ELEUTHERIA

Published by the Institute of Speculative Philosophy

Volume V Number 1 | SPRING 1993 | Ottawa, Canada

Message from the President

Francis Peddle

I

This instalment of ***ELEUTHERIA*** contains two pieces on aesthetics and the philosophy of art. *Mozart and the Aesthetics of 'Absolute Music'* which was first given by me at the Learned Societies Conference at Queen's University in May, 1991 and Peter McCormick's *Crimson Words, Pale Fires of Reason: Philosophy and Poetry at the End of the Kantian Era* at the XIIth International Congress in Aesthetics in Madrid in September, 1992.

Speculative philosophy has traditionally comprehended art as the immediate appearance of absolute mind. The idea of beauty is a sense-world unity of subjectivity and objectivity.

The content of art is spiritual, its form is the embodiments of the individual arts. The concrete perfection of the ideal in art is the unity of spiritual content and material form. This ideality presents itself as the infinite, free and self-determined work of art bereft of all unnecessary externalities and contingencies.

The counter-absolutism of modernity has refracted our approach to art as much as it has philosophy and religion. In its lowest manifestation art is perceived as entertainment and amusement. In education it is manipulated for its social utility. Moreover, art no longer bridges imagination and sensibility - a necessary connection in the stabilization of subjectivity. Historically, embodiment and contingency have become prior to spiritual content. Form is simply abstraction, a nonembodied reaction to over-subjectivized art.

As the first appearance of absolute mind art is primarily *self-determining* and this is the basic difference between it and mind as anthropology, phenomenology and psychology or as an institutional or social ethics. Art is a self-determining immediacy in which a shifting emphasis between content and form results in the particular arts and in art history as such. This issue of ***ELEUTHERIA*** explores this shifting emphasis and the immediacy of speculative thought in musical and poetic aesthetics.

* * *

The Institute now has available for purchase at $5.00 per copy Volume One in its ***MONOGRAPH SERIES.*** The monograph, entitled, *Speculative Philosophy and Practical Life*, is by James Lowry, and originally appeared in the *Fall, 1990* issue of ***ELEUTHERIA***. Each volume in the ***MONOGRAPH SERIES*** contains a ***Concordance*** and ***Line Numbering*** for easy reference.

Mozart and the Aesthetics of "Absolute Music"

Francis Peddle

Introduction

There was a fundamental change in aesthetic attitudes towards instrumental music and the interpretation of music *per se* in the period from the publication of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Dictionnaire de musique* in 1767 to Eduard Hanslick's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* in 1854. Rousseau reflects the traditional position of eighteenth century musical aesthetics in these words:[1]

> Purely as harmony music is of little account. If it is to provide constant pleasure and interest it must be raised to the rank of an imitative art. However the subject of the imitation is not always as immediately obvious as it is in painting and poetry. It is by words that music most frequently defines the idea (*image*) that it is depicting, and it is through the touching sounds of the human voice that the idea evokes in the depths of the human heart the feeling (*sentiment*) that it seeks to arouse. Who does not feel, in this respect, the inadequacy of instrumental music (*symphonie*) in which brilliance alone is the aim?

Insofar as instrumental music was a kind of "tone-painting", then it came under the unifying artistic concept of *mimesis* (Abbé Dubos and Charles Batteux) and as such found a form of derivative legitimacy.

Equally, the dictum ascribed to Fontenelle "Sonata, what do you want of me?" ("Sonate, que me veux tu?") could be cited in polite company during this period without any hint of the supercilious. This mirrors the dominant aesthetic of representation, effect and sentiment in which art was viewed as useful for educational and cultural purposes.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the autonomy and authority of instrumental music as the *opus perfectum et absolutum* was beyond doubt. Hanslick succinctly describes the source of the beautiful in music in these well-known words:[2]

> *Its nature is specifically musical.* By this we mean that the beautiful is not contingent upon nor in need of any subject introduced from without, but that it consists wholly of sounds artistically combined. The ingenious coordination of intrinsically pleasing sounds, their consonance and contrast, their flight and reapproach, their increasing and diminishing strength - this it is which, in free and unimpeded forms, presents itself to our mental vision.
>
> The primordial element of music is euphony, and rhythm is its soul: rhythm in general, or the harmony of a symmetrical structure, and rhythm in particular, or the systematically reciprocal motion of its several parts within a given measure. The crude material which the composer has to fashion, the vast profusion of which it is impossible to estimate fully, is the entire scale of musical notes and their inherent adaptability to an endless variety of melodies, harmonies, and rhythms. Melody, unexhausted, nay, inexhaustible, is pre-eminently the source of musical beauty. Harmony, with its countless modes of transforming, inverting, and intensifying, offers the material for constantly new developments; while rhythm, the main artery of the musical organism, is the regulator of both, and embraces the charms of the timbre in its rich variety.
>
> To the question: What is to be expressed with all this material? the answer will be: Musical ideas. Now, a musical idea repro-

> duced in its entirety is not only an object of intrinsic beauty but also an end in itself, and not a means for representing feelings and thoughts.
>
> The essence of music is sound and motion.

The somewhat tautological notion that "musical ideas" ought to be what is expressed in the raw material of musical composition, and not the representation of feelings or mental imagery, has its roots deep in German philosophical idealism. Non-representational musical aesthetics are relieved of the arduous task of having to grope around in the "fog" of an aesthetics of emotion.

Hanslick, not uncontroversially, identified the form of music with its content and spiritual essence. He thus speculatively unites the paradox of form and content in his aesthetics of music as absolute. "Forms moved in sounding" or "tonally moved forms" (*tönend bewegte Formen*) are the architectonics of intellectual spirit or the "musical idea" taking their outward form from within. The theme is the aesthetically indivisible musical unit of thought. And from the concept of theme developed the musical idea of thematic process.

Well before Hanslick's systematic formulation of the intellectual and spiritual autonomy of music, the fusion of the self-determination of the philosophical concept with the "absoluteness" of the musical idea can be discerned in classical German Idealism. In 1800 Friedrich von Schlegel in *Das Athenäum* characterized the philosophical nature of music in this way:[3]

> All pure music must be philosophical and instrumental.
> Many people tend to find it curious and absurd that musicians should talk of the *ideas* in their compositions; and yet it may frequently occur that one is apparently more conscious of their thoughts *in* their music than of their thoughts *about* it. Anyone who is aware of the wonderful ways in which the arts and sciences relate to one another will at any rate mistrust the dull idea that the arts are based on the concept of so-called 'naturalness'. According to this, music is supposed to be merely the language of the emotions. The person who goes more deeply into the question will discern that a certain element of philosophical speculation is not at all foreign to the spirit of pure instrumental music. Must not purely instrumental music create its own text? And is not its theme developed, confirmed, varied and contrasted, just as is the object of a sequence of philosophical speculations.

By the time we come to Hegel's *Lectures on Fine Art* several decades later, the principle of music as the inner life of the individual finds full philosophical expression:[4]

> "Now if this subjective experience is to gain its full due in music likewise, then music must free itself from a given text and draw entirely out of itself its content, progress and manner of expression, the unity and unfolding of its work, the development of a principal thought, the episodic intercalation and ramification of others, and so forth; and in doing all this it must limit itself to purely musical means, because the meaning of the whole is not expressed in words".

Unfortunately, Hegel's characterization of absolute music as indeterminate, primarily because of the dialectical positioning of music as a "non-objective inwardness" between sculpture and painting on the one hand and poetry on the other, and because of his approach to the history of philosophy and the philosophy of *Geist* as most explicitly a philosophy of the λόγος, led him to evaluate it as meaningless and empty. It is mainly as such only an affair for connoisseurs and not of humankind in general.

The liberation of music from the texts and words in instrumental music signalled the romantic immersion in the concepts and

enthusiasms of freedom and infinity. When Schlegel was writing in 1800 romanticism stood for everything that was new and innovative. To his contemporaries, Mozart was a romantic and his instrumental music "expressed" in the purest form possible the most refined and yet daring musical and philosophical ideas of the period.

How did it come about that instrumental music, a "language of tones" (*Tonsprache*), wholly unsupported by texts, program notes, any form of mime, or even the affectations, could be taken as having meaning both inherent and intelligible? Is the liberation of instrumental music from all forms of external and empirical determination to be connected with the overall philosophical elaboration of the concept of freedom in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Can an underlying continuum be identified in this development of the romantic metaphysics of pure instrumental music? And to what degree did Mozart contribute to this development by solidifying the prestige of instrumental music as an autonomous art-form? These are some of the broader philosophical, historical and musicological questions whose borderlines must be crossed if we are to begin to understand the deeper relations between late eighteenth century philosophies of the absolute and the explicit appearance of pure instrumental music around this period as the highest and most idealized of art-forms. My primary aim in this inquiry is to examine the plausibility of the claims of the romantic aestheticians of absolute music in terms of musical interpretation and analysis by trying to respond to their philosophical experience of how this music may move and enlighten us.[5]

Historical Genesis of the Phrase "Absolute Music"

The phrase "absolute music" was convolutedly coined in Richard Wagner's aesthetics of the music-drama. It appears in an isolated way in Wagner's 1846 program notes for Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.[6] Later it is used more extensively, but inconsistently, in *Art of the Future* (1849) and *Opera and Drama* (1851). Wagner only appropriated from earlier writers like Hoffman the view that there is a linear philosophy of music history. Unlike Hoffman and Hanslick, however, he saw absolute instrumentalism as merely an intermediate step on the road to music drama.

Hanslick, on the other hand, accepted Hoffman's thesis that instrumental music was the "true" music and the goal of music history, even if his notion of the "specifically musical" tended to purge romantic metaphysics of its more audacious musical metaphors. Nevertheless, Hanslick retained the principle of the immanent interpretation of music, understood as the concept of form perfected in itself. The metaphysics of the developmental unfolding of the universe was for Hanslick a very useful metaphor for the exposition of the "specifically musical".

The aesthetics of "absolute" music in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche had both an emancipatory and revelatory character. With Schopenhauer music was the *modus vivendi* for coming to the inner nature, the of-itself of all appearance. Nietzsche also understood absolute music literally as the emancipation of music from language. The later nineteenth century aesthetics of absolute music intensified and clarified many of the distinctions of the late eighteenth century proto-romantics, but it nevertheless relied heavily on many of the same conceptual and metaphysical terms of reference. On the other hand, absolute music also took on a more formal and vacuous connotation in the late nineteenth century such as in Ottokar Hostinsky's *The Beautiful in Music and the Complete Art Work from the Viewpoint of Formal Esthetics.* The philosophy of the aesthetics of absolute instrumental music which began in the late eighteenth century has a continuity of development and elaboration throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Concept of Absolute Music

The Oxford Companion to Music contains the following formal contrastive definition of "absolute music":[7]

> This term exists as the antithesis to 'Programme Music' (q.v.), i.e. as a label for all that large class of music which has been composed *simply as music*, without any attempt to represent the sounds of nature or of human life, or to follow out a scheme of emotions dictated by a poem, a picture, etc. Thus the most part of the world's music comes under the description of 'Absolute'.

The notion of "absolute" music did not explicitly exist before the late eighteenth century, although the nineteenth century aesthetics which explained what was meant by the term contained a considerable amount of revisionary and reinterpretive historical exegesis.

One of the founders of modern musical journalism, E.T.A. Hoffman, published in 1813 an essay called "Beethoven's Instrumental Music". This essay opens with the following paean to instrumental music:[8]

> When we speak of music as an independent art, should we not always restrict our meaning to instrumental music, which, scorning every aid, every admixture of another art (the art of poetry), gives pure expression to music's specific nature, recognizable in this form alone? It is the most romantic of all the arts - one might almost say, the only genuinely romantic one - for its sole subject is the infinite. The lyre of Orpheus opened the portals of Orcus - music discloses to man an unknown realm, a world that has nothing in common with the external sensual world that surrounds him, a world in which he leaves behind him all definite feelings to surrender himself to an inexpressible longing.

Hoffman goes on to say that Mozart and Haydn were the creators of the present instrumental music. Hoffman describes Mozart's E-flat major symphony, the "Swan Song" in these terms:[9]

> Mozart leads us into the heart of the spirit realm. Fear takes us in its grasp, but without torturing us, so that it is more an intimation of the infinite. Love and melancholy call to us with lovely spirit voices; night comes on with a bright purple luster, and with inexpressible longing we follow those figures which, waving familiarly into their train, soar though the clouds in eternal dances of the spheres.
>
> Mozart calls rather for the superhuman, the wondrous element that abides in inner being.

The avoidance of the representation of determinate feelings is a crucial romantic distinction between "absolute" and "programmatic" or "characteristic" music. Many writers, especially German, at the turn of the nineteenth century, came to view instrumental or absolute music as the apotheosis of the evolution of the arts. Absolute music signified a supremacy over all the other arts. An essential aspect of that supremacy was the "dissolving" of music's relationship to words, texts, vocal music, functionality, sentimentality, affectations and empirical and finite *appearances* in general. This dissolution in the aesthetics of absolute instrumental music made possible the "exaltation" and "sublimation" of the finite, temporal content of instrumental music as such into the infinite and indeterminate spirituality of the absolute itself. The undifferentiated indeterminacy of pure instrumental music was held to be indicative of its superiority over the determinateness and differentiation of vocal music.[10] For Hoffman, Tieck, Wackenroder and others instrumental music became the "poetic", not because it is dependent on literature, or tells a story, or depicts a character, but because it is an artistic idea, a Platonic εἶδος, in which individual manifestations must participate in order to be art.[11] Absolute music thus achieved what was poetry's ultimate aim - purity of expression and feeling. The post

Sturm und Drang writers who developed a romantic metaphysics of absolute instrumental music elevated it into an art-religion wherein contemplative devotion and almost mystical worship of the grandeur and sublimity of the symphonies of, for instance, Beethoven, became *de rigueur*.

The doctrine of absolute instrumental music developed at the turn of the nineteenth century is articulated linguistically as a *via negativa* reminiscent of negative theology. The determinateness of texts and functions are deliberately set aside as irrelevant and superfluous in this doctrine. Instrumental music, especially initially the symphony, becomes an idealized art-form that is the most explicit conduit to the absolute in the history of art.

The dialectics of bipolar opposites are often used by aesthetic writers of this period to portray how instrumental music captures the essence of the inwardness and spirituality of the absolute. The dialectic operates in various writers at varying levels of sophistication. The comprehensive differentiation of absolute instrumental music from any form of external determination - textual, functional, emotional, historical - i.e. its pervasive ineffability, is itself to be demarcated from more narrow differentiations such as "true" music as distinct from the musical forms mired in the external sensual world, the constrictions of the bounded and the finite as opposed to the liberating vistas found in the *allegro* movements of symphonies, concertos and sonatas for solo instruments. The emphasis on the capacity of symphonic music to make us aware of the eternal stands in fundamental contradiction with the inherently temporal and linearly progressive medium of music. It was this paradox - the transparent nature of musical temporality or discursiveness and the atemporality to which it gives us such a unique glimpse - that so confounded the romantic metaphysicians.

There is also a dialectico-speculative element in the aesthetics of absolute music that is often overlooked by students and commentators. Frequently the "sublimations" articulated by the instrumental aestheticians are complementarities of subjective states of inner being such as mourning and joy, dread and elevation, love and melancholy, fear and rapture, poetic yet non-literarized, dramatic yet disassociated from moving scenery, dissolving yet utterly integrative - a totality of an unknown, infinite realm. Much of this rampant romantic speculation is logically and conceptually tamed by Hegel who contextualized the "sounding inwardness" of instrumental music - the onesidedness of its indeterminacy and the abstractness of its notion of infinity - within the overall architectonic and determinate articulation of the Absolute Idea in which spirit necessarily pushes beyond merely aesthetic phenomena. This degree of philosophical sophistication is, for the most part, absent in the musical journalists and aesthetes of the period. Nevertheless, even from a Hegelian perspective it can be argued that it is necessary for instrumental music to establish its indeterminacy and disconnectedness from all texts, functions, emotions and histories in order to become an autonomous art-form wherein the form and content essential to its identity as an art-form can be equated.

The concept of "absolute" music therefore has an extremely diverse range of connotations from its inception in late eighteenth century romantic aesthetics to the later nineteenth century articulations. By the time one reaches Ferruccio Busoni's *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music* in 1906, the "architectonic", "symmetric" or "sectional" shape of the instrumental music of Mozart or Beethoven was viewed as a constricting structure from which music needed to "free" itself in order to become "absolute" music proper.[12] In late eighteenth century aesthetics the autonomous development of instrumental music was decisively tied to various explications of the philosophical absolute in German Idealism. Freedom from the phenomenal world, the infinite spiritualization of temporal existence, the heroic drama of the mind discovering unknown worlds, the

wonderful interplay of intelligence and passion, all found an idealized and inexpressible form of non-linguistic expression in purely instrumental symphonic music.[13]

The musical idea and the musical theme and its development in instrumental must be conceived as self-referential. This self-referentiality is fundamental to any concept of the absolute. Therein lies both the freedom from external determination of the concept of the absolute and the necessity of the revelation of what lies initially buried in the musical idea. The thematic developments of the instrumental works of Beethoven and Mozart are internal self-unfoldings and mediations of simple themes and musical units of thought - they have their own intramusical logic. Recapitulations in the sonata-*allegro* form are thus mediated immediacies with respect to the working out of these themes. A coherent and majestic totality is thereby presented that moved the romantic aestheticians to idealize instrumental music as the ultimate art-form.

Mozart's Piano Concerto in D minor

Detailed analysis of the conceptual working out of a musical idea or a musical unit of thought is frequently rare in the romantic aesthetics of absolute music. Furthermore, the early romantics focused primarily on the symphony for an illustration of their metaphysics and immanent principle of musical interpretation. The concerto, the quartet, and solo instrumental compositions were only later looked upon as indicating the same characteristics of the "true" music.

The piano concerto is, however, the medium within which Mozart made his greatest accomplishments as an instrumentalist, symphonist and soloist. It can also be said that his best concertos are symphonic in the highest sense.[14] Indeed, from the philosophical standpoint the integrative unity and dialectic interplay of elements find their most sublime synthesis, their deepest speculative reconciliation, dialectical interrelation and artistically contrastive distinction in the collective and individual forces arrayed in many of his piano concertos. The D minor piano concerto, K.466, places us at the summit of Mozart's creative powers.

The aesthetic of absolute music still plays a powerful role in Mozart interpretation. For instance, a recent biography of Mozart by Wolfgang Hildesheimer describes his piano playing in the following terms:[15]

> Many contemporaries vouch for the fact that he played very simply, without stretching the rhythm, without exaggerated *rubati*, without extravagant dynamics; he sat calmly, hardly moving his body, showing no feelings. These must have been the moments (often hours) when he reveled in blissful self-forgetfulness, when he severed his connection with the outside world; here he was the unadorned Mozart, who needed no intermediary in order to communicate - no singers, no instrumentalists or fellow musicians, and no bothersome score, either. Here, and perhaps only here, he achieved true pleasure in his own genius; here he transcended himself, becoming the absolute Mozart.

Hildesheimer sees the "absolutely puzzling" as the unique in Mozart.[16] The signalling of the enigmatic in enigmatic musical language is a powerful theme in the romantic metaphysics of absolute music.

The D minor concerto, finished on February 10th, 1785, marks a radical change from Mozart's previous concertos for the piano. It was Mozart's first piano concerto in a minor key and the one best known in the nineteenth century.[17] The contrast with the subtle humour of the preceding F major concerto is stark. The D minor concerto no longer contains any traces of march or dance rhythms, opera buffa closes, ironic humour, or other externalities of style and tradition that are characteristic of the F major concerto. There is an obsessive pursuit of a single musical idea

in the D minor concerto that in many ways makes it the prototype of the features of absolute instrumental music singled out by the romantic musical aestheticians.

The brooding tutti which opens the *allegro* theme of the D minor concerto sets down all of the essential musical elements for the subsequent narrative. This is done almost literally, the only thematic material absent being the introduction of the piano solo, the second part of the second subject, and the third lyrical motif that occurs first at bar 127. But the opening of the *allegro* definitively enunciates the terms of the dramatic and vital character of the whole work. It has that evasive quality which is so often likened to an intimation of the infinite - one of the key concepts in the characterization of high order absolute music. The growth of telltale gleams of melody out of silence hints of the opening of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and gives us an awareness of the eternal that so perplexed and fascinated the romantic aestheticians of pure music.

It is often said that the opening four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony contain some of the most compact and potent thematic material in the literature of absolute music. The syncopated repetition of the D minor chord combined with a rising triplet on the fourth beat in the opening two bars of Mozart's D minor concerto presents us with a musical motif even more succinct and yet equally powerful. The early romantic search for the indescribably sublime and mysterious can find no more perfect paradigm. Mozart relies almost entirely upon rhythm in these opening bars to achieve the desired effect. The agitated breaking out of this theme by means of the fourth-beat rising triplets and sixteenth notes, and reaching a peak with a forceful dotted eighth-note rhythm continues to rise and fall, Hanslick's "flight and reapproach", until the opening statement of the primary thematic material ends on the dominant.

The presentation of the second subject in the woodwinds in the relative major is done in a tripartite structure which itself sets the lead for many other threefold structurings throughout the movement.[18] The dialogue in the second subject between half and eighth notes rises by one degree each time, moving from F major into G and then A minor. There then comes a transitional sighing passage in the strings (bars 39-43) which brings us back to the tonic and another powerful rising figure which falls back to a *piano* and the closing subject before the entry of the solo instrument.

It has been remarked by commentators, for example, Einstein, that the contrasts in the *allegro* of the D minor concerto between the tutti and the solo present a dualism which is not overcome.[19] The opening motif of the piano firmly establishes its individuality and distinctness from the orchestra. Nevertheless there is an identity of feeling and depth in these free wandering configurations, reaching from A in the soprano to a high F, that tells us there is to come a narrative which will contain insights and passions hitherto unexplored. The identity of the specifically musical content and form embodied in the varied thematic material of the solo and the tutti does not have to be the result of strict tonal imitation. Mozart does not want to rely simply on instrumental *timbre* and melodic range to sustain the dialogue between the orchestra and the solo instrument. He is delving into the inner sanctum of the D minor tonality and allowing the peculiar articulations of the piano part to mine further the rich deposits of harmony revealed in the opening syncopated repetitions. Mozart therefore manages to bring back the musical and spiritual substance of the opening thematic material by introducing a widely arching melody, thinly yet evocatively harmonized by thirds and sixths in the bass, that are reminiscent of the emerging melodic pattern in the tutti at bar 3 of the opening argument.

Mozart creates at the outset of this concerto a profound speculative unity of tutti and solo by reducing the dominance of the tutti in

giving the solo instrument a personality quite distinct from the orchestral mass. All of this is achieved with such a seeming absence of effort that the subjective historical and mental experience necessary to bring the composition into being is left far behind. This sense of not having risen up from the vicissitudes of finite existence contributes to the transcendental clarity and otherworldiness of the forces instrumentally arrayed.

After a brief cadential passage that modulates from the dominant to the tonic (bars 88-91), the pulsating off-beats of the opening thematic material in the strings re-enters and are shortly joined by a sixteenth-note rumbling of this material accompanied by rising sixteenths to the main beat in the piano bass.

The solo takes over the eighths of the second subject from the flute and adds a dotted eighth and quarter note rhythm that leads after a cadence into a new subject in F major at bar 127. This reversion to the relative major gives us some time to catch our breath before we get the some thirty solo bars of energetic scales, arpeggios and broken octaves. Threefold patterns, signalled in the second subject, recur here in half and full bar trills at bars 152, 158 and 173. Threefold occurrences at bars 162-164 further add to the structural unity of these bravura sections.

The primary thematic material of the solo starts out on a new and more dangerous journey at bar 192. Girdlestone states that in the exposition there has been the announcement of a drama rather than the drama itself.[20] The development begins with a refrain of the solo's opening figure, but after two bars we get an indication that things have fundamentally changed. At bar 194 an embellishment, a turn, appears after the second beat, which adds an eerie poignancy to a melodic passage that modulates to G minor, then we go back to the F major dominant and into cascading sixths and thirds. The original pulsating repetitions of the tutti now return in a much more threatening manner. Mozart achieves this startling effect with unheard of instrumental and musical economy. The structure is again tripartite. Three times the solo introduces with various modifications its original material interspersed with virtuoso passages and the orchestra manages to hold its own. Finally at bar 227 descending broken octaves in the piano in the brighter key of E-flat major break momentarily the tension, but the subsequent climbing broken chords rapidly modulating from E-flat major to F minor to G minor to A major to D minor via cascading broken chords of the diminished seventh establishes the domination of the solo with respect to the dramatic action until the reprise at bar 254.

The development is replete with Mozart's authentic three strains and the balance of forces between solo and tutti is sublimely symmetrical and proportioned. The solo initially giving the intimation of the drama, the orchestra explicitly responding to this intimation and then the solo reaching its full dramatic capacity in the climbing arpeggiated chords supported by the original rising sixteenths to the main beat in the orchestra. This developmental section of the sonata-*allegro* thematic material confirms in the most fundamental sense Hanslick's notion, and that of the writers around 1800, that musical thought flows from its inherently dynamic aspect. It is as Leo Treitler says; "a language, a discourse, a kind of thinking. It has meaning, but that is intrinsic and strictly musical".[21] Mozart's D minor concerto is diffuse with feeling, passion and pathos, but it does not *represent* feeling, as was the object of much of the Enlightenment aesthetical project.[22] There is no question of gauging the accuracy of one's feelings or somehow objectively characterizing one's emotional response to the self-unfolding narrative or discourse that Mozart engages in the D minor concerto.

The "reprise" or "recapitulation" is unfortunate nomenclature for the reworking of the original exposition, especially within the narrative context of the aesthetics of absolute music. The so-called "telling again" of the reprise is in

effect a further "telling about". The statement of the initial pulsating thematic material is now accompanied by broken octave figurations in the solo (bars 261-266). This signifies that the tutti and the solo have reached a heightened level of cooperative dialogue. The arpeggiated accompanying chords in the solo at bars 278-280 confirm this. The second subject is presented unchanged from its previous appearances, although the dominant tonic cadential passage at bars 299-302 is differently figured than in the exposition and it ends on the dominant of D minor rather than F major. Unlike in the exposition, however, the entry of the thematic material, or "singing theme" as Girdlestone likes to call it, at bar 302 (compare bar 127) is in D minor. There is no modulation from the tonic for the rest of the movement.

The solo passage which follows (bars 318-355) is structurally the same as the exposition except for the figuring of the runs, but its spirit and forward dynamic are quite distinct from what has gone before. The expressive virtuosity of this passage and the development are said by Girdlestone to be amongst the finest that the *genre* affords.[23] Formal beauty and symmetrical perfection are here aligned with a controlled emotional richness that can only reinforce Einstein's remark that Mozart was "only a guest on this earth".

Mozart left no cadenzas for this concerto. After the cadenza there comes a repetition of the fiery passages of the first part of the exposition. These bars up to the coda have the quality of a highly compact epilogue, nevertheless it is well-balanced with the cadenza to show the mutual respect of the solo and the tutti for each other's autonomy while at the same time corroborating in the larger, more engulfing, dramatic portrayal of the thought-world of the musical material. The eight closing bars of the coda are languid and yet still resonant with the driving energy of the "menacing" triplets so prevalent throughout the whole piece. The *allegro* ends with three tonic chords *pianissimo*, an enigmatic echo of the distant syncopated tonic chords which began the journey.

Conclusion

A Mozart concerto or symphony can be understood not for what it imitates, or represents, or expresses, or describes, but in terms of its own inherent logical succession and musical narrative. The meaning of the concerto is to be found in its own dynamic, in its own thinking, in its own language. This form of internal tonal and dynamic analysis of a composition does not have to be strictly formalistic as it is often taken to be. Nor does it have to degenerate into a cascade of musical and literary metaphors which never seem to get around to discussing the unique structural characteristics of the music itself. Balancing and integrating formal analysis with illuminating metaphors is central to a well done aesthetics of absolute music.

Notes

1. Peter le Huray and James Day, eds. *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1981), p.4.

2. Eduard Hanslick, *The Beautiful in Music*, tr. Gustav Cohen (New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), pp.47-48.

3. le Huray and Day, *op. cit.*, p.247.

4. G.W.F. Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, tr. T.M. Knox (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), Vol.II, p.952.

5. Leo Treitler, "Mozart and the Idea of Absolute Music" in *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1989) engages in the same sort of exercise with respect to the *Andante* of Mozart's E-flat major symphony, K.543.

6. Carl Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, tr. Roger Lustig (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989), p.18.

7. Percy Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music*, edited by John O. Ward, 10th ed. (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), p.2.

8. Oliver Strunk, ed., *Sources Readings in Music History: From Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era* (New York, Norton, 1950), p.775. The dialogue in the "The Poet and the Composer" also aspires to express the indescribable effect of instrument music (p. 788):

> Is not music the mysterious language of a faraway spirit world whose wondrous accents, echoing within us, awaken us to a higher, more intensive life? All the passions battle with one another, their armor shimmering and sparkling, perishing in an inexpressible yearning which fills our breasts. Such is the indescribable effect of instrumental music.

This passage contains many of the key terms of the romantic metaphysics of instrumental music, such as, "mysterious", "wondrous", "intensive", "inexpressible", "yearning", and "indescribable".

9. *Id.*, p.777.

10. Dahlhaus, *op. cit.*, p.60.

11. *Id.*, p.66.

12. *Vide*, Dahlhaus, *The Idea of Absolute Music*, *op.cit.*, p.38. I suspect that later in the nineteenth century the quartet, especially the late Beethoven quartets came, rather than the symphony and the concerto, to represent the ideal of absolute music because in the late Beethoven quartets the architectonic of the classical form, its sectionality and symmetry, began to break down. We therefore have the view in Busoni and others, not unlike the position of the early romantic metaphysicians of instrumental music, that absolute music is a liberation from the constrictions of the classical or traditional forms. This is tied in with the history and evolution of the sonata-*allegro* form out the contrapuntal conventions of the Baroque era and with the interrelation between the spiritual development of an art-form and the structural conventions within which such development is instantiated. In classical music such forms, once re-interpreted as being suffused with the infinite sublimity of spirit, were themselves revolutionary, *vide*, the developmental revolutionary transformations of instrumental music starting with Stamitz, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Also throughout the nineteenth century the symphony increasingly became contaminated by extra-musical determinations, e.g. use of the voice, the symphonic poem, epic landscape descriptions, etc., thus the "purity" of its form was not as evident as in Mozart and Beethoven.

13. The symphonic model was of course followed in the concertos and solo instrumental works of Mozart. Later writers could find the synthesis and peak of Mozart's instrumental achievements

in his piano concertos, see, for instance, Alfred Einstein, *Mozart* (London, Granada, 1973), p.299. It is certainly true that the quantity and quality of Mozart's compositions is much higher in the piano concertos than the symphonies or string quartets.

14. His operas have also been described as symphonies with singers, see, Treitler, *op. cit.*, p.212.

15. Wolfgang Hildesheimer, *Mozart*, tr. Marion Farber (New York, Farrar Straus Giroux, 1982), p.279.

16. *Id.*, p.40.

17. Beethoven wrote cadenzas for the first and last movements of this concerto. The pathos and drama, evident in the D minor concerto and so characteristic of nineteenth century musical aesthetics made it possible to see Mozart as the forerunner of Beethoven. Brahms also wrote a cadenza for the first movement which has an anachronistic quality. It treats Mozart as a nineteenth century aesthete. Nietzsche would say that not only is Brahms an "epigone" but he approaches all music "epigonistically".

18. It is interesting to note that this movement is the only example in Mozart where the second subject appears all three times in the same key, see, C.M. Girdlestone, *Mozart's Piano Concertos*, 3rd ed. (London, Cassell, 1978), p.316, note 2.

19. Einstein, *op. cit.*, pp.320-321.

20. Girdlestone, *op. cit.*, p.315.

21. *Op. cit.*, p.213.

22. There is an interesting symmetry between the attempt in the aesthetics of absolute music to get around the aesthetics of the representative, with all its conundrums and problematics, and the critique by Richard Rorty of representational theories of knowledge in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1979). Rorty sees the multiple discourses and revisable vocabularies orientation of the Romantics as consonant with his own anti-foundationalism.

23. *Op. cit.*, p.316.

Crimson Words, Pale Fires of Reason: Philosophy and Poetry at the End of the Kantian Era

Peter McCormick

In 1943, in Warsaw, in the midst of a still untold suffering of so many human beings, the Polish Nobel Prize poet, Czeslaw Milosz, fashioned an image for the European artist and philosopher. The image is that of an almost blind mole, underground, nosing along with "his humid snout," mining the inexpungible traces of a murderous history. The poet writes:

> Slowly, boring a tunnel, a guardian mole
> makes his way,
> With a small red lamp fastened to his
> forehead.
> He touches buried bodies, counts them,
> pushes on,
> He distinguishes human ashes by their
> luminous vapor,
> The ashes of each man by a different part
> of the spectrum
> Bees build around a red trace.
> Ants build around the place left by my
> body.
> I am afraid, so afraid of the guardian mole.
> He has swollen eyelids, like a Patriarch
> Who has sat much in the light of candles
> Reading the great book of the species.[1]

One of contemporary poetry's most searching critical intelligences, commenting on this guardian mole as "an image of vivid moral urgency ... who stands for history, prophecy, and writing," remarks on "the formal means by which the patriarchal mole is given relentless substance - the accumulation of phrases, the zeroing-in from the general to the particular (from bodies to ashes to a single man), the quasi-scientific acumen first ascribed to the mole (as he distinguishes ashes by vapor, individuality by bands of the spectrum), and his ultimate aggrandizement into a recording angel, a Patriarch, red-eyed with congested historical woe."[2]

Now, for most of us, today in Madrid, this kind of work whether lyric poetry or critical comment is distasteful. This kind of poetry hurts the mind, but mildly. For art is not life. And when, as perhaps here, we may politely endure a fleeting mental pang in contemplating these fanciful, indeed fictive, images of an imaginary being while feeling real pain in looking every day at television images of actual and immense human suffering, we can find poetry and its endless interpretations either barbarous or, still worse, boring. For life is not art.

Yet poetry after Auschwitz - poetry after Shoah and after the Gulag, after the colonization of Korea and the rape of Nanking, after Guernica and Stalingrad and Warsaw, after Hamburg and Dresden, after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and after so much unutterable suffering since - poetry after Auschwitz still calls for thought.

As we meet these days in Madrid, the post-industrial societies of Europe, the Far East, and North America are spinning faster into radical historical, social, and cultural revolutions. We believe such fundamental transformations are rare; we know that they are also full of suffering. Alone in the European context two obvious examples of such fundamental revolutions are the Renaissance sequel to the Medieval world and in turn the seventeenth-century displacements of Renaissance humanism. In both cases horrific wars, mass murders, deportations, famines, and destruction punctuated the times, as they do today. And although much Western art - think only of Goya's Zaragoza paintings of "The Disasters of War" and Picasso's "Guernica" - has always struggled to represent the immensity of suffering and the enormity of the powers that continue to wreak such suffering, we are still unable to think that suffering in the reasonable

yet pallid terms of philosophy at the end of the Kantian era.

When the contexts of such suffering are fundamentally revolutionary, the most basic changes underway involve the replacement of one fundamental and comprehensive pattern of intelligibility - a fundamental pattern for integrating the quasi-totality of facts, relations, events, situations, and institutions - with an entirely different one. The skeptical pattern of Renaissance humanism replaces the medieval pattern of faith, just as the seventeenth-century mathematization of nature replaces the pattern of Renaissance humanism. Such fundamental revolutions, the substitution of one fundamental pattern of intelligibility for another, we may speak of largely as cultural revolutions.

A cultural revolution thus transforms an entire culture by replacing one paradigm of rationality and reason by another. If we are to credit the very large body of converging evidence many contemporary historians, economists, sociologists, political scientists, and others are continuing to amass today, our societies are currently undergoing just such a cultural revolution. And they have been for some time. One fundamental and comprehensive pattern of intelligibility, call it the scientific worldview with its prodigiously fruitful and radically flawed understandings of reason and rationality whether instrumental or relativistic, is giving way. But another such fundamental and comprehensive pattern has yet to emerge. For we are not at the end of this most recent of cultural revolutions; while very much at the end of the Kantian era, we are still very much in the midst of a new and ongoing cultural revolution.

If such observers are largely correct, then just as in the eras of Renaissance humanism and seventeenth-century science, the manifold practices of both philosophy and the many worlds of the arts are also part of this radical cultural revolution. For such a thorough-going process, as I have defined it here in terms of intelligibility rationality and reason, can leave nothing unchanged. The most fundamental understandings of reason and rationality that govern in different ways our philosophical practices as well as our artistic activities are in the process of undergoing absolutely radical transformation. And we ourselves are caught up in the same transformations. How then are we to understand the newly problematic relations between philosophy and the arts today?

I would like to put on exhibit here, tentatively and with the sincere hope of having the benefit of your critical comments, three aspects only of our struggles today with the newly difficult relations between philosophy and the arts in a time of fundamental cultural revolution. I shall limit my remarks to the situations of poetry. After looking at a certain understanding of reason and rationality implied in many of our efforts to understand representative modernist works of literary art, I will take up a very different understanding of reason and rationality implied in our efforts to understand some representative postmodernist work. In my final section, I will then come back to the burden of these introductory reflections and, with the witness of yet another kind of contemporary poetic art, turn to the poetry of human suffering. There, I will suggest, with the help of some Kantian texts, that coming to understand such work requires of us a radical rethinking of both modernist and postmodernist construals of reason and rationality.

I

Recall one of Antonio Machado's central poems, the elegiac lament for Federico Garcia Lorca, "The Crime was in Granada."

> He was seen, surrounded by rifles,
> moving down a long street
> and out to the country
> in the chill before dawn, with the stars still
> out.
> They killed Federico
> at the first glint of daylight.
> The band of assassins

shrank from his glance.
They all closed their eyes,
muttering: "See if God helps you now!"
Federico fell,
lead in his stomach, blood on his face.
And Granada was the scene of the crime.
Think of it - poor Granada - , his
Granada...(LIII)[3]

This 1936 poem can still move us deeply. Like the even greater "llanto" Lorca himself wrote for his friend, Ignacio Sanchez Mejias, fatally gored in a bullfight in Manzanares in August 1934, Machado's elegy exhibits an evocative verbal richness of sound and sense. The poem's multiplephonetic, syntactic, semantic, and even pragmatic aspects catch up most thoughtful readers immediately and almost unwittingly in a work of understanding and interpretation.

That work is various. But two initial concerns are the focus of interpretative understanding here and elsewhere in modernist work, questions about meaning - what does the poem say? - and questions about truth - is what the poem says right? For without some sense of the poem's meaning and truth, however we finally parse these freshly problematic terms today, we cannot even begin to account for its apocalyptic hold on our imaginations.

Like so many other works in European literary modernism, Machado's poem immediately challenges its readers to articulate a meditative response to its utterances, however provisional any response must remain in the ceaseless succession of creative and interpretive communities. To recognize this challenge we need only pause for a moment over its conclusion. For whatever the many questions the poem's complex representations and rhythms raise as a whole and throughout, the lament concludes even more enigmatically with a stark injunction to its implicit readers and perhaps to us as well:

He was seen walking ...
Friends, carve a monument
out of dream stone
for the poet in the Alhambra,
over a fountain where the grieving water
shall say forever:
The crime was in Granada, his Granada.
(LIII)

Part of what makes this conclusion enigmatic is the elusiveness of just what the listening reader is to understand by the sense of time here, the memorial "dream stone," and the significance of where the monument should stand, "in the Alhambra,/ over a fountain. ..." These lines suggest not only the recurring themes of dreams and water in the poetry of Machado but important contrasts. One important contrast is with the much more traditional ending of an earlier elegiac poem Machado wrote in 1915 for his teacher, Don Francisco Gines de los Rios, and its very different prophecy for Spain.

Let his heart be at rest there
in an oak's pure shade,
where the wild thyme draws
the flitting yellow butterflies ...
Up there the master dreamed one day
that Spain would flower again. (CXXXIX)[4]

But we know today that Spain did not flower in Granada - "the crime was in Granada."

More puzzlingly, Machado ends his lament for Lorca with no traditional elegiac reconciliation, as in the terrifyingly prescient ironies of the toast at the end of Machado's "Siesta" (CLXX) dedicated to the memory of one of his imaginary selves, the poet-philosopher, Abel Martin, author of Machado's own sonnet "Al Gran Cero" ("To the Great Nought).

By this glass filled with darkness to the
brim
and this heart that's never full,
let us praise the Lord, maker of Nothing
ness,
who carved our reason out of faith.
(CLXVII)

Now of the many questions the end of Machado's elegy to Lorca puts to its interpreters,

at least one insists on an answer. Can we know whether Machado was right in the reasons for his ironic and bitter condemnation, if not of the "maker of Nothingness" or even of Spain herself, at least of Granada? For without answering that question, Machado's interpreters can come to no persuasive account of the central enigmas of register, tone, and voice in the elegy's non-traditional ending.

In cases like these, critics often turn to literary and historical critics for help. But, even in work that incorporates the intentional and new historicist corrections to the mistaken formalisms of the "New Criticism," little agreement is to be found among even the most distinguished interpreters of one's own time and place. Consider the contrast between Machado's own interpretation of Lorca's murder and that of Lorca's most successful English biographer.

Machado himself believed that Lorca's murder resulted both from the political considerations that motivated his Fascist opponents and from the complacency of the people of Granada. "Could Granada have defended its poet?" Machado asks in an undated letter from 1936 or 1937. And he answers unequivocally: "I think so." Machado finds in his own poem, he tells us, "a feeling of bitter reproach, which implies an accusation against Granada. For the fact is," he continues, "that Granada ... is ... one of the stupidest cities in Spain, one of the most self-satisfied in its isolation and through the influence of a depraved and idle aristocracy and hopelessly provincial middle class."[5]

But with the benefit of hindsight and his own exhaustive researches, Lorca's biographer disagrees with this judgment. Lorca's murder was the result not of political considerations and bourgeois apathies but of a "personal vendetta."[6] We need to make a decision then, one based on careful empirical examination of the available background materials.

The question then as to how we are to understand the untraditional ending and unfamiliar tones Machado has introduced into the classical form of the elegy can be resolved in large part by an appeal to historical circumstance. Moreover, perhaps part of the negative although nuanced judgment Machado himself made of his own elegy for Lorca - "not very highly elaborated aesthetically" he writes in the same letter - can also be interpreted as a function of Machado's mistaken views about the cause of Lorca's murder.

But, we may ask, what is the understanding of rationality and reason most often operative in this representative instance of successful interpretation of modernist work? On the evidence of how the sense and significance of Machado's work and that of so many other modernist poets continues to be understood, I suggest that the primary understanding of reason here is a modernist view of reason as preeminently instrumental.

An instrumental view of reason, a view that has its modern origins in the Lockean framework of belief, is one that construes the nature of reason in functional terms. Reason accordingly is a capacity to order goals and their interrelations as well as a capacity to select efficient means for the realization of such goals. More specifically, an interpreter or critic may be said to be acting rationally on an instrumentalist view of reason when he or she either exhibits internal consistency in the actual choices of goals and means or acts in such a way as to maximize self interest. In the first case, instrumental rationality is centered on consistency of choice, whereas in the second the accent falls on correspondence of choice with aims.[7] In both cases the understanding of rationality focuses on choice of effective means for the realization of goals already on hand. Moreover, in both cases an instrumentalist understanding of reason necessarily objectifies goals and means as a condition for their subsequent representation as a function of a binary relation.[8] But in neither case does the understanding of reason extend to the identification, description, appraisal, and selection of the goals themselves.

In the interpretation of much but not all

modernist works of literature, such as we find in the historical interpretation of the untraditional ending of Machado's elegy, interpretive procedures are seen as rational to the degree that they succeed in objectifying linguistic functions in the literary work so as to allow both consistent variation and permutation within the domain of the work itself. Features of the work are objectified only in the sense that they are isolated from description within the text itself. The key to such description is seen to involve the restriction of putative representational and referential elements of the work to verifiable intersubjective inspection. Yet whatever lies beyond the work itself and the objectified elements of its linguistic structures is taken as strongly pertinent to the kind of rational reflection taken as most effective for reflection on literary works of art.

Appropriate reflection on modernist literature is rational to the degree that it is genuinely functional. Such functionally rational reflection involves objectivity, representation, and reference. These are understood here as not strictly bounded within the linguistic domains of the work itself, but as constituted by actual linkages believed to hold between the work and its contexts. Only that reflection that would construe objectivity, representation, and reference in larger than textual terms, the implicit claim in most interpretation of modernist work goes, can be properly justified.

In short, reason properly understood in instrumental terms can indeed elucidate literary works of art. And reason in interpretive practice has sufficient warrant to explore the putative interactions between literary works and the world. The goals of reason here center on the perspicuous exhibition of the links between linguistic functions of the literary work and their referents in the actual world. And its various means encompass a wide spectrum of contemporary ways of what is called close reading.

We may grant, I think, that reaching historical consensus about the cause of Lorca's murder is not without some difficulty. Still, we need to question whether any finally satisfactory critical consensus about Machado's elegy can be expected from even accomplished critical readers when they confront today such intertextual and polysemous narrative sequences as, for example, these lines from the poet's description of Lorca's murderers.

> They all closed their eyes,
> muttering: "See if God helps you now!"
> Federico fell,
> lead in his stomach, blood on his face.
> And Granada was the scene of the crime.
> Think of it - poor Granada - , his Granada
> ..."

Before taking up some of the underlying philosophical problems here with the instrumental construal of reason in modernist interpretation of literary works, I want to turn to a very different understanding of reason, one operative in a postmodernist context.

II

To recognize the contrast between on the one hand a poetics of modernism and the instrumental construals of reason and rationality that most often govern its interpretation, like the one on exhibit in the interpretation of the untraditional ending of Machado's elegy for Lorca, and on the other hand a poetics of postmodernism and the very different construals of reason and rationality that its interpretation requires, consider briefly a recent poem by the Russian expatriate Nobel prize poet, Joseph Brodsky.

Transatlantic

> The last twenty years were good for
> practically everybody
> save the dead. But maybe for them as well.
> Maybe the Almighty Himself has turned a
> bit bourgeois
> and uses a credit card. For otherwise time's
> passage
> makes no sense. Hence memories, recollec
> tions,

values, deportment. One hopes one hasn't
spent one's mother or father or both or a
handful of friends entirely
as they cease to hound one's dreams. One's
dreams,
unlike the city, become less populous
the older one gets. That's why the eternal
rest
cancels analysis. The last twenty years were
good
for practically everybody and constituted
the afterlife for the dead. Its quality could
be questioned
but not its duration. The dead, one
assumes, would not
mind attaining a homeless status, and sleep
in archways
or watch pregnant submarines returning
to their native pen after a worldwide
journey
without destroying life on earth, without
even a proper flag to hoist.[9]

Brodsky's poem of course, despite its repeated allusions to the horrors of our times - the unnamable dead, the persistent threat from nuclear submarine ballistic missiles, the uncountable homeless - is not an elegy. Its tone is completely opposed to any hints of memorializing or reconciliation or redemption. The god that figures here (whose name is ironically capitalized and then emphasized with a hint of an Irish brogue - "the Almighty Himself") is not even Machado's impressive "Nothingness" - just one more bourgeois consumer who pays on credit. Yet, the poet urges, without our presuming precisely this kind of god, "times power" makes no sense. Dreams here can never be the vehicles of myth, the premonitions of history, or even the deep recollections of time as they are in Machado's modernist world. Dreams in Brodsky's postmodernist world either die out thankfully with the happy hopes of discontinuing at last their expensive analyses, or metamorphose first into daydreams then into fantasies. And "time's passage" - all the Bergsonian preoccupations of Machado - can make sense only on the assumption that whatever uses we may have had for the divine can now only be parodied.

Matter of fact, multiple-voiced, witty with pastiche, humorous and impersonal and improvisational in its startling metaphors (pregnant submarines), jerky in syntax and the uses of afterthoughts and afterimages - all these parodistic and punning devices suffuse postmodern work like Brodsky's with a neon glow of contemporary carnival, Times Square tawdry and cosmopolitan packaged tours, Venetian pensiones with California starlets, juxtaposition, unending counterfeit, and shimmeringly stunning intelligence all at work on eliminating the subject, substituting text for work, sending up any sense of an ending with recurring anticlimaxes, and above all, keeping up the white, affluent liberal European conversation without any illusory needs for meaning and truth.

Yet, like Machado's unexpected ending of his elegy in bitterness and accusation instead of reconciliation, Brodsky's text also raises perplexing issues. One key issue has to do not with the sense of a form as in the case of Machado's variations on the traditional structure of the elegy, but with the significance of diction, the choice of the right word.

Twice in Brodsky's short text, *Transatlantic*, we find a similar compound expression, each time apparently referring to radically important matters at the end of this bloodiest of centuries. The poet highlights this expression not only by repetition but also, and effectively, by placing the expression both at the rough middle of the text and, instead of at the end, the traditional rhetorical place of greatest importance, at the beginning. The text begins - "The last twenty years were good for practically everybody / save the dead. But maybe for them as well." And later the text echoes this opening - "The last twenty years were good / for practically everybody and constituted the afterlife for the dead."

Now these expressions are perplexing for more than one reason. The expressions are in English and are composed in English unlike the English expressions in poems like the very recent "Fin de siecle," which are the product of Brodsky's translations of a text he composed in Russian.

Moreover, although the second phrase in each case is different - "But maybe for them as well" versus " ... and constituted the life of the dead" -the first phrase is almost identical with one very important exception - "The last twenty years were good for practically everybody" versus "the last twenty years were good for practically everybody / save the dead." That difference is the phrase "save the dead" with its parodistic and jingoistic echoes of "save the children," "save the people" -occurs in the opening expression of the text not in its repetition, and it occurs as a run-on line rather than as an end-stopped one. Finally, the use of the English word, "save," is ambiguous here - "save the dead" may be taken in the sense of "except the dead" for whom the last twenty years were not good, or "save the dead" may be taken in the several senses of the imperative usage (which the device of beginning the run-on line with this phrase suggests), imperatives such as" resurrect the dead!" or "redeem the dead!" and, less far-fetched, the suggestion - "some of those who died these last twenty years died needlessly. Don't let us allow any more to die for lack of our thoroughly possible and effective intervention." What then are we to make of the diction here, Brodsky's choice of the word, "save"?

Suppose one group of critics claims, with good warrant, that "save the dead" means "except the dead," while a small though no less zealous group claims, with equally good warrant, that "save the dead" means "do not let any more people die needlessly." Immediately the very familiar problem appears of how we are to adjudicate differences between equally well-warranted interpretations of literary works of art. To make the problem precise we need only to add that the second claim is not just an alternative to the first but incudes its denial. Thus the opposition is not between "the meaning of the phrase is P" and "the meaning of the phrase is Q," but between "the meaning of the phrase is P" and the conjunction of "the meaning of the phrase is not-P" and "the meaning of the phrase is Q." The problem of how to adjudicate differences in conflicting interpretations becomes then the problem of how to decide between the contradictory truth claims of two incongruent judgments.

What exacerbates any attempt to address a familiar problem here, when dealing with a postmodernist as opposed to a modernist text, is the amount of other textual indications in the same work - especially the characteristic Poundian stress on the uses of parody, sarcasm, mixed registers of speech, overheard utterances, intertextual allusions, performance and play. These devices, nowhere so exploited as in postmodernist texts with their diverse strategies of self-reflection and self-reference, tend to subvert and mockingly exclude in advance the propriety, pertinence, and decidability of any questions about truth at all.

Now, behind these deep tensions within the worlds of art today, between the different practices for understanding modernist works and postmodernist texts, lies I believe an as yet insufficiently examined commitment to an understanding of reason in other than merely instrumental terms alone. This different set of assumptions about the nature of reason and rationality, while related to the instrumental understanding of reason, is in part a radi-calization of that notion, a strong, subtle relativistic construal of reason and rationality increasingly on evidence in much contemporary criticism and philosophical reflection, an internal relativism.[10]

Relativism appears in a great variety of forms, whether classical ("whatever is affirmed is at once both true and false") or contemporary ("there is no common conceptual ground in terms of which to adjudicate pertinently opposed claims"). But in each case the central foil is an externalized two-valued model of truth. By contrast, an internal relativism is the view that in some contexts two-valued models of truth should give way to many-valued models any one of which needs to be articulated internally. The point of internal relativism is not that some domains of inquiry require probabilizing truth claims or warranting some truth claims in subjective and non-cognitive terms, or reconciling recurring conflicts among competing truth claims by

constructing fresh conventions. Rather, while fully satisfying consistency and coherence requirements, internal relativism construes truth-like values within a many-valued model of truth in such a way that, within restricted domains, some truth-like values can function non-symmetrically. Consequently, internal relativism can deal with peculiar kinds of competing claims in weaker terms as truth-like that a two-valued model of truth could only interpret as logical incompatibles or contradictions.

Internal relativism however must not be confused with classical or contemporary forms of skepticism. For internal relativism denies both that "it is not the case that S can know that P" and that "there are not better reasons for believing that S can know that P than there are for not so believing." In short, internal relativism is the view that within some domains of inquiry but not all, for example within the domains of the interpretive understanding of works of art, those alethic properties of incongruent judgments that standardly generate incompatibles are to be reinterpreted inside a many-valued model of truth. Truth-like values such as "aptness," "compatibility," and "plausibility" can be assigned within such domains as the interpretive understanding of poetry, even where what is at issue are incongruent claims - there is only one true interpretation versus there is more than one true interpretation.

Internal relativism challenges the standard instrumental view of rationality and reason that arises in the modern era from the Lockean framework of belief. What holds the Lockean framework together is the interpretation of what it means to have good reasons when one adopts the Lockean mandate to believe only what your reason says you have good reasons for believing. Having good reasons is holding responsible beliefs, i.e. beliefs to which one assents as a consequence of following all those obligations, rules, and norms for directing one's understanding that reason when fully reflective requires.

But what are to count as good reasons when the task is to adjudicate between incongruent judgments within a particular domain such as the interpretive understanding of poetic works? On the standard instrumental view only one of two incongruent judgments can be true. Yet to choose either one would be, on the standard view, irrational since, by hypothesis, each judgment is fully supported. Hence either choice would be consistent with affirming only what one has good reasons to affirm. By contrast, internal relativism holds that choosing either of the incongruent judgments is rational since we have in interpretive matters no inalienable commitment to a two-valued model of truth. Consequently, each judgment can be seen as apt, plausible, compatible and so on although both cannot be seen as true.

Moreover, the relations between the incongruent judgments on the Lockean model must be symmetrical; hence having to choose one to the exclusion of the other is irrational. But on the internal relativist model, these relations can be non-symmetrical with the consequence that both of the two claims can be affirmed. And, since the claims are not logically incompatible, the affirmation is not irrational. In short, internal relativism is able to adjudicate recurring issues about incompatibilism, incommensurability, and undecidability in some domains like those of interpretive criticism by shifting talk of truth to talk not of probability and conventions but of plausibility and aptness by proposing a non-relational theory of reference.

We would of course want to see, in detail and with the benefit of sustained argument, just what a non-relational theory of reference comes to and just how it connects with a particular many-valued theory of truth and truth-like properties. Here however we need not go into such detail since our interests do not require us to consider anything more than the main outlines of at least one contemporary alternative to standard accounts of rationality. What we have seen so far of internal relativism shows that, whatever its details, internal relativism operates with a very different understanding of reason and rationality. And this understanding is certainly a serious

counter to the instrumental view of reason and rationality.

What I now want to suggest however is the philosophical interest in shifting our larger historical focus from the Lockean framework of belief whose inadequacies generate contemporary challenges like that of internal relativism to a very different framework of reason that need not. For while acknowledging the continuing importance of the Lockean framework for understanding contemporary reflection on the arts, and elsewhere, we continue to do our intellectual heritages an injustice by failing to develop fresh thoughts about the changing understanding of reason and rationality that Kant wins his way to in the later aesthetics of the *Critique of Judgment*. Those views once before us will allow us to take at least some necessary distance not on the problem of incongruent claims but on how something more than claims requires fresh philosophical attention today in a time of radical cultural revolution.

III

Consider briefly one final poem, one of the central literary works of art in the very limited European context only of our continuing reflections on the problematic relations between philosophy and the arts at the end of this bloodiest of all centuries, Paul Celan's "Psalm."

No one moulds us again out of earth and
clay,
no one conjures our dust.
No one.

Praised be your name, no one.
For your sake
we shall flower.
Towards
you.
A nothing
we were, are, shall
remain, flowering:
the nothing-, the
no one's rose.

With
our pistil soul-bright,
with our stamen heaven-ravaged,
our corolla red
with the crimson word which we sang
over, O over
the thorn.[11]

Even in its refutation of Adorno, this poetry after Auschwitz remains today an unsayable utterance. For despite its echoes of Rilke and Mandelstam, Trakl and Valery as well as its verbal gestures in voices and performance towards more contemporary work like that of a Johannes Bobrowski or an Ernst Meister, this poetry is neither modernist nor postmodernist. Celan's poetry is late twentieth-century poetry, a poetry of immense human suffering at a time of radical cultural revolution, work like that in very different registers of a Tamura Ryuichi, or a Kim Chi-ha. Appreciating what is most at stake in such work requires assembling some historical and not just grammatical reminders from at least one flawed but still much overlooked account of what such poetry exhibits.

Unlike the memorializing poetry of Machado's modernist elegy and the glittering performances of Brodsky's texts, what still is unsayable for philosophical reason in this poetry is the magnitude of human suffering today and the power that wreaks such suffering still. The representation of ineffable suffering, the suffering we daily see in the images of our televisions but cannot ever bring ourselves to utter, this deep pathos of things, this is what challenges any idea of interpretation based on merely instrumental or relativistic notions of reason and rationality.

When we look more closely at a poem like "Psalm," in the context of so much other later twentieth-century poetic work both within and without our Eurocentric perspectives, work which shares a preoccupation with the limits to representing incomprehensible suffering, we notice immediately in the very title and the apparent genre of such an utterance, deeply veiled allusions to a now almost inaccessible Jewish and Christian vision of human creation in a spiritual universe. Moreover, the central and terrible play

in this piece is a logical sleight-of-hand with negative personal pronouns, so familiar, even in translation, from our hearing in childhood of Alice's linguistic adventures in a wonderland suffused with all of the humourous strategies of an excellent logician.

But in the second part of "Psalm," the uses of "no one" are deepened with the parallel uses of "nothing." If a "no one" is presented as moulding human beings out of dust, what "no one" moulds is finally a "nothing." More specifically, "no one" moulds something which the poet (in the exhaustive struggles in his workings ever closer towards an impossible ideal of a strict literalness here and throughout his work) restates - first, neither indefinitely as "a nothing," nor definitely as "the nothing," but incompletely, in the gaping punctuation of a voiceless hyphen, as "the nothing-." Rilke's epitaphic "no one's rose" becomes Celan's "nothing-rose."

The poet concludes by taking up the earlier images of human lives as heliotropic flowers, where Montale's sunflowers become thorny roses, though no less tropic, glimpsed now as "flowering towards" no god at all. Rather, the flowers turn inexorably the shapes and colors of their own powers of reproduction towards whatever might be surmised in the play of a pronoun become a proper name, "your name," says the poet, in the most bloodstained of his several mother languages, "Niemand." The organs of the flowering rose are "soul-bright" yet "heaven-ravaged," and the rose's corolla is "red." It is "red," the poem ends, not with the crimson colour of a fading now drooping red rose. The corolla is "red with the crimson word which we say / over, O over / the thorn" - it is unutterably red, "red with the crimson word."

This work is neither a modernist poem nor a postmodernist text. To preserve its profoundly alienating intimacy we might choose to call it all the more abstractly "a piece," a piece of language, or a piece of verbal art that takes away our peace, that first brings pain, then stirs in us what Kant called those "intellectual feelings" that compel recognition of our radical contingencies.

Interpreting such a piece seems here too ambitious a description for the struggle just to apprehend in this kind of saying which is a singing. We need to set aside questions about genre - as if pieces of language so much of Celan's posthumous work displays could be sorted - neither elegy nor lament nor even, with its desperate blasphemies, psalm - and we must disregard the endless syntactical play of proper noun, pronoun, and paradox, the definite and the indefinite, pass by the changing transpositions of the negatives, the syncopated rhythms in the voicings of the fractured lines, the rests the accelerandos and the ritardandos in the broken punctuation, the unvoiceable hyphen, and so much else. We need to focus for only a moment on the final subject in the cadenza, "... the crimson word which we say / over, O over / the thorn."

I do not think we can succeed in apprehending what such a piece exhibits here by any appeal to the usual practices so many critics deploy so fruitfully in reading closely such modernist poems as Machado's "The Crime Was in Granada." For most often these practices, as I have intimated, imply an understanding of reason unduly restricted to the choice of suitable means for achieving ends already agreed upon antecedently. Means must be chosen consistent with prescribed ends, and the means chosen must correspond to those prescribed ends. These interpretive means, once determined in light of the functional and instrumental view of reason, are then applied in such a way as to maximize the interpretive outcome. Once agreed antecedently that the linguistic features of Machado's untraditionally bitter conclusion to his elegy for Lorca require psychological and historical clarification (*pace* mistaken views about intentional and historical fallacies), appropriate scholarly and historical means are chosen to yield the required results.

But if understanding Machado's un-elegiac conclusion - "The crime was in Granada, his Granada" - may require interpretive practices

that imply an instrumentalist account of reason, apprehending Celan's "crimson word" must imply a very different account of reason. For in Celan's case, but not in Machado's, our aims or goals or purposes in meditating such pieces are not captured at all by talk of explanation or understanding. Apprehending Celan's crimson word is not a work of understanding at all. Instead, I shall call such efforts to apprehend so obscure a matter as what is on exhibit in Celan's piece a desire of reason.

Similarly, I do not think we can succeed in apprehending Celan's piece either by any appeal to a strongly relativistic idea of reason and rationality. This is the idea that arises from overriding concerns to be able to adjudicate incongruent claims thoughtful critics articulate when they appraise such postmodernist texts as Brodsky's "Transatlantic." For most often these practices, as I have also intimated, imply an understanding of reason and rationality that restricts our understanding to assessment and appraisal. The qualities of the text are to be identified, their relations charted, and, after many peregrinations, their effects on communities of competent readers articulated as artistic value judgments. Philosophical reflection comes to deploying a particular understanding of reason as strongly relativistic to account finally for the plausibility and compatibility of those incongruent judgments on which competing communities might achieve consensus.

But once again, if understanding Brodsky's repeated orchestration of tone and voice in "the last twenty years were good for practically everybody / save the dead," implies an idea of reason that centers on the power to adjudicate the truth-like values of equally plausible but not equally true incongruent judgments, apprehending Celan's crimson word requires something else altogether. For in Celan's case, but not in Brodsky's we are most often not even able to formulate whatever we may or may not eventually be tempted to judge. Celan's crimson word eludes assessment and appraisal just as clearly as it eludes explanation and understanding; Celan's crimson word is no utterance at all. His crimson word is a broken phrase in some unending quasi-psalmic singing inside an "impossible possible" spiritual world. And if apprehending Celan's crimson word is not a work of understanding, it does not seem to be a work of reason either. Instead, I shall call attempts to apprehend what makes itself heard in Celan's crimson word an ejaculation of the spirit.

But now, in my final section, let me provide some brief historical glosses on talk of our philosophical attempts to apprehend the poetry of suffering as desires of reasons and spiritual ejaculations.

In *The Critique of Judgment* Kant distinguishes rational from aesthetic ideas (Ak., 342).[12] A rational idea is what an objective principle refers to a concept, whereas an aesthetic idea is what a subjective principle refers to an intuition. In particular, the subjective principle that refers an aesthetic idea to an intuition is the "mutual harmony of the cognitive powers" (imagination and understanding). Neither idea can yield cognition (*Erkenntnis*, i.e., the product of the process of acquiring knowledge or *Wissen* - see Ak., 475). For a rational idea "contains a concept (of the supersensible) for which no adequate intuition can ever be given, whereas an aesthetic idea is itself an "intuition (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found."

Although intuitions of the imagination, Kant says (Ak., 314) that these imaginative presentations are rightly called "ideas" for two reasons. First, these aesthetic presentations, while striving to articulate something "that lies beyond the bounds of experience," attempt to exhibit rational concepts and hence to provide some "semblance of objective reality" for these presentations just as intellectual ideas do. And, more importantly, these imaginative presentations may be called "ideas" because, even though no concept can be completely adequate for them, these presentations remain "inner intuitions" (Ak., 314).

Kant proposes that rational ideas are

"indemonstrable concepts of reason," whereas aesthetic ideas are "unexpoundable presentations of the imagination." Aesthetic ideas are unexpoundable in the sense that the understanding is unable to capture with its determinate concepts the fullness of the imaginative intuition in its free play. Yet such aesthetic ideas, if not conceptualizable, can still be exhibited. And the general, although not specific, ability to exhibit such ideas, Kant says famously, is genius.

Now such ideas (as Kant explains more fully in the Preface - Ak., 167-8) while not leading to cognition have this peculiar usefulness and indispensability. Aesthetic ideas serve as regulative principles, that is, these ideas can restrain the claims of the understanding to circumscribe "the area within which all things in general are possible." Moreover, aesthetic ideas can "quicken the understanding, in its contemplation of nature, by a principle of completeness - though the understanding cannot attain the completeness - and so further the final aim of all cognition" (Ak., 167-8; cf. CPR, A 642-68=B 670-96).

Kant fills out this picture in his discussion of genius (Ak., 313ff.) where he identifies the specific capacity to exhibit aesthetic ideas as spirit, what he calls "the animating principle in the mind." Spirit "imparts to the mental powers a purposive momentum," says Kant, "a play which is such that it sustains itself on its own and even strengthens the powers for such play." Spirit then is what produces aesthetic ideas precisely as those imaginative presentations which Kant says "prompt much thought, but to which no determinate thought whatsoever, i.e. no [determinate] concept, can be adequate so that no language can express it completely and allow us to grasp it" (Ak., 314).

Spirit, Kant thinks, is most on view in some poetry. In poetry matters of our everyday experience, like love and fame, envy and death, as well as rational ideas themselves like those of creation and eternity (these are some of Kant's examples), are articulated in such a way "that goes beyond the limits of experience ... [that is,] with a completeness for which no example can be found in nature" (ibid.). Kant thinks the poet fashions these expressions, thanks to a peculiar kind of imaginative activity, one that "emulates the example of reason in reaching [to] a maximum."

This extraordinary use of the imagination Kant calls "creative" in a special sense. For the intuitive presentation of the poet's imagination enables the poet to think of more "than what can be apprehended and made distinct in the presentation," more "than can be expressed in a concept determined by words" (Ak., 315). In such imaginative presentations, aesthetic ideas "quicken the mind," says Kant, "by opening up for it a view into an immense realm of kindred presentations." Aesthetic ideas can do so thanks to their arising from the effects of disparate aesthetic attributes of objects (that is those attributes, Kant says cryptically, "that accompany the logical ones"). Aesthetic attributes "give the imagination a momentum which makes it think more in response to these objects thought in an undeveloped way, than can be comprehended within one concept and hence in one determinate expression" (*ibid.*).

After providing examples (which it should be said remain perplexing) Kant summarizes his account: "In a word, an aesthetic idea is a presentation of the imagination which is conjoined with a given concept and is connected, when we use imagination in its freedom with such a multiplicity of partial presentations [aesthetic attributes] that no expression that stands for a determinate concept can be found for it. Hence it is a presentation that makes us add to a concept the thoughts of much that is ineffable, but the feeling of which quickens our cognitive powers and connects language, which otherwise would be mere letters, with spirit" (Ak., 316).

In his final comment at the end of this long analysis, Kant glosses what he means here when he says that some presentation allows of no adequate expression. For, "... in order to express what is ineffable in the mental state accompanying a certain presentation and to make it

universally communicable ... we need an ability [viz., spirit] to apprehend the imagination's rapidly passing play and to unite it in a concept that can be communicated without the constraint of rules, a concept that on that very account is original, while at the same time it reveals a new rule that could not have been inferred from any earlier principles or examples)" [Ak., 3l7].

Now, whatever the very many qualifications we need to make on this extravagant Kantian doctrine in the light of our very different pictures of body, brain, and mind today, this doctrine contains at least three elements which may push our philosophical reflection one step further in trying to deal with such poetry of suffering as Celan's crimson words. For this doctrine has the merit of trying to articulate a particular understanding of both the radical contingency of the mind as well as its today almost unrecognized sublimity. (Only the mind, says Kant, is properly speaking sublime.)

The imaginative presentations of aesthetic ideas and their attributes in some poetry (think here not of Kant's problematic examples from Frederick the Great's laboured verses in French but of our own late century's crimson poetry of suffering) shocks the mind as in its initial dealings with the ungraspably great (the Kantian mathematical sublime) and the ungraspably powerful (the Kantian dynamical sublime). For the mind ceaselessly recoils from its painful encounters with the limits of its inexorable élan just as the visual processes continuously short-circuit in the perception of Op Art works. In this flip-flopping recoil the mind recognizes its incapacities to conceptualize, perhaps we may say here, the magnitude of suffering and the immensity of the power that wreaks such suffering. Yet in its sudden awareness of its inexorable élan to capture in determinate words what is expressible only indeterminately, the mind recognizes one of reason's desires. And, in its struggle to complete beyond the bounds of experience the desire of reason, to capture in its conceptualizations the fullness of both suffering and its causes, the mind discovers within its restless and ever frustrated movements one of the ejaculations of the human spirit.

The attempt to apprehend Celan's crimson word, and generally the poetry of human suffering, is a desire of reason because it is the residue of the mind's ineluctable drive to comprehend what lies beyond the limits of the mind. And the attempt to apprehend Celan's crimson word, and generally the poetry of human suffering, is an ejaculation of the spirit because it is an intermittent sign only of that completeness for which the world can provide no example.

This doctrine, we well know, is radically flawed. For both the course of post-Kantian philosophy with its sustained criticisms of the narrowness of Kant's understanding of the self, knowledge, mathematics and physics, experience, and the double doctrine of a noumenal and phenomenal world. And the course of our own bloody times have shown that his doctrines even here are both too restrictive and not restrictive enough. They are too restrictive in leaving out too much metaphysics - the self, the world, the divine - and not restrictive enough in including too much psychology, anthropology, and politics. Kant's view of the mind is arguably too pessimistic we might argue later while at the same time in the sadly misplaced optimism of his untempered rationalism his view, as our history has demonstrated, is too optimistic. Nevertheless ...

Conclusion

In the light then of both the newly problematic yet still central understandings of reason and rationality and the poetry of suffering at the end of the Kantian era, how are we to understand the relations today between philosophical thinking and the practices of the arts?

Whatever their multiplicities and variety, neither philosophy nor the arts can be any longer what they were - complicitously innocent of history. Whether in the heyday of philosophical modernism with James and Russell, Husserl and Unamuno, or in the watershed years of philosophical postmodernism with the work of Foucault and Derrida and Deleuze, whatever the

newly questionable value of Heideggerean meditations on poetry and being or Wittgensteinian elucidations of an art and ethics beyond the sensual world, we can no longer in a time of radical historical, social, and cultural revolution think those ever difficult relations between philosophy and the arts by arbitrarily taking sides any more with either modernist thinkers or postmodern ones.

Quarrels between a Habermas and a Lyotard miss the point. For the breakdown of both an instrumental as well as of a relativistic understanding of rationality in the aftermath of itsapotheosis in the bloodiest of all centuries - think of the grandiose millennial ambitions of Albert Speer's architectural drawings for the new Berlin or the convoluted evasions and denials of any objectivity in the writings and the life of a Paul de Man - this breakdown leaves us no choice. We can be satisfied with neither neo-enlight-enment strategies like Habermas's still too innocent theorizings about rationality and the arts (Lyotard's critique is partly right), nor with postmodern dismissals of truth altogether like Lyotard's own still too evanescent interpretive fireworks (Habermas's critique is also partly right). We are waiting then. But unlike Godot, we are not waiting for anything at all like a god at the end of the Kantian era. We are waiting for nothing; we are rather waiting on. We are waiting on the workings out of understandings of reason and rationality that might allow us to sidestep rather than to referee the tiresome tirades between modernists and postmodernists. And we are waiting on the articulations of fresh philosophical and critical idioms - less innocent ones yet less skeptical ones too, idioms elaborated with all the rigor of alternative logical frameworks yet with all the expressiveness of figurative speech-acts - we are waiting in such a way as to let our thoughts be freshly shouted to a halt at a border crossing in a language we do not understand, summoned, interrogated, then liberated or condemned in as yet dark ways by the endless solicitations of the worlds of suffering across, if not our always questionable lives, at the very least across our endless interactions with works of art.

Without sustained and continuing philosophical critiques of both modernist and postmodernist construals of those seriously compromised understandings of reason and rationality implied in our interpretive practices today, and without that active waiting on the articulations of less compromised philosophical idioms, I am persuaded that we can no longer deal thoughtfully enough with the presentations of suffering, either in the several worlds of art or in those of our own histories, communities, and individual lives.

We cannot, that is, if we are to have anything at all to say to the guardian mole, to the poet's and to the philosopher's guardian mole with whose dank tunnel borings I began these reflections on philosophy and the arts today, a guardian mole almost blind we remember, but, like a miner in Silesia or in Pennsylvania, "with a small red lamp fastened to his forehead," and almost blind we remember too, yet "like a Patriarch / Who has sat much in the light of candles / Reading the great book of the species." For, in ways we do not yet understand, our question both as poets and as philosophers is now, at the end of this horrific time - truly at an end yet truly never to be over - our question is very close to the crimson word that Czeslaw Milosz finally apprehends just before his fateful interrogation by the guardian mole. "What will I tell him," cries the poet-philosopher?

> What will I tell him, I, a Jew of the New
> Testament,
> Waiting two thousand years for the second
> coming of Jesus?
> My broken body will deliver me to his
> sight
> And he will count me among the helpers
> of death:
> The uncircumcised.

Notes

1. "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto," *Collected Poems* (New York, Ecco Press, 1988), pp. 63-64.

2. Helen Vendler, "Tireless Messenger," *The New York Review of Books*, August 13, 1992, p. 44.

3. *Selected Poems*, tr. A. S. Trueblood (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 262-65. The Roman numeral in the text refers to the numbering of groups of poems in the last publication of his work that Machado himself supervised in 1936. This numbering is carried over into the definitive text edited by Oreste Macri, *Poesie de Antonio Machado* with Italian translations facing the Spanish text (3rd. ed. Milan: Lerici, 1969). This edition in turn is the basis for Trueblood's English translations cited here.

4. *Selected Poems*, p. 153.

5. Cited in Trueblood, p. 303.

6. Cited in Trueblood, pp. 303-304.

7. See Amartya Sen, *On Ethics and Economics* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1987), pp. 12-16.

8. See M. K. Richter, "Rational Choice," in J. S. Chipman, et al. *Preference, Utility and Demand* (New York: Harcourt, 1971); cited in Sen, pp. 12-13.

9. *The New Yorker*, August 3, 1992. Compare Brodsky's longer poem, "Fin de siecle," *TLS*, August 7, 1992.

10. See especially Joseph Margolis, *Pragmatism Without Foundations* (New York: Blackwells, 1986), pp17, 67-8, and 28. Compare these views with the recent nuances in his *The Truth About Relativism* (Cambridge, MA.: Blackwells, 1991), pp. 40-54, and 119-148.

11. *Poems of Paul Celan*, tr. M. Hamburger (New York: Persea Books, 1988), pp. 174-75.

12. *Critique of Judgment*, tr. W. S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), pp. 214-15. Hereafter, references are to the pagination of the Prussian Academy edition of Kant's works which appear in the margins of the translation.

ELEUTHERIA* ISSN 0843-8064.** Published semi-annually in the Spring and Fall by the **INSTITUTE OF SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY:** P.O. Box 913, Station B, Ottawa, CANADA K1P 5P9 Tel: (613) 594-5881. Fax: (613) 594-3952. E-mail: isp@raynon.com Charitable Reg. No. 07799841-20. Available to all members. Subscription rates and the availability of back issues and of volumes in the **INSTITUTE'S** ***MONOGRAPH SERIES will be supplied upon request.