

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

The Development of Individuality through the Perspective of Art,
in the Transition from Ancient Egypt to Ancient Greece:
A Philosophical Anthropology

BACHELOR THESIS

Filip J. Lupsina

Bratislava, 2022

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BACHELOR THESIS

Undergraduate Study Program: Liberal Arts

Study Field: 3.1.6 Political Science

Bachelor Thesis Advisor: Jon B. Stewart, PhD., Dr. habil. phil. et theol.

Qualification: Bachelor of Arts (BA)

Date of Submission: January 31, 2022

Date of Defence: May 15, 2022

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is a work of my own and has not been published in whole or in part elsewhere. All literature sources used in this thesis are attributed and cited in references.

In Bratislava, January 31, 2022

Filip J. Lupsina

Author: Filip J. Lupsina

Title: The Development of Individuality through the perspective of Art, in the Transition from Ancient Egypt to Ancient Greece: A Philosophical Anthropology

University: Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts

Thesis Advisor: Jon B. Stewart, PhD., Dr. habil. phil. et theol.

Thesis Defense Committee: Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc., doc Samuel Abrahám, PhD., prof. PhDr. Iveta Radičová, PhD., Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. Silvia Miháliková

Head of Defense Committee: Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc.

Place, year, scope of the thesis: Bratislava, 2022, 63 pages (109 708 characters)

Qualification: Bachelor of Arts (BA)

Keywords: ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, art history, Hegel, individuality, philosophical anthropology

Abstract

This study investigates the historical transition of artistic creation between ancient Egypt and ancient Greece through the perspective of philosophical anthropology and art history. The thesis demonstrates that by examining concrete cultural artifacts of art from given historical peoples, we can see a reflection of their conceptions of what it means to be human. This then can be compared with other cultures for the purpose of arriving at a better understanding of what later developed into our own conception of what we mean by being human today. The goal is to show that the perception of human inner subjectivity and individuality was not immediately given but first had to be discovered through the development of history. This notion is demonstrated by analysis of the important transition in the history of culture where the shift from objective external depictions of the world to individual subjective human life is visible. The thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach of philosophical anthropology based on a reading of the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, secondary sources in philosophy, and art history based on account of the transition between Egypt and Greece. The thesis critically examines the development of human culture, avoiding the limits of these two fields when treated separately. Instead, by combining these fields, we can arrive at a more comprehensible understanding of human agency, ontology, and societal causes of the transition in mythology and visual arts between external reflection to the inward individual. This is illustrated by an analysis of empirical examples drawn from concrete works of art in Egypt and Greece, which are supplemented with background information about other aspects of culture in these societies.

Autor: Filip J. Lupsina

Názov Práce: Vývoj Individuality cez Perspektívu Umenia v Prechode Medzi Starovekým Egyptom a Starovekým Gréckom: Filozofická Antropológia

Univerzita: Bratislavská Medzinárodná Škola Liberálnych Vied

Školiteľ: Jon B. Stewart, PhD., Dr. habil. phil. et theol.

Komisia pre obhajoby záverečných prác: Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc., doc. Samuel Abrahám, PhD., prof. PhDr. Iveta Radičová, PhD., Mgr. Dagmar Kusá, PhD., prof. Silvia Miháliková

Predseda komisie: Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc.

Miesto, rok, rozsah bakalárskej práce: Bratislava, 2022, 63 strán (109 708 znakov)

Stupeň odbornej kvalifikácie: Bakalár (Bc.)

Kľúčové slová: dejiny umenia, filozofická antropológia, Hegel, individualita, staroveký Egypt, staroveké Grécko

Abstrakt

Zámerom tejto štúdie je preskúmať historický prechod umeleckej tvorby medzi starovekým Egyptom a starovekým Gréckom cez perspektívy filozofickej antropológie a dejín umenia. Táto bakalárska práca skúma konkrétne umelecké artefakty pochádzajúce zo zmienených historických národov, vďaka ktorým je možné vidieť reflexiu ich koncepcie, čo pre nich znamená byť človekom. Významom tejto analýzy je, že môže byť porovnaná s inými kultúrami za účelom lepšieho porozumenia čo viedlo ku koncepcii významu človeka, ako jednotlivca dnes. Cieľom tejto práce je poukázať na fakt, že vnímanie vnútornej stránky človeka, ako subjektívneho a autenticky individuálneho tvora nebolo odjakživa priamo dané, práveže naopak muselo byť postupne objavené počas vývoja histórie. Táto predstava je podložená na analýze dôležitého prechodu v dejinách kultúry, kde je vidieť transformáciu vnímania seba a sveta, ako výslovné cez vonkajšie externé fenomény ku vnímaniu individuálneho subjektívneho života človeka. Práca využíva interdisciplinárny prístup, primárne založená na čítaní nemeckého filozofa G.W.F. Hegela, a druhotných zdrojov z filozofie, ako aj z dejín umenia zameriavajúc sa na komparatívnu štúdiu kultúry Egypta a Grécka. Dôvodom interdisciplinárneho prístupu pre skúmanie vývoja kultúry je vyhnutie sa limitov týchto dvoch študijných odborov ak sú brané do úvahy samostatne. Naopak, kombinovaný prístup prináša rozsiahlejšie porozumenie ľudskej intencionality, chápanie vlastných schopností a možností, ontológie, či spoločenských príčin zmeny v mytologickom rozmýšľaní a vizuálnych umení, ilustrovanom na prechode medzi zobrazeniami vonkajšieho sveta a vnútorného subjektívneho vnímania jednotlivca. Táto štúdia ilustruje a potvrdzuje túto tézu priamo cez empirické príklady reálnych umeleckých diel z Egypta a Grécka s doplnením potrebných podkladových informácií o spoločenských aspektoch týchto kultúr

Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without my advisor Jon B. Stewart PhD., Dr. habil. phil et theol, to whom I would like to express my deepest gratitude for introducing me to this subject matter, his extraordinary patience, and guidance throughout the whole process of writing this thesis.

Apart from my advisor, I would like to thank Prof. PhDr. František Novosád, CSc. for his comments and observations.

I would also like to thank Prof. Allen Speight for consulting with me.

And finally, my gratitude belongs to my family, which always stood beside me, for their moral support and understanding.

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Introduction

In 2019, 9.6 million people visited the Louvre Museum in Paris; the same year 6.48 million people visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; the Tate Modern was visited by 5.4 million, and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam by 2.68 million visitors. Seen from a worldwide perspective, there is no doubt that humanity today is surrounded by a global museum of the products of human culture. This wealth of art should tell us a lot about how we conceive of ourselves and our culture today, but do they really? How do we make sense of who we are today as a civilization, as a group, as an individual? What answers do we give to ourselves to such immediate questions, when we are at the same time producing institutions that try to confidently shed light on enormous accounts of the history of humanity?

Let us for a moment imagine walking through one of these institutions of western art. In the first room we might encounter the artifacts from ancient Mesopotamia or ancient Egypt, and in the next the art of ancient Greece and Rome; next we move through the period of the Middle Ages and then to the period of the Renaissance with its connection of the ancient with the modern, and afterward to the Romanticism and Neoclassicism of the 18th and 19th century. So far, with only a little help from the historian's analysis and an understanding of certain conceptions of religion, the subjects being depicted seem easily comprehensible. We are able to recognize readily the motifs and depictions of specific figures. Now we move on to the modern art of the 20th and 21st century, and something dramatic seems to have happened: the continuity has been broken. Even though modern art should be the most direct reflection of us, we seem to struggle to understand it. It is difficult to interpret and requires considerable knowledge of modern art theory, and criticism. By contrast, with art from previous times, such as the ancient Greek world, the Renaissance, or the 18th century, which seems much more straightforward, the modern works of art are generally not immediately accessible to the viewer since they are quite idiosyncratic of the individual artist. Being surrounded by this great exhibition of creators from the pre-historic periods and then from Mesopotamian art to the very recent history of avant-garde and modernism to post-modernism, might give the impression that we seem to be a culture at the end of history.

How can this radical change in art be explained? Why did art move from something that was transparent and comprehensible to something that is enigmatic and seemingly incomprehensible?

Thesis Statement

In this work, I argue that the reason for this shift is that the way that people view themselves and the world around them has changed radically over the ages. Specifically, in the more distant past, tradition and custom were the dominant factors that determined who people were (Stewart, 2020, p. 11). But this left little room for the development of individuality. By contrast, in the modern world, individuality is highly valued and celebrated (Stewart, p. 12). It took millennia for humans to gradually come to recognize and cultivate an inward sphere of individuality or subjectivity (Stewart, p. 11). This development is reflected in the art (and other cultural artifacts) of any given culture since works of art reflect the values and views of the culture in which they were created.

I intend to demonstrate my thesis by examining specific works of art, where this shift from objective to subjective takes place. By this means it will be possible to see how the artists have gradually come to drop the external sphere of nature or the world and subsequently have fully embraced individuality and subjectivity, which they try to express artistically.

Since it would be impossible to trace the movement from the dominance of the objective to that of the subjective throughout the entire history of art, I have chosen to illustrate this by focusing on what I regard as one important shift where this movement can clearly be seen. Specifically, I will explore the shift in art that takes place from the ancient Egyptians to the ancient Greeks. While the Egyptians were still very much tied to nature and the external sphere, with the Greeks we can begin to discern the discovery of individuality and subjectivity.

Outline

The first part of the thesis starts focuses on identification of Hegel's ideas in the broader context of the chronological development of the field of art history, by identifying his contribution to the field. In the following subchapter Hegel's theory of development is analyzed in greater detail. The concluding subchapter focuses on Hegel's philosophy of art, in which are also explained the key concepts, such as subjectivity and individuality.

The body of the thesis is divided into two broader chapters focusing on the transition from an external to an internal or individual understanding of the human being through a comparison of works of art through the development of the given cultures of Egypt and Greece.

The first chapter of the body of the thesis on Egyptian culture describes the Egyptian conception of humanity and their strict traditional codex of depiction. This implies also the specific symbolical expression of Egyptian art and its occupation with the worship of animals as deities. Henceforth, the specific Egyptian visual expression of their deities as a combination of intertwined characteristics of natural and human forms is analyzed as an important step in realizing human agency, although only to a limited degree. There is no clear line between what is to be characterized as solely human and what belongs to the realm of nature, but rather the individual seeks his reflection not within himself but instead finds it in nature; he is submerged in it like a Sphinx, and his human individuality and character are not seen as something distinct from nature. Since Egyptian art was highly symbolic and almost in its entirety served as a visual extension of religious meaning and magical functions, by being exhibited not to the public eye but intentionally restricted predominantly to funeral art, it is necessary also to understand the Egyptian preoccupation with the afterlife. The concluding subchapter about Egyptian culture is devoted to the cult of Osiris and the importance of the Egyptian notion of the immortality of the soul for the development of human thought in understanding individual culpability and responsibility.

The second chapter starts with a comparison of Egyptian and Greek art. The Greeks were first inspired by the Egyptian art but nonetheless dramatically deviated from it. With works such as the Statue of a Youth by Polymedes of Argos in Delphi, circa 580 B.C.E., in which we can still see the strong influence of Egyptian art, and then not so long afterward with the Boxer at Rest by Apollonius of Athens in Rome, circa late 4th century B.C.E, we are standing in front of a man with authentic individuality and character.

We can see that something tremendous and essential has happened; we can discern that the way in which humans understand themselves has changed, and we can see a reflection of inner-human subjective life of emotions and feelings leaping out of the statues. The more we enter the Hellenistic period with artists such as Praxiteles, Lysippos, or the three Rhodes masters of the Laocoon statue, the clearer this transition or shift becomes; the realism, individuality, and humanity become vivid as has never before been seen in the history of mankind. This transition did not, however, happen simply due to better technology or technical ability. Egyptian artisan production did not change significantly for almost three thousand years, and their technological capacity was without a doubt much greater than the capability and availability of resources that was at the disposal of disunited Greece. How did this radical change from Egyptian art to Greek art happen? How can this be explained? I wish

to show that the transition happened not just in art, which is an external representation, but rather somewhere much deeper, inside human thought, in the human understanding of oneself, and then this self-understanding naturally became reflected in perception and artistic depiction. This was the period which the Austrian art historian Gombrich has labeled the “Great Awakening” (2006, p. 75).

In the concluding chapter I intend to explain how my research is not only relevant for the understanding of the two historical peoples the Egyptians and the Greeks but also can be a beneficial approach to the understanding of modern-day conceptions and trends in art, such as the movement from realistic to the abstract depictions. It seems impossible to trace when and how art started, nevertheless what is possible and visible is a clear lineage from the art of Egypt to Greece. As I will show, this can then be used to shed light on the problem of the well-known difficulty of understanding modern art.

Methodology

This thesis is primarily inspired by and will focus on a critical reading of primary sources written by the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) or transcripts by his students, which are directly related to the theme of the thesis, the transition between the art of Egypt and Greece. The philosophy of Hegel is a wide and complex matter, which discusses various themes concerning society, nature, history, and being, which this thesis will not focus on, and is not responsible for. Instead, I will only be concerned with the development of human culture between Egypt and Greece. Hegel’s approach of philosophical anthropology and philosophy of history to the matter will be also compared with the approaches of art historians Gombrich, Pijoan, and Politt as well as secondary sources written on Hegel’s philosophy.

The reason for my approach of combining philosophical anthropology and art history is due to the fact that separately these two disciplines, each in their narrow fields, tend to overlook important aspects of the other, which in combination can lead to a much more comprehensible and insightful understanding. Philosophers of history are often accused of imposing certain abstract principles and arguments on history, while leaving out important empirical facts. Philosophers of history have also been criticized for being concerned only with argumentation and concepts and for being unable to look directly at the reality of causal relations (Stewart, 2020, p. 12). And historians, by contrast, are often criticized for not going deep enough, focusing on ready-made historical events and artefacts, which they fail to analyze more deeply in order to understand the intentionality behind them or to look critically

at the development of human thought in a more general way. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to be interdisciplinary and combine the approaches of both of these fields in order to take advantage of the benefits of each.

The thesis primarily focuses on the chapters concerning Egyptian and Greek art from Hegel's lectures, which appear in the text *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art: The Hotho Transcript of the 1823 Berlin Lectures*. This will be supplemented with some of Hegel's other texts concerning the society of the given cultures, including chapters from his *The Philosophy of History*, and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*. The primary source Hegel is compared with secondary sources of Art History, namely, Gombrich's *Story of Art*, and Pijoan's *History of Art*. For secondary sources from philosophy, I will rely on Jon Stewart's books, *Hegel's Interpretation of the Religions of the World: The Logic of the Gods* and *The Emergence of Subjectivity in the Ancient and Medieval World*.

For the part of the thesis, concerned with empirical examples of Egyptian and Greek art and mythology, I will rely on scholarly textbooks written on the two cultures. For the part of the thesis related to Egyptian culture, I will use *Pinch's Handbook of Egyptian Mythology*, *The British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* by Ian Shaw, and Jan Assman's *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*. For the part related to Greek culture, my main sources will be H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, and *The Art and Experience in Classical Greece* and *The Art in Hellenistic Age* by J. J. Politt.

Hegel's philosophy of art, religion, and history has been to a large degree either neglected or criticized as overly abstract and defective, but this is due to an oversimplified understanding of the conclusion of Hegel's philosophy, that is, that the development of human thought reaches its climax in Protestant Christianity. However, this mistaken view leaves out the very detailed and empirical research that Hegel has done with regard to the logic of the historical development of human thought. Hegel's notion of human development is, on the contrary, not a pattern aiming at a static, determined end but a concept of logical dynamic movement. Hegel realizes the relevance of all religious and artistic traditions in as much as they are a product of the collective mind and exhibit an emanation of reason (Stewart, 2018, p. 5). By examining them specifically, each of them in its given time, we are able to trace the development of the perception of self-awareness and individuality that a given people were able to conceive and thus realize what conception of humanity a given society had about itself.

Therefore, in order to understand human culture in general and human culture today, we must examine how the different intuitions of what it is to be human, which are reflected in artistic creation and religious imagination, led to the intuitions of humanity we have today. So far there has been scarcely any research that tries to look at Hegel's philosophy of the development of art from an empirical standpoint, that is, by examining specific works of art.

In the manner sketched here this thesis will explain the disconnect between the most recent art of the 20th and 21st centuries from previous periods of art history. Artists in the past focused on the representation of the external world around them, in accordance with the ethos of their culture, which recognized subjectivity only to a limited degree, if at all (Stewart, 2020, p. 12). By contrast, today, the opposite principles of individuality and subjectivity have become dominant, and thus artists believe that the truth of art lies within themselves and not out in the world. This has resulted in a competition to be as eccentric and idiosyncratic as possible in art, which has turned it into a field of isolated individuals each trying to express their own inwardness with no common understanding with their audience and with no concern with objective shared meaning.

Chapter 1

Hegel in the Broader Context of Art History and Philosophy

In the modern sense art history originates in 19th century Germany (Hatt & Klonk, 2006, p. 21). Although previously there were various approaches to the acknowledgement of the art of the past at least from the 16th century, they were appreciated in an unhistorical way. That is to say that the scholars were not judging art by its role in the context of its particular time and environment and its influence on the art, but rather the judgement of various artistic creations was understood to be in a cyclical process under “timeless” universal aesthetic norms (Hatt & Klonk, p. 21). Pioneers of these methods were Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), and later in the late 17th century French art theorists André Félibien (1619-95) and Roger de Piles (1635-1709) (Hatt & Klonk, p. 21).

As an academic discipline, art history emerged around 1850 in Germany, after two influential ideas changed the traditional approach (Hatt & Klonk, 2006, p. 22). First was the idea that specific art originates as a distinctive expression of a particular society and civilization. The pioneer of this idea was Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68). In his work *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764) he pioneers the argument that art is inseparable from its societal, geographical, political environment, and the way of thinking and perceiving dominant at the time. This also included the social understanding of the role of artist. Yet, the priority of the unique cultural context over individual artistic quality or metaphysical ideals was not wholly worked out by Winckelmann himself (Hatt & Klonk, p. 22).

Giving priority to the historical context over timeless ideals was further elaborated by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) (Hatt & Klonk, 2006, p. 22). Herder at the same time criticized and agreed with Winckelmann, agreeing that artworks are products of societies with distinctive cultural values, and that no artworks should be judged by standards of another later culture. He disagreed with Winkelman on the point that art embodies some timeless universal aesthetic ideal for which human beings in all societies strive. Winckelmann’s notion of judging art by cultural context and at the same time acknowledging a universal ideal was seen by Herder as contradictory. Herder, by contrast, presented a different understanding of the development of art, a synchronic understanding of art (Hatt & Klonk, p. 22). Herder’s approach elaborated on a conception of art with relation to other parts of culture, in which the latter determines the former. This approach pointed out differences and similarities between various cultures and thus laid the foundations for a diachronic view that was properly

introduced by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). A process that studies how periods of cultural development influence each other. It was only by means of the diachronic understanding of art as developmental that the history of art as understood today emerged (Hatt & Klonek, p. 22).

A. Hegel's Theory of Development

Hegel's contribution was not only in the field of art history, but rather his philosophy was strikingly interdisciplinary, contributing to the philosophy of mind, religion, history and politics. Perhaps the most important contribution to modern human thought was his approach of historicism to understand human nature; he claimed that one must look critically into history to come to any objective understanding of who we are (Stewart, 2018, p. 1). As one of the founding fathers of the field of Western Civilization, Hegel's overall aim of philosophy was to examine human nature and culture in its complexity, through a trajectory of development identifying driving forces of change.

Hegel's theory of human development in world history in essence tries to sketch a story of spirit's (Geist) attainment of freedom from the earliest accounts of human culture. For Hegel, "reason rules the world" (Hegel, 1861, p. 12). Therefore, world history is a rational process, a gradual emergence of spirit in the world as freedom as such, a spirit coming to know itself (Hegel, 1861, p. 20). This all might sound very abstract, and this is because Hegel wrote in a very inaccessible language. But Hegel's claim does not mean that everything in the world is rational or that humans solely act rationally. The logic of the argument is quite the opposite. According to Hegel, individuals act with the intentions of securing their private egoistic needs and desires, which are predominantly irrational. This egoistic drive in every individual clashes constantly with the intentions of other individuals and creates a flux that drives development forward. Hegel acknowledges history to be a "slaughter-bench (Hegel, p. 22)", an "altar", to which many sacrifices of good will have been made. How then can this constant conflict be labelled as "reasonable"? The irrational actions of individuals are the only source which drive the history forward, but the products of their action, their culture and conceptual frameworks of society are products of the human mind and ideas, products of reason meant for another reason (that is, other people) to make sense of it. When people conceptualize laws, institutions, or the deities of their religions, they, just like Hegel, create abstract ideas that require self-conscious reason. Hegel tries to conceptualize an abstract idea, a spirit which can represent collective mindedness, or an abstract collective human mind in time (Zeitgeist), an abstraction representing humanity, "as a whole without being concerned with particular

individuals" (Solomon, 1970, p. 644), at a given stage in history and its attained level of self-consciousness.

World history tracks the increasing individual freedom and self-consciousness of human beings. In Hegel's words, "history is the development of spirit in time" (Hegel, 1861, p. 75). So, spirit is the engine of history; it is a sort of principle of activity and motion behind which is a human mind, human reason acting in the context of its time. Without the human mind history would not exist, and neither would any development or progress. This progress of spirit has an empirically demonstrable pattern visible in the chronology of the products of human mind. This process is, as Hegel calls it, self-consciousness coming to know itself (Hegel, 1861, p. 20). This again might sound very abstract, but for Hegel the human mind, spirit, is the permeating force for everything in the world. So, the spirit is not some kind of mysterious force, but rather an abstraction, an idea describing the movement and intentionality behind human activity which is progressing to gradual self-awareness. And by this gradual development of self-awareness, of realizing our inner subjectivity, we progress towards freedom, towards being able to govern ourselves, towards being aware of our own intentionality and responsibility. For example, many of the aspects of our culture that we take for granted today such as human dignity, respect for human life, individuality, or equality did not exist at the beginnings of history but rather had to develop throughout time, and this development can be demonstrated through the gradually created products of human culture such as art, law, religion or philosophy. History unfolds chronologically by human reason coming to know itself.

Things are always changing; they are always in a process of becoming. We can never say with certainty that this thing is what it is and it is certain that it will stay that way. What Hegel is trying to show, by means of his notion of spirit, is that the world is always in flux, in a state of change. Therefore, history is essential for understanding the way things are, in contrast to the notion of a permanent unchanging truth. Yet throughout this process of constant change, we can say that things are always in progress, and this progress is, according to Hegel, teleological, a progress of human reason towards freedom. Although the biological and chemical essence over the centuries stays to a large degree identical, we cannot say that human reason does. In general, the human mind by means of culture is able to record knowledge and experiences for forthcoming generations and thus become more aware of its humanity. This aspect is a process of constant progress, but it does not mean that on a local level everything is progressing towards something better, or that everyone becomes more reasonable with

proceeding generations. History progresses with ups and downs, and every civilization has its peak and downfall. Oppressive political regimes and wars for example arise through the whole of history. Nonetheless what does progress is human self-awareness of itself, a gradual realization of human subjectivity and individuality. New reactions, relationships and ideas constantly arise in step with the newly attained degree of self-consciousness, which is reflected in all areas of culture.

Hegel's philosophy reconciles two more prevailing and established philosophical schools in the tradition of Western thought (Stewart, *The subjective turn*, 2020). On the one hand the more traditional essentialist approach of ahistorical philosophy, that argues that there is a set human nature distinctive from other living beings in nature, and always will be no matter the development of time. This approach comes from ancient philosophical schools, such as the Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, as well as the Christian tradition. On the other hand, Hegel's view can also be seen as in harmony with the more modern approach of existentialism, and deconstructivism arguing that there is no such thing as human nature, but rather what we call human nature is simply a complex set of behaviors and attitudes interpretable in different ways (Stewart). The postmodern approach argues that human nature represents only a term of language describing human experience, but does not correspond to any reality or real thing.

Hegel's approach to human nature occupies a middle ground between the mentioned opposites. His approach through philosophical anthropology and philosophy of history, claims that we can get a grasp of something that we call human nature, but it can be understood only through an analysis of the human development in history (Stewart, *The subjective turn*, 2020). This premise relies on the fact that what we call human individuality or subjectivity has not been immediately present but rather had to be developed over time. Today we value and acknowledge the inner subjectivity of each human being, and we ascribe agency to individuals as well as acknowledge their freedom and dignity. This has not been the case throughout most of history, but rather there was no conception of the uniqueness of individuality or self-consciousness. Instead, in ancient history, the conception of the individual was identified primarily with belonging to a larger group, such as family, tribe, state, or religion (Stewart). The domination of customs and traditional practices dictated every aspect of behavior, and this meant that questions of individual freedom or self-determination did not arise in the way as we understand them today (Stewart).

B. Hegel's Philosophy of Art

The chronological narrative of human development that Hegel is trying to tell is the development of human agency through the development of human consciousness in time. By understanding the principles of how humans understand themselves and the world around them in a given time, we can come to a deeper understanding of humanity. The conceptualization of humanity in each given period of history is necessarily reflected in the products of human thought, the products of culture. One of these is art, which, in its many forms, serves as an objectivization of one's identity in the world. Looking critically into the chronology of these identities, we see that people do not attempt to create arbitrary identities but try to necessarily create art to make sense of who they are, to give themselves an objective meaning. The more they realize their agency and individuality behind their action, the more they drop representations of nature as supreme and depict individual human characters with intentionality and emotionality.

In his theory of the development of human history Hegel makes a distinction between stages of human culture. This distinction is based primarily on the development of world religions, due to the fact that especially in earlier civilizations this branch of human culture covered a wider ethos and played a key role in the cohesion of the societies, thus influencing also politics, ethics, and art... In *the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* Hegel makes a distinction between religions of nature, which are based primarily on the world of plants and animals, and religions of spirit, which are based on a degree of self-awareness of human individuality.

The religions of Hinduism or Zoroastrianism are prime examples of religions of nature since almost no explicit awareness of individual consciousness is present. In the religions of nature human beings seek their reflection in deities representing unconscious objects of nature, such as the sacred cow in Hinduism or eternal light and darkness in Zoroastrianism. In contrast, the Egyptian religion occupies a specific place between religions of nature and spirit. The Egyptians' earliest conceptions of divinity are still bound to animals but over the course of time develop into a mixture of human and animal shapes. This implies that they started attributing importance to human beings, but, nonetheless, the mixture of human and animal becomes the stage at which they stop. The distinctive human nature starts to be recognized but is not yet properly separated from nature. In the Greek world this development reaches a new milestone and becomes the proper example of a religion of spirit. The acknowledgment of the distinctive self-conscious nature of human beings from external nature becomes reflected in literary and visual works of art. Although influenced by earlier stages of religious

imagination, the Greeks move one step forward by reflecting themselves and the gods in human shape with visible characteristics of subjectivity and emotionality. The development from external to the inner subjective is also apparent from Greek literary works, in which human agency moves from the external sphere of the gods influencing human action in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to the first conceptions of individual agency with the Socratic Daimon or intuition. Hegel explains,

For art's ability to express thought, it has the most exalted character, one shared with religion and philosophy; like these two, it is a way of expressing and bringing to consciousness the divine, the highest demands of spirit. People have set down their most exalted representations in art, and often art is the only key to learning of the religion of a people. (Hegel, 2014, p. 184)

What Hegel is explaining here is that art is a means of revealing human thought to the external world, which reconciles with two poles of human perception, the inner subjective aspect and outer world of experience. Both portrayals of the immediate sensuous experience of external world and, at the same time, the highest demands of spirit, that is the understanding of human consciousness, come together in the work of art. This general characterization of art embodying the consciousness of its creators is essential, because it must be again perceived by the consciousness of the other members of a group and thus reveals that the products of art are not mere unbounded fantasy but a door to understanding the highest thought, attained at any given moment in history, of one's conception of humanity (Hegel, p. 185). The human conception of the divine is among the highest of thoughts. This is represented to the senses through art.

Contrary to being just a random amusement, art is an expression of universal thought, and it should not be dismissed from philosophical inquiry since it maps the development of human consciousness through time. According to Hegel, the creation of art is a natural intuition of human beings since they naturally have ability to think in abstract universal terms. Art shares this characteristic with religion and philosophy, and the difference is just that art is representational of universal thinking in sensuous appearance. By contrast, religion is an expression of thought in feelings and philosophy in reason.

In being conscious, one must place before oneself what one is and what there is, and these two objects then stand in relation to themselves (Hegel, 2014, p. 192). Natural things just simply are, their essence lays in their externality, we cannot speak about subjectivity or

inwardness in relation to external objects (Stewart, 2020, p. 14). In contrast, what defines human beings is precisely the inward sphere of subjective consciousness. Our external physical bodies are part of us, but they do not merely represent a set of behaviours or instincts, but are indication of “something more profound that lies within” (Stewart, p. 14). We possess our own individual character that is developed throughout our lives, and we can realize this simply by the gaze of recognition from another human being, behind which we suspect a similar inward sphere of consciousness. In the animal kingdom we can also trace a similar pattern although only to a limited degree. The broad realm of the animal kingdom could represent an intermediate sphere, in which there are species with purely mechanistic behaviour and with a small number higher animals such as dogs or primates in which we can begin to see a slight resemblance of our own inwardness and emotionality (Stewart, p. 15). Nonetheless, even the highly advanced animals are not able to produce transferable culture which is characteristic of self-conscious humans. By the terms “inwardness” or “subjectivity,” we are not describing one concrete thing, but rather a complex of various but related elements, that make human culture possible. “What we refer to as “subjectivity” is a part of this development from nature to human culture” (Stewart, p. 16)

Chapter 2 Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egypt, an enigmatic culture stretching across the Nile River, has occupied the minds of outsiders with riddles and mysteries ever since the times of ancient Greece and Rome. Solon, Herodotus and Diodorus of Sicily were all convinced of the ancient roots and sophistication of Egyptian culture. Herodotus believed that the Egyptian gods stood at the cradle of the Greek Pantheon, while Diodorus of Sicily claimed that the first humans walked the earth in Egypt thanks to its nourishing environment (Pijoan, 1982, p. 45). Yet, even though the Egyptian society has been clouded in various myths from outside cultures, it is evident that the heritage of Egyptian culture left its invincible mark on subsequent human culture. Symbolically, the Egyptian spirit through its monuments has after all acquired immortality, the very thing the Egyptians were always preoccupied with. Many centuries after their golden age still a man fears time, but time fears the pyramids (Simpson & Speake, 2008).

Image 1: All Giza Pyramids



Note. Fourth Dynasty, Old Kingdom, ca. 2600-2500 B.C.E

The resilience of the pyramids speaks not only of the advanced conceptualization of immortality but also lays the proofs of the utmost organization and centralized absolutism in the ancient valley of the Nile River (Gombrich, 2006, p. 55). With an organization in which everything was hierarchically structured, art was meant to reflect balance and order in a symbolic portrayal of universality. Egyptian society was structured as a caste system, and this ancient mode of hierarchy, for Hegel, resembled also society in India to which he compares

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the Egyptian model. The caste system of ancient Egypt did indeed resemble the despotic rigidity as in the Indian case, it was unthinkable for a common person to rise up to a high administrative office (Davis, 2014, p. 57). Hegel also acknowledges this fact and claims that it is one of the reasons that the Egyptian society is so important in the development of human individual freedom, dignity and self-awareness (Hegel, 1861, p. 213).

Among the earliest nations art has always served the specific purpose of religion's pictorial portrayal, and from this rule Egypt is no exception. Therefore, art was not understood as it is today; especially in Egypt its aim was not adornment, exhibition or originality in the modern sense, but rather art served a practical function with established traditional rules. Every depiction was supposed to meet a threshold of harmonious completeness serving a concrete purpose in its narrative function of political and social life. But the highest purpose was in the religious importance of the maintenance of life after death. Pharaohs were the first who had the privilege of afterlife in the Old Kingdom (c. 2700- 2200 B.C.E.); they were dependent on mummification and portrayals to be able to enter the underworld properly. This is why the word "sculptor" in ancient Egypt had the meaning; "the, one who maintains life" (Gombrich, 2006, p. 58). Later on, in the Middle Kingdom (c. 2040- 1730 B.C.E.) and later these burial rituals were extended to nobles and eventually commoners, making the cult of immortality an all-encompassing necessity of the society.

Image 2: Reserve Head



Note. Sculpture, 4th Dynasty, reign of Khufu, ca. 2609-2584 B.C.E., from Giza, limestone, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Copyright 2022 KHM-Museumsverband

The Egyptian style contained several strict rules, which were supposed to be learned by every individual artist (Gombrich, 2006, p. 67). Sitting statues had to have their hands on their knees; men had to have darker skin than women. The hierarchical system of the society was reflected in the shape of the figures, and each individual god had his own set visual characteristics. Rule of order and tradition laid the importance on artisanry rather than originality; change was viewed as chaos and not as a positive phenomenon (Gombrich, p. 67). Egyptian art gives an impression that almost the entirety of sculpture, pictures, or architecture were subject to complete compliance with rules, as if they were all subjected to one law (Gombrich, p. 65). Since the Egyptian artisan had to work within a strict framework of ethical, social, aesthetical and magical purposes, in many portrayals of pharaohs or commoners it is hard to distinguish the individual based only on the appearance. The Egyptians artists painted from memory, ensuring that everything necessary would be included in the correct degree of importance. Their method resembles more of the work of cartographer than of an artist (Gombrich, p. 60). Nothing in the Egyptian art is coincidence, and by deciphering the conventions and symbols, we can almost read in their art as in a detailed chronicle of Egyptian life and death.

Image 3: Nakht's Offering Chapel



Note. Painting, 18th Dynasty, 1410-1370 B.C.E., tempera on paper, 194.3 x 203.8, Upper Egypt, Thebes, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna

A. The Reflection in Nature and Symbolic Expression

Hegel claims that art is created by humans through their higher desire to reflect their conception of humanity to themselves. All art is a process of self-determination by objectifying the identity of a culture by itself to itself (Hegel, 2014, p. 287). Therefore, the content of art is necessarily spiritual, that is, a product of human mind for another human mind. This characteristic is present from the beginnings of art, even though in the earlier conceptions of humanity art might not seem to reflect this. This is because, as Hegel has pointed out in his detailed studies of ancient arts and religions, in the distant past humanity did not necessarily see its reflection in humanity, but rather in nature and its phenomena. “Therefore there is not yet any thought unconnected to nature, and the portrayal of this thought is nothing thought has produced, for instead the natural things are this portrayal” (Hegel, 2014, p. 288).

Image 4: Stela of the Serpent King



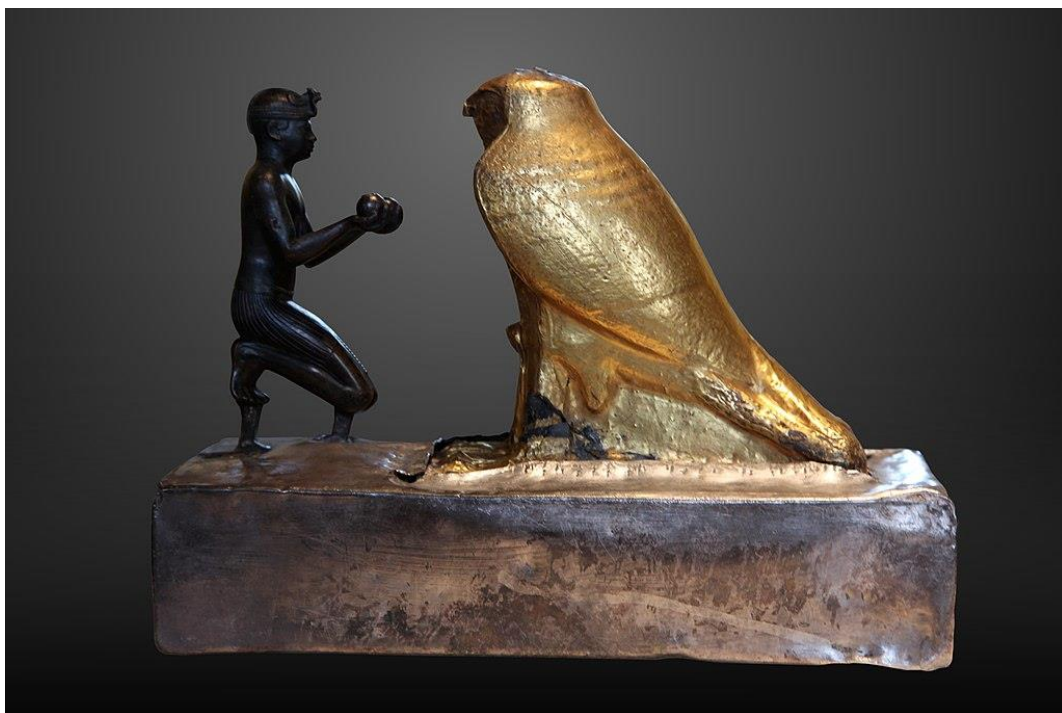
Note. Stela, ca. 3100-2900 B.C.E., stone, limestone, material of mineral origin 143 x 65.5 x 25 cm, 700 kg, Louvre Museum

The first conceptions of deities are portrayed as natural objects, and this rule is visible in all early stages of the religious imagination (Hegel, 2014, p. 288). *Image 4* is an example of such imaginary, *The Stela of King Djet* originating from the period of unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, starting with the first dynasty of the Old Kingdom. It depicted the supreme god Horus as a hawk, symbolizing protection from above, for King Djet, who is depicted by means of the symbol of a snake (Pijoan, 1982, p. 52). Nonetheless, the ancient cultures do not take nature to be simply external, but instead sense reason behind it. According to Hegel, the presentiment of reason is that behind these natural objects there is a thinking entity; this tendency in the early religions of nature starts by portraying the universal (abstract idea) on to finite nature. Here in the pure religion of nature the god has a nonspecific content in all the finite natural environment, that is that the god is not represented as an individual character, but the idea of god, something universally applicable, manifests in everything, for example natural entities such as the sun, a river or in animals. Examples of such religious imagination can be found, for example, in Zoroastrianism the religion of light, in which nature represents the eternal fight of good (the light) and evil (the darkness), or in Hinduism with Brahma in which all natural phenomena represent an infinity. But also, the pantheon of Egypt or Greece starts at its cradle with natural roots, but in contrast to the religions of nature develops into a more humanlike (spiritual) understanding of the nature of gods and human beings. Hegel describes this stage along the lines that the concept of God is filled with all the natural phenomena, their arising and perishing and their relationships, all that is immediately present (Hegel, p. 288).

Hegel refers to Egyptian art as symbolic, which is not simply a mode where a natural object is taken and worshiped for what it is, but rather the natural object is used as a bridge between the natural phenomena and characteristics of something higher, an idea about human beings. The Egyptians begin with an object of sense, something particular such as the sun, the Nile or an animal, and then use it to represent an abstract universal concept (Stewart, 2018, p. 187). "A symbol is the pictorial portrayal of a general representation, of something inward" (Hegel, 2014, p. 285). It can be a bull representing its internal characteristic of strength, but it can also be a sensible pictorial portrayal representing an abstract idea such the eye of Horus. The eye of Horus was an image that in itself represented various natural entities, it was both associated with the god Horus who could take the form of a falcon, whose right eye symbolized the sun and left eye was the moon. This represented both the divine order of things as well as kingship since Horus was in the Egyptian Mythology the rightful heir to the throne after Osiris (Pinch, 2002, p. 131). Having said that, the Egyptians were fascinated by the variety of the natural

world full of life, the land to which they were firmly bound. They depended upon the natural environment since it was responsible for their civilization's livelihood as well as possible destruction. The objects of nature prompted them to think further beyond them as a departure to universal ideas (Stewart, p. 187). And so, the Egyptians worshiped various gods in animal forms or elements of nature, such as the sacred Nile (the *nun*). These were responsible for the year and its seasons, the sun as life-giving, and nourishment by means of agriculture. These objects gained universal meaning in virtue of being represented in art, and religion (Hegel, 2014, p. 290)

Image 5: Taharga offering wine vases to Hemen



Note. Sculpture, ca. 690 – 664 B.C.E., bronze, greywacke, gold and wood, 26 x 19.7 x 10.3, Louvre Museum

A principal sphere of symbolic portrayal, is the universal process of change. Change, “the dialectic of living things - origin, growth, perishing and re-emergence from death or destruction, and procreation is the kind suited to the symbolic form” (Hegel, 2014, p. 290). Hegel explains that this universal change has a great many examples in portrayals of Egyptian culture, of the seasonal floods of the Nile River, or the sun that stands low in winter, rises high in the spring, and reaches its apex in the summer, which affects the natural surrounding by this cycle (Hegel, p. 290). Plants also exhibit similar changes throughout their existence – they originate in the seeds, grow, blossom, produce fruit, and in dying produce new seeds leading to procreation or rebirth. Hegel furthermore explains how the ages of human life, and life as

such, in a sense portrays the same universal process. The notion is that the transitions or change (as general dialectic) is evident in all things, in objects and spirit (humans) as well as in nature (Hegel, p. 291). These two worlds are linked within this universality of change, and early civilizations understand the world by such similes and represent them by universal symbolic ideas in religious representations, such as myths of origin and destruction and apocalypse.

According to Hegel, early human beings do not acknowledge human agency as something influential. In their world the variety of cyclical natural phenomena represented by the gods are the driving forces of not only the world but their beings as well. They have not yet grasped themselves as free subjective beings since they are not yet conscious of their inner human world as being rational agents separated from external objects with no volition (Hegel, 2014, p. 287). Therefore, given the lack of awareness of this inner subjective content, it cannot yet be represented in art. Hegel furthermore explains that even though human beings in the early religions of nature were already creating mythologies, by thinking in universal abstract terms, such as the god of creation Brahma or the eternal fight of light and darkness in Zoroastrianism, yet they are not conceptions which could reflect individual human subjectivity, character, or simply anthropomorphic figurative style. The self-consciousness of spirituality is not what emerges first, but instead is the result of development of art (Hegel, p. 287).

Similarly in Egypt numerous gods who are represented in animalistic forms are thought to be responsible not only for natural phenomena but also for characteristics of human production, human culture. For example, the Egyptian god Anubis, represented as a jackal, is the patron of mummification and burials, and, moreover, the god Thoth (*image 6 and 7*), represented as an ibis or baboon, is thought to be responsible for the invention of writing but is also depicted as the god of moon (Pinch, 2002, pp. 104-105, 209-211). It seems at first glance to not make sense to ascribe the invention of writing to a baboon or an ibis, since these animals don't do any writing. But this shows that the nature of these gods has shifted over time, the development of external world was slowly moving to world of human culture. They were first entirely natural creatures, but over time human characteristics were attributed to them and they were then represented no longer just as animals but also as having acquired partly human form, as we will see further below.

Image 6: God Thoth as Ibis



Note. sculpture, 6th century B.C.E., wood, silver, stucco, glass, 32.2 x 6.9 x 22.2cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Copyright 2022 KHM-Museumsverband

Image 7: Depiction of Thoth as Baboon



Note. sculpture, ca. 1400 B.C.E, quartzite, 68.5 x 38.5 x 45cm, British Museum, Copyright 2019 Felicísimo

In many poetic portrayals the symbolic elements are vividly accessible, as a bull representing strength or a blue color representing fertility, but there are also cases in which the distinction of what is supposed to be meant symbolic or not is not clear. Hegel explains that this might signify that the examples of the blending of symbols are reveal that the creators do not realize their use of symbolical expressions, that the self-awareness of inner abstract thought has not yet been accessed by human culture. Instead, according to Hegel, the pictorial mode of expression is the only mode of portrayal in which the Egyptian and Oriental cultures are able to represent themselves (Hegel, 2014, p. 284). The more the development moves forward, the less symbolic expression is visible in art. Out of this premise, looking at mythologies and symbolical art, we cannot take them simply as fables, as an expression of the human ability to imagine fantasies for amusement, or for the reason an expression of the need to maintain hierarchy and order without intending something deeper than that. On the contrary, Hegel argues that human beings necessarily rationalize themselves to themselves by the best ability they have, at any given time, in a sense that they produce images to themselves to understand themselves, to make sense of the world around them and their place in it. In the times of the Egyptians these images were products of human reason that was not yet aware of itself; it lacks the ability to explain its own inwardness and thus also struggles to portray comprehensible images in art (Hegel, p. 285). According to Hegel, the idea that the universal representation comes first, and then the second step is to find a suitable portrayal of it, is incorrect. Rather the natural image is first utilized to become a symbol, the imaginative fantasy begins with natural and expands this image to universal meaning. A spiritual content is extended onto a particular object or existence because of which it acquires a universal meaning (Hegel, pp. 291-292).

The Egyptians were not aware of projecting the meaning in symbolical content, for it would require that they would have already had the thought about what the meaning is behind the riddle of human culture in contrast to the natural finite world and that they would try to portray the content in a more comprehensible way. Hegel explains:

But this is just not the case, for they employed such images simply because they were still in a poetic condition; they were habituated to becoming aware of what is inward in the mode of fantasy, not in the mode of thought. But this is a necessary stage. (Hegel, 2014, p. 286)

That means that the people had sensible imagery, whose shape was taken as a concrete fact, and not an abstract representation at the same time; the art of the Egyptian culture was not

meant as a fabrication but as a literal meaning. The majority of pictorial depictions in Egyptian art served practical magical purposes, and they were not mere pictures for the sake of pictures, for exhibition (Mark, 2017). Hegel writes,

They did not understand abstract representation; but that is something different from saying that the abstract representation as such is not concealed or embedded in the image..., the peoples...were not yet capable in this way of placing the representation before their consciousness as separated from what is pictorial (Hegel, 2014, p. 286).

Nevertheless, the Egyptians occupy a specific place in the development of the world religions and art, because their conception is situated as a transitory religion between the religions of nature and spirit (Hegel, *Phil. of Religion*, vol. 2, 1962, p. 211). Their culture starts with the worship of animals and develops into conceptions of deities that are a mixture of spiritual and animalistic characteristics. In the pre-dynastic Egyptian culture, we can see numerous portrayals of mythological animals in contact with humans, for example, *The Bull Palette* or *The Narmer Palette*, but we do not yet see deities with a combination of anthropomorphic and animalistic shapes. However, Egyptian culture did not stop worshiping purely animalistic shapes but developed further by realizing the unique distinction of human subjective individuality from nature. This characterization is visible both in the mixture of anthropomorphic and animalistic deities that emerge in Egypt as well in the conception of afterlife in the myth of Osiris. Yet, even though the conception of the Egyptian deities and the afterlife are major developments in the understanding of human nature, it does not mean that they the Egyptians have found the final answer to the question. The specific Egyptian conception was one step in the historical development and manifested itself in a specific contradiction in the mixture of human with the animal. This contradiction has occupied the Egyptian mind as enigma or a mystery which they were unable to solve.

B. The Combination of the Human with the Animal

Similarly, as with any other culture, the Egyptian religion and art have also undergone a development. Nevertheless, certain practices in religious worship tend to persist much longer than socio-economic, or political relations, that is why religion is usually the best way to learn about the overall character and nature of society (Stewart, 2018, p. 190; Donini, 1961, p. 61). We can see that in pre-dynastic period in Egypt and in the early Archaic period, the deities of the Egyptians are simply objects of nature, usually animals such as dogs, hawks, or snakes (Pijoan, 1982, pp. 48-51). It is later on that they start to emerge from nature and give emphasis

to human characteristics, that is, when we get deities which are a mixture of human and animal attributes. According to Hegel, we can ascribe this to a natural feature of the historical development, namely, the Egyptian religion took place over centuries, and so most of the deities depicted as having a human body and an animal head are represented as having an entirely animal form in the first original conceptions of them from earlier stages of the religion (Stewart, p. 190). But the Egyptians stop at this stage since for them the mixture of human culture and the animal world is an unsolvable riddle.

Nonetheless, the Egyptian imagination is mostly known and important for these deities of some mysterious mixture of animalistic and human shape. The famous image of a sphinx guarding pyramids has come down as a symbol of ancient Egypt and was also a favorite example for Hegel as a description of the Egyptian spirit, as the spiritual element breaking free from the natural (Hegel, 1962, vol. 2, p. 113, p. 119). It is not difficult to find numerous examples of Egyptian deities with a depiction of a human body and a head of a certain animal. As for example Horus with the head of hawk, Sekhmet, the head of a lioness, Sobek, the head of a crocodile, or Taweret, the head of a hippopotamus. It is obvious now, that “the Egyptian divinities are not purely gods of nature, such as the sacred cow of the Hindus or light of the Persians. An element of the animal is still present, but now for the first time a human element is also introduced, mixed together with it” (Stewart, p. 189).

Hegel describes in detail one of the most important Egyptian deities Anubis, who has the body of a human and a head of a dog or jackal:

Anubis is called the friend and companion of Osiris. To him is ascribed the invention of writing, and of science generally—of grammar, astronomy, mensuration, music, and medicine. It was he who first divided the day into twelve hours; he was, moreover, the first lawgiver, the first instructor in religious observances and objects, and in gymnastics and orchestics; and it was he who discovered the olive. But, notwithstanding all the spiritual attributes, the divinity is something quite other than the god of thought. Only particular human arts and inventions are associated with him. Not only so; but he entirely falls back... and is degraded under physical symbols. He is represented with dog's head, as an imbruted god... (as cited in Stewart, 2018, pp. 189,190; Hegel, 1861, pp. 219,220)

Even though, “Hegel's information seems not to be entirely precise here since Anubis is primarily associated with the process of mummification and the guarding of graves. But his

general point still seems to hold. Since Anubis has created important aspects of human affairs such as the science of mummification, one would expect him to be represented in an anthropomorphic manner given that it is after all only humans who have science“ (Stewart, 2018, p. 190). Anubis still has a head of a jackal, and Hegel refers to this as spirit not yet free from nature (see *Image 9*). We can find a similar example in the god Thoth *Image 10*, who has the head of an Ibis and the body of a man. Thoth is truly a deity representing human sciences, writing, and wisdom. Said to be the inventor of hieroglyphics, he is often portrayed as recording, by means of writing, the fate of the dead souls in the afterlife. Given this description, one might again expect him to be depicted in a wholly human appearance since it is only human beings who possess writing. Yet, he is oftentimes depicted as an ibis *Image 6* or a baboon *Image 7*.

Image 8: Tutankhamun Jackal



Note: sculpture, Anubis in animal form from an earlier stage of Egyptian religion, rein of Tutankhamun 18th dynasty, wood, plaster, lacquer, gold leaf, 273.5 x 63.7 x 50.7cm, Egyptian Museum Cairo – Anubis is seated on a tomb symbolizing his protection of the necropolis (Pinch, 2002, p. 104).

Image 9: Anthropomorphic Anubis



Note. Painting, Anubis attending the mummy of Sennedjem

Image 10: Anthropomorphic Thoth



Note. The Brooklyn Museum

It was the Greeks who came up with the answer to the Egyptian riddle; they found their reflection in figurative configurations and saw this as the embodiment of rational deities. The Egyptians started this development, and even though their deities started to have characteristics of human beings, still the portrayals of them remained submerged in a mixture of arbitrary natural elements from the earlier stages of religion. By contrast, the realization of human figurativeness in the Greek world has deep importance because it, as a culture, for the first time began to objectify its mode of existence through the actual human shape and not through a mixture of human and animal characteristics. And by this process, the cultural self-awareness became more developed, by humans realizing their distinctly human subjective sphere apart from nature or tradition. Nature is no longer the true or adequate reflection of humanity. But now it is the human form that comes to be regarded as higher than nature. This hallmark is of essential importance and will have a further impact on the development of other cultures notably the Greeks. Hegel calls it “the spiritual breaking free from what is natural” (Hegel, 2014, p. 290). This needs a further explanation of what is so significant and yet contradictory in the depiction of deities as hybrids of humans and animals, and what the breaking free of spirit from nature means.

C. The Immortal Empire of Osiris

Hegel claimed that the best way to understand the Egyptian spirit is through their monuments. To understand the Egyptian mind constructing these monuments, we need to understand their religion, which gave meaning to such monumental creations. The Egyptian Religion is a significant step in the development of the human imagination about the value of the human soul or human individuality. This significant aspect is the cult of immortality, since for the Egyptians death was an “origin and centre” of their culture, and is the key for understanding their self-image (Assman, 2005, p. 1; Stewart, 2018, p. 184). Already Herodotus claimed that the Egyptians were the first who taught about the immortality of the soul (Hegel, 2014, p. 297). Hegel cites Herodotus in several places of his texts, because he sees the story of afterlife he embodies as major characteristic not only of the Egyptian society but also as an important development in the realization of the value of individuality in history.

With regard to the Egyptian deities, the highest importance in Egyptian society was given to figures of Osiris, Isis and their son Horus (Hegel, 1962; Davis, 2014; Stewart, 2018; Pijoan, 1982; I. Shaw, 1995). Although the creator god Amun and sun god Ra were also of high importance, their worship rose later on in the New Kingdom (c. 1539-1075 B.C.E) when they were intermixed together into a single god Amun-Ra, a “mysterious originator of all life”

(Pinch, 2002, p. 101). Yet, the deity Amun continued to be a subject of speculative theology rather than part of mythical narratives (Pinch, 2002, p. 101). In the grander scheme of things Egyptian society was centred around the symbolic story of Osiris. The story of Osiris as a cyclical life-giver of nature and the lord of the death was a major development in the realization of human individuality, accountability, and distinctive inner human life in the form of a soul. The story of Osiris and Isis has several characteristics, roles, and responsibilities just like the other deities in the Egyptian pantheon. Yet, for Hegel Osiris is not significant as a god representing agriculture and natural phenomena, his significance lays in his role of the judge in the realm of the death.

Osiris a legendary primal king of Egypt, was according to the myth firstly deceived and betrayed by his usurper brother Seth, and later cut to pieces so he could never rule again. Nevertheless, the pieces of his body were recollected and put together by Osiris's sister Isis, by this act he is revived, and for the first time in history, the human spirit wins over dead (Stewart, 2018, p. 177). The rebirth of Osiris grants him a new responsibility, to oversee the judgment of every individual after death. It might seem that the story of the afterlife is not significant in comparison to other cultures, yet the Egyptian story points out significant differentiation from the parallel examples found in Hinduism or Zoroastrianism. The difference consists in the fact that the Egyptian afterlife is dependent on individual merit, it was preserving "individual soul as a self-conscious entity" (Stewart, p. 181). By contrast in Hinduism, the goal was explicitly "the dissolution of the individual" and all of his personal "desires, characteristics and interests" (Stewart, p. 180). In the Persian example, we can see no resolution to the question of the conflict between good and evil, these two forces are in a constant conflict, neither is able to gain the higher ground, contrary to these examples, Osiris was able to overcome the evil and death, his figure is reflects an idea that an individual moral character is has its value and importance (Stewart, p. 176).

Osiris unlike other Egyptian deities is always depicted as anthropomorphic (see *Image 12*), by his appearance he is detached from nature but connected to the realm of spirit. In the *Image 11*, we can see the scene from the papyrus known as *The Book of the Dead of Hunefer*. In this depiction the seated figure Osiris is judging an individual based on his moral worth. The act of weighing the hearth of the deceased on the scales against a feather will determine if the person is worthy to enter the realm of the afterlife or be eaten by the god Ammut (with the head of a crocodile, the body of a hippopotamus, and the mane of a lion) who is ready to devour "the heart and with it the soul" if necessary (Stewart, 2018, p. 181).

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Image 11: Papyrus of Hunefer



Note. Judgment scene, ca. 1275 B.C.E., Copyright 2022 the British Museum

The importance of how one acted in the world, and the fact that each individual is important enough to be part of his own particular legal proceeding is a proof of importance that Egyptian society has in the development of individuality in history (Stewart, 2018, p. 182). According to Hegel, the Egyptians are by their idea of judging individuals for their moral worth the first people who have arrived at the first conception of human subjectivity (Stewart, p. 178; Hegel, 2014, p. 355).

Image 12: Head of Osiris



Note. ca. 595-525 B.C.E., Brooklyn Museum

Chapter 3 Ancient Greece

A. Transition to the Greek World

In Greek art, we can still notice symbolic language, mostly in the earlier periods where the Greeks are still very much influenced by the mode of the depiction of the Egyptians (Gombrich, 2006, p. 78). Hegel also acknowledges this notion, claiming that the Greeks supposedly acquired “mastery of technical matters” from the Egyptians, but by their independent spirit transformed it (Hegel, 1861, p. 247). An example of the Egyptian style in Greek figurative art can be noticed in the sculptures of *Kleobis and Biton, the Kouros brothers*, by Polymedes of Argos (ca. 580 B.C.E.). But very soon, Greek art portrays its content in a new unprecedentedly intelligible way. Hegel argues that in Greek art the contents are portrayed in a comprehensible way for what they are, unlike in the symbolic art of Egypt, where the content’s meaning is portrayed as something disconnected from the literal portrayal, a hidden meaning representing something other than itself. As Hegel puts it, “classical art is, on the whole, clear art. In the symbol, the image still presents something other than the representation” (Hegel, 2014, p. 284). In Greece for the first-time art will not only to a large degree function for strict social or religious purposes but for the exhibition of beauty as such. Additionally, Greek art develops into portrayal where the phenomena of nature are subjected to human beings, which requires a degree of self-awareness of one’s humanity in distinction to nature.

Egyptian art is characterized by a certain stiffness inside a strict code of depiction. In the depictions of individual persons, we are confronted not with an individual, but rather with a being empty of its inner-subjective character; we encounter a number of individual depictions of Gods, Pharaohs, scribes, or other members of Egyptian society with the same proportions and characteristics as if they were meant not to know themselves individually, but to be all as one. A sense of an inward humanity has not awakened yet, in which like animals it is not possible to spot the inner intentionality and subjectivity behind the eyes of a different member of the same species. This notion can be clearly seen when we compare the sculptures of Egypt and Greece. Below the examples depicted in *Image 13* and *14* demonstrate the important transition from the external sphere to the inner-subjective emotional sphere reflected in art between the two cultures that influenced each other.

Image 13: Statue of Isis and Horus



Note. ca. 332-330 B.C.E, the Ptolemaic Period, faience, Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Image 14: Silenus with the Infant Bacchus



Note. ca. Roman copy of Greek statue by Praxiteles or Lysippos, ca. 400-330 B.C.E., marble, middle of the 2nd century, Museo Chiaramonti, Braccio Nuovo

In both cases we have an attempt to represent a common scene: an adult holding a child. In the Greek image, we can sense motion, true human expression and affection (Hegel, 1975, p. 202). By contrast, the Egyptian figures are completely stiff. There is no movement and no sign of any individuality or feeling. While Silenus looks Bacchus in the eye with love and affection, the Egyptian pair are not even looking at one another. The Egyptian artist has utterly failed to convey the inwardness of the individual with genuine human emotion. In a word, there is no *spirit* here. This Greek revolution in art and thought combines within itself several aspects that have moved the development of individuality forward. First of all, the movement from the animal to the mixture of animal and human that is present in Egypt, eventually moves to fully anthropomorphic depictions of gods for the first time in ancient history. Seen retrospectively, the eventual purpose of the Greek spirit was precisely this, to awaken the ancient world from the irrational subconscious mixture of human with nature, and from the supernatural beastlike beings towards rationality and subjectivity (Bouzek & Kratochvíl, 1995, p. 25).

Hegel characterizes the Greek culture and thus its spirit in relation to natural phenomena as “thoughtfully listening spirit – creative while observant. The interpretation and explanation of nature and its transformations – the indication of their sense and import – is the act of the subjective Spirit” (Hegel, 1861, p. 245). Hegel explains in this passage that for the Greeks nature was not conceived simply as something mystical, something incomprehensible, but by their character as curious and observant, they were motivated to explore it, to make sense of it. “They believed that it had something intelligible to convey if only it could be understood correctly” (Stewart, 2018, p. 233). This is an important aspect of their spirit, because the traditional enigmatic mystification of nature was converted in Greece into a more comprehensible almost scientific observation. It is not the external world that they project upon themselves but the the other way around: they project themselves onto the external world, their mind (Spirit) and inner-subjective life. We will see that this transformation of the mode of looking at nature will have sweeping effect on all of Greek culture.

In the *Philosophy of History* Hegel begins his analysis of ancient Greece by explaining the Greek world by saying that “we feel ourselves immediately at home, for we are in the region of Spirit; and though the origin of the nation, as also its philological peculiarities, may be traced farther – even to India – the proper Emergence, the true Palingenesis of Spirit must be looked for in Greece first” (Hegel, 1861, p. 232). As we could see, the Egyptian culture was much more enigmatic and distant to our contemporary ideas, feelings and senses; it was harder to comprehend. Yet in Greece even without understanding of background forces of the social,

ethical, and religious influence, we can easily comprehend and identify with its visual arts. As the development of history has shown, we have never truly disconnected from the tradition of Classical art. The greatest disconnect from it occurred in modernity, yet it seems only to appear as, because even in the contemporary culture arises reactions to this tradition. We cannot completely detach from it, because in a sense the Greeks are the ones who introduced modern way of thought. Nevertheless, how has the dramatic transition in thought from Egypt to Greece occurred, or in Hegel's terms how was thought transformed from distant oriental cultures of religions of nature into the culture of Spirit, individuality, in Greek society?

Hegel begins by explaining how first of all geography could play its role on the mentality of Greeks. Mainland Greece, the Peloponnesian peninsula and the islands in the Aegean and Ionian Sea, the homeland to the Greeks has a specifically distinctive character from the territories of the oriental nations. According to Hegel, the diversity of the territory played a dominant role in shaping the Greek spirit. Hegel explains:

We find here mountains, plains, valleys, and streams of limited extent: no great river, no absolute Valley-Plain presents itself; but the ground is diversified by mountains and rivers in such a way as to allow no prominence to a single massive feature. We see no such display of physical grandeur as is exhibited in the East, - no stream such as the Ganges, the Indus, &c., on whose plains a race delivered over to monotony is stimulated to no change, because its horizon always exhibits one unvarying form. (Hegel, 1861, pp. 234-235)

In this distinctive and diverse territory, the Greeks had to meet the various challenges to survive but most importantly, as the land was diverse so also was the population inhabiting it. Hegel writes how the various tribes of Greeks were in constant interaction with each other as well as with foreigners from other parts of the world surrounding it, it is very complicated to identify which of these peoples was the originating or which had the biggest influence (Hegel, 1861, p. 236). Yet precisely, as is mentioned above, according to Hegel the mixture of cultures and the variety of terrain shaped the Greeks not into a fixed stagnation but into progressiveness. The lack of "physical grandeur" in the sense of a big river or big plains, as in Egypt the Nile or India the Indus and Ganges, which determined a great deal of the identity of these societies, the character of the Greek terrain lacked such a sole fixed natural point and

led to the development of “independent individualities” (Hegel, p. 235). Hegel furthermore adds:

This is the *elementary character* of the Spirit of the Greeks, implying the origination of their culture from independent individualities; — a condition in which individuals take their own ground, and are not, from the very beginning, patriarchally united by a bond of *Nature*, but realize a union through some other medium, - through Law and Custom having the sanction of Spirit (Hegel, 1861, p. 235).

This is an important coincident of geography and humanity. In comparison to the cultures which conceptualized their identity around a strong dependence on a single natural phenomenon that prevented them from developing further, the Greeks had to rely on a different force and that was the spiritual production, products of human thought such as law or customs.

B. Subjected Role of Nature

Therefore, with this lack of absolute dependency on a single natural part of the environment and the intermixing of various tribes and foreign cultures, the Greeks over the ages started to question nature and its relation to human beings. Thus, their conceptions of gods had to undergo development, through several stages from animalistic to civilized human beings. The first example Hegel gives of this transition is the transformation of the water goddesses Naiads into the Muses. He explains,

The Greeks listened to the murmuring fountains, and asked what might be thereby signified; but the signification which they were led to attach to it was not the objective meaning of the fountain, but the subjective—that of the subject itself, which further exalts the Naiad to a Muse. The Naiads, or fountains, are the external, objective origin of the Muses. Yet the immortal songs of the Muses are not that which is heard in the murmuring of the fountains; they are the productions of the thoughtfully listening Spirit. (Hegel, 1861, p. 245)

Image 15: The abduction of Hylas by Naiads



Note. Hylas and the Nymphs, a Gallo-Roman mosaic, 3rd century, Musée of Saint-Romain-en-Gal

The Naiads were goddesses representing waters of fountains, lakes, marshes, etc. They came to be, according to Hegel, since the Greeks were curious about the sounds of floating water and associated it with creatures of a spiritual nature. In the *Image 15* we can see a depiction of a Greek myth where Naiads are abducting the companion of Heracles, Hylas, with whom they have fallen in love. But the important part here is that the Naiads are goddesses of nature; they represent the various waters and are portrayed as beings naked beings outside civilization. Nevertheless, as the Greek culture progresses, the Naiads start to be replaced by the Muses (Stewart, 2018, p. 234). The Muses, however, are very distant from nature; their realm rests in human culture. They are represented in elegant clothes, and each of them represents an individual character. Each Muse possessed a different aspect of creative human culture: Clio (history), Erato (love poetry), Polyhymnia (hymns), or Urania (astronomy) etc (Stewart, p. 234). With these characteristics they are no longer part of nature like the Naiads, who are naked and live in rivers, but rather they enter the world of civilization. The *Images 15* and *16* are the best way to point out this difference, the movement from nature to spirit. Since each Muse has a concrete character and profile, they differ from the Naiads who lack specific personality or individuality but are in principle the same (Stewart, 2018, p. 234).

Image 16: The Nine Muses



Note. Sarcophagus known as the "Muses Sarcophagus", representing the nine Muses and their attributes. Marble, first half of the 2nd century C.E., Louvre Museum

Another example that Hegel makes use of in order to demonstrate this movement from pure nature to spirit is the famous statue of Artemis from Ephesus, which Hegel contrasts with the Greek Artemis, also known as Diana, the goddess of the hunt and the protectress of young girls. The cult of Artemis originated in Ephesus in Asia Minor, where she was worshiped and where her temple was located. This cult was later brought to Greece, where this deity was reconceived (Stewart, 2018, p. 242). Hegel describes the change in goddess as follows:

Fundamentally Diana has the office of being the universal mother of nature, e.g. as Diana of the Ephesians, who hovers between the old and the new, she has, as her chief content, nature in general, procreation and nutrition, and this meaning is indicated even in her external form, in her breasts, etc. Whereas in the case of the Greek Artemis, the huntress, who kills beasts, this natural aspect recedes altogether into the background in her humanly beautiful maidenly form and independence (Hegel, 1975, p. 474).

The Artemis of Ephesus (*Image 17*), clearly shows Eastern influences, that is, conceptions of sacred nature as we could see in Egypt. "Her multiple breasts make her look like some kind of inhuman monster, but the symbolism is clear: she is the mother of the natural world. Below her many breasts are heads of various animals, which she presumably nourishes" (Stewart, 2018, p. 243).

Image 17: Artemis of Ephesus



Note. This version of Artemis is newer copy of the original one, ca. 2nd century C.E., the head, hands and feet are a modern restoration by Giuseppe Valadier, Naples National Archaeological Museum, Copyright 2011 Nguyen

By contrast, the Greek version of Artemis (*Image 18*) reveals a very different character, she is no longer a part of the nature rather is utilizing it. She appears in completely human form. In the Greek sculpture she is depicted during a hunt, usually with a just captured deer which she

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is preparing to kill. There is no nourishment or continuation of nature as in the Eastern version, but rather the Greek goddess appears as the superior being in distinction to the animal world. She has surpassed nature and dominates it.

Image 18: The Greek Artemis



Note. Diana of Versailles or Diana the Goddess of the Hunt, marble, partially restored Roman copy of a lost Greek bronze original attributed to Leochares, ca. 325 B.C.E., Louvre Museum

We can see that the Greeks can transform nature. They have clearly made a step forward from the religion of nature, but it is important to note that even though they have transformed their relation to nature towards subjection under the power human culture, and by their art can transform natural material such as stone into depiction of inner spirit, they still need

nature as point of departure (Stewart, 2018, p. 235). As Hegel writes; “the Greek spirit as the medium between these two, begins with nature, but transforms it into a mere objective form of its (Spirit’s) own existence. Spirituality is therefore not yet absolutely free; not yet absolutely self-produced—is not self-stimulation” (as cited in Stewart, p. 235).

C. Greek Pantheon and The War of the Gods

The Greek religion developed as any other religion over several centuries, yet the differences in stages of its development were much more dramatic and extensive than in oriental religions (Stewart, 2018, p. 236). The gods of Greek pantheon at the peak of the Greek culture were by their character and powers very distant from those they had at the beginnings. The Greek peninsula combined various tribes which had their own local deities and local folk-myths, this variety could at first glance give a contemporary observer an impression that the Greek mythology is full of confusion and complexity. Though, this would be a false premise, the variety in generations of Greek gods, in which at first glance several gods could represent the same powers and responsibilities, and thus being contradictory can only be understood through examination of chronological development of this religion (Stewart, p. 236).

When the Greeks came in contact with each other, there arose a need for adjustment of pantheon to be able to accommodate the variety of local deities (Stewart, p. 236). Additionally, as the Greek culture was developing culturally the original conceptions of deities were no longer reflecting the more developed self-conception of the Greeks. There was a natural need for new deities to emerge and acquire different character which would better reflect the self-conception of the Greeks, this manifested in the myth of the three generations of gods (Stewart, p. 236). According to Hegel the key to understand the Greek religion is to examine it through the whole of historical development, only then we can comprehend the thought the generations of deities truly reflect. In later stages of Greek culture, awareness arose that the confusion in variety of their gods needed account how they came to be. The Greeks arrived with mythological explanation, the concept of the war of the gods, transforming natural deities into self-conscious deities. During this development the original natural deities were becoming obscure, failing to adequately reflect the gradually more self-aware Greek society (Stewart, p. 236).

H. D. F. Kitto in his book “The Greeks” (1951) also acknowledges that to properly understand the Greek religion we must understand its chronology, and not to approach the religion from “the wrong end” (Kitto, p. 195). In the major myth of the Greek pantheon, we encounter three

generations of gods: the primal natural deities associated with Chaos, then the Titans a middle ground between nature and spirit, and lastly the Olympians, each of them resembling individual human beings. For Hegel the key element is that the Greek religion does not stop at one particular generation but develops further in a process of particularization and individualization, in other words detaching from divinities of indeterminate external natural phenomena to conscious individual gods (Stewart, 2018, p. 237). Thus, it is necessary to briefly explain the stages of Greek gods, what they represent, what character they have, and how they are portrayed.

The first generation of Greek gods according to Hesiod's *Theogony* were very distant from the more familiar Olympian gods, "there was Chaos, from which sprung different natural deities, Gaia (the Earth), Tartarus (the Underworld), Eros (love), Nyx (night), and Erebus (darkness)" (Stewart, 2018, p. 236). In this stage the Greek thought about the gods as much as other primitive societies, the gods resembled external forces, which we cannot control like weather or the power of the sea or a storm. This initial stage was according to Hegel stage of indeterminacy, no value was given to any morality or individual character of human beings (Hegel, 1962, pp. 229-230; Stewart, pp. 236-237). The rain falls just as on the just as it does on the unjust, like the primal gods he is indeterminate (Kitto, p. 195).

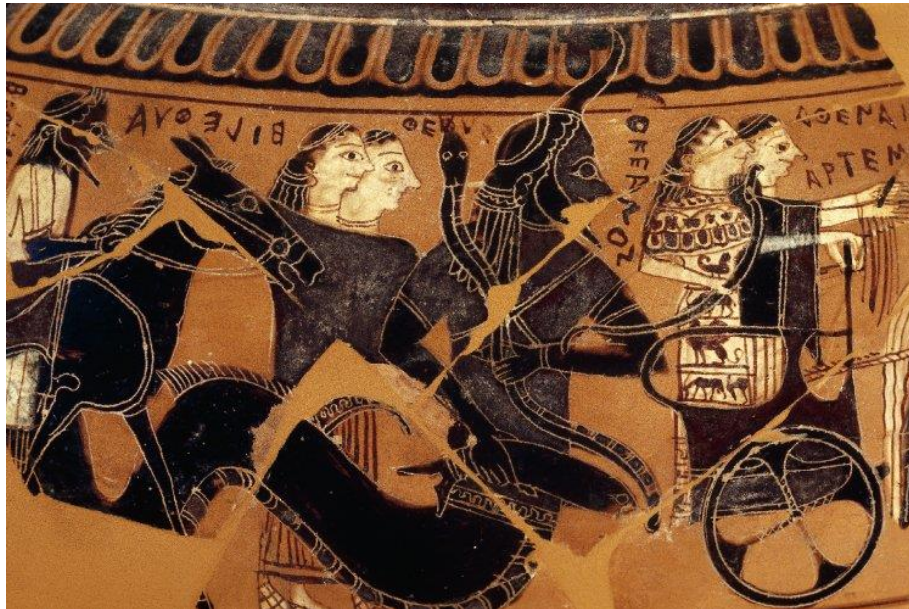
The next generation after Chaos are the Titans, the children of Gaia and Uranos, that is the union of earth and the sky. "The Titans consisted of the following gods: Cronos, Oceanus, Tethys, Koios (or Coeus), Pheobe, Hyperion, Theia, Kreois (or Crius), Iapetus, Themis, Mnemosyne, and Rhea" (Stewart, p. 237). This generation was ruled tyrannically by Uranos, but his son Cronos with the help Gaia leads a rebellion and overthrows his father. Cronos is then installed as the new king and rules the Titans until the same scenario occurs again, but now it is the Zeus who overthrows his father Cronos giving rise to the new and concluding generation of the gods, the Olympians (Stewart, p. 237).

Now according to Hegel, it is important to note that the Titans did not represent "genuine subjective personalities" but rather were still submerged in nature resembling in their form the transitory gods of Egypt, but the Greeks never ascribed to them inventions of human culture but were "indistinguishable from the natural forces" (Stewart, 2018, pp. 237-238). On the other hand, the Olympians represent gods of spirit, they still need to control also natural forces like titans but additionally to this they acquire new responsibilities for products of human culture (Stewart, p. 238_239). Best example of this transition from nature to spirit can again be seen in the artefacts of Greek art. In the *Images 19* and *20*, we can see the Oceanus,

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one of the Titans as personification of nature. The Oceanus is depicted as a creature with serpent body and on his head he has claws like crab or lobster. Such creature could be easily related to nature as he looks that he has just emerged from the depths of the sea, but there is no civilization he is responsible for.

Image 19: Oceanus Attending the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis



Note. Athenian, black-figure style dinos by Sophilos, ca.590 B.C.E.

Image 20: Oceanus and Tethys



Note. Mosaic of the Oceanus and his wife Tethy from the Zeugma Mosaic Museum

On other hand, the character of Poseidon is distinctive to Oceanus as he is no longer only responsible for the force of the sea but becomes responsible also for human culture. Hegel explains, "Oceanus as such is only the element of nature which his name denotes. Poseidon has still the wildness of that element in his character; but he is also an ethical personage; to him is ascribed the buildings of walls and the production of the horse" (Hegel, 1861, pp. 254-255). In some ancient images, Poseidon is usually depicted as a strong warrior riding his horse-drawn chariot, representing the power of development and dominance of human culture over nature (Stewart, 2018, p. 240). Furthermore, Hegel argues that there can be more examples of this symbolic transition from nature to spirit, with other Olympian gods who better represented civilized life, like for example Zeus who in contrast to Uranos, no longer only represented rain and lightning but became the god of state and civic life (Stewart, p. 239).

The fact that Greeks were instinctively inclined to look for unity and order in the universe, inclination to understand the world through their personal experience was quite a different approach than that of the Egyptians whose conceptualization of the universe had essential restriction to comprehend it, where the knowledge about nature of things was "purposely" left mythologically clouded by a veil of mystery.

D. Transition of the Artisan into the Artist

As we have already described the movement of the Greeks from the religions of nature into the religion of spirit is reflected in the examples drawn from art. This new self-conception was also a transition to a new purpose and intention of artisans, that is, the movement from the artisan to the artist. The Egyptian artisan (*Werkmeister*) is by Hegel referred to as the one who "brings forth himself as object, although not yet having taken hold of the thought of himself". His work is the "instinctive fashioning of material" that is equivalent to "the building of honeycombs by bees" (Hegel, 2018, p. 401). On the other hand, the artist (*Künstler*), is defined as a creator who "has taken an inward turn – and into an inner that in itself expresses itself from out of itself, is a thought that begets itself, preserves the shape appropriate to itself, and is itself a lucid existence. Spirit is artist" (Hegel, p. 403). "To be sure, there is a consciousness which comes back to him from his work... the spirit which is their essence" (Hegel, 2018, p. 408). According to Hegel, the artist represents a movement from the unconscious agency of the artisan towards a certain degree of self-consciousness of one's own spirit (mind), one's own individuality, and subjectivity, which is reflected in the art he produces. Yet, for the art to be able to express the inner life of human beings the author must also be aware of his own

subjectivity. With the Greek artist “the shape has gained the form of self-conscious activity” (as cited in Speight, 2013, p. 208).

In the previous chapters, Hegel has demonstrated that the development of thought had a tremendous impact on all areas of society. What had to occur, what caused the Greeks to be able to have such self-reflection that is represented with lively shapes of human inner emotions in their artifacts? This is difficult to explain, and perhaps it cannot be wholly understood from our distant perspective. Many aspects such as geography, connections with foreign cultures, perhaps even the uneasiness, anxiety, yet victorious conflict with the Persians influenced their identity,” which is a repeating theme of Greeks facing the Orientals” (Politt, 1972, p. 80). Politt further elaborates on this dilemma:

Whether as a result of some mysterious tendency in the national psyche or spontaneous reaction” to the turbulent historical experience after the break-up of the Mycenae world, the Greeks felt that to live with changing, undefined unmeasured, seemingly random impressions – to live, in short, with what was expressed by the Greek word chaos – was to live in a state of constant anxiety (Politt, 1972, p. 1).

It is well known that the essential elements of Greek artistic and philosophical expression were to find order between the conflict of physical and psychological experience (Politt, 1972, p. 1). As Politt notes every confusion creates a feeling and to some extent a need for expression, nevertheless the example of Greek “quest for order” was historically exceptional (Politt, p. 1). Yet what is striking is that in order for this transition to happen, the mastering of techniques, tools, or media that preceded it were not its cause. On the contrary, the Egyptians were profound artisans and builders, yet with their conceptions of their deities and themselves as human beings, they were not able to reflect the inner life of individuals. Rather, according to Hegel, the transition became possible precisely because of the new conception of human beings, a higher understanding of one’s own inner subjective life. This provided the groundwork for new deities and artistic expression (Speight, 2013, p. 207).

At the beginning of this chapter, I have already mentioned the famous set of two male statues the *Kleobis and Biton (Image 21)* from the late Greek Archaic period. These figures represent the conventional canon of proportion and composition, resembling the stiffness of Egyptian sculpture. These types of sculptures, generally known as the *Kouros* male figures, still represent the stage of the artisan approach to artwork, in which one sticks closely to the

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prescribed canonical rules and one's individual input as creator is neither expected nor present.

Image 21: Kleobis and Biton



Note. The twin Kurois by Polymedes of Argos, marble, 1.97 m, ca. 580 B.C.E, Archeological Museum of Delphi

Image 22: Black Pharaohs



Note. Statues of Various Rulers, late 25th Dynasty, see the resemblance in stiff frontal perspective with the early Greek statues, Kerma Museum

However, what we know today as Classical Greece approximately from 510 B.C.E. to 323 B.C.E., was the period of greatest innovation and exploration. New modes of portrayal both of the outer shapes of figurative art and natural object themes, as the emotions and feelings, started to emerge in this period in which Greece acquired its style as we know it. In the period of Classical Greece, the artists started to explore the “emotions and changing states of mind”, in an unprecedentedly “dramatic context”, unlike the Archaic statues (*Image 21*), which tend to have an “iconic character”. The Archaic statues seem to be in an “unchanging presence”, completely unaffected by the changing nature of the world (Politt, 1972, p. 15). In the early Classical period, we can start to discern the first efforts attempts at the humanization of figures. Here the Greek statues begin to have a glimpse of individuality behind their eyes, as well as a looser convention on composition and much more natural and realistic human proportions (Politt, p. 15). One example of such an early statue is the *Kritios Boy*, located in the Acropolis Museum in Athens, from ca. 480-475 B.C.E. By far the most brilliant example of the transition from Archaic to Classical art are the two statues of dying warriors from pediment

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sculptures of the temple of Aphaia on the island of Aegina. These two sculptures are in the original temple placed to face each other, and although they depict the same theme, they are completely different in their character. With regard to their date, they were constructed at around the same time, perhaps only ten years apart.

Image 23: West Pediment Fallen Warrior



Note. Aegina, Temple of Aphaia, marble, ca. 490 B.C.E.

The fallen warrior of the west pediment (Image 23) has been struck in the chest with a spear (now missing), which he grasps with his right hand while leaning on his left arm. Even though his proportions and silhouette are created in a very humanistic matter, he has an expressionless face, resembling that of the earlier Kouros. Rather than displaying any real agony or suffering from his fatal wound, he seems as to be completely internally unaffected by these circumstances (Politt, 1972, p. 19). The fallen warrior of the east pediment (*Image 24*) is, by contrast, a completely different matter, described to the utmost emotional detail by J. J. Politt:

As life ebbs away and he sinks toward the earth, he tries futilely, sword (now missing in hand to raise himself. His eyes narrow as his consciousness fades; his mouth is slightly open as his breathing grows difficult; he stares at the earth. His enfeebled movements contrast poignantly with his massive physical frame... The sculptor who conceived the figure had obviously thought carefully about exactly what it meant. He must have asked himself what it must really be like when a powerful warrior is wounded and falls. What

does he feel? How should we feel? And what meaning is there in our feelings? (Politt, 1972, p. 20)

Image 24: Fallen Warrior from the East Pediment



Note. Aegina, Temple of Aphaia, marble, ca. 480 B.C.E.

Important aspect now arises for acknowledging the emergence of individuality, that is the Greeks seem to show signs of being able to see their own style in historical perspective, visible in architecture as well as in sculpture. Politt (1972) especially gives credit to this notion of using archaism: “such perspective about artistic styles is often characteristic of very self-conscious age, like the Early Classical period and like our own” (Politt, pp. 60-61). Signs that the Greek artists were becoming gradually more self-aware individuals is demonstrated also by another sphere of artistic expression, the introduction of psychological portraits (*Image 25 and 26*) (Politt, 1986, p. 59). The genuine interest in being able to express authentic individual conscious life of everyday experience of the members of the society.

Image 25: Portrait of Demosthenes by Polyeyktos



Note. marble, Roman copy of an original of 280 B.C.E., Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

Image 26: Seated Girl



Note: Marble, Roman copy of an original of the school of Lysippos, ca. 3rd or 2nd century B.C.E., Centrale Montemartini

E. The Rise of Heroism

According to Hegel, we can ascribe the development of spirit also to socio-political reasons. We know that the most famous example of first democracy can be looked for in Athens, this political system in which the majority of citizens have governmental power in their hands, according to Hegel caused rapid development in contrast to Egypt or Persia where centralized hierarchical power dominated most of their history (Hegel, 1861, p. 242). The democratic

mindset of individuals feeling as free citizens, and growing populations accordingly that led to the Greek colonization, is to Hegel sign of the individual character of people who would not submit to the degradation of poverty and always sought equality (Hegel, p. 243). As I have also mentioned above in the subchapter *Subjected Role of Nature* the Greeks did not evolved into absolute dependence of worshipping specific natural environment and geography, which thus did not lead to stiff bondage of arbitrary natural authorities. Hegel explains this as follows:

In Man, the side of his subjective existence which he owes to Nature, is the Hearth, the Disposition, Passion, and variety of Temperament: this side is then developed in a spiritual direction to free Individuality; so that the character is not placed in a relation to universally valid moral authorities, assuming the form of duties, but the Moral appears as a nature peculiar to the individual – an exertion of will, the result of disposition and individual constitution. (Hegel, 1861, p. 246)

The constellation of Greek individual politics, colonization, and relation to comprehensible and conquerable nature, led according to Hegel to perhaps one of the best proofs of the development of free individuality in Greece. In Greek culture the emergence of heroes is yet perhaps the most profound. Let us think for a moment and ask ourselves how many heroes can we name if we would be asked to mention some of the Greek Heroes? Most of us would immediately have several on our mind, starting perhaps with Prometheus, Heracles, Perseus, Theseus, Oedipus, Achilles, Odysseus, Bellerophon, or Orpheus, and we could continue further. Now let us concern ourselves with a similar question, how many heroes of ancient Egypt do we know? Well, this question might astonish us, it seems to be much harder to answer, are there even any? We can come up with the names of few pharaohs, we know also about Osiris, Isis and Horus yet they seem not be real human beings. Osiris is depicted anthropomorphically but he also embodies agriculture and his body parts are stretched across the whole of Egypt, Horus definitely has glorious acts in restoring the order of the universe, yet he is not properly even human, and Isis is a goddess which seems not need to worry about changing nature of things since her acts occur in a naturally repetitive manner of the seasons. What does this tell us about how the peoples saw or valued individuality?

If we are to investigate further even to ancient Sumer we know about Gilgamesh, his deeds are truly heroic, but upon closer investigation, he might not be far from the image of a

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Pharaoh. He and Enkidu are mythological personifications of whole communities that could be responsible for their acts. Just like with the pharaohs with whom we usually do not even know the names of their generals, ancient Sumer was known for being in lack of natural resources, namely wood which they needed to exploit from neighboring nations, such as Sargon of Agade and Gudea of Lagash (Stewart, 2020, p. 31). These states had the wood the Sumerians desired, yet were not in support to see foreigners coming to cut down their trees, and thus violent conflicts erupted between the populations. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, this is however explained not as a military campaign of collective of men from Uruk, but the whole is represented by Gilgamesh and Enkidu slaying the guardian of the Cedar Forest, the monstrous giant Humbaba (the forest people) (Stewart, p. 31).

Now let us take for example the famous statue, the Roman copy of *the Dying Gaul* (Image 27), whose original Greek counterpart (now lost) has been created sometime between 230 and 220 B.C.E. by king Attalus I. to commemorate his victory over the Galatians from Anatolia, or the emotional depiction of companions in hardships in war *the Pasquino Group*, also known as *Menelaus Carrying the Body of Patroclus* or *Ajax Carrying the Body of Achilles* (Image 28).

Image 27: *Dying Gaul*



Note. Roman marble copy of a Greek original, ca. 230-220 B.C.E., Capitoline Museums, Copyright 2017 Nimatallah

Image 28: The Pasquino Group



Note. Roman marble copy of a Hellenistic bronze original, ca, 200-150 B.C.E. Loggia dei Lanzi

Let us compare these pictures with Egyptian art (*Images 29, 30 and 31*) dealing with the same subject matter of war endeavor. The Egyptian imagery seems to be wholly ignorant of the fates of various individual warriors taking part in them if. The only credit is given to the grandiose enlarged pharaoh who is able with the help of gods to solely vanquish all his enemies. The Egyptian depictions do not show any traces of individuality, if so only towards

the pharaoh, yet by appearance all the pharaohs look alike. By contrast, the Dying Gaul is completely different, his realm rests in the internal battle of his own individuality. The fact that the Greeks not only gave individual features to this Celtic warrior and expressed “a deeply moving tribute to the human spirit” (National Gallery of Art, 2013), it is their conquered enemy to whom they are paying such a dignified respect within an embodiment of courage in face of one’s own death. We can see now that the Greeks valued the value of a feeling human being quite differently than the Egyptians.

Image 29: Ramesses II. Capturing Enemies



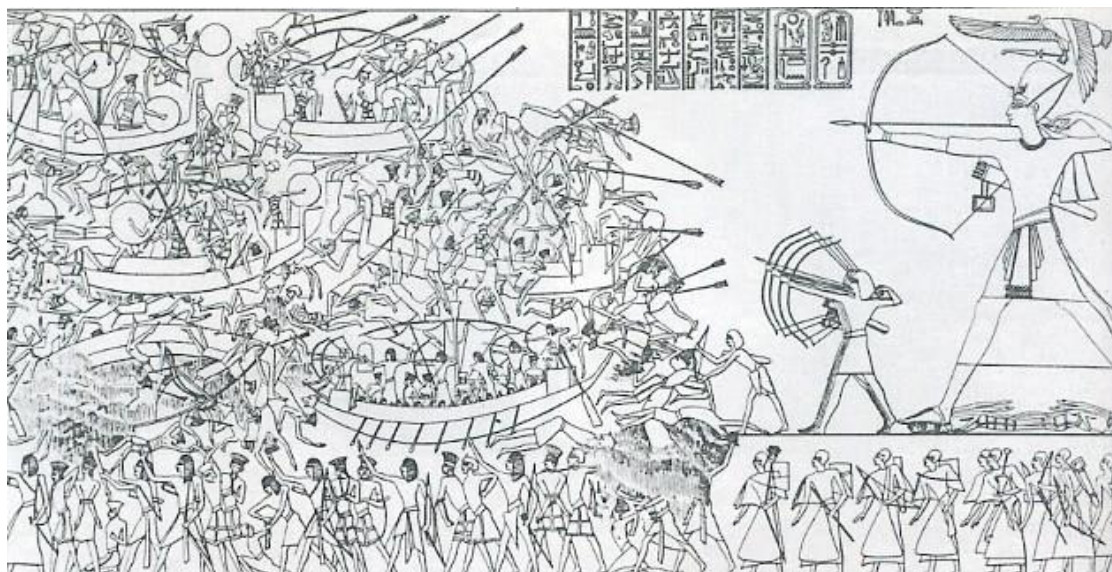
Note. Relief of Ramses II from Memphis showing him capturing enemies: a Nubian, a Libyan, and a Syrian, ca. 1250 B.C.E, Cairo Museum

Image 30: Ramesses II Storming the Hittite fortress of Dapur



Note. Depiction of the siege of Dapur, which was part of the larger military campaign of Ramesses II against the Hittite Empire (modern-day Syria) in 1269 B.C.E.

Image 31: Ramesses III. Fighting the Sea Peoples



Note. Depiction of the Battle of the Delta, ca.1175 B.C.E., North wall of Medinet Habu

This rise in individualization and human agency can be also put in relation to themes outside of military conduct, with Hegel's explanation of how the Greeks saw beauty and importance of one's own individual cultivation of body, mind, and character as the aim of acquiring desired highest potential and distinction of an individual. As Hegel claims, "the spiritual interest of primary importance is, therefore, the development of the body to a perfect organ for the will" (Hegel, 1861, p. 251). The tradition of Olympic games for the sake of the competitive sport, is for example one of the various proofs for this self-conception. *Images 32*

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and 33 reflect this conception in which genuine appreciation for aesthetics of a naturel athletic physique is conveyed.

Both of these young athletes embody the Ideal of a young male, the important aspect here is that they do not need to battle mythological beasts, or save the world in some manner, or simply be on a life-threatening adventure as the majority of Greek heroes do. No, they are simply valued for their beauty, as common members of the Greek society without neglecting their distinctive individual character of thinking human beings.

Image 32: Victorious Youth



Note. Bronze, 5th or 4th-century B.C.E.

Image 33: Athlete from Ephesus



Note. Roman bronze copy of Greek original, ca. 330 B.C.E, Ephesos Museum

The Young male from Ephesus (Image 33):

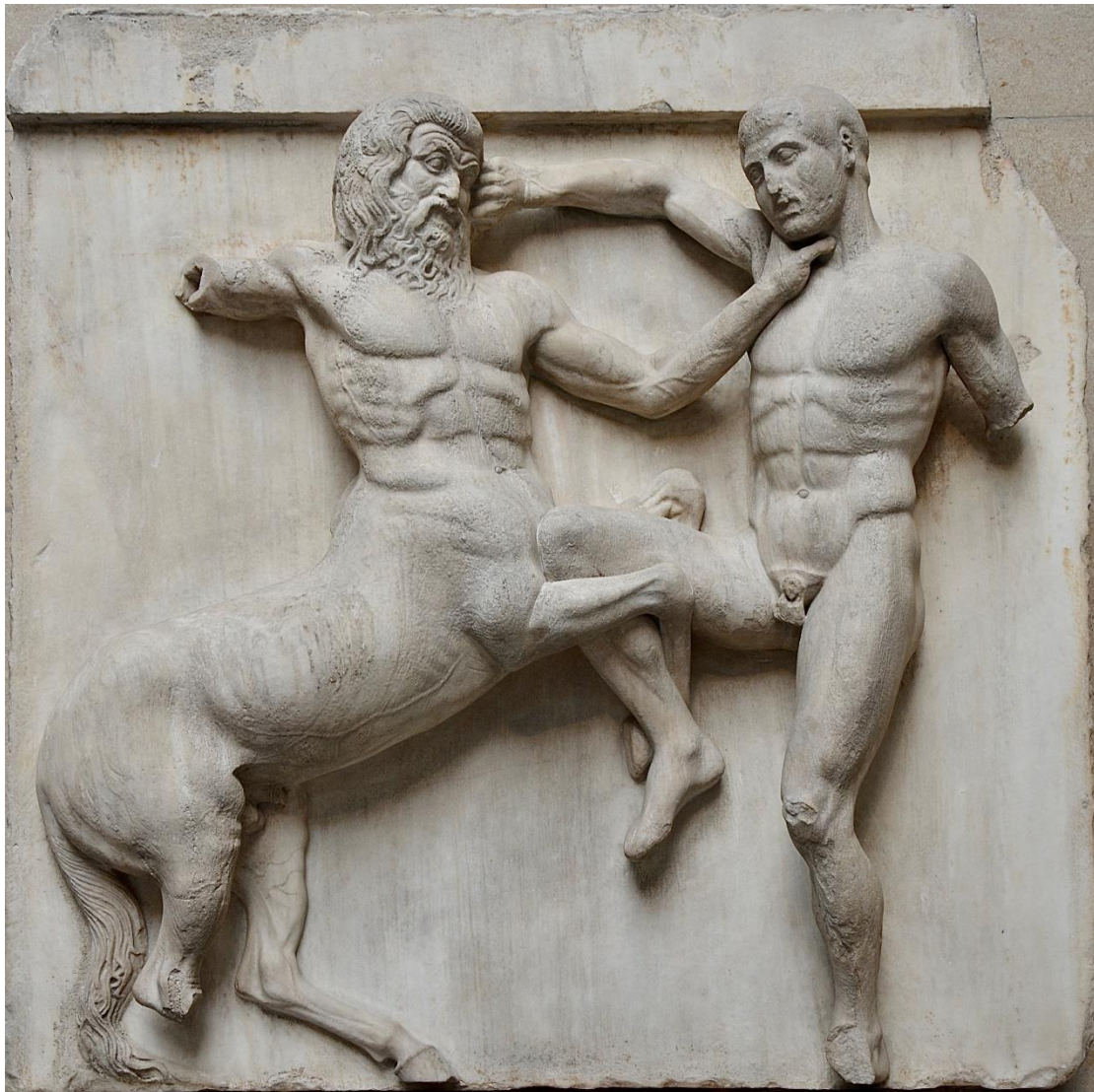
Depicts an athlete who, after completing his workout in the gymnasium's palaestra, is shown scraping off sweat, sand and the oil he had slathered himself with with a στλεγγίς (strigilis). We see him running his left thumb over the (now lost) scraper to clean it. Both the apparently spontaneous "snapshot" of someone lost in thought, and stylistic details point to a 4th-century BC model. (KHM-Museumsverband, 2022)

Hegel gives an account to these general observations as follows:

Among the Greeks, then, we find this boundless impulse of individualities to *display themselves*, and to find their enjoyment in so doing... Free as the bird singing in the sky, the individual only expresses what lies in his untrammelled human nature, – [to give the world "assurance of a man"], – to have his importance recognized. This is the *subjective* beginning of Greek Art, – in which the human being elaborates his physical being, in free, beautiful movement and agile vigour, the most diverse individualities. (Hegel, 1861, pp. 251-252)

Upon returning to the concept of heroes which predated this individualization of common members of society such as athletes. The heroes from mythological stories wandered into dangers of adventures for the desire of glory, recognition, or justice. In these quests they had to many times face beast-like enemies symbolizing fight of spirit and nature (*Image 34*), "the triumph of the forces of order and civilization over those of chaos and barbarism" (Politt, 1972, p. 80). According to Hegel, just like the athletes in the Olympic Games or warriors and leaders in reality, the mythological heroes desired to display themselves, to be able by their merit to acquire individual distinction, for this purpose they had to many times fight with personified yet indifferent forces of nature. These conflicts are represented in the Greek art and accompanied by new artistic expressions of emotions of anxiety, restlessness, or attempts to depict motion and tension in dramatic compositions.

Image 34: Centaur and Lapith Fighting



Note. The Parthenon sculptures, British Museum, south metope no. XXXI, ca. 447-442 B.C.E

We can see now that the artworks of Greeks were a work of authentic artists rather than indistinguishable artisans. J. J. Politt (1972) at the end of his book *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*, after his extensive research of Greek art polemizes whether it is even possible to identify any single element, which could characterize the whole of Greek art. The simple answer would be no, since the diversity of styles and themes are so striking that they are more determining than any common unifying thread (Politt, p. 195). “Dramatic tension, moralistic austerity, mannerism, visionary aloofness, a passion for elegance, academicism, sensuousness, and pathos can all be found at one stage or another” (Politt, p. 195). Yet, there is one more element on which artistic expression can be analyzed, and that is in which way it conceptualizes the general conception of reality. Throughout history, the various artistic

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movements claimed that reality can be experienced and observed only through individually conflicting observations. The mystical emotion of Gothic Christian art or more modern approaches of the 20-century Realists conveyed that reality is perceived through sense experience freed from rationalizing mind or fiction (Politt, pp. 195-196). The fact that the Greeks have already tried to reconcile with two of the extremes, to find a balance between the specific or relative, and generic or absolute speaks of strikingly early self-aware consciousness of these great artists.

Image 35: Barberini Faun



Note. equivalent of the Greek Satyr, Roman marble copy of a Hellenistic sculpture of the Pergamene school, ca. 220 B.C.E., Glyptothek Munich

Conclusion

Every work of art is created in a specific time and place, and every book on art history talks about how the given cultures influenced the given works of art that came from them. However, this thesis argues something much more specific. I wish to show that the changes in *the self-conceptions of human beings* are reflected in the artworks of the different periods. This approach from philosophical anthropology is something that art historians are generally blind to. On the other hand, certain philosophers of history tend to fall into the death trap of rationalizing and assembling data to be suitable for their “interpretation”. One lacks the empirical side and the other a general pattern of principle that might shed a deeper understanding of history and its cycles in a broader more objective manner. In every age, there is a desire to interpret the past to present generations, and we should not be ignorant about it. To understand human nature has been the task of philosophers since the beginning, but this quest is not over and we must continue in pursuing the dialogue between times. The quest to better understand ourselves and guard the principles and values that human agency has produced, for much will of individuals and even whole generations have been sacrificed for us to leave a better-dignified life. Ignorance or misuse of the interpretation of history can lead to devastating consequences and we must not be blind to it.

The combination of the approach of philosophical anthropology and art history has not been properly studied yet, thus I have chosen to approach my topic in an interdisciplinary fashion. The thesis is demonstrating that the shift in the Hegelian idea of freedom and individuality can be supplemented by empirical examples. This study is thus realizing the Hegelian thesis that the dramatic change in the Greek art has not been solely made by a coincidence of external relations but by the human mind realizing itself as individuality and reason.

Followingly, the disconnection of modern art could be furthermore explored precisely through this framework of another movement of spirit, a movement in the interpretation of what constitutes contemporary human beings. To address the modern problem of the idiosyncrasy of individual authors, which manifests in a paradoxical fashion is a task for further research. One might think he knows himself, yet wonders only in his internal reactions to personal experience and loses connection with the objective world. This might cause him to fall into the extreme of being self-assured of his ability to produce art, although art deprived of any meaning or aesthetic quality. The disconnection from any external influence, superfluous knowledge, or lack of critical thinking that can indeed occur in the overflow of information in

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highly self-aware developed civilizations, can lead to the degradation of art in the sense of indifference towards quality or morality. Contemporary individuals can be assured of their “artistic” merit by the vast amount of superficial public opinion. Nevertheless, the public has for a long-time lost connection with a sense of common criteria for judging the quality and a comprehensible collective agreement on the purpose of art. The modern concept of no authority for judgment of art, or art being located in every phenomenon or object even without human interference, resembles worrying impression as if we were part of Andersen’s folktale pretending that the vain emperor has his clothes on.

Image 36: Dionysos Riding Cheetah



Note. Dionysos on a cheetah, mosaic floor from Pella, Greece, 330-300 B.C.E

Resume

Zámerom tejto bakalárskej práce je preskúmať tézu G.W.F. Hegela o progresívnom vývoji chápania individuality a hodnoty jednotlivca, ako aj vnímania ľudskej subjektivity v porovnaní spoločnosti starovekého Egypta a starovekého Grécka. Prínosom tejto práce pre už existujúci výskum je v jej interdisciplinárnom prístupe filozofickej antropológie a dejín umenia, z dôvodu nedostatku existujúcich zdrojov, ktoré by sa zaoberali buď empirickým podložením Hegelovej teórie či spojenia dejín umenia cez perspektívu filozofickej antropológie. Táto práca pristupuje k Hegelovej téze vývoja individuality práve empirickým výskumom konkrétnych umeleckých predmetov z daných kultúr. Práca je rozdelená do troch kapitol, ktoré ďalej pozostávajú z podkapitol.

Prvá kapitola sa zaoberá zaradením Hegelových myšlienok do chronologického kontextu vývoja dejín umenia a filozofie. Nadväzujúca podkapitola sa zaoberá konkrétne Hegelovou teóriou vývoja, ako chápania absolútnej ideí či objektívneho poznania skrz vývoj ľudského myslenia v dejinách. Záverečná podkapitola tejto časti sa zaoberá Hegelovou filozofiou umenia a taktiež vysvetľuje kľúčové pojmy, ako subjektivita a individualita, dve dištinkatívne charakteristiky človeka. Tieto pojmy chápe ako kľúčové aspekty pre existenciu ľudskej spoločnosti a kultúry, no upozorňuje na fakt, že v dejinách si ľudstvo túto charakteristiku nevedomovo ale pripisovalo dôvody vlastného konania externým fenoménom.

Jadro práce je ďalej rozdelené medzi dve kapitoly sústreďujúce sa na myslenie, spoločnosť a umenie Starovekého Egypta a Grécka. Prvá z týchto dvoch kapitol pojednáva o starovekom Egypte, počínajúc so štúdiou Egyptskej spoločnosti, ako silno hierarchickom systéme s danými nemennými pravidlami pre tvorbu umenia. Druhá podkapitola sa zaoberá konceptom „symbolického umenia“ Egypta a uctievania božstiev vo zvieracej forme. Tretia podkapitola nadväzuje na predchádzajúcu a vysvetľuje príčiny a význam odklonenia sa od čisto zvieracích zobrazení božstiev ku kombináciám ľudských a zvieracích atribútov zobrazovania božstiev, táto zmena signalizuje počiatočné príklady ľudstva uvedomujúc si samé seba. Záverečná podkapitola sa venuje fenoménu posmrtného života pod kultom boha Osirisa, ako významný míľnik vo vývoji vo vnímania hodnoty jednotlivca, kedy sa podľa Hegelovej teórie po prvý krát v histórii pripisuje dôležitosť morálnemu správaniu života a zodpovednosť zaň každému jednotlivcovi.

Tretia kapitola tejto bakalárskej práce v úvode pojednáva o prvotnom ovplyvnení Gréckeho umenia Egyptom, ale dáva do popredia Grécke dramatické odpútanie sa od spôsobu tvorby, a

teda aj myslenia starovekých Egypťanov. Druhá podkapitola pojednáva o postupnej degradácii uctievaní prírodných javov či zvierat pred antropomorfnými zobrazeniami božstiev na rozdiel od Egypta. Tretia podkapitola sa zaoberá mytologickou vojnou bohov, ako Gréckej interpretácie postupného odpútavania sa od externého vnímania seba symých ku vnímaniu bohov, ako reflexie subjektívnych ľudských bytostí, zosobneného v troch generáciách Gréckych bohov. Štvrtá podkapitola pojednáva o prelome v chápaní role výtvarníka medzi Egyptom a Gréckom, a to cez vývoj anonymného remeselníka ku autentickému umelcovi, ktorý sa snaží zachytiť subjektívnu a emočnú schránku človeka. Posledná podkapitola nadväzuje na predchádzajúcu a zameriava sa na fenomén individuálneho hrdinstva, ako unikátny produkt Gréckej kultúry. Tento fenomén je demonštrovaný doloženými umeleckými dielami, ktoré reflektujú túžbu jednotlivcov zdokonaľovať a preukázať svoje osobitné vlastnosti a schopnosti vo vymedzení sa voči ostatným jednotlivcom. Tieto charakteristiky jednak reflektujú mýty a legendy, či športové udalosti ale aj umelecké zušľachťovanie tela jednotlivca.

Záver napokon spomína potrebu interdisciplinárneho prístupu k pochopeniu vývoja ľudskej histórie, a teda aj kultúry. Taktiež podotýka prínos tejto bakalárskej práce pre štúdium Hegelovej filozofie a taktiež odboru dejín umenia. Výsledkom tejto bakalárskej práce potvrdením Hegelovej tézy o vývoji ducha, teda o postupnom sebauvedomovaní si vlastnej individuality v Gréckej spoločnosti. Toto poznanie je dokázané empirickými príkladmi konkrétnych umeleckých diel, ktoré tento vývoj reflektujú. Napokon práca taktiež polemizuje nad možnosťou použitia podobného prístupu k skúmaniu umeleckých vplyvov aj v modernejších obdobiach či v súčasnosti, teda analýzou súčasného všeobecného ducha (abstrakciou) spoločnosti vnímajúc vlastnú koncepciu ľudskej bytosti.

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