, professionalization and humanistic and techno-scientific specialization that contributes to the purification of the spirit. The genetic process of art occurs or develops simultaneously with the process that makes religion emerge as a figure of the spirit capable of appropriating art and its inherent virtualities: Hegel explains, therefore, the way in which art and religion imbricate to the point that critics come to believe that they cannot be separated from the category "religion of art" (*Kunst-Religion*). Our philosopher, however, goes one step beyond this identification, which does not exhaust the horizon of the relationship between art and religion, when he explicitly distinguishes between religious doctrine and artistic doctrine.

More than uniting and reuniting art with religion, whose historical-formative confluence Hegel needs to make explicit, the purpose of our philosopher seems to be to lay the theoretical foundations to understand the divergence and insurmountable split that makes art and religion. Already in modernity, they go—or want to go—on separate paths: hence,

from our perspective, we perceive outlines of both a philosophy of art and a sociology of religion. We are interested, for now, in order to delve into Hegelian thinking, to elaborate on the first edge since we perceive the nutritional potential that it has to explain from there how Hegel articulates and concatenates the notions of art, religion and spirituality in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, when it is proposed to base artistic creation and the work of the artist as moments of absolute spirit.

In this line of thought, we are of the opinion that the insertion of art in the discourse of *Phenomenology of the Spirit* underlies a philosophy of art that serves the purpose of systematically articulating the onto-historical figures of the spirit in the evolutionary process, certainly traumatic, that it carries out to rise from the particular to the universal, that is, the absolute, where it can already (re)know its own essence: its purest radical spirituality. This philosophy of art implicit in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* considers the anthropological, technical, and scientific aspects of art, on the one hand, and, on the other, the transcendental aspects that speak of the relationship of art with religion, philosophy, and metaphysics [2]. Thus, according to Hegel, art represents the absolute. This idea is consistent in the lessons that the philosopher taught consistently about art throughout his philosophical-pedagogical career. Indeed, in a later mature work the philosopher writes.

[...] that the spirit is capable of considering itself, and of pos-

sessing a consciousness, a thinking consciousness, of itself and of everything originating in itself. Thinking is precisely what constitutes the inmost essential nature of spirit. In this *thinking* consciousness of itself and its products, however much freedom and caprice these may always have, the spirit is acting in accordance with its essential nature, provided that it be genuinely in them. Now art and works of art, by springing from and being created by the spirit, are themselves of a spiritual kind, even if their presentation assumes an appearance of sensuousness and pervades the sensuous with the spirit. In this respect art already lies nearer to the spirit and its thinking than purely external spiritless nature does. In the products of art, the spirit has to do solely with its own. [...] [3].

It seems, then, that Hegel thinks that art has the capacity to reveal or produce certain and true knowledge by itself, independently of the religious, moral, and theological precepts that traditionally provide the theoretical-practical framework for its productive work. With Feuerbach and Schleiermacher, furthermore, Hegel thinks that “religious feeling” is not exclusive to dogmatic religion and that, in fact, this feeling is present in the generative principle of art, both in the technical-historical sense and in the aesthetic-transcendental. If the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* insists so much on the confluence of art and religion, as criticism insistently and emphatically highlights, it is not so much because Hegel, as a theologian, assumes a prescriptive and normativism attitude with respect to artistic praxis, but rather, as a philosopher, it is necessary because Hegel perceives before him an art in the process of becoming historically autonomous from the tutelage of dogmatized religion.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Art and Artistic Discipline

In the task of identifying, collecting, and examining the passages of the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* in which Hegel deals with art and religion, the investigation explains how the notions of art and artistic discipline are related. In the current research landscape, the English translations of Pinked and in wood stand out. In Spanish, the classic translation by Races is joined by the translation by Jiménez and, above all, the translation by Gómez Ramos, which has the merit of offering the German text original in an impeccable bilingual edition. The Portuguese translation by Meneses and the German edition with an epilogue by L. B. Puntel also contribute to the philosophical discernment that we carry out here. Hegel postulates that art has its own specific richness (*kunstreichen*) that distinguishes it from religion: art springs from the human capacity to produce culture and, for this reason, it is impregnated with living popular feeling, a feeling that is positivized early through religious art as its ideal medium [4-11]. Now, what does the richness of art according to Hegel consist of?

Our philosopher reasons that religious temples and all their belongings shape the religious sentiment of communities. Thus, it seems clear that, after all, the abode of the gods is simply a habitation of humanity that is destined to preserve,

precisely, the positive expression of the religious feeling of that humanity: like religion, art is not about being homogeneous and uniform, but, as it is nourished by human experience, it is rather about being diverse and heterogeneous. The art and technique referred to here is, obviously, architecture. There is also an anthropological approach to religion that, since the spirit is aware of being in a constructed dwelling, contrasts with the transcendental approach to religion, which believes it grasps the substance of the divine through a powerful and intuitive intuition, unstopplable.

Faced with the rationality of architecture as a buttress of religious feeling, it is not necessary, however, to rush to the mystical attitude to enter into the experience and understanding of religious feeling. Art helps, without a doubt. But, in short, what, then, is religious art? To begin with, a manifestation of the reality of the spirit that knows itself to be true [11]. Religion arises from the depths of the spirit and is institutionalized historically and socially through the resources of art, but not only them: if the *anthropos* for example, initially he is driven by the need for shelter to build his protective lair from the cold and the physical and existential weather, only later does he discover and perfect through practice the architectural technique to build the abode of the gods with all their belongings, gear and accoutrements. The abode of the god, Hegel reasons, is after all the fruit of human labor.

Note the strong techno-scientific meaning that the concept of art has here (*Kunst*): it is a practical, constructive and transformative knowledge of matter and spirit that formalizes a way of being, feeling and being in the world. Although religion is a way of access to the absolute, Hegel thinks that it is not the only way. Art also opens a path to reach the absolute. Well, what relationship does Hegel establish between art and the absolute? From the point of view of philosophy, it is necessary to leave the point of view of contingent diversity and go one step beyond abstraction in search of the concrete universal, since the aim is to apprehend with thought that which is present in all things, artistic manifestations as an internal, inherent, intrinsic, and inalienable being to art [11]. Hegelian thought progresses towards the discovery of the figure of absolute art that, arising from the heart of ethics—the historical reference is very precise—, carries in its essence the irreducible, inalienable and inviolable sign of work (*Arbeit*): the work of art can only be when it is created, that is, engendered, generated and manufactured by free men. Indeed: “[...] to ethics [*Sittlichkeit*] is reached for the first time in the free people of the Greeks (in the East there were only despots and slaves) [...]” [12-14].

Hegel distinguishes between the tendency of art towards the absolute and the absoluteness of art. On the one hand, art attempts to represent the absolute as the divine, independent, and transcendent of human manipulations and in line with myth; hence it is specified and consolidated as religious art or religion of art. On the other hand, the work of art is a scientific work created by the theoretical-practical activity of the free spirit through the technical and technological instruments that facilitate its loving cultivation. But at this point it is still necessary to differentiate between the work of

art (*Kunstwerk*) and artistic work, which is not stuff, as the first, if not free, activity of the spirit: „[...] die freie geistige Tätigkeit [...]“, in Hegel’s expression [11]. It is worth asking what the work of art consists of according to Hegel and, consequently, how it differs from the work of art or, what is the same, artistic work [11]. The work of art is the product of artistic work [15].

According to Hegel, then, artistic work capable of producing absolute art is only possible in ethics. In this way, only the ethical subject can act artistically [11]. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Hegel thinks of Greek anthropomorphic sculpture and theater as paradigms of absolute art. The technical mastery of the resources required by the artist to carve a sculpture or represent a tragedy is not achieved by chance. Hegel maintains that art “[...] one must spend a considerable amount of trouble in learning and practice [...]” [4]. Indeed: „Von allen Wissenschaften, Künsten, Geschicklichkeiten, Handwerken gilt die Überzeugung, daß, um sie zu besitzen, eine vielfache Bemühung des Erlernens und Übens derselben nötig ist“, writes Hegel [11]. According to this passage, then, the philosopher reasons that, like science and philosophy, the arts also require the progressive appropriation of knowledge through study that strengthens, improves, and perfects a natural ability. Hence also that art can produce knowledge susceptible to organize into a doctrine. Like Aristotle, Hegel is aware that art is said in many senses, but unlike Aristotle, he knows that these senses depend largely on the effective historical reality that instantiates art (*Kunstgeschichte*). According to specialized critics, the Enlightenment and Romanticism manifest different attitudes towards the history of art.

The history of art did not receive enough attention in the Enlightenment, more concerned with establishing canons of beauty and harmony based on rationality (a rationality that, in essence, was inspired by mathematics) than with examining the evolution of ideas, artistic works throughout the centuries and in different cultures. In romanticism, however, history will be seen as a force of vital development [2].

Furthermore, it is not only that art is the result of the historical-critical formation of culture, but that the spirit itself is information (*Bildung*). With this, then, Hegel lays the basis for a reflection, no less substantive because it is succinct, on the specialization and professionalization of artistic disciplines.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Specialization and Professionalization of Artistic Disciplines

Certainly, there is not much that is said in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* on the specialization and professionalization of artistic disciplines. Hegel does not want to create a catalog of the artistic specialties and professions that emerged until classical Greece, nor does he want to create a manual of artistic precepts nor provide stylistic-hermeneutic guidelines for the reception, contemplation and tasting of the work of art, although Hegel uses the category *Kunstbetrachtung* only once in our primary source [11]. Critic of neoclassicism that seeks to revive the ideals of Greco-Roman art, the Hegelian attitude seeks a break with the mimetic attitude that adheres

to those old values, since the philosopher is interested in capturing the essence of art as a channel for the experience of the absolute in sameness of the spirit.

It is this need that leads the philosopher’s thought to recognize and enumerate a transition of figures that we can well understand in a historical-critical sense, although the sequence in which they appear in the text is not strictly chronological: the worker, the craftsman, the master builder, the artist, the architect, the sculptor, the *aeda*, the tragicographer, the comedian and the actor appear in the chapter dedicated to the religion of art as a succession of figures in which the spirit discovers, carves and perfects its creative power. The religious cult that frames art can make us think that the only context of art is religion. However, Hegel points to technique as a non-religious space where the formation of the spirit implies the return of the spirit on itself in the abandonment of religious abstractions to re-root itself in the spiritual need that is satisfied in the concretion and immediacy of the act.

Artistic work as techno-scientific work requires learning. In an early page of the treatise we are studying, Hegel brings up the effort (*Bemühung*) that requires a diligent and measured spirit to overcome the annoying obstacles that learning implies as a transition from not-knowing to knowing [11]. The philosopher illustrates this with the example of the shoemaker, who takes from the foot “[...] as if he did not likewise possess in his own foot the standard for making a shoe [...]”, writes Hegel, but that requires, in any case, study, learning, practice and technical mastery in the handling of the tools with which the leather is worked and molded, since “[...] that although anyone with eyes and fingers who acquires leather and a last is not for that reason in a position to make shoes [...]” [4]. The philosopher justifies.

Von allen Wissenschaften, Künsten, Geschicklichkeiten, Handwerken gilt die Überzeugung, daß, um sie zu besitzen, eine vielfache Bemühung des Erlernens und Übens derselben nötig ist. In Ansehung der Philosophie dagegen scheint itzt das Vorurteil zu herrschen, daß, Wenn zwar jeder Augen und Finger hat, und wenn er Leder und Werkzeug bekommt, er darum nicht imstande sei, Schuhe zu machen, — jeder doch unmittelbar zu philosophieren, und die Philosophie zu beurteilen verstehe, weil er den Maßstab an seiner natürlichen Vernunft dazu besitze, — als ob er den Maßstab eines Schuhs nicht an seinem Fuße ebenfalls besäße. — It is scheint gerade in den Mangel von Kenntnissen und von Studium der Besitz der Philosophie gesetzt zu werden, und diese da aufzuhören, wo jene anfangen [11].

It can be seen, in the quote, that Hegel establishes a comparison between the philosopher and the shoemaker, valuing the epistemological-scientific aspect of all human constructive activity as it demands vital and intellectual energy. In a similar way to the shoemaker, then, who does not proceed by pure intuition or by a single pragmatic intention, natural reason is not enough to philosophize spontaneously because philosophy also implies disciplined study, and a tedious and painful acquisition. The counterexample of the shoemaker

and the philosopher is represented, for Hegel, by the hyper-skilled musician who, in his madness (*Verrücktheit*), composes with shameless irony and exaggeration, inverting elements and subverting styles *to the devil*, although showing, with that, all the integrating and synthesizing truth of the spirit as a creative being [11].

Now, for Hegel, works of art are each determined in a different way according to these different agents, but without suppressing diversity, the work of art in general has in common “[...] is created in consciousness and is made by human hands [...]” [4]. Indeed: „Das Gemeine an dem Kunstwerke, daß es im Bewußtsein erzeugt und von Menschenhänden gemacht ist, ist das Moment des als Begriff existierenden Begriffes, der ihm gegenübertritt“, writes Hegel [11]. For this very reason the first work of art is abstract and one: it is abstract, on the one hand, because it is first conceived in consciousness and it is one, on the other hand, because, after being conceived intellectually, it is then transposed into three-dimensional reality, as a unique and immediate object, as *stuff* that differs from its maker: „Die erste Weise, in welcher der künstlerische Geist seine Gestalt und sein tätiges Bewußtsein am weitesten voneinander entfernt, ist die unmittelbare, daß jene als *Ding* überhaupt da ist“, continues Hegel [11]. Therefore, if it is not, in fact, just a thing, what is it, then, the work of art in the context of *Phenomenology of the Spirit*? Especially, the work of art is the work of the spirit for the forging of itself: in the work of art the spirit positivizes and establishes its figures so that it can return to itself after distancing itself from those figures that do not exhaust even its figurability—i.e.: its capacity to give itself through figures, to make itself a figure—nor its figurative power [11]. The distinction of the work of art into three types —*abstract, live, and spiritual*— insists less on the material element of art than on the subjective element that makes the work of art: precisely, the spirit as artist [11].

It is worth asking, then, what reflections Hegel points out about the artist in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. The figure of the artist integrates the figures of the artisan and the skilled master craftsman in that his action transforms the matter: the stone is transformed into sculpture by chiseling it, the clay is molded and solidifies to give way to the ritual vessels and amphorae, etc. Mimetic ecstasy runs through all these figures, but only the artist is capable of carrying mimesis (*Nachahmen*) to the extent of giving the impression that appearance is about to awaken to a vitality that is foreign to it: the representations of nature and organic life allowed the purification of sculptural art to the point that the sculptor produces figures that are both zooanthropomorphic (hybrids of animal and man) and purely anthropomorphic. The philosopher writes: „Die menschliche Gestalt streift die tierische, mit der sie vermischt war, ab; das Tier ist für den Gott nur eine zufällige Verkleidung; [...]“. And he continues: „[...] es tritt neben seine wahre Gestalt, und gilt für sich nichts mehr, sondern ist zur Bedeutung eines Anderen, zum bloßen Zeichen, herabgesunken“ Pinkard translates [11].

The human shape strips off the animal shape with which it was intermingled. For the god, the animal is only a contin-

gent disguise; the animal walks alongside its true shape and no longer counts for itself as valid. Its meaning has degenerated into that of something other, into a mere sign [4].

**For his part, Inwood says:** The human shape strips off the animal shape with which it was mixed; the animal is for the god only a contingent disguise; it steps alongside its true shape and no longer has any worth for itself, but is reduced to the meaning of something other than itself, to a mere sign [5].

The humanization of sculpture goes hand in hand with the anthropoformation of the god, but it is not capable of producing the incarnate god beyond the story that being narrative gives him: the god does not reside in the human body nor is he yet capable of genuinely inhabiting it, although in the pre-classical archaic world and even in the classical world, judging by Plato’s testimonies, power has led rulers and those close to them to feel and think of themselves as “god-like” (ἰσόθεον, *Phaedrus* 258c2). But art cannot engender the concept of God because that task corresponds to religion: art can only take it and represent it under its different conceptions. It only remains to show it more clearly than religion can show it by itself. That is why artistic language can serve various religious beliefs, that is, not only different and divergent from each other but even opposite and contradictory. For the same reason, furthermore, that artistic religions (*die künstlerischen Religionen*) find in art a vehicle to expand and disseminate, taking advantage of it and subordinating it to their didactics and pedagogy. But the propaedeutics of art is different from the propaedeutics of religion. From reading the text it is inferred that Hegel thinks that the pre-artistic stage of transformative action that is applied to matter does not exceed the horizon of the manufactured, since historically the true transformative action of the artistic spirit has not yet been deployed. This revolutionary and transformative deployment will occur first in Greek art and, later, in Roman art.

In that sense, then, what does our philosopher think about art as a transformative action? The *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is very clear about this: Hegel knows that the Art is a prop in the spirit’s struggle to escape from that state of subordination to which the dogmatic principle of religions subjects it, which inhibits the development of critical thinking and invites sensitivity to conform with what is given. External responses, already made, sedimented by tradition, can effectively alienate the spirit and, when adhered to, even make these prostheses naturalize. From our perspective, Hegel seeks to explain the foundation of the autonomy of art. In this search for a foundation for the autonomy of art, which means that art becomes an end, Hegel thinks that art is not only acting action but, above all, transforming action. We have already said it: not only of the matter that gains form, but above all of the spirit that is purified and knows itself better and more clearly as a creator. Hence, unlike the craftsman, the artist is a spiritual worker.

Along these lines, what assertion does Hegel make about the artist’s work? In sum, Hegel asserts that the work of the art-

ist (*Kunstler*) is qualitatively different from the work of the artisan (*Werkmeister*). This different quality lies, in fact, in two reasons. In the first place, the opposition between instinct and spirit speaks of the different attitudes that both agents have towards mechanical work in relation to the productive movement that emanates from the active body: effort, fatigue and pain are the result of the work. In both cases, but the artist, who is the craftsman who has become a spiritual worker, knows the work of art as a work hers, that is, he knows the difference between his self, his work, his effort and his work, which is a radical expression of his individuality, and his resulting otherness, the work itself existentially emancipated as another. The craftsman, on the other hand, has not yet developed awareness of his individuality nor, much less, of otherness. Unlike the artisan, anchored in the pre-ethical world, the artist is an ethical spirit. Secondly, the artist is aware that the work he has produced has gained independent existence and, consequently, sufficient autonomy to enter the social world, even regardless of his will: he also knows that others can spread it without his consent and even against all possible restrictions. Both reasons point out that the work of art, which is the result of the artist's work, can, in fact, be alienated to such an extent.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Art at the Service of Religion

That the work of art gains autonomy with respect to the artist who produces it does not mean that it is absolutely and unconditionally autonomous, since as a thing it is governed by the laws that affect the generated beings that perish. Religion will appropriate the work of art and find a way to put it at its service. In what sense, then, according to Hegel, is art at the service of religion? Or, put another way: what does the work of art require, according to Hegel, to determine herself as religious? The abstract work of art that arises in the context of the religion of art has before it, as its foundation, the image of the gods: the ritual requires the chant for the praise and veneration of the god, but the chant goes through a formal moment in which it acquires a form of poetic art, namely: the hymn. This stopping of the preparations of the rite in the poetic and musical composition of the hymn speaks of a rest of the devout soul in the language not ordinary of everyday life, but of a rest in the divine language. When the work of art enters that sphere and goes through the process of divinization and sacralization, it becomes religious. In the hymn, human language is no longer expressed, but divine language.

Consequently, without losing its abstract being, the hymn becomes a divine work of art. But in what sense is the work of art divine? The hymn is not the only way, however, in which divine language is expressed. Unlike prophecy and the oracle, which interpret signs and signals, and which makes explicit a renunciation of rationality, the hymn goes through a moment of correction that adjusts its form, its meter and its intentionality. One does not arrive at worship, therefore, without due preparation. Regarding the hymn, then, Hegel recognizes the reciprocal influence that theater and ritual have: the preparations for the dramatization of the ritual sacrament do not omit the contingent of the white garments

with which the purified soul is externally covered, but rather make such dresses a means of preserving purity that facilitates access to the absolute.

Die Seele vollbringt diese Läuterung mit Bewußtsein; doch ist sie noch nicht das Selbst, das in seine Tiefen hinabgestiegen, sich als das Böse weiß, sondern es ist einseiendes, eine Seele, welche ihre Äußerlichkeit mit Waschen reinigt, sie mit weißen Kleidern antut, und ihre Innerlichkeit den vorgestellten Weg der Beiten, Strafen und Belohnungen, den Weg der die Besonderheit entäußernden Bildung überhaupt durchführt, welchen sie in die Wohnungen und die Gemeinschaft der Seligkeit gelangt [11].

According to this passage, for Hegel drama becomes ritualized and the more insistent this tendency is, the more spiritual the work of art becomes. But this does not mean, in any way, that human language and divine language become identical and indistinguishable, or even that they overlap, since each retains what belongs to it and keeps them specifically distinct and distinguishable — although the Divine language, for the anthropological-sociological perspective that critically studies religion, is nothing more than a radical mode of articulable human language.

What, then, is the difference between human language and divine language? To put it very synthetically: human language deals with the small and prosaic things of everyday life, while divine language enunciates itself, and for himself as he gains clarity and becomes more transparent in the concept, he conceives of himself.

Das Wesen [geistes] schaut nur sich selbst in seinem Fürsichsein an; es ist in dieser Entäußerung nur bei sich; das Fürsichsein, das sich von dem Wesen ausschließt, ist das *Wissen des Wesens seiner selbst*; es ist das Wort, das ausgesprochen den Aussprechenden entäußert und ausgeleert zurückläßt, aber ebenso unmittelbar vernommen ist, und nur dieses Sichselbstvernehmen ist das Dasein des Wortes.

**Pinkard Translates:** The essence intuits only itself in its being-for-itself; in this self-relinquishing, it is only at one with itself, is the being-for-itself which excludes itself from the *essence, is the essence's knowing of itself*; it is the word [*Wort*], which, when spoken, relinquishes the speaker and leaves him behind as emptied and hollowed out, but which is likewise immediately interrogated, and it is only this hearing-and-interrogating-of-itself that is the existence of the word [4].

**In the Translation by Inwood, in Turn, we Read:** The essence intuits only its own Self in its Being-for-itself; in this estrangement of itself it is only at home with itself: the Being-for-itself that excludes itself from the essence is essence's knowledge of its own self; it is the word which, when uttered, estranges him who utters it and leaves him emptied behind, but which is just as immediately heard, and only this hearing of its ownself is the Being-there of the word [5].

Contrary to what is usually induced by a transcendentalist

sector of specialized criticism, for Hegel the absolute is not uprooted: its expression is contingent and depends greatly on the technological and intellectual development of the spirit at the given/determined moment in which philosophy turns to art, and takes it as an object of philosophical study, research, reflection, and criticism. This is, in fact, how Hegel understands the historical link between art and religion: dimensions of the spirit that contribute to strengthening the vocation of the spirit to achieve the maximum possible perfection. Art reminds religion that it can give more of itself so that the expression of the absolute does not become dogmatic, reified or ossified, since it is always an imperfect expression, therefore it is perfectible to the extent that history is open to new experiences that is why religion is open to new formulations. If autonomous art implies that religion is demystified, this is because art reminds us that religion cannot be removed from the historical process—although religion can become alienated in ahistorical attitudes. It remains to explain how Hegel characterizes the emergence of the new autonomous art. To do this, he helps us distinguish between religious doctrine and artistic doctrine.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Religious Doctrine and Artistic Doctrine

In the philosophical foundation of the autonomy of art, the distinction between religious doctrine and artistic doctrine allows Hegel to speak of the opening of the spirit to the absolute based on the basic recognition of its own spirituality, that is: of the reality of its own spiritual being. Beyond the confluence between art and religion regarding the absolute, what is the difference between religious doctrine and artistic doctrine? Hegel explains that both have an impact on the historical-philosophical configuration of the critical notion of modern subjectivity as artistic-aesthetic sensitivity, beyond superfluous sensualism, and that the rupture and divergence influences and impacts historical change and gives rise to a new art, suitable to influence the revolutionary social transformation that the sensitivity of European culture experienced between the 18th and 19th centuries.

If religious doctrine aims to be immediate knowledge of the absolute, then what does artistic doctrine consist of (*künstlerisch*)? In the light of the present study we can affirm that it consists of the set of knowledge, techniques, acquaintance, methods and procedures capable of putting in motion the creative capacity that is required to make the work of art emerge. If one asks, then, what the difference is between religion and art, one must answer that art has a more flexible vocation to express the concerns and needs of the spirit, while religion, by requiring the logical-ritual moment, tends to the reification of religious truth when it turns it into dogma: when religion evades the absolute, it makes room for art.

In fact, specialized criticism discusses the meaning and reflective horizon of the Hegelian exposition in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*. Classical criticism from the middle of the last century thought, with Hyppolite, that the thematization of art in our treatise was irruptive and disruptive and that, therefore, it was difficult to understand the need for its insertion and its connection in the expository logic of the treatise:

«Hegel paraît avoir fait rentrer dans le cadre du développement phénoménologique ce qui tout d'abord n'était pas destiné à y, trouver place», writes Hyppolite [1]. Still in the mid-1970s, the most reputable critics expressed their bewilderment at the thematic diversity that the treaty in question addresses, to the point that, being stunned, they were unable to take the articulating step that the text demands from readers from Hegel [3, 16].

The philosophical reflection on the critical method with which Hegel articulates art, religion, and spirituality in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit* (1807) highlights the importance of the work of the spirit in the continuous effort to underpin self-learning, which emerges as a continuous and persistent challenge. In coherence with the philosopher's reasoning, we can affirm that when art achieves true autonomy with respect to religion, it not only consolidates the constitutive knowledge of art to make way for the diversification of artistic disciplines, but the spirit consolidates its own autonomy with respect to religion of art, religion and even philosophy as their own forms of appropriation of the absolute. Hegel sees in art the nurturing potential that is required to explain the spirit's continuous, urgent, and unending effort to know itself more and better. In no way does Hegel postulate an absolute autonomy of art, since he recognizes the historical, social, political, economic, and evaluative dependencies that intervene in the formation of art and its objects. Since the autonomy of art is relative, for that reason it is susceptible to either reductions or expansions. Hence, then, the importance of art in the Hegelian foundation of artistic creation and the work of the artist as moments of absolute spirit. If we understand Hegelian thinking well, we can safely say that art is a way in which the spirit knows itself.

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