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LETTER TO HEGEL

Dear Professor,

I have before me, for rereading, two "tomes" in which your "Aesthetics" is printed. I believe I am one of those to whom your lessons are addressed and am writing to you today because I have come to learn of the scientific proof that your Aesthetics, as I had always suspected, is actually a castle in the air.

I believe that the error taken as the foundation of your doctrine is already to be found in the introduction to your ponderous work. A foundation which admirably expounded in your "Science of Logic" deliberates that "the finite" is not true being: you decide to make it disappear into the infinite by saying: "*that which is, is only the infinite*" (Hegel, *Scienza della logica*, Laterza 1996, page 139). You decide without convincing that finite things as such are a "*merely illusory presence*" (Hegel, *Estetica*, Einaudi 1976, page 57).

This vision of yours is perturbing. I do not believe that "finite" things are only the objects which we perceive and which through pure anthropocentrism imagine to be orbiting around us. Our rational being is also finite.

And if that which is rational is real, as you say, one who rationalises this real will be real and not merely illusory. So when the rational thinks that the finite is real and is not an illusory presence, what will be illusory is that infinite which escapes rationality, becoming incomprehensible, and which you on the contrary consider "true being".

You thought that physical living beings were "finite" in the sense of the opposite "infinite".

You believe that totality is not "infinite" because you think that each "finite" being is such thanks to its "opposite" which as the opposite of finite things cannot be reduced to a finite sum.

But this creation of truth at writing table convinces only dreamers. In fact I could, with your method, invent the entity "opposite" to a work of art, omitting that the opposite is the absence of the work of art but indicating this absence with a name that gives the illusion of its existence as an entity opposite to the work of art, and thus the work of art would be such thanks to the existence of the relationship with its opposite. But it is evident to anyone that the opposite of the work of art is the simple absence of the work of art, which is to say an entity that in reality does not exist. All of which also means that each work inasmuch as it is willed by teleological design is a work of art, and that it is only by degrees that works are great or small, but the small and the great are not in opposition among themselves. This has happened to that "infinite" of yours which does not exist but which, having been given a name, seems to.

You will object, once more and always, that the totality of finite things cannot be infinite but finite totality. But then I ask you how a finite totality can disappear into an "infinite" which in refusing to be totality claims for itself a nature different from the finite, otherwise it would be the same totality. This infinite defined by you as the sole reality claims a difference of nature in comparison with the numerical infinite. But the "finite" is conscious of both itself and the numerical infinite because it is a part thereof. The personal existence of finite beings is unique and unrepeatable therefore their simple and sole existence makes them "be" in reality and not in an illusory manner. In its awareness of self the finite then determines by itself its own limit. To be able to have the idea of being finite, the finite necessarily has the idea of infinite (as totality). It thus possesses awareness of the infinite and therefore is rationally a part thereof. You maintain without limitation, and hence erroneously, that what is rational is real, and so our finite being should be real inasmuch as it is rational, and if one of the two must perforce disappear it must be that infinite you imagine, since it lacks awareness of itself and is therefore outside all rationality. Thus your infinite has, in this absence *inasmuch as it is an absence*, the limit which annuls it as infinite and brings it back to being only the totality of the finite, and so that which "is" is only the finite that constitutes the totality.

Professor, it seems to me that what must disappear is the illusion of the "pure" infinite, the pure of each being and non-being, pure art and "supreme needs", because when the wicked "accidents" are removed from reality nothing remains of reality, and in fact there is no neuronal response in the encephalon when an impure, relative, sensible, finite image is not perceived, and this you will see at the end of my letter; and don't tell me that the intellect thinks also what the senses do not perceive, because it is scientifically untrue. In fact, "if sensorial perception of an environmental stimulus is experimentally modified, the structure of the encephalic region assigned to its integration is modified. One example comes from G. Moruzzi: upsetting visual perception by placing in front of one eye, from birth, a permanent lens that turns images upside down, results in a structuring of the occipital cortex that is inverted with regard to the contralateral." (Vittorino Andreoli *La norma e la scelta* – Mondadori 1984, page 25).

This fact demonstrates that the structure pattern of the brain depends on sensorial stimulation from the external world. And given that rationality, which is to say the function of the brain, depends on the latter's structure, rationality necessarily depends on stimuli from the external world and in any case in simultaneity with the external world.

One understands how the structure pattern of a foot is simultaneous with its functional ends. If one could by contrivance replace the *astragalus* bone of the foot with the *sphenoid* bone of the nose, the foot would lose its logical function which is, logically, that of walking.

So brain and intellect must necessarily have the same relationship as the foot and walking. The logic of thought would be modified or impeded if the structure of the brain were modified or impeded or upset, as in the function of the foot. Thus the logic of thought, which is to say thinking, is the logical function of the brain just as walking is the logical function of the foot. Consequently, if thinking depends on brain structure and the latter on sensorial perceptions, there can be no contradictions between thinking reality and perceiving reality. It is necessary that there be no difference in content between rational or encephalic reality and the reality external to the encephalon.

And yet this does not mean that the idea we have of an object represents the *whole* reality of the object.

Reality is necessarily greater in quantity than the encephalic idea thereof. The idea of reality takes from reality only that which is of *vital project-related interest* thereto. This grasping from reality what is useful to our ends is that which evolves reality for the subsequent intervention of our project. If it were not thus, reality would be immobile.

The mechanism seems to me to be as follows: through the senses certain parts of reality pass representatively and teleologically into the encephalon and are established in the memory. With this data the artist elaborates a new form, obtaining the institution of a relationship of analogy of the finality of the artistic form with that of the form of nature.

Unfortunately this analogy of the forms of art known as "resemblance" to the forms of nature is at the root of an error: that of thinking that a simple copy of a natural form (if such a copy were ever possible) is the content of art. But the term "resemblance" is not equivalent to the term "analogy". The former refers, through carelessness of reason, to forms alone and not to their functions. And since every form is unique and unrepeatable, because a form identical to another would have a function identical to another and therefore be useless in the economy of nature, "resemblance" among forms is of necessity due to carelessness of reason, as I said. The concept of analogy, on the other hand, is founded on the form of the finality and not on the illusion of resemblance. You will ask me what this finality formally consists of in the work of art. As I am writing to tell you that only *form is content*, I reply that the artist's finality or project is rendered concrete in artistic form through exclusion of formal elements of nature and the inclusion of other formal elements of nature. The former excluded because they are not suitable for the artist's project and the latter utilised to highlight it. This selection of natural form transposed into artistic form is highlighted through comparison of the artistic form with the form of reality. The difference between artistic form and genetic form is concretely formal, meaning concretely finalised. In this sense modern "expressionism" was right on target with regard to this truth, though guilty of excessive exclusion and of the excessive inclusion of finalised forms. The images, teleologically exasperated, lose credibility. I mean that the expressionist artist's statement takes on a binding, insistent value that contains an imposition.

The artist's proposition, if it is not to annoy but be accepted by the beholder, must be humble even if firm, available even if intransigent, interpretable even if univocal.

In brief, it must be like nature: open from the project-related viewpoint but subject to law.

The work of art being a part of nature, being a constituent of the evolutionary process of a living being, takes origin from the genetically transmitted. Project-related or artistic form cannot claim a revision or a denial of the genetic but only propose an evolution of the genetic. On the other hand, the physical geometry alone of natural objects transposed into the technical work, which is to say a mere copy, would reduce the work to passivity. But this is in any case an impossible occurrence because a double, which is to say a "copy", is impossible.

Thus with *its* finality the artistic form acquires analogy with regard to the real form. It assumes project-related form without separating itself from natural form.

(An example may clarify the distinction between *analogy* and *resemblance*: there is nothing in common between the form of an hourglass and a wristwatch with regard to geometrical resemblance or functioning, but they have the same finality, so we say that the two objects are analogous. It is clearly seen that "analogy" and "resemblance" are two distinct elements. And this analogy is the content of artistic forms and not the resemblance to the natural form, which would mean basing the content of art on an illusion given by carelessness of reason).

So artistic content consists in the proposal of a form in a relationship of analogy with the finality of nature. And the peculiar feature of art is precisely this: that it produces a new synthetic form with objective analytical parts of a form anterior to the artist's project, and this new form in being analogical to a real form may also seem a resemblance thereof. And once more we must not think, as you thought, that the finality of the artistic form can separate itself from the finality of the form of reality. We must not think that the finality of art is the theme of the "interests of the spirit", of that spirit which in order to be "unique reality" as you say would annul form and therefore also the form of art.

The illusory "resemblance" moreover does not impugn the analogical content of art. It is not possible to reduce to opposites the efficiency that moves and that which is moved, merely out of hatred for the illusion of resemblance, impossible to avoid. In fact in the form of a being, be it genetic or artistic, there is always something which is only partially pertinent to that being; I say "partially" and not "accidentally" as you yourself would have it. When we own a donkey we also own its ears and the hairs in its ears. I mean that the donkey is all of its parts, including those which you define as being accidental. To me it seems impossible to possess the "content" of the donkey, which is to say the "pure" donkey, a donkey "regenerated by the spirit" (Hegel, *Introduction to Aesthetics*). All in all it does not seem to me possible to think of the "species" of the donkey without thinking of all donkeys, so that the "idea" of the asinine species appears to me simply as a multitude of ideas, each one referring to a real donkey. It seems to me that the content of a form is all its "accidents" and what is true for a donkey is true for art. Thus the content of a work of art is its finalised form, precisely that form which you hold to be accidental like the hairs in the donkey's ears.

Let it be supposed that for unknown reasons certain donkeys are born without hairs. You will say at once that they are still donkeys without the accident of hairs. Let it then be supposed that some are born without ears. You will say that they are still donkeys. Let it be supposed that they are born with horns, with six legs, two tails. You would begin to have difficulty in admitting that they were still nevertheless donkeys. When an animal then did not have all the "accidents" of a donkey but had others, you would find yourself having to coin a new term to designate the "essential" content of the new animal, thus implicitly admitting to have made your concept of asinine content or "species" dependent on the "accidents" which certain animals have in common by *analogy* with others. Admitting, and this is serious for you, that there is no content and, if there is, it is identified in accidents *finalised* with regard to a personal project, and in this finality, for a donkey and for every living being with hairs, the very last hair is also essential because a hair too is like any other part, such as the liver, the brain or other parts. And since it is right that I should be hard on your heels as you were on mine, I repeat: if the idea of work of art refers to the content of the work of art just as the idea of donkey refers to the content of the donkey, and the content of the donkey, as is

evident, is the same finalised form of the donkey, the content of the work of art is its same finalised form (and cannot be its non-finalised form) which you, contrarily, define as "accidental". Thus the abstract idea of donkey. The metaphysical idea, the idea of "species" which Plato held to be anterior to all donkeys whatsoever and which you believe to be true substance as against the "lowness" of "accidents" and given quite apart from "accidents; well, this idea does not exist, nor may we possess in our stable such a donkey without its essential accidents. So pure art too, which is to say without the "ballast" of accidents, does not exist: what exist are only objects that are more perfect or less perfect in form, or rather, suited in their form to their purpose. The metaphysical idea of object seems to me to be a reference to the project-related use of the accidents of an object. Our project-related aim maintains and defines as "accidental" that which in the object is held to be useless, and defines as substantial that which is held to be useful. But these definitions concern the functions which we assign to objects and are not properties of the objects even though the objects permit our definitions. So the metaphysical idea of "art" actually seems to me to refer to the object when it is suited to our project and not to the metaphysical "pure substance" of artistic "species". Thus "pure" art appears to me as the product of a game of chance because for the construction of the "metaphysical" concept of art one also needs the most "accidental" of formal signs constituting the artistic object, just as the concept of the donkey also needs the very last hair of a real donkey.

My dear Professor, even the idea of "being" is derived from a real being, which is to say from its "accidents" and therefore from its "flesh", which you have much vituperated.

Parmenides had already attempted a definition of the concept of "being" and first of all had to reduce it to the "one", but as Plato replied, the unity of a real being is impossible since from the reality we must exclude its "parts" which are a multitude and a multitude cannot constitute the "one", which is to say the unity of "being", thus no being is possible in a concept that is not derived from its parts, or rather from its accidents. But the extraordinary fact is that you, after more than two thousand years, did not seek the truth but limited yourself to plagiarizing the thinkers of "being".

I note that, removed the form, your so-called content disappears: without the "accidents" there is no "being". In fact between the form of reality, or "accidental" form, and its "substantial" artistic representation there is only our project-related use of accidents.

It thus remains that between things and the idea of their substance there is nothing other than the use we make of "accidents". So that which is real, both in art and genetic nature, is only the form which you define as "*temporal accidentality*" (Hegel, op. cit. page 107). Therefore the real content is what you call "accidentality" which in your opinion would be the contrary of ideal content, all of which seems to me a simple blinding. The semiologist Umberto Eco, an enthusiast of problems of knowledge, has recently admitted the difficulty of defining the "species" of a "strange" animal called the "duck-billed platypus". This difficulty is due precisely to the idealist vice that thinks of the real as accidental and posterior to the ideal. Classification of the new animal in accordance with knowledge already acquired about other animals might also be impossible, resulting in the need for a new classification, and this because the ideal classification is posterior to the real animal, as we have said with regard to the donkey.

All this "pure" rubbish ought to disappear from our language. What we call "being" is only physically determined and "impure", not under "species" but unique and unrepeatable.

So-called absolute or ideally "pure" values seem to me to be a verbal convention useful for the practical communication of values that are non-absolute and actually "impure".

If we did not have recourse to the agreed fiction of the existence of a pure point and had to locate a pencil mark in St. Peter's Square we should still in any case need to specify the location of the pencil mark. But the location of a real pencil mark in St. Peter's Square is possible only if we make a fictional pure point correspond to the location. But even a real pencil mark is divisible into many marks, and to know which of these marks is the pre-selected one requires a further specification of one of the many points constituting that mark. Thus the real location necessitates the fiction of the pure point which we know well to be "impure" or real.

The reality of this non-existent thing consists in the existence of its fiction. The real

form is divisible to the infinite but the pure point necessitates indivisibility. Thus the pure point too is, from your viewpoint, that "opposite" to the impure which, in order to be the opposite of what exists, does not exist, except in the name that makes it appear to exist.

You will ask yourself why the mind needs this fiction in order to communicate the physical objective real, and in my opinion you will be able to answer yourself that although we know of the divisibility to the infinite of the real we elevate its parts to indivisible entities because their utilisation is indivisible. And what counts for us with regard to reality is what we make of reality in a project-related context. The project-related idea, by analogy, is like the white lie that a girl who needs to achieve her purpose tells her mother when she introduces her husband-to-be as a clean-living churchgoer although she knows he's an inveterate womaniser. The mother too knows the truth but accepts him: her daughter will thus have an impure husband but will at least have a husband. *Thus the pure or metaphysical idea is the representation of the project-related utility of that which is impure and physical.*

The idea of object transcends the physical object in order to bend it to project-related utility but is not, as every good idealist maintains, anterior but rather posterior to the object transcended and does not betray it but represents it objectively. What the fiancée does in order to actually get married is something we all do: to be able to accept ourselves we think of and present ourselves with an idea that transcends us. In thinking of myself I "purify" myself – you would say – of my accidents; otherwise I should lose myself in their infinite labyrinth.. My identity is the transcendental representation of myself. But what I am urged to say to you is this: my identity is not more elevated or nobler than my "flesh", as you would have it. But if I had to employ your language I should say that the idea that transcends me is far baser than my body because it is the servant of the master that is myself in my impurity, divisibility and perishability. But from my viewpoint my body does not raise itself above the idea that I have of my body, and so the project-related memory I have of myself is what you call "spirit". This memory is the same myself finalised like the fiancée's lie.

Yet you still insist on purity. You make pure being and pure nothingness the same thing, but you have also made them opposites. Aren't you playing with words? You also say that when "we raise ourselves above the temporal by means of reason, it is understood that this occurs without any detriment to the finite" (Hegel *Scienza della logica*, Laterza, p. 139).

But is not raising ourselves above the temporal the same as conceiving the temporal finite in a low condition? Why invent opposites only to annul them in reality as if reality were posterior to the opposites or as if the opposites were the cause of reality? And since one thing cannot simultaneously "be" another, this means that the "opposites", which you consider as such simultaneously, cannot then be reconciled without undergoing extinction. It is only because they participate as differences and not as opposites in the same teleological project that they constitute "being there", otherwise there would be no "being there".

It seems to me that in reconciliation the opposite loses its identity and thus, lost in the "other", loses the force of constituting the project-related and social unity of "being there". The unity of the "being there" is given by the finality and therefore the opposites must be only different.

It seems to me that the entire world is a society of "differences" with only one single end ¹.

The opposites to be "reconciled" appear to me to be only puppets. In our days the name philosopher is given to certain tightrope-walkers who, on the basis of your doctrine, deny existence itself. They deny that "being there" which, precisely in the strict sense of your logic, is nothingness if it comes from the reconciliation of pure being and pure nothingness which you postulated as identical nothingnesses. *"Pure being and pure nothingness are therefore the same"*, you say, and if in "reconciliation" and in the one "passing" into the other *"each one disappears into its opposite"* (Hegel, *Scienza della logica*, Laterza, p. 71), in disappearing they do not make "being there" emerge but cause the disappearance into nothingness of that which had already appeared as nothingness. In fact if being passes (excuse me if I don't understand what "pass" means but I'll pretend to), if being, then, passes into nothingness, it seems to me that it becomes a nothingness. So in passing one into the other they do nothing other than, at the most, exchange themselves with the other, leaving everything as it was before. But what is, is, and does not pass. You had so much imagination you could have sold it, but I don't think it's wise to buy from you.

You will pardon me this tirade because I am writing to you as a painter of finite and therefore concrete things. I am writing to you because I want you to know what scientific research, in your day, had not yet discovered. Neuroscience today demonstrates that your aesthetic castle is reduced to ruins, as well as your prophecy of the death of art.

(Note N° 1 – Letter to Plato)

In fact it has been discovered that only "finite" experience is real and that the metaphysical idea of the infinite is reduced to empirical experience.

It must be admitted that you were fascinated by Immanuel Kant. You believe it necessary to "discover the first foundations of the faculty of principles independent of experience" as Kant says (Immanuel Kant, *Critica del Giudizio*, Laterza 1984 p. 5), which you called "absoluteness of reason in itself, which has constituted the turning point of philosophy in the modern age, this absolute point of departure should be acknowledged and must not be confuted therein (in Kantian philosophy)" (Hegel *Estetica*, Einaudi 1976 p. 68). Even if you admit, unlike Kant, that it is possible to apprehend the beautiful in the concept (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 107), you thought of the form of nature as accidental or "only sensible apprehension" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 45) or as "merely illusory external presence" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 57). Finite things for you must not be real but appearances placed "merely as wrapping" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

But it is with prudence that you, in your treatise, alternate running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. I was present at a dispute between two Hegelians. One said that you ran with the hare to get the hounds moving, the other that you hunted with the hounds to put the hare in its place. You first in fact admit that "the spirit appears appreciably in a satisfactory manner only in its body" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 91), that in the artist's production "the spiritual and the sensible must be one thing only" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 49). You then state that the body in artistic representation "must be removed from the needs of all that which is only sensible and from the accidental falseness of appearance. In this way the form is purified in order to express in itself the content conforming thereto" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 91).

All of your beating about the bush has the aim of serving two masters, even if you do favour the less appropriate one. And this is why your descendants still argue today, and perhaps will always argue, in the attempt to clarify whether or not you were honest. In every other line you write that since art has the spirit as its peculiar purpose "it cannot give the intuition of this by means of particular objects of nature such as the sun, the moon, the earth etc. These are certainly sensible existences but they are isolated and, taken in themselves, do not give intuition of the spiritual" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 119).

In your treatise we find in every other line "the spirit that struggles against the flesh" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 65) and "the will that finds its direct opposition in nature, in sensible impulses" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 64).

And in the end your message is communicated thus: "One may hope that art raises and perfects itself increasingly, but its form has ceased to be the supreme need of the spirit" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 120).

Professor Hegel, you have been listened to. The form of art has been perfected in the form of tinned shit, that is to say "merde d'artiste", written in French because it is always "refined".

Your philosophising, dear Professor, has taken in whole generations of small-time historians and aestheticians, thinkers dedicated to plagiarism and copying, and small-time artists with vain socio-political aspirations, all pupils of your schools who, be they right or left, differ only in the rags they use to cover their shameful parts.

Today however neuroscience is bringing your schools to their knees together with yourself, your teacher and the teacher of modern teachers. I am alluding to Descartes who guarantees Existence because it is thought. Today it is scientifically certain that "in order to think, the brain needs objects, just as the eyes do in order to see" (Changeux, *Ragione e Piacere*, p. 112 Cortina 1995). Notwithstanding the fact that Descartes himself reflects saying "in the proposition *I think therefore I am* there is absolutely nothing that assures me the truth thereof except that I see in the clearest manner that in order to think one *must be*" (Descartes, *Discorso sul metodo*, Mondadori 1993 p. 32), the so-called modern world

maintains that reality is not anterior to the thinking thereof and indeed maintains that the guarantee of reality is thinking it in accordance with the proposition interpreted by Descartes and the with subsequent Kantian theory of a priori knowledge. Not only, but the so-called "weak thought" fashionable today casts doubt upon the existence of reality because thinking it guarantees it only subjectively. You too Professor were in agreement with Descartes and Kant for the greater security of the modern world in saying that "the real is rational and the rational is real". Today research on the encephalon may aid philosophers. It has been ascertained that it is only the physical real that can constitute the idea of the real, as we have said. However, the central nervous system is an organisation programmed in accordance with a need anterior to its rational consciousness. The preservation of life is a need which, for all beings, is anterior to encephalic awareness of preservation. In fact this need is also possessed by organisms without an encephalon and therefore without rationality. So the Cartesian "cogito" must be increasingly guaranteed by "being". Because *it has been ascertained that one may be without thinking of being*. Whereas the modern world has reduced being to the state of being able to be not-being because it places rationality before being.

It is true that we can think of men with wings.

But the existence of men and of wings is real. The constituent and analytical elements of this thought-object are in a relationship of analogy with genetic reality even though the object of their synthesis is not at all genetic.

The work of art proposes a rational though unreal form. Pupils of yours and plagiarists in the guise of neo-Hegelian philosophers, having taken your maxim to the letter ("The rational is real"), make you cut as bad a figure as you deserve by saying that art is irrational. But art would be irrational only when it had no relationship of analogy with the given reality, as shown by modern non-representational artists who, being good pupils of yours, infatuated with the real as rational and the rational as real, maintain that art, being unreal, is also irrational, thus demonstrating the imprudence of their reasoning.

It is true that the real is rational, but the rational is not always real. In fact each artistic project is rational but unreal. So I may say that I think because I am and not vice versa, even if this truth was felt by everybody even before they knew what neuroscience has taught. Today "*only sensible apprehension*" (Hegel, *Estetica*, Einaudi 1976, p. 45) is a nonsense since thinking the real and apprehending the real sensibly are one thing only. We are also discovering that the senses possess the ability to select with intelligence without recourse to encephalic thinking. Thus the finality of the artistic form, having a sensible relationship of analogy with the finality of the already given genetic form, is guaranteed in its genetic value by the finality of the already given genetic form.

The living being is therefore the incarnation of its artistic project whose efficiency is given in temporary possession by the Exigency of genetic efficiency.

It would be an insult to explain to you the difference between the ownership and the possession of goods. You know better than I that possession does not necessarily involve ownership. Thus in possessing the exigency of my artistic project I do not have ownership thereof. So any exigency of mine, though it is mine because I possess it, may be taken away from me. Therefore I do not believe you will be scandalised if I maintain that I am not the owner of myself, whereas you will certainly be strongly against my saying that my flesh and my spirit are the same. But I am writing to you precisely in order to say it, with the support of a host of scientists who, believe me, are to all effects philosophers. Art is the product of the species that organises itself for its exigency. You say that "*everything that is spiritual is superior to any natural product*" (*op. cit.* p. 37). But each natural being possesses teleological functionality relative to its personal form, as anyone can easily see. This is why it is necessary that the form of nature be the form of its finality, which is to say its artistic or spiritual form. From this it follows that finality, any finality even if historically immoral, is spiritual, so the form of nature and the spirit of nature are the same entity, and the cause of the efficiency of this entity we may call by the name of God or Primary Exigency of existence. I seem to understand that by "spiritual" you intend that which is "moral". I seem to understand that your "absolute spirit" is none other than the absolute good of mankind associated historically. But to me it seems that "spirit" is the simple projecting of all matter. And the project of a being must be defined moral or immoral if it is useful or useless to the society of individuals dictating the

rules for its own survival. Multiplying bread and fishes to feed the multitude is highly moral and is motivated by a great love for mankind. But to the fishes this multiplication of their death appears as a treacherous aggression on the part of mankind. And in fact mankind considers the plague as a treacherous aggression. Mankind's imprecations against God for evil caused to mankind by other beings result from confusing, as you do, the "spirit" with the morality of mankind. God can be neither imprecated against nor prayed to because God is the project-related Exigency of all beings, including those which destroy mankind. Therefore both good and evil are spiritual.

Professor, modern discoveries tell us that "*an external side of form*" (Hegel, op. cit. p. 84) does not exist.

Because our spirit is our very body finalised without external sides but all internal and itself contained by itself, so "*the incompleteness of form*" does not "*originate*" "*from the incompleteness of content*" (op. cit. p. 87). But from itself if it lacks self.

Art does not purify the form of the sensible since the sensible is itself art. An artist's art is only a part of genetic art and is personalised in implementation by means of a choice finalised towards a personalised end. And in this way alone is art personal though universal. Art is the finite of the infinite. Thus in nature there cannot be other than total purity and substantial form, and never "*accidental appearance*" (Hegel, op. cit., p. 7).

Genetic form or the form of nature is its own spirit which has been in process to a purpose for billions of years. I wish to repeat myself by saying that it seems to me that the form of nature is the final artistic masterpiece of genetic nature even if not the last, and the art of an individual artist is a part of that, finalised by the artist as a genetic individual. And therefore there cannot be a form, either genetic or artistic, unsuited to its content. One of your assumptions recites that there may be "*an imperfect art which with regard to the technical viewpoint and other viewpoints may be fully realised in its determined sphere but which appears incomplete in comparison with the very concept of art and with the ideal*" (Hegel, op. cit. p., 87). Do you wish to propound that there may be a formally complete art, which is to say perfect in its artistic sphere, that is incomplete with regard to artistic content and hence imperfect? Like saying an art that is perfect but imperfect, which seems pitiful to me. You maintain, always and everywhere, that in the artistic procedure there are two roads taken by the same vehicle: one is formal and accidental as you put it, and the other is spiritual. But when and how the two roads meet with view to the vehicle taking the road of true art you do not say, and nor could you because if you had gone into the problem in depth you would have had to resolve your contradiction which posits nature as impotent to "be": "*the finite disappears*" etc. etc., subject as you say to externalism. On your suggestion my contemporaries have chased this externalism out of art and, as may be seen, nothing remains. And this is due to the fact that externalism is not exterior but wholly interior and the road is one only.

Yours, dear Professor, was a great blinding. You let yourself be blinded by an imaginary spirit. It was not vouchsafed you to think that every form of nature is unique and unrepeatable and this is why it dictates to us *per se* the idea of self as Moruzzi's experiment demonstrates. The non-repeatability of a form elevates it to "substance", so that it will be thought and rationalised just as it is seen in reality. And what brings forms of nature to the unique and universal value is their convergent finality. Their freedom permits them the choice of a personal itinerary towards a common point of arrival. In this way the artist's freedom will give the possibility of a formal choice for his work converging with that end in accordance with the genetic one. And the greater the appropriateness of the formal choice with regard to his purpose, the greater the beauty of his work will be. And where an artistic form has a non-univocal or contradictory purpose, a limit will be placed there to its perfection to that purpose, hence a limit to its beauty.

Thus a painting, a house, a pair of shoes, a bird's nest, a beehive will be part of the very body of those who produced them. However, beauty being proportioned to formal perfection with regard to a univocal purpose will not be bound to the moral good of a historical epoch. Allow me, professor, to make a distinction between the morality of a historical group and the ethics of the species. The gene eliminates the personal and historical experiences of the group if it deems them useless to the species. What you call "absolute spirit" might also be

a historical error to be rejected. You will permit me then to hold an opinion different from your own and say that artistic work is evolutionary. It evolves the individual genetically even if the individual and his historical group should deteriorate morally.

The work of art has a destination beyond the historical morality of the time in which it is produced. The work of art, even if its theme is negative, encourages environmental adaptive capabilities, evolves the individual and his environment. Thus both the genetic form of an individual and the form produced thereby due to the necessity of being a genetic individual are artistic. It was Plato's wish that the beautiful should also be good, so Plato too admitted that the beautiful need not be good. "*In fact there would be no little profit if poetry appeared which was not only sweet and mellow but also useful*" (Plato *Politeia X*, p. 438, Rizzoli 1953). It is clear that moral good cannot be found in a work that exalts historically immoral behaviour. Yet the beauty of a work of art is the simple perfection of its form, certainly ordered to a purpose, but it does not lie in the goodness or moral usefulness of the purpose. I could give you a banal example: two athletes compete in a race. If one of them, halfway round the track, starts meditating on the mystery of the Holy Trinity thus losing coherency of movement, he is doing nothing wrong in connection with religious problems and therefore is doing good and what he is doing is good in connection with religious problems, but the wrongful thing, which therefore does no good, is that what he is doing with regard to the purpose of winning the race is not good. So we may easily say that the other athlete won the race because all the forms of his energy were perfectly coordinated to this end and he created a form perfect for a univocal end, thus realising, in comparison with the first athlete, an artistic form. While running the athlete may also produce an artistic form suited to the problem of the Holy Trinity and simultaneously produce an artistic form unsuited to winning the race. But in any case the value of the two forms always refers to their formal perfection which is highlighted in the finished product and not in its usefulness, otherwise the athlete who loses the race, having produced with his thoughts of the Trinity a greater good than victory in the race, would win the race while losing it. But the art of winning a race is not the art of resolving the mystery of the Holy Trinity. You on the other hand believe that there may be a perfect form with insufficient artistic content. It is as if you believed that the athlete who loses the race for having produced a greater spiritual good by thinking of the Holy Trinity runs *substantially* better than the winning athlete. You do not believe that the work of art is its own form. But the one who wins runs better because he runs more. He produced an ordered form to an end *quantitatively* greater than the one who lost the race. The finalised quantity in progress determines the quality of the result. Thus the artistic object is determined by the greater or by the lesser quantity of finalised form, and this will make your hair stand on end. To make myself clear I have to give you another couple of examples: a painting is subjected to aesthetic judgement: let us say it is a depiction of the vice of Wrath. If forms are represented in this work which may lead to suppose that wrath is a pacific mood, then this creates that equivocal incongruity in the work which I described above for the athlete who slows down his pace in order to philosophise and who quantitatively subtracts specific form from his race. The aesthetic judgement will be negative in this case, and will be positive if the work of art is in possession a form perfectly convergent with its purpose, that of representing the vice of wrath *by quantity of form suited to its purpose*.

But even the simple representation of a genetic form without theme may be perfect or imperfect in a gradual manner in accordance with the degree of analogy with the finality of the genetic form: a portrait without a theme may be the subject of artistic representation. When the portrait of a face is equivocal with regard to another face it possesses an *insufficient quantity of finalised form*, like that of the athlete who dabbles in philosophy while running a race. A form quantitatively insufficient to its purpose is not aesthetically beautiful. Thus in a work of art beautiful forms are possible but not the beautiful as "species". However, a face, quite aside from the representation of an individual's specific somatic features, has its own subject in the representation of the genetic characters of a genetic group and therefore the possibility of a representational perfection not bound to the representation of a determined individual. The beauty of an artistic form lies in this coherent analogy and adherence of the representational or artistic form to the genetic form. Moreover there may be perfection in the representation of everyday items: this perfection again is evaluated with regard to the analogy of its model, meaning to the service which the everyday item carries out; and since the use, or finalised function, of an everyday item is its content, this rises to content of the representation. Beauty is thus traceable also in the perfection of the everyday item itself and

not only its representation. When the form of an everyday item is perfect in relation to its purpose, it will be beautiful in comparison with another which does not perfectly serve its purpose.

From your teachings, Mr Hegel, I believe I have learnt a lesson that obliges me to overturn your doctrine in order to calm myself down into logical coherence. There are two banalities you propound which I find especially unbearable. The first: the annulling, through reconciliation, of two so-called opposites: form and content, or overcoming the "*struggle of the spirit against the flesh*" (Hegel, *op. cit.* p., 65). You propose a purification of "exterior" form as if this making-up of spirit became interior, and you think that a portrait may be perfectly painted and not catch the spirit of the face painted. But if a portrait does not catch the spirit, it does not catch the face of the spirit, and this is why such a portrait is not perfectly painted.

It may be that incompetents take for good painting the kind that is well smoothed on the surface, doing as you do yourself, you who, from what you say, understood nothing of painting. Incompetents think that the smooth is difficult to execute and since it is difficult they consider it artistic.

Plato too concludes the *Hippias* Dialogue, in which the problem of the beautiful is dealt with, by saying that the beautiful is difficult. Contrarily Leonardo da Vinci, who certainly knew something about art, believed that art was a temperate proceeding and that any difficulties encountered should not be seen in the work of art, and even less so the physical efforts the artist might occasionally have to suffer during the execution. Michelangelo destroyed the preparatory drawings of his works in order that the effort he had made to produce the work of art should never be seen. If he had believed that the beautiful were difficult he would not have been ashamed, even through immodesty, of having worked hard to achieve it. In fact that which is difficult does not give enjoyment, so in this case the Platonic beholder, should he receive no enjoyment from the difficult, would go against the master's opinion and think that the beautiful is very easy and not difficult. But easy it certainly is not. In fact the easy is not project-related, is not active but retroactive and hence it appears to me that the beautiful is spontaneous but not difficult, even if it is not easy. We should need to ask bees if their hive is difficult to build. Bees build their hive as Phidias built the Parthenon: for exigency. Exigency renders spontaneous that which other people, not having the same exigency, find difficult. Phidias would have had difficulty in building a beehive. Now, to return to ourselves, if the purpose is to smooth a surface, a well smoothed surface is artistic. But the art of representation of the spirit, or of physical forms, is not the art of smoothing a surface. So a merely well smoothed portrait cannot be well painted. Dear Professor, I understand you: the early 19th century, the epoch of your mortal life, saw the flourishing of minor artists who, like yourself, believed in the "smoothed" and believed, like yourself, that artistic perfection was the perfect "licking" of coloured paste. But vaguely intuiting that the thing did not lie precisely in these terms you invoked a content opposed to the smoothed which you called "*technically achieved form in its determined sphere*". I think that with technically achieved form you were referring to this smoothness because, if not, you were light-heartedly milling the flour of gross contradictions which you then processed and prepared in the form of doughnuts with a perfect hole. But in any case it remains clear that your philosophising on art was a floundering in a subject unknown to you. To speak of a trade one must be at least a little of the trade. I say this not to confuse a trade with excellence of the trade, because everyone knows that the trade is a genre and the art of that trade is the level of that trade, which may be as high as it may be low to the point of disappearing into the trade of philosophy of the trade, I beg your pardon, to the point of disappearing into chatter about aesthetics, as in your case and in that of many of your followers who are still alive today. Dear Professor, do not separate the form of art from the content of the "spirit". At the most, separate these from smoothed paintwork.

Your theory of the separation of form from content produced incalculable damage. The more the themes were held to be the content of art, the more the form was imposed upon, to be in the end absorbed by moral philosophy, you believing with this to lead the form of art to its death. Art lost its atemporality to the extent that it became the dupe of the contingent political pronouncement pure and simple of the choice between left and right, in accordance with the teachings of your schools. Artistic became pure social behaviour and not a perfect object. Thus it happens today that a communist is an artist because he isn't a fascist, a bigot an artist because he isn't a rabid anti-clerical. If someone sets fire to the houses on the

right hand side of the street he is an artist of the left who creates a work of art by arousing awareness of the "supreme interests of the spirit", and someone who sets fire to the houses on the left hand side of the street is an artist of the right who creates a work of art by arousing awareness of the supreme interests of the spirit. Athletes who win races, painters who create fine works, are said to be obsolete because they lose themselves in the "accidental", that is to say in form, as you said, and are not committed to bringing the "supreme interests of the spirit" into consciousness. To these artists one gives, at the most, a slap on the back so that they will continue laudably. May the athlete win again, but if he loses it's all the same. In fact we hear that what counts is not to win but to take part in the race. But these teachers of "pure" art who do not distinguish the first athlete from the last do not realise that taking part in a race without winners and without losers is like being fattened like pigs. Thus everything is at once good and bad.

Believe me dear Professor: we are all in the dung because the form of art has been abandoned for the "supreme interests of the spirit" and we find ourselves without interests and the "spirit" is only that of the sceptics. The race is no longer run without sensible figuration, everything is mingled, even good and evil homogenise and are homogenised, children grow up limp, without backbone, children for whom everything is permissible, including shooting for fun at passers-by and later dying of an overdose. Dear Professor, do not separate form from content. Form is content. To you it seemed that content belonged to the intellect and not to the "flesh" because you did not know that the brain represents *all* the project-related aspects of the flesh. To you it seemed that project-relatedness was the teleological command of the intellect and that the senses were a lowly mechanism of implementation when they were not an obstacle. It seemed to you that the "flesh" was not the intellect itself because it wasn't in the encephalon. Whereas the flesh is not only in the encephalon but the project-relatedness of the encephalon is dictated by the exigency of the flesh, as demonstrated by Moruzzi's experiment. We discover today that the idea of real form is the only reality that the encephalon possesses, to the extent that brain and intellect, due to their common finality, become synonyms. Were this not the case the intellect would not be the function of the brain, all of which has been demonstrated to be untrue. So the formal image does not contain its spirit but is itself spirit. Were this not so, the project-relatedness of a thinking being would be anterior to the thinking being and so predetermination would touch on everything. But here we refute the existence of even a minimal predetermination, clearly seeing the existence of freedom.

To keep up your teachings on the accidental quality of the form of nature someone, to the greater glory of "content", has replaced in the work of art the analogical form of reality with the photographic reproduction of the form of reality.

You should know that about one hundred years after your death a machine was invented that could fix, on a sheet of paper, the images of nature precisely as the brain does through the instrument of the eyes and of the hand onto paper. This image, called photographic, refers to a fraction of a second of becoming reality. These operators employ photographs to highlight the "supreme interests of the spirit" which here we may safely call political ideologies for the use of the times, given the way things have turned out. And it is true that a photograph may possess the finality of the theme like a work of art, but the work of art is not its theme but the *how* which, as we have seen, is the formal "quantum" which brings to light the theme. Photography reproduces a form anterior to the artist's will, whereas art produces a new form beyond the theme. Nature photography is like nature mirrored. Today we know that the eyes of the brain snap millions of photographs every second and the project-relatedness of the brain utilises only those images deemed to be constructive and useful to the project. As you will have understood, one single mechanical photograph is an artistic wretchedness in comparison with a work resulting from the finalised selection of millions of cerebral images. The analogical or artistic form is a new personal form. In brief, the content of the photographic work is the telling-off of the theme, that telling-off which you gave to believe to be the content of art but which today is seen to be what it is.

The same must be said for the construction by assembly carried out on the computer. This gives the possibility of efficiently carrying out a theme but with a pre-constituted and prefabricated form that is anterior to the artist's will. Computer thematic processes do not possess a form deriving from the artist's freedom. And when you want to draw a form with the

mouse you still do what has always been done with the pencil. With the difference that a pencil is more obedient to the hand and the hand is intellect itself. As an instrument replacing the pencil and the hand, the mouse is a step down in the ability to transmit the encephalic idea.

Construction of the analogical form carried out by a spiritually manual artist is such as to transform the form of nature into representation. The artistic form with its analogy is a new nature. And, like nature, unrepeatable and therefore true spiritual substance. Assembly on the other hand is without formal unity but unitary only in the thematic procedure. You ought to see this device, highly useful for certain activities aimed at time saving. The computer is like an immobile warehouse of immobile images in which you can trace recyclable pieces to be adapted to the construction of the thematic idea. The computer operator who takes forms from the computer does not personally possess the idea of the form he takes for his theme. The idea of that form is traceable to the programmer who placed the files in the computer. And to find a form ready made means to find oneself unable to think it autonomously. You will understand at this point the consequences of having annulled the centrality of form in favour of an imaginary spirit or pure content. What has remained of your spirit or pure content is the mere social theme, of brief historical duration, of brief and ephemeral instrumental utilisation. What has remained is the incapability of thinking a form, hence of thinking an artistic content.

You express your second banality as follows: "*the work of art is not a natural product but is produced by human activity*" (Hegel, *op. cit.* p. 33).

You hold that human activity is not natural and so it is natural that you also consider man as not natural. Is there perhaps a non natural human reality? If you want art to be considered not natural you will not want it perceptible. So why write perceptible words if you do not want the object of your words to be perceptible? You have predicated things that are not predicable. Today neuroscience gives us the proof that no cognition can go beyond the sensible natural object, as I told you. And also deductions from premises, if these are true, that is to say sensible truths, only render formally explicit that which was already in the premises. And since our central nervous system is the product of an evolution begun billions of years ago with the constitution of a first molecule and a unicellular organism, of necessity the individual freedom of our ancestors' cells is the departure point of the formation of our current central nervous system. Johann Friedrich Meckel says, "During its development the higher animal passes through the permanent organic stages of those species inferior to it" (Changeux, *Ragione e piacere*, Cortina, p. 129).

It is therefore necessary that mental representation should have its form modelled by the sensible and finalised form of nature, as Moruzzi's experiment demonstrates. It is also necessary that our first ancestral cell should have possessed the aesthetic capacity to distinguish and choose the best for itself, refusing the worst. Without the freedom and capacity of choice of our first ancestral cells, our present freedom of choice would not have been possible.

So between the genetic spirit that you call "flesh" and the project-related freedom of the current individual that you call "spirit" there is not struggle but identity of construction work which goes from the individual to the species. It starts with the first molecule and arrives at the most highly evolved man: "We preserve in our brain the material imprint of our fish ancestors that lived around three hundred million years ago, and perhaps also of even older primitive worms" (Changeux, *op. cit.* p. 147).

The memory of experiences that we consider useful by means of an aesthetic judgement serves as a model and point of departure for new knowledge. "The human brain's exceptional capacity to produce and evaluate mental representations, to communicate them and memorise them, makes it possible to propagate and perpetuate representations from one generation to another" (Changeux, *op. cit.* p. 156).

Many believe that this memory of experiences is incapable of modifying the genetic code. But if forms of life evolve through experiences in a logical way, the memory of experiences is necessarily the source of genetic codification. Experiences would otherwise be useless. One cannot believe that a consequentially logical evolution is due to chance, which is neither progressive nor logical but occasional and reversible. It has been found that in the course of thousands of centuries domesticated animals have undergone evident bone and almost structural modifications which their counterparts in the wild state have not undergone.

Now, if there are two animals with the same genetic beginnings and one of these, changing environment, undergoes modifications, it means that it is the adaptation to the new environment and not chance that modifies the structure. And since we cannot today accept that evolution is programmed in advance but is rather the result of a reciprocal current adaptation for the exigency of individuals and of the environment formed by the individuals, the memory of experiences is necessarily the source of the environmental behaviour decisions which evolve the species and hence the gene in accordance with the times and modes chosen by evolution, once again for its exigency: "three evolutions are interwoven in the brain in a singular manner: that of the species, that of individuals and that of cultures" (Changeux, *op. cit.* p. 6).

Vittorino Andreoli states that it is possible for the encephalon "to modify itself on the basis of external stimuli and therefore of experience" (*La norma e la scelta*, Mondadori 1984, p. 19). Now if structural modifications of the encephalon due to current experience are currently possible, it is also possible to hypothesise that the entire structure of the encephalon is formed through past experience. If we consider that the earliest forms of life of our ancestors were lived without encephalon, it follows that the encephalon is the final result, even if not the last, of a cognitive activity starting out from the aggregation in organisms of the first cells, if not the first molecules.. Thus the genetic code too is necessarily the final and not last fruit of a transformation begun with the first aggregation in an organism of the first vital elements at the beginning of their cognitive experience.

I believe that you will want to take note of the news from the modern scientific world and take such hypotheses into consideration. So that you may no longer think that the spirit is not the body. So that you may think that the spirit evolves because it is body. If the spirit did not evolve, our first ancestral cell would have possessed our present spirit, but it is reasonable that each body should be its own spirit even though it has a soul in common with the rest of the world.

At this point you will ask me what the soul is, if the spirit is body. With this question you will insinuate that I deny the existence of the spirit, and if the spirit does not exist then neither does the soul.

I should like to define the soul as Exigency of physical or spiritual efficiency, but not determining cause of the spirit as you would have it. You describe the soul as that which coordinates the finalised movement of the parts of the body. This non "*accidental*" movement (Hegel, *Estetica*, Einaudi 1976, p. 143) you deny to animals, saying they have only arbitrary movement not conforming to a law. In your opinion a peculiarity of the soul is the *determination* of conscious movement. But you neglect the important property of movement which is its continued teleological efficiency even after the death of the conscious body and the constituent parts thereof. And it is natural that it should be so because in your day the movement of atoms and their particles was not known. This movement is finalised towards life in general and reveals a *marvellous efficiency* coordinated for the creation of other conscious and non-conscious lives. This efficiency cannot be personal even though the individual, inasmuch as spirit, personally finalises this efficiency. If fact an individual capable of giving itself efficiency by itself would be immortal. So efficiency of movement is due to an entity which transcends the individual and which I should call Soul or Primary Exigency of existence. Finalised coordination of movement I should attribute to the spirit, meaning the teleological body of each individual. If, as you say, the soul *determined* the movement of the body, it would have a relationship of the same nature with the body. Over and above being peculiar to that body it would have an evolutionary relationship with the body, losing all transcendence over the body, whereas in its being only the exigency of the efficiency of the body, the soul's transcendence over the body is clearly necessary. This distinction renders comprehensible the simultaneous presence in reality of an immortal entity such as Exigency of the efficiency of that which is mortal, renders necessary the Soul as Exigency of the project-related body, which is to say the spirit.

You say that the symmetry of crystals is due to their lack of soul, which explains what conception you have of the soul. The soul, in your opinion, "*is concentrated in the eye*" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 175) "*which is the seat of the soul*" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 176). For you "*the noblest organs are the internal ones: liver, heart, lungs*" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 157).

You have a mortal concept of the soul as would befit only the body, or the spirit in its uniqueness and project-related non-repeatability. Whereas the soul is revealed to us as Exigency of the efficiency of the project. It therefore transcends the project of every living being and hence every spirit. And thus, being the universal cause, it is not personal property but only a personal possession, as I told you. The soul is the Exigency of the spirit, or of the body. The soul of a saint is the same as that of the most abject man. It is the cause of the efficiency of existence. It is the tension that permits us to freely build our genetic life. So the soul is God himself, as the spirit of man is man himself. Thus the soul appears to me to be an entity that cannot leave the body but only transform it. Between the Divine Soul and the spirit of man and of all project-related beings, including crystals and subatomic particles, there can be no intermediary or obstacle, therefore neither conflict nor reconciliation, since the living being possesses the Exigency of its efficiency which transcends it. Thus the divine Soul is possessed by nature inasmuch as nature exists, and the death of God is only a senseless pronouncement that affirms His presence.

So as long as living beings live as artistic form, or as spirit, by their Exigency, for them there will be no opposition with the body. Genetic form thus appears to me to be the form of the spirit of the species, appears to me as work of art; efficient for its Exigency and, as I said, in temporary possession of the soul. Art will certainly not die for the reasons adduced by you as a pretext. "*Inner nature*" does not "*celebrate its triumph over the external*" and does not "*make appear in the external and over it a victory with which every value is removed from that which sensibly appears*" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 34).

Modern science has cancelled out the distinction between internal and external, between interior and exterior and has returned to the sensible all the value that you had removed from it. And with this the death of art and the death of God have been defeated. Art could die if the Soul died. But death of the Soul would annul existence over and above the same energy, which seems impossible to me. Illustrious Professor, I am pouring ink into the inkwell, but I need paper in order to draw sensible figures so I won't be long-winded. Yet I feel urged to say one last thing to you. It concerns a sad fact of which you too are aware but which takes on a different value if interpreted correctly: it appears that the emperor of the east, Leo III, in the seventh century of the Christian era, was not in good faith when he issued his famous decrees against sacred images. This Leo, a thousand years before yourself, thought as you did, but pretended that images were the "flesh" fighting against the spirit. This Leo might have written your very words, "*art is not, either with regard to content or form, the supreme and absolute way of bringing to the spirit awareness of its true interests*" (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 14). But the interests of the spirit of Leo III were imperial. They were contested by the classical culture of Christian monasticism. In order to strike the political opposition he attempted to strike the culture of the opposition, which is what happens as a rule.

The death of art sought by Leo III is the death that you theorised about. But a philosopher cannot falsify like an emperor and cannot permit anyone to make him observe the contradiction into which he has fallen, as you fell in removing value from the figure with a figurative language. If we talked about it and our words were not figurative we would not understand one another. So at first glance, without knowing the real reasons for the ancient iconoclasm, one does not understand why images were attacked by Leo III and why a thinker like yourself did not note the contradictions in theorising the impotence of the figure to represent the spirit with an interminable sequel of formally figurative sentences, therefore, in accordance with your own theoretics, instant suicide. Strictly speaking this old iconoclasm should also have struck writings and conversations and the figurative imperial decrees themselves, and you, professor, would have had to keep your mouth shut and not hold your figurative anti-figurative lessons. The non-figurative artists of today are more coherent than you were and, taking your doctrine to its logical conclusions, no longer produce any objects whatsoever, because even a blank canvas, raised up previously with figurative words as symbol of the non-figurative theory, speaks through its silence the figurative language of your theoretics. A blank canvas in itself is not artistically nothing, but sustaining with its not being figurative the negation of the figurative it becomes an eloquent and figurative message of its non-figurative philosophy. Thus also the blank canvas in order not to have to be subject to the figurative language that explains it declined due to that coherency which you lacked.

Historians say that all those who practise the profession of tyrant do not look well on

the spreading of culture and think up artificial problems to conceal their abject purpose of ruling over others. The usual argument thought up by the tyrant maintains that God cannot be represented, which everyone knows, including fiercely representational artists. And since God cannot be represented, the tyrant would have it that everything concerning the spirit emanated by God cannot be represented. From the heights of your university chair you pontificate exactly like the iconoclast emperor and write for the future decline of art that *"God in this spirit is now known also in a higher way, more correspondent to thought, with which it is at the same time put forward that manifestation of the truth in sensible form is not really appropriate to the spirit"* (Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 122).

This is a deduction only talkers can make, but artists reject it. Given that all cognition is implemented through an image or figure and that every mental form is determined by images, the communication thereof is also necessarily figurative, that is, structured in accordance with its image. The Christian doctrine states that God became man, and this I believe symbolically only to communicate with men *"in the eternal memory of the life in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have received the tradition of depicting Him in his human figure thus exalting the self-humbling of the Word of God"* (Germanus VIII century). But in reality, with what self-conceit does that philosopher or that artist soil himself by separating himself from the "flesh"? Perhaps the maddest kind, because in order to do this he must deny his own flesh which, reduced to nothingness, cannot think of the existence of God, that is, the primary Exigency of existence. It also necessitates that the destruction of images be destruction of consciousness, and without consciousness there can be no rational idea of God. This implicitly accuses your chair of obscurantism. We find openness to consciousness and therefore find scientific correctness in the fundamental principle of ancient Scholasticism which postulates that there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses. We believe logically and in accordance with scientific proof that what has first been in the senses possesses, in the intellect, the form of the senses.

So-called pure concepts cannot be figured, that is, cannot be represented. If concepts such as the concept of pure space, declared independent of empirical experience in accordance with the Kantian doctrine you accepted, cannot in this fundamental principle undergo figurative representation, it is due to the simple fact that they do not exist. And with what sinful contradiction does a Christian soil himself in believing that the death of art is possible when this means the death of God? For whom did Jesus take upon himself martyrdom as a man? Why did Jesus' body rise from the dead if the body is that vile encumbrance so disparaged by Mr Hegel? Perhaps for Christians who deny the existence of God. Let the Christian church make a careful analysis of the reasoning behind a non-iconic art and state whether it is Christian or heretical.

For those who are nostalgic for the iconoclastic and regressive world it is a great effort to accept that their entire thinking is a product resulting from neuronal organisation, even if they are told that this is moved by Divine efficiency. Scientific realism scares them because they are poor in spirit and because their certainty in the necessity of God is weak. They also suffer from logical weakness and weakness of character. They meekly submit to anyone who steps up to the chair and do not see even the most striking contradictions in doctrines such as yours, eminent teacher. The fatal weakness is the one that prevents them distinguishing efficient things from the Exigency of their efficiency. This weakness is the cause of the difficulty in letting God and the freedom of living things coexist simultaneously. This terror derives from failure to distinguish the concept of precedence from the concept of priority.

It seems to me that God cannot be creator, that is, precedent to and cause of creatures, otherwise He would be creator of that which before time He had not yet created; this therefore necessitates that the freedom of our efficiency not be posterior to but simultaneous with the Exigency of existence. We may say that the Exigency of our efficiency is the very presence of God within us. So God cannot be precedent to efficient things because with that precedence He would have been efficient cause of that which was not yet efficient because not yet existing. So our project has not been predetermined by God. But in His priority too there is nothing nobler with regard to what is not of a priority nature, since it is inconceivable that a nobility or priority should be efficiency of the absence thereof. Thus God cannot create something, nor can one inferior or merely similar create Him since it is contradictory to the event of an act of God which He has not always carried out and of equal

dignity with regard to his power. What I mean is that the exigency of the efficiency of things cannot over time be greater than what it has always been. It may be pointed out that if one maintains that God created the world, one must admit that before the creation God was in power at the moment of creation. But to pass from power to the act means "becoming" and God cannot be subject to becoming, hence God cannot be the creator of the world.

In order to maintain that God is the creator of the world and at the same time remove him from temporal becoming it is maintained that time too was created by God separate from time, which means conceiving God in eternity and specifying that eternity is not the totality of time, but each existence disappears into eternity. The existence of God also disappears. Professor, you who are a great player at logic, tell me if one may play on the simplicity of a non-existent concept such as the concept of eternity if this is not the totality of time. Tell me if one may communicate this false concept thus: though eternity seems to be infinite time, it has not even the slightest relationship with time, nor affinity nor distant analogy. Eternity has nothing to do with anything known or knowable. Knowledge of each thing is subject to the image which time gives thereof. If I had to make eternity understandable to an intelligent child – not to a young undergraduate corrupted by his philosophy lecturer – I should tell him to first imagine all the time of years, many billions of billions of years that pass by. Then to imagine eternity as a thing that sees all this time passing in a millionth of a second, adding at once that not even this millionth of a second has anything to do with eternity because eternity has nothing at all to do with time. The millionth of a millionth of a second can be measured, but eternity has nothing to do with any kind of measurement.

What say you professor to this stratagem for making a student understand what eternity is if it is not the totality of time?

However, you will see if I too have understood well what is meant by eternity. It seems to me like your *absolute infinite* which having nothing in common with the numerical infinite is like eternity that has nothing in common with time.

But you must explain to me why the word "eternity" immediately elicits the thought of infinite time and the word infinity that of the infinity of finite things. Is it not perhaps because eternity and the pure infinite seem non-existent to everybody? Is it not because there are only finite realities in the encephalon? It seems to me that those who maintain the existence of an eternity that is not of infinite time are lying to themselves; in fact the definition of an entity without time is borne only on the denial of every real definition. It is in the denial of the temporally known that we arrive at the non-existent called by an empty name. I believe that deduction of the existence of an entity transcending the real is possible only where the transcendent is not opposed to the real but is its guarantee, where the "*finite is true being*" so that everything may be said of this being, precisely because it is itself infinite. Something may be thought without current perception, but on the condition that it does not exclude past perception and includes its finality.

So it is not a diminution of God to attribute to Him the exigency of the efficiency of the world, because without the Exigency of its efficiency the world would not exist. But as may be seen, the Exigency of existence does not stand on any negation or opposition but is affirmation par excellence. Nor is infinity taken from God – in fact the efficiency of the infinite as totality of time is infinite.

It is said that Leonardo da Vinci before painting a picture prepared the appropriate final varnish. So some said that Leonardo was crazy because he started a work from the end and not the beginning. This anecdote may serve to make it understood how a "priority" is not precedence and is not subject to temporal succession. In fact in a time order Leonardo first had to paint the picture and then varnish it. But if the varnish had not been prepared beforehand or devised in a concretely appropriate manner for that given painting to be painted in accordance with a given technique, the picture would have been painted in vain or would not have been painted at all. For Leonardo the varnish had priority with regard to the painting even though it was temporally posterior thereto. The Priority of God is the simple guarantee of the efficiency of things and has no relationship with the chronology of things although it guarantees things in their chronology. This guarantee of efficiency transcends the guaranteed and efficient object. It is unique and, not being subject to efficient things, is proper to God as unique attribute. Thus God may be thought even if not perceived because he is thought of as

the guarantee of that which is perceived inasmuch as that which is perceived cannot (without finality) guarantee itself by itself. God being the finality of perceived things guarantees their existence. If the matter perceived constituted the "opposite" of God, God would disappear because the opposite of what is certain is the impossible. God would not be thought. In the denial of the Existence of matter there is the denial of the Exigency of existence. God is therefore real because the finite real that thinks God is real. The real thinks of Him as the guarantee of His existence. And it is not madness to distinguish the Exigency of efficiency from the efficient thing. If we admit the teleology of our every act it will be necessary to distinguish it from finalised things, at least to our eyes. But it seems that our eyes see what is there and not what is not there. But many things, Professor, you did not see with your eyes: you invented "opposites" of what you saw. We see the priority of God as the priority we give to the purpose of what we do. So, God being the Exigency of the efficiency of what we do, God necessarily has a priority without temporal determination for what we do. But also in what we do not do, if it is thought as done or to be done by means of knowledge of the real.

Even the simple idea of making an object or doing good or evil is formally, structurally, physically concrete in the encephalic image and moved by the same Exigency as an achieved act. In choosing to do something there is already the form of that thing in our physical encephalic structure. Only impediments activated by the will of others might deviate our project, so even if the project is not realised its Primary Exigency is not lessened, it belongs to the priority of the Soul without specific determination, as we have said.

Now at last you will ask me why I put you on a par with the iconoclast emperor: you had no empire to defend, true, but you defended your barony with much smoke and no fire: you took the form of nature as scapegoat with extreme coolness and did not think of the consequences.

For the rest, it is known that on seeing the splendid snow-capped Alps you were unmoved. Today a neurobiologist would suspect you of having a cerebral lesion or dysfunction, typical of those who are perfectly rational but without feeling.

But it's time I finished this letter by communicating to you, as promised, the results of an experiment carried out with scientific accuracy in which it is demonstrated that the form of sensible nature is the content of nature and of the idea of nature: a French researcher, Professor Changeux, who is in charge of the molecular neurobiology laboratory at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, speaks of an experiment carried out on a macaque by a group of scientists. The experiment took the form of recording the responses of the monkey's neurones which, as Professor Changeux points out, are homologous to those of man. This monkey was shown the full-frontal drawing of a human face. It was then shown the same drawing but without the eyes. Subsequently the drawing was shown in what we should call in today's artistic jargon "naïf" lines. Then the image was decomposed and shown in separate parts: "abstract" we should say in artistic jargon today, meaning non-representational: without analogy with the genetic forms of the first drawing. Well, the neuronal responses, beginning with the most intense to the first image, gradually diminished until they almost disappeared with the abstract. The experiment demonstrates that if a sign is not traceable by analogy to the function of an image that is logical, that is to say, structurally finalised by nature, is not traceable to a rational value, then it does not produce emotive responses. The researchers' experiment has now laid the scientific ground for the theory which I and very few others uphold: that informal art, in excluding all analogy with the genetic form of nature, excludes the possibility of any emotive response. This experiment proves once more that the "sensible" which you believe must be vanquished is clearly the victor. The spirit, as you imagined it in opposition to the "flesh", does not exist and art is only the formal finalised perfection of the sensible, of that sensible from which derives all cognition and therefore all spiritual movement inasmuch as it is sensible. Dear Hegel, the art you crucified rose up on the third day.

I send you live, sensible greetings.

Mario Donizetti.

P.S. I feel the need to excuse myself for the arrogant tone pervading my letter, but it was written under the impulse of the offence given me by the modern world of which you are one of the founding fathers.