



The Metaphysical Meaning of Art in F.W.J.Schelling's Philosophy with
special regard on plastic art

A Summary of the Doctoral Thesis

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The Purpose of the Thesis: We have set ourselves two main objectives within the scope of this doctoral research: a) a recuperation of Schelling aesthetics as an essentially metaphysical one (especially important in Romania, affected by an obvious lack of research on this topic) as well as b) a defence of its contemporary validity, against the background of the legitimacy crisis and multiple dead ends in modern aesthetics. This effort demands exegetical fidelity and a robust argumentative basis.

Our research's innovation: The most difficult effort consisted in the analysis of primary texts, in German, belonging to an extremely elaborated and abstract philosophical system. The main innovation relies in the appropriation and application of this classical and speculative aesthetics in the analysis of some forms of modern radical art. The result of this confrontation is, in light of our demonstrations that this aesthetics of a metaphysical type succeeds in explaining very well the positive and negative features of an anti-metaphysical art, such as the modern art is. It thus proves to be a fundamental reference for any radical aesthetical analysis.

I. Aesthetics in the Transcendental Philosophy

In his *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), Schelling develops a confrontation with Kant's transcendental idealism. He proceeds by establishing the terms of Kant's dualism, between subject and object, which covers a more profound distinction between apperception and the thing-in-itself, as simultaneous conditions of possibility for the phenomenon as such. Knowledge presupposes the convergence subjective – objective. Nature is the totality of the objective; the ego is the totality of the subjective. He who represents is conscious, that which is represented is unconscious. Therefore – either the objective comes first (and then we must explain how is the subjective attached) or the subjective comes first, and then we must explain how is the objective attached). The only solution is the determination of a point in which the analytic and the synthetic, the subject and the predicate, the concept and the object *coincide*. But the representation is the subjective, and the existence is objective. The only point of coincidence is the subjective that becomes object for itself, that is – the point of self-

consciousness, which is identical and different, containing within its unity the rigid Kantian duality. Schelling's solution is therefore that there's no horizontal solution, and that between and beyond these two worlds, the real and the ideal, there must exist a pre-established harmony, and this is inconceivable without the original identity and indifference of the two activities- the one that unconsciously produces the objective (the world) and the one that consciously manifests the subjective (the will). Nature must then appear as consciously produced and as the work of a blind mechanism.

The object, as opposite, which is found in front of the ego seems, of course to be something else than the ego – and such it is that it must appear, as if there's something admitted within the ego that does not belong to the ego. But the ego is the basis of any admittance, and, on a different level, we, the ones who philosophize, know that the fact of being limited proper to the objective is grounded in the subjective. Still, the intuitive ego cannot simultaneously intuit and intuit itself as intuitive. The necessity of a principle of idealism derives from the impossibility of an original exteriority between objective and subjective. And a coincidence of the opposite is only possible through the mediation of a single principle, the principle of all science. The condition for such mediation is, however, that in the principle of knowledge itself, the original content of knowledge to presuppose the original form, and vice versa. In any other case we face an original separation that cannot be traversed in order to deduce one from the other. But the spirit is an island, and in any dualism we need an unjustified *leap* to get to matter or vice versa. The solution of this dual-monism is presented as the only one able to consistently explain the ego's mechanism. Philosophy is accomplished when it arrives to explain this postulate identity between the unconscious activity and the conscious one within the sphere of the subjective (not only within the objective - that is within nature). But, Schelling says, this unified activity manifests itself within the subject only in **art**.

“Die objektive Welt ist nur die ursprüngliche, noch bewusstlose Poesie des Geistes; das allgemeine Organon der Philosophie – und Schlussstein ihres ganzen Gewölbes – die Philosophie der Kunst“¹

6. Between the theoretical philosophy – which unveils the genesis and the structure of nature, and the practical philosophy, that unveils the genesis and the structure of freedom, there is a void. The unconscious product of nature and the free product of will find themselves

¹ Schelling, F.W.J. *System des Transzendentalen Idealismus*, in Werke. Band 9,1. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 2005, S. 40.

in an open opposition. But this opposition cannot be ultimate, according to previous deductions regarding the necessity of a first principle. In order to know where the two worlds are communicating Schelling indicates that we need to identify a product that has the attributes of both previous products, and that objectifies the unity of nature and freedom. Here we must, however, recognize the unity of the unconscious and the conscious in an inverted form that within nature. Nature begins unconsciously, and ends up consciously. The activity we search for must begin consciously and ends up unconsciously. Within this product, the free and conscious activity and the necessary and unconscious activity must stand united, *but this unity must still be consciously reflected*. But this, according to Schelling, is exactly the artistic activity, and the product we have been searching for is the artistic product. The intellect will recognize the identity within this object once it is realized, that is – accomplished. Then, the separation within the product disappears, and the effect of this disappearance induces an infinite satisfaction to the intelligence that finally recognizes the identity when the opposition closes. But this satisfaction coincides with the ending of freedom's manifestation that began with the actualization of the product. The intelligence will testify to the objectivity of the product, paradoxically emerged from within the free and subjective efforts. Then it will consider the perfection of the product as a *favor* that has harmonized the subjective and the objective activity. And this unknown, concludes Schelling, is precisely the Absolute that contains the ground of the pre-established harmony. It is reflected, within the object, as destiny, as unknown force that accomplishes that which the subject cannot. With this, the art becomes the metaphysical solution and the keystone of the whole system, because the aesthetical intuition reveals the unity of nature and freedom within a single product, the non-objective and the non-subjective principles that redeems the opposition between man and nature.

II. Aesthetics in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity

1. From the System of Transcendental Idealism to the System of Identity.

Schelling makes explicit his doctrine of identity (anticipated in the form of indifference in his System of transcendental idealism). We have made our point regarding the perennial debate over Schelling's turn from transcendental philosophy to the system of identity. We can distinguish continuity and discontinuity between the two stages of Schelling

philosophy. The indifference is the *indifference between the opposites*, and it is the result of a successive series of unification and a progressive overcoming of dualism. The *Indifferenzpunkt* here appears as a whole transcending the parts of the system, rendering possible the general harmony of the world of the subject with the world of the object as its own objectification. In his *Philosophy of Art* this identity is exposed in an inverted manner – affirmative and positive, as identity of form and content, while before it was only a negative limit (as in-difference of the subject and the object).

2. The Necessity and the Conditions of a Philosophy of Art.

Approaching the art through the elaboration of a “science” signifies the systematic organization of justifications, understanding the forms of art through reason. It is just by seizing the idea of the *whole* of a work of art, the relations between its parts, and of the whole with its parts can we access to a true aesthetical judgment. The rationale of this method is that, just like nature, art is an organic whole. From within the greatest freedom, a supreme order is born that offers us a most immediate access than nature inside the mystery of human spirit. The paradox of the art, in Schelling’s view is that it derives from the exercise of an absolute freedom but still generates uniformity and law (unlike the nature that also expresses necessity, in an unconscious way, however). The metaphysical meaning of the art is thus expressed from the beginning: art has a cognitive function. It is through art that we come to know what is *beyond* the phenomena - that is a part of the mysteries of human nature and spirit. Philosophy cannot provide a revelation that only a god can. However, it can express in ideas that which the true creator concretely intuitively. Here again the metaphysical meaning of art becomes apparent: just because the art is capable of assimilating, concentrating and expressing the infinity (as the infinity in a determinate potency), the philosophy of art makes sense. Just like philosophy, art doesn’t express things (just works of art), but their archetypes. However, in order to thematize the archetypes, it used from its inception mythological and religious symbols. Schelling justifies this fact precisely in virtue of the intrinsically metaphysical structure of art.

3. The Mythology as the matter of art. I

If philosophy considers ideas in their purity, without their real incorporation, art seizes ideas, personifies them so that the universal is no longer white (without particular colour) but is chromatic (incorporated into real figures). Thus, the play of mythological figures in art is not arbitrary. Mythological figures are not pure fiction. They are (an incredible formula for a postmodern epoch) absolutely real. We can understand absolute reality of the gods as reality and objectivity of the meanings incorporated in figures, that is through conceiving the reality of art's figures as realizations of ideas. "The gods are the ideas intuited in a real form" (§ 30). *The reality of mythology consists of the very fact their reality is precisely the realization of ideas.*

The features of mythology are: a) a suppression of the amorphous and the unlimited, the imposition of stable forms in opposition to the dark original background; b) everything that is born is derived from another form in a genealogical structure; c) mythology is predominantly finite, realistic; d) the infinity only appears in unity with the matter (not free, in its indetermination); e) the predominance of the limits appears also in the Greek tragedy, characterized by a morality of the limits recognition.

4. Religion as the matter of the art

After having established the features that make the mythology the essential matter of the art, Schelling brings in discussion also the problem of the religions, precisely the Christian one, in the framework of a comparison that prefigures a radical distinction of the mythology from the revelation in his late works *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1842) and *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (1854).

The Christian religion, as separated of the mythology, is not based on the interference of the infinite with the finite, but: a) The symbolization of the finite by the infinite, where the imagination is completely located on the territory of the intelligible, from where she descends and confers meaning to the nature (not inversely, while sensitizing the intelligible by the nature); b) The introduction of a disjunction between the infinite and the finite. Thus, the infinite remains involuntarily affected by a limit that is the finite, although what were taken

into account were exactly the transcendence and the infinity; c) The Judaic mythology, which is, nevertheless, purified through the naturalist representations. Here already appears the discharge of natural representations of the infinite, and the nature (the finite) receives its meaning by the general signification of the intelligible world. It continues by the face of Messiah, whom biography, prophesied in the Old Testament does not happen as an *allegory*, but as a *fact*; d) The modern world begins, therefore, by the separation of the nature, and the human become stateless tries to take its roots in the intelligible world. Schelling notices how, as a difference from the Greek mythology, which represents the infinite into the finite (as a symbolism where the infinite finds itself unified with the finite inside the finite), the Christian mythology represents a radical mutation; f) For the Greeks the *mythos* was a problem of the *species*, of the people. For the Moderns, religion belonged to the *individual*: the prophets are the individual emblem for the access to the revelation. In the world of the revelation one finds, nevertheless, a suprasensible world superimposed over the sensitive world, and the history is, of fact, a suprasensible history that enters into the sensitive world through the miracle, while arising of some non conditioned thing into the phenomenon.

5. The ontology of the work of art

We exposed Schelling's solution concerning the problem of the translation from the art's universal matter to his particular form. As well in German idealism, and to Schelling, we confront ourselves with a dual-monism, with the problem of the transition from the universal towards the particular) - as much in the speculative philosophy, as in the philosophy of the art.

Schelling's response at the tension between the universality of the matter and the particularity of the form which specifies a concrete and individual work of art is that the universal and the particular are not originally dissociated. This scission would be a secondary fact of the intellect, and it is not present in the case of the imagination and the reason that are analytical faculties, not synthetic ones. The work of art expresses already this unity of the universal and the particular at the particular's level, so as the philosophy expresses the same unity, but at the universal's level. In this section we intended to clarify Schelling's position concerning a) the work of art's attributes and b) the esthetical idea's transition in the concrete work of art.

6. The metaphysical meaning of the music

By using the Kantian association of the arithmetic with temporal intuition, Schelling relates the music's temporality with its arithmetical nature already marked by Pythagoras (the music is a self numeration of the soul) and Leibniz (*musica est raptus numerare se nescientis*) In fact, the music is an art saturated by a rational-mathematical component.

6.1. The Forms of the Music:

a) The rhythm. As an original fundament of any kind of music, the rhythm is a primary form of constituting the unity into the multiple. According to its most abstract concept, the rhythm is: „*Die in der Musik selbst wieder als besondere Einheit begriffene Einbildung der Einheit in die Vielheit oder reale Einheit ist der Rhythmus*“².

The rhythm is described by Schelling as being a mystery common for the *art* and *nature*, and he considers that the *nature* inspired the rhythm to the human by a non-mediated way.

It is almost impossible to find something that may be called beautiful that proves not rhythm. It is therefore *abstract*, as a sort of base or a sort of *skeleton* which predetermines the dynamic (speed and repetition) of the sounds and tonalities that are the *chair* of the music. The rhythm is realised when the mere accidental succession is obeyed to a necessity. By consequence, there is no more the time that subordinates everything, but the rhythm is now the one coordinating the time.

b) The modulation. If the rhythm is a unity in the diversity, we must see now, towards a superior level, that the rhythm's variety it is not only quantitative, but also *qualitative*, this being an aspect that develops and adds a concrete character to the *rhythmical abstraction*: „*In diese Beziehung ist nun Modulation die Kunst, die Identität des Tons, welcher in dem Ganzen eines musikalischen Werks der herrschende ist, in der qualitativen Differenz*

² Cf. Schelling, F.W.J. *Philosophie der Kunst*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990, S.135-136.

*ebenso zu erhalten, wie durch den Rhythmus dieselbe Identität in der qualitativen Differenz beobachtet wird*³.

c) **The melody.** Schelling gets the melody as an equivalence connection between the rhythm and the modulation. The *rhythm*'s synthesis with the *modulation* offers the *melody*: „Man kann also sagen: der Rhythmus = erster Dimension, Modulation = zweiter, Melodie = dritter. Durch den ersten ist die Musik für die Reflexion und das Selbstbewusstsein, durch die zweite für die Empfindung und das Urteil, durch die dritte für Anschauung und Einbildungskraft bestimmt“⁴.

6.2. The connection between the melodic and harmonic music.

Schelling surprises the essential aspects of the harmonic music by connection to the metaphysical vision implied – this being a contribution of the music's ontology which the musical critics and the musicology cannot offer: „Im gemeinen Sprachgebrauch sagt man von einem Tonkünstler, dass er die Melodie verstehe, wenn er einen einstimmigen durch Rhythmus und Modulation ausgezeichneten Gesang setzen kann, dass er Harmonie, er der Identität, welche im Rhythmus in die Differenz aufgenommen wird, auch noch Breite (Ausdehnung nach der zweiten Dimension) zu geben weiss, also wenn er mehrere Stimmen, deren jede ihre eigne Melodie hat, in ein wohlklingendes Ganzes zu vereinigen weiss. Dort ist offenbar Einheit in Vielheit, hier Vielheit in Einheit, dort Sukzession, hier Coexistenz“⁵.

In the harmonic music the rhythm is the essential music. The harmony is the whole here, and that subordinates the rhythm. Therefore, the music makes us perceive, *by and through* the rhythm or harmony the universal's body's form movement, the pure form liberated from the object or the matter. The music, regarded conclusively in the art's system, holds a double antinomian determination: a) on the one side it is the most general and the most hermetical among arts, which expresses just the pure form of the movements, separated from its corporality. Therefore, by quitting the „firm“ territory of the objects, the music comprises a stock of indistinction and chaos, being neither rational, as the philosophy, nor

³ Cf. Schelling, F.W.J. *Philosophie der Kunst*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990, S.139.

⁴ *Ibid.*, S.140.

⁵ *Ibid.*, S.142.

verbal as the poetry. b) on the other side, precisely because the music is the most unlimited among the arts.

7. The metaphysical meaning of the painting

The metaphysical meaning of the art is to represent into form the thing itself. We are far from the Kantian dualism, and we find at Schelling an art's epistemology where the beauty expresses a side of the truth. The system constructs the particular forms of the art.

7.1. The inherent elements of the painting:

a) The light. The light is the ideal unity as far as it is comprised in the frame of the real unity. But the *space* is already a universal form of the reality, the homogeneity where the real differences appear. Therefore, that thing through which appear the differences into space must be something (even more) ideal by connection with the space, which is not filled as the matter is, but it is traversed without transforming the various things. The light's *ideality* must be put in connection with the ideal character of the space. In both situations we have the real diversity of the bodies. Both are, though, enough homogeny and „immaterial” in order to constitute the ideal identity inside the real unity. Schelling distinguishes with great clarity the *metaphysical light* from the *physical light*, but considers the physical light as a display into the phenomenon the metaphysical light. Therefore the art, as far as it uses and expresses the light, it is, herself, metaphysical: *„Das Licht ist das in der Natur scheinende Ideale, der erste Durchbruch des Idealismus. Die Idee selbst ist das Licht, aber absolutes Licht. In dem erscheinenden Licht erscheint sie als Ideales, als Licht; aber nur als relatives Licht, relativ-Ideales. Sie legt die Hülle ab, mit der sie sich in der Materie bekleidet; aber, um eben als Ideales zu erscheinen, muss sie im Gegensatz gegen das Reale erscheinen“*⁶

b) The resonance/ the body. By resonance, the *body* is pulled out from the indifference towards itself and put in movement. The resonance, for it puts the body in

⁶ *Ibid.*, S.151.

motion, would be „the soul” of that thing, meaning the ideal in the relation with that particular real (the movement is for Schelling the *life* in a sense that the mechanics does not accept). An absolute light that totally melts the differences (allusion to Spinoza) could not enter inside the phenomenon but by its set up against bodies.

c) **The colour.** From the light’s synthesis with the body appears the darkened light which is the colour: „*Das Licht kann als Licht nur in der Entgegensetzung mit dem Nicht-Licht, und demnach nur als Farbe erscheinen. Der Körper ist überhaupt Nicht-Licht, sowie das Licht dagegen Nicht-Körper ist. [...] Licht mit Nicht-Licht verbunden ist nun allgemein getrübt Licht, d.h. Farbe*”⁷. Schelling gets here in a debate with Newton’s doctrine on light that admits a causal unilateral rapport of the light by the refraction of the light while passing through the transparent bodies. For he did not consider the body itself, and its necessary correlation with the light, Newton transposed all the chromatic diversity inside the light itself, as a totality (fascicle) that mechanically decomposes in seven rays. Schelling defends that, in fact, the colours do not pre-exist into the light, but they are the result of the *light’s* combination with the *non-light* (the body), from where derived not only the physical effects, but also the colour’s artistic effects. Therefore, in the light’s identity, the non-light introduces the difference and it is only so that the spectral whole appears. Newton supposes that the difference already exists in the identity because he does not take in account the non-light but only as something passive penetrated by the light. But, Schelling says that precisely the darkness is what divides the light into colours. We observe here a general characteristic of the German idealism, *the conversion of the negative into positive*, by difference from the classical metaphysics which considers that the negative or the darkness is a mere absence or privation.

7.2. The particular forms of the painting

a) **The drawing.** The drawing is the real form within the painting, by the delimitation of the identity that enters in a certain difference and particularises itself. It is the painting’s real *Grund*, so as the rhythm is for the music. Schelling considers the dispute between the drawing and the coloured as being false, because both of them must be equilibrated in the painting. Without the drawing, the accomplished colour does not suffice in order to give the art’s completion. The form brings the things into the light, and after, the colour offers matter into this form. The drawing comports some basic demands:

⁷ *Ibid.*, S.153.

a) **The perspective.** Schelling defends that we cannot conceive that the ancient art have not acquiesced the perspective, considered as defining for the modern art. It is necessary for the execution's correctitude. If we don't adjust from a perspective point of view a form or a volume, then the *monstrosities* arise there.

b) **The truth.** The drawing must be subordinated to the truth, says Schelling, but not in a strictly imitative way. In fact, it must survey right beyond the phenomenon. But not without the phenomenon as the abstractionists or in the anti-figurative art. It must reach into the core of the phenomenon, by guarding the form of the phenomenon. For example, there where it is about the human figure, the noblest form, and the painter will not reinvent it, but it should surprise in its real form the eternal and the intimacy of its nature, for he never paints just an individual.

c) **The essential.** The drawing must select only what is necessary (eliminating all that is useless or imperfect, such as the decor, the clothes or the circumstances that will deviate the contemplation from the idea. The beauty appears precisely by removing the accidental empirical solutions).

d) **The expression.** Representing the interior by the exterior reclaims intuition and also virtuosity in execution.

b) The clear-obscure. The form is the first condition of the art and by drawing (contour) determines the undetermined, by giving it act and reality. But by the clear-obscure, the painting resumes the ideally the drawing's reality. By the clear-obscure: „*ergreift die Kunst den ganzen Schein des Körperlichen, und stellt ihn, abgehoben von dem Stoffe, als Schein und für sich dar*”⁸.

The clear-obscure is, from a technical point of view, the game of the light and the shadow toward which the thing's shape is suggested. The clear-obscure already points by the light the difference in between the surface and the thoroughness. A law of the natural clear-obscure is that the clear colours and the dark ones get in contact with each other and influences reciprocally by attenuating themselves.

⁸ *Ibid.*, S.175.

From this game of reflections, between ideal and real, appears the clear-obscure's magic. The air's perspective changes the colours intensity depending on the distance. The shaded tones become shadows, and then become monochromes by the distance increases. The artistic meaning of the clear-obscure it's huge. It is the *magical* side of the painting. Schelling exemplifies its esthetical and metaphysical force using the *Night* painting, where Correggio's genius succeeded to transpose within the painting the source of light itself. The clear-obscure is the identity, the *indifference* where the *light* and the *dark* melt together, a masse that differences by itself and generates a deep silence. The clear-obscure is necessary for it is the sole manner to obtaining the *appearance's corporality*.

c) **The coloured.** As we saw, the colour is the light's synthesis with the body. In the clear-obscure appears the light as a surface effect of the body. Only in the colour the light and the body are truly one.

Therefore, Schelling identified the three particular forms specific to painting and showed the way that they rewind the general traits of art. The *drawing* snatches the form from its abstraction, and, by a fringe, stabilises it by keeping the thing as a particular one. The *clear-obscure* puts the so obtained body in the framework of the light, by evidencing its corporality. And the colour accomplishes everything by transforming all the way through the deepness the light into the matter and the matter into the light. Between the real of the drawing and the ideal of the clear-obscure, the circle closes with the indifference of the real and the ideal, with the colour through which the light solidifies by becoming the matter within the form (by creating the appearance of the kind or the specific quality of the matter that the thing is made).

8. The metaphysical meaning of the sculpture

The evolution of Schelling's system is ascending, as for each ulterior form includes and surpasses de previous forms. The *music* represents the inorganic form the matter, the things transformation (the essence within the form). The *paining* represents the organic (the form within the existence). The *sculpture*, in *lato sensu*, expresses the essence and the form reunited and indifferent. It expresses the idea into a *real object*, in a separated corporality, and it is the superior art between the plastic arts. Therefore, if the music develops in time, but without the space, and the painting simulates the tridimensional space on a surface, but

timeless, the sculpture enters properly in space, by the volume, and by being in the real world (not a figure within a surface), lays under the time.

The music is quantitative, the painting is qualitative. The sculpture is their reunion, their synthesis. The sculpture comprises all the anterior artistic forms, and comprises itself. In conclusion, the division of the matter must comprise a) the music from the sculpture, which is the architecture; b) the picture from the sculpture, which is the bas-relief, and c) the sculpture itself.

8.1. The architecture or the music of the sculpture.

The architecture is music into stone. The architecture belongs to the sculpture as a representation of the idea into a separated corporal object. That thing appears in nature as the animal's artistic instinct, which is sort of analogue with the procreation instinct, but its main characteristic is the identity or at least the relation of whatever whom produces it with the product. The bees create the honeycomb, the spider the web from itself. The cancer produces its own carapace as an external skeleton. At a higher level, the birds build their nest, and here we already have present in nature the instinct that from humans brings to architecture. The difficulties which appear in this case are resolved in an original manner in Schelling's system. Its relation with the nature would clarify the architecture's place within the beaux-arts. Schelling shows that the architecture has not for a purpose just the need, and that the beauty makes that the essence (the objective) claims the form (the subjective) for itself, against its conditioning by the utility (not to mention also the temple, practically deprived from a specific utility, by opposition with the Bauhaus, the functional style by excellence, that, for this reason, could be considered by Schelling just a formal art, therefore a subjective one, but unreleased, that does not express anything, and it only serves, being an object, but not an art object).

The architecture itself has a rhythmical, a harmonic and a melodic part: § 115: „*Der architektonische Rythmus drückt sich in der periodischen Einteilungen des Gleichartigen [...] aus*“⁹. Here we are talking about the quantitative proportions in between the elements of the whole: the number and the colons profile, the dimensions between the colons. If the proportions are not optimal, we have exaggerated expressions – the big colons give a bearish

⁹ *Ibid.*, S.234.

aspect, the colons too small signify vulnerability. The main difference is that „*In der Musik sind es die Weiten Zeitentfernungen, in der Architektur Raumweiten*”¹⁰. Also § 117: „*Der harmonische Teil der Architektur bezieht sich vornehmlich auf die Proportionen oder Verhältnisse und ist die ideale Form dieser Kunst*“¹¹.

The height and the verticality are specific also for the human body, but also for the architecture. Here the rhythm is subjected to the *harmonic superposes* which represents the ideal part from the architecture: „*die Architektur schliesst sich auch dadurch ganz an die Musik an, so dass ein schönes Gebäude in der That nichts anderes als eine mit dem Auge empfundene Musik, eine nicht in der Zeit – sondern in der Raumfolge aufgefassten (simultanes) Konzert von Harmonien und harmonischen Verbindungen ist*“¹². Also §118 „*Der melodische Teil der Architektur entsteht aus der Verbindung des Rhythmischen mit dem Harmonischen*“¹³.

8.2. The sculpture

The sculpture represents the ideas by: a) *independent* objects (unlike the bas-relief which is a „partial sculpture”, fixed on a fundament); b) *organic* objects (unlike the architecture which works in inorganic only suggesting the organic). Through these characteristics, the sculpture contains its space itself, by becoming an *imago mundi*. Schelling arrives now, by successive degrees at the melting point of the plastic arts. From music, that suggests the most general movements of the nature, the time and the progress, stepping through the painting, that brings the light and the colour, the sculpture expresses the ideas in a supreme way by the human figure. The fact that the sculpture works in the gross matter it is not an obstacle, because this realism is absorbed by the idealisation of the matter, so that the perfect created organism expresses the fact that the *matter's essence is the reason, and the point where the matter and the reason coexistent it is precisely the human being, the sculpture's supreme object*.

The sculpture does not express adequately neither through inorganic, neither through the vegetal, because here appears just the species, and the individuals do not truly exist. The sculpture has a decisively metaphysic potential – it is the most synthetic between plastic arts.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, S.234.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, S.238.

¹² *Ibid.*, S.239

¹³ *Ibid.*, S.240-241.

What remains specific for sculpture is the fact that the *absolute incomparabile magnum* is comprised, captured into the finitude, and it is intuited from a sole glare, without being affected in its greatness. The infinite from the form's finitude becomes the symbol of the absolute infinite. This kind of understanding offered by the sculpture is a metaphysical one, because it gives a plastic intelligibility for what it is *beyond the form*. The sculpture realises so, in a supreme way, the works of art essence. For this reason, the colossal and the sublime are specific for the sculpture (these attributes must be comprehended separated by the empirical space external to the work, because the sculpture has its space within, it is a world closed inside, self-sufficient and independent, thus an infinity concentrated in a finite).

The sculpture satisfies for itself the criteria representing the *gods*, meaning the absolute ideas (ideal and real at the same time), intuited in a real way (§28, §129), meaning by representing a superhuman *indifference* that can only exist in a divine nature. So it appears a non-temporally state in sculpture, where we see through a fulfilment that transcends the matter's limit, and the gods rest themselves in happiness and in peace, above the cares that torment the human being, in a superior equilibrium, serene, in a sublime indifference, as beings in themselves and for themselves, unlimited and unaffected by the exterior, infinite in their internal accomplishment.

III. The confrontation of Schelling's aesthetic with the modern art

The main question of this section is: *what would Schelling say about the modern art?* In order to verify the violability of Schelling's aesthetics, we analysed some currents of modern art, proving the relevance of the interpretative categories of the philosophy of art even in the case if some currents considered totally innovative and radical. We argued that, from Schelling's system point of view, *against* some aesthetic decisions that have not a sufficient foundation and cannot persuade only for they are proclaiming themselves as innovative art. We saw how proclaimed anti-metaphysical aesthetics still comprise unnumbered elements and metaphysical suppositions, and affirmed involuntarily in many forms what they are declaratively denying. We consider that this indirect presence of the metaphysical problems in the art proclaimed as anti-metaphysical represents an argument for Schelling's aesthetical system.

a) The expressionism. Probably the most significant and concentrated formula which gives essence to the dominant theme of the expressionist current, as a radical experience that

offers an understanding key of the individual drama we find it to Edvard Munch (1863-1944): „*Krankheit, Wahnsinn und Tod hielten wie schwarze Engel Wache an meiner Wiege und begleiteten mich seitdem durchs Leben*”¹⁴(o.t.).

This dominant of Munch's conception constitutes a terrible challenge for the philosophy of the identity, where the truth, the good and the beautiful harmoniously interlock. Here we have a difference that separates the identity and where it is not regarded their transcendental unity. Schelling says that, in order to recognise a work of art we must be able to acknowledge an infinite content within the finitude of a particular sensible form. For Schelling, the organism represents a real copy of the nature. The matter is, also, immanent in its essence, is reason, but the organism is the most accomplished expression of the reason, by its character of a closed totality, as a succession turned towards itself, where its parts find their harmonious place in the whole. Even though biological, the organism reflects the reason, thus the infinity, and because contains in itself the principle of the inner movement, it is not totally conditioned as the organic is. The reason, which integrates synthetically the analytical series of the finite intellect's conditions, it is also a thicker replica of the infinite. It reflects the auto sufficiency and the infinite's accomplishment. The human being, shows Schelling, find itself in the peak of the being's chain, because he is the only organism that is also reason, and the only reason that is also an organism. Therefore, also physically, and spiritually, the human reflects the infinite. That's why the human face is the supreme theme of the painting, because the physic expresses here in the most transparent manner the spiritual inner.

For Munch, the things are different, but different in the sense of opposed – the organism is marked by disease, and the reason is affected by madness. The disease separates the healthy organism's unity. A part does not listens anymore the wholes harmony and by this induces pain (physical, but also spiritual) and sooner or later brings to death. The madness disintegrates de whole of the reason – we say that it is not in his whole minds, thus we understand that the reason is totality. The death is the final conclusion of the disease and of the madness: it does not separate the organism's unity, it does not cut the reason's unity, but it detaches the reason from the organism, and then liberates the inorganic from the organic harmony. The parts are coming out form the whole and disintegrate. In expressionism, the experiences radicalise and the particular aesthetical form cannot follow strictly the formal

¹⁴ Cf. Ragna Stang: Edvard Munch der Mensch und der Künstler. Königstein im Taunus 1979, S.31.

standard that made it adequate to suggest the infinity from the finite and the universal idea from the particular object. In Munch we have a tragic vision of the retirement and of the partial absence of the infinity in the finite.

The expressionism thematize the experiences associated with the experience of this emptiness. Therefore, the *form's discourse* also suffers a metamorphosis – it cannot use pure contours, the harmonic proportions and the clear-obscure equilibrated.

b) The cubism. Along with the cubism we move away decisively from the traditional, ancient art in which Schelling formulated the philosophy of art. So, Schelling's aesthetics and the cubism seem to be *incommensurables*. Schelling, in some observations from *The Philosophy of Art* anticipates the possibility of some formulas that today we name cubists – even though only under the title of a unrecommended possibility. As we saw, without a real form, the ideal cannot be actualised, expressed. The sublime, as the absence of the forms, expresses for Schelling the chaos, meaning the total exceeding of the cosmos, but the sublime is difficult to realise in painting and it is rather a limit-case. In the cubism we have, for the first time, a programmatic rejection of the figurative and of the canonical techniques that assured the adequacy of the real form (through the drawled *outline*) to its specific universe.

Also, the perspective with its necessary illusion (illusion subordinated to the adequacy at the reality and the truth) it is rejected because of the unilateral and limited access which it offers to human towards the intended object. The innovation in execution appears for the first time with Picasso's painting known as *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* (1911). In here Picasso introduces the „broken faces“. In the right down corner of this painting, there is a character whose face regards towards us, but whose body it is turned at 90 degrees toward left. So, the perspective's rules are practically disabled. Instead of using the illusion created by the perspective in order to play harmoniously the figure, also the face and the profile are flattened, so that we see, theoretically, the front and the profile simultaneously, that is, we tend to see as many sides at the same time. Both Picasso and Braque argue that it is about a more fully contact with the objects. Picasso and Braque argue that it comes to contact with objects more fully. But these are fragmented, depicted and rearranged. Practically, the illusion of perspective that serves the truth is replaced by another illusion, who wants to show the objects decomposed in polyhedral sides, so that they can be visible as a three dimensional projection on a flat surface. But this procedure replaces the figurative with the disfigurative.

The arts purpose, says Schelling, is to notice the universal in a particular which it expresses allegedly. In fact, Schelling cautioned in the discussion concerning the perspective that by failing to respect the perspective (literally) will endeavour *monstrosities*. Schelling calls them, by anticipation, "monstrosities". The art critic Louis Vauxcelles, contemporary with the current's appearance calls them *cubist oddities*. Both, however, refers to works of art which brake the laws of the perspective. The fact that the human is subject to the laws of perspective represents the necessary side of art. Human's finitude enables him to glare at in an absolute manner.

c) The futurism. A huge debate of the German idealism concerned the theology. This should have reconciled the organic traditional vision with the mechanical scientific one. The result was the combination of the purpose with the blind finality. The nature looks, in Schelling's formula like the natural product has had finality, while the industry is blind. The Kantian formula of the pointless finality is emblematic for this synthesis. These reflections influenced decisively Bergson's philosophy, which radicalised unilaterally the intuition by intellect's default and the quality by the quantity's default, as a counterweight for the modern époque's materialism. It is auld how, even though profoundly inspired by Bergson, the futurism arrived to results that contrasted profoundly with this vitalist and neoromantic philosophy. They developed a *macchinolatria*, an apologia of the metal, the speed and the mechanisation of the humanity, as an epochal exceeding of humanities limits. If we find at Bergson the reprobation of the artificial and of the mechanical in the name of the authentic and the organic, the futurists obtain de opposite. They want to exceed the organics limits with the aid of the machine, as an extension of the natural human powers. For Schelling, the organism is an objectivised reason; a re-totalised succession which images reflects analogically the independence and the auto sufficiency of the spirit. The innovation of the futurists induces the mechanical fraction of the organic, its decomposition in successive established frameworks and the openness of the organic whole. This causes, essentially, the dehumanisation, because in order to break the organic whole the person's significance is disintegrated. The intention to exceed and to ameliorate the humanity crashes at the futurists in a disintegration of the organic which reflects a disintegration of the person.

d) The surrealism

The surrealist program includes a refusal of the order of the *real* and the *reason*, and an impulse of transcendence of this order. This thing realizes itself here and there also by breaking of the natural connections of the things with the events. Thus, the real form, the *outline*, is not disintegrated as it is in cubism or futurism.

In exchange, the forms are associated without a justification, derivation or correlation. By that, we have distinct traits at the level of the form by which the particular forms are mentioned as distinct and marked, but their juxtapositions do not listen of any logic. Thus, the drawing does not serve here for an imitation of the nature, such as the cubists feared. By contrary - and especially with Dali – in opposition to extreme descriptive harshness and of a terrible acuity of the detail, it is realized a counter-world, a dreamlike world, often absurd and grotesque. The execution of Dali is patient and shows a precision and scrupulosity worthy of the medieval calligraphy or of the Japanese miniatures. Although it is presented to ourselves a world absolutely unbelievable and purely dreamy, the clarity of the forms is almost photographic – ("photographs painted by the hand", as Dali itself had said). That is very unusual for the avant-garde movements, hostile towards the outline and towards the figurative structures, frightened by their mimetic threats. The surrealism succeeds to maintain the clarity and the figurative, but shocks by the strangeness, by the absurd associations, inexplicable and unintelligible between the clear and distinct forms, that, taken individually, are intelligible.

But we know from Schelling that which appears through the particular forms is only an absolute unity, the *idea in itself* and *for oneself*, the form is only the body that she dresses and through which she objectifies herself. Thus, to the difference of the cubists that have moved the contradiction inside the form, while disintegrating it, the surrealism associates the incompatible forms in a real manner. In a deeper meaning, while holding counts that every *form* reflects an *idea*, then the contradiction was practically moved out from *the interior of the form* to *the relations between forms*, therefore at the level of the relations between the ideas. Thus, the associative collision of the forms, and therefore, of the suggested ideas, produces the *absurd* at the whole.

We already underlined the associative voluntarism where the emancipation and the resolution of the contradiction between the dream and the reality comes back to the contingency, that is to say to the liberty that is not constrained by the requirements of reason's foundation. This is the point that separates Breton from Hegel – but also from Schelling. In

the aesthetic conception of Schelling, such as we already saw in the analysis of the *System of the transcendental idealism*, the art is simultaneously a conscious and an unconscious product, meaning that beyond the effort of the free subjectivity, always happens something of advantage, something of mysterious which makes that in a work of authentic always art intervenes also an unknown factor that completes and orients the final product.

Also in the *Philosophy of the art*, Schelling continues the analysis of the synthetic character of the art, that is a simultaneous product of liberty and necessity : „Wir nennen z. B. schön eine Gestalt, in deren Entwurf die Natur mit der größten Freiheit und der erhabensten Besonnenheit, jedoch immer in den Formen, den Grenzen der strengsten Notwendigkeit und Gesetzmäßigkeit gespielt zu haben scheint”¹⁵.

The paradox of the art is that, although it diverts from the absolute exercise of a liberty (the conscience), the art produces an order that ensures us the access to the mystery of the human spirit. Although free, the art produces nevertheless uniformity and regularity, that is to say that finally it results in the form of a superior necessity. From this standpoint, the mere associative, arbitrary freedom does not carry out – by the definition – with necessity towards the art. The one is the argument of which we are on Schelling had presented to Breton. For him, the surrealism would have been a license for everything, a *white check* offered to his will. Of course, André Breton was himself an exceptional face – but exactly for that the democratization of the surrealist rules cannot work out for everyone. Certainly, everyone is surrealist... while dreaming.

In the space of the dreams world, the things seem absurd, shocking by contrasts and by associations found by the otherness with the daily common sense. Nevertheless, even here, not much further from the psychoanalytic practice, it conceives as a goal exactly to seize the hidden connections, therefore the *hidden necessity* that worked concealed behind the dreamy liberty. Thus, Freud offers a position closed to the aesthetic mentioned below because it does not believe in the unilateral effect of the arbitrary, but, on the contrary, it looks for the chains that are not arbitrary and absurd.

e) The conceptual art

The technique (the art, the execution) corresponds to the *conscious* side of the work of art and represents all that it is intended and deliberated (while belonging to the reflection and to the abilities received). This part can be transmitted by the tradition and obtained

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, S.27.

through the style and the personal exercise, and it is called "art", in an older direction, Latin, term of *ars*. The inspiration corresponds to the *unconscious* part of the work of art and contains what cannot be learned or received by the exercise, but can be described only as a *native gift* or a free and mysterious favour of the nature. This is what Schelling calls „poetry” in the art. Schelling considers that none of them has a value in itself, and a masterpiece can attain the apogee of the mistress only by the merger of these two elements. Being given the general current of the *anti-figurative* abstractisation from the contemporary art, the importance of the technique has considerably dropped.

One presupposes that the talent or the inspiration stayed both equally distributed in an artistic manner that claims and obtains levels of a more and more lowered technical elaboration. Thus, the conceptual art *seems* to express the inspiration, but with a random technique, being thus the imbalance of a content without forms.

The final conclusion

The art is intrinsically metaphysical – more precisely, it is the metaphysical in a physical form, such as it is updated in the conscience, not in the nature. The specificity of Schelling’s analysis consists in the apperception of the ontological principles of the art that predetermines the stylistic structures of the various aesthetic currents. Schelling’s arguments allowed us to indicate the validity of this conception even in the case of the modern art, that is predominant anti-metaphysical and that determines, voluntarily or involuntarily, by an adherence or by a rejection, the metaphysical structure of the art.