THE INFLUENCE OF SCHILLER'S THEORY OF NATURE ON HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT*

BY MICHAEL H. HOFFHEIMER

Schiller's impact on Hegel's early philosophical development has received increasing attention since it was first discussed by Hegel scholars.¹ But although Schiller's importance is now widely assumed in Hegel scholarship,² the influence of Schiller's theory of nature on Hegel's early philosophical development has been neglected despite recent studies that have demonstrated the centrality of nature in Schiller's world view.³ Nonetheless, there is strong evidence that Schiller's treatment of nature in his aesthetic writings published in the journal Die Horen in 1795 and 1796 exerted an important influence on Hegel's intellectual development in 1796 and 1797—generally accepted as critical years, if not as a turning point by students of Hegel's development. My aim is to show that important elements of Schiller's theory of nature became permanently assimilated in Hegel's distinctive world view. First, I shall review the emergence of Hegel's interest in nature in 1796-1797. Then after examining Schiller's general influence on Hegel I conclude that Schiller's theory of nature exerted a strong influence on Hegel's writings after 1796.

There is a striking shift of interest revealed in the fragmentary writings

* I want to thank Professors Leonard Krieger and H. S. Harris who read earlier drafts of this article and made many helpful suggestions, which I have tried to incorporate. Neither necessarily agrees with me or is responsible for my mistakes.


² The self-proclaimed and self-fulfilling "Hegel Renaissance" has itself been the subject of recent discussion. See, e.g., Richard J. Bernstein, "Why Hegel Now?", The Review of Metaphysics, 31 (September 1977): 29ff.

³ An older study still of much use is Hans Lutz, Schillers Anschauungen von Kultur und Natur in Germanische Studien, vol. 60 (Berlin, 1928). For a more recent thematic treatment of the concept of nature in Schiller's writing see Wolfgang Dürring, "Kosmos und Natur in Schillers Lyrik," Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schiller Gesellschaft, vol. 13 (Stuttgart, 1969). Certainly the most important recent work is Kenneth Dewhurst and Nigel Reeves, Friedrich Schiller: Medicine, Psychology and Literature (Berkeley, 1978). The authors plausibly contend that Schiller's training and experience as a physician and psychologist "is a major shaping influence, arguably more important than his acquaintance with the thought of Kant." (Ibid., 307.) They argue specifically that the roots of Schiller's philosophical and aesthetic writings "reach deep down into the intellectual world of his formative years," and they further attempt to demonstrate, with much success, that the theoretical content of Schiller's aesthetical essays reflects the creative expansion of ideas drawn from contemporaneous medical theory. (Ibid., 307, 347ff.)
that survive of Hegel’s literary production while he was a tutor in Bern and Frankfurt am Main. The shift has been variously seen as a transition in Hegel from theological to philosophical concerns and, more ambitiously, has been interpreted as a change in his underlying philosophical perspective. In any event, the shift is characterized by the emergence of Hegel’s increasing interest in the concept of nature and objective ontological problems as well as by his extensive application of metaphors and analogies drawn from natural phenomena.

The sudden appearance of nature in Hegel’s writings in 1797 represents a return to earlier concerns. Hegel had taken required science courses while a student at the state-run seminary (Stift) in Tübingen; his interest in science and nature at that time clearly had gone beyond the required curriculum. He had further pursued botanical studies in the summer of 1791 on his own initiative to such an extent that H. S. Harris in his study of Hegel’s development remarks that “Botany certainly interested Hegel more than theology in 1791 and 1792.”

Nonetheless, the fragments that survive from Hegel’s stay in Bern (1793-1796) curiously reflect an almost total neglect of concrete ontological problems, nature, and natural phenomena. The surviving fragments reflect Hegel’s general preoccupation with reestablishing a harmony between moral law and subjective inclination by means of an ideal religion based on virtue (Tugendreligion). Hegel identified this religion of virtue with the moral philosophy of the ancient Greeks and radically counterposed it to contemporary Christianity. He regarded Christianity as perverted by “Positivity” which was defined as a sort of external compulsion in unmediated opposition to a negatively defined subjective freedom. The rigid opposition of an ideal morality to “positive” Christianity was both the consequence of and justification for Hegel’s idealized view of ancient Greek thought. Conversely, Hegel’s polarization of classical and Christian morals led him to view with pessimism the possibility of reconciling morality and subjective inclination in his own day. The subjective orientation of Hegel’s writings in Bern was further evident in his definition of God merely as a postulate of the greatest good. Whether such a conception was ultimately compatible with Hegel’s dominant idea of a religion of virtue is problematic; in any case, the subjective definition of God indicated his general lack of interest in ontological and epistemological problems.

Hegel largely ignored objective categories in Bern or dealt with them in their negative relation to the subject; nature also played a minimal role in Hegel’s writings in 1795-1796. However, the beginning of an

important shift can be detected in the fragment _Unterscheid zwischen griechischer Phantasie und christlicher positiver Religion_ ("The Difference between the Imaginative Religion of the Greeks and the Positive Religion of the Christians") which Hegel wrote in mid-1796 and appended to an earlier writing given the title _Die Positivität der christlichen Religion_ ("On the Positivity of the Christian Religion") by posthumous editors. In this appended fragment Hegel specifically discussed the repeated attempts in the history of Christian theology to represent God as _unendlichen Natur_ (infinite nature) through ideas taken from the understanding of nature such as numbers, sense-impressions, and the concept of a beginning. Hegel further critically discussed the view that nature itself revealed moral purpose. Although the exact significance of this passage has been the source of some discussion, it seems clearly to anticipate the expanded interest in nature that was to characterize Hegel's writings after 1796.

The discontinuity in Hegel's theoretical development indicated by the shift in his interest in nature occurred during a period of depression and personal indecision in Hegel's life. Hegel's sister later recalled that he had been "withdrawn" during his stopover in Stuttgart en route from Bern to Frankfurt. This personal crisis was also the subject of his correspondence with Hölderlin and Schelling, and Hegel mentioned it in letters from Frankfurt to Endel, a woman with whom he had formed a friendship while staying with his family between teaching positions in Bern and Frankfurt. Passages in letters from both Hölderlin and Schelling to Hegel were clearly responses to remarks Hegel had made to them in letters (now lost) about his despair or depression. In a letter of June 20, 1796, Schelling wrote: "Allow me to say something to you. You seem at present to be in a state of irresolution and—according to your letter to me—even depression, which is entirely unworthy of you. Pfui! A man..."

---


of your powers must never let this irresolution arise."

However, the extent and impact of the crisis on Hegel's intellectual development are problematic. The crisis began, or at least became particularly severe, in the middle of 1796, and lasted until early 1797. In a letter to Endel written in Frankfurt on March 22, 1797, Hegel said, "I turn back to the world again here in Frankfurt. . . ."

Whatever the ultimate origins and overall significance of Hegel's personal crisis, it coincided with the theoretical impasse he had reached regarding the reconciliation of morality and inclination through a virtue-based religion; it probably stimulated Hegel's reevaluation of his previous intellectual development and the adequacy of his current philosophical positions. The crisis appears to have been closely bound up with the striking shift in Hegel's interests that is reflected in his writings in Frankfurt. Thus it is in the context of the crisis that Hegel first seemed to show a serious renewed interest in nature. Nature played an important role in his personal life during the course of the crisis; nature also became an important subject in his more reflective and philosophical writings dating from the period, beginning with Unterscheid zwischen griechischer Phantasie und christlicher positiver Religion in which Hegel had critically discussed attempts to grasp God in naturalistic categories. In a letter to Endel written in the summer of 1797 from Frankfurt, Hegel explicitly referred to the importance of nature in his personal life:

The memory of those days spent in the country always drives me from Frankfurt, and just as I always reconciled myself in the arms of nature with myself, with humanity, so I escape here to this loyal mother, in order to sunder myself with her from the men with whom I live in peace and to keep myself, under her aegis, from their influence and to thwart an alliance with them."

Hegel had expressed similar sentiments in the opening lines of a poem "Eleusis," composed in Bern in August 1796.

Shortly before leaving Bern and shortly after having written the passage which was appended to the manuscript on the positivity of the Christian religion, Hegel went hiking in the Alps. In a diary he kept during the trip he recorded a number of philosophical observations about nature. Several writers have noted the Heraclitean overtones in his discussion of the falls:

Through a narrow ravine the water presses above, quite narrow, and then falls down vertically in much wider waves—in waves that continually draw the spectator's glances down with them and which one nevertheless can never fix, never follow, for their image, their form, dissolves every few moments and is

10 Ibid., 52.
11 Ibid., 53. It is not clear whether the reference was to experiences in Bern or Stuttgart.
12 Dokument zu Hegels Entwicklung, 380.
replaced by another, and in these falls one sees eternally the same image, and sees at the same time that it is never the same.\textsuperscript{13}

Hegel strongly contrasted nature to art: "even in the best painting the most attractive and essential feature of such a spectacle would be missing: eternal life, the tremendous motion in it."\textsuperscript{14} Hegel related his observation of nature to some of the broader philosophical interests which had preoccupied him in Bern; he rejected physico-theology as the result of a cultural arrogance, "inasmuch as one sooner finds satisfaction in the notion that so much has been done for us by a strange being than one would find in the consciousness that it is man himself who has offered all these aims to nature."\textsuperscript{15} To physico-theology Hegel counterposed the attitude towards nature of the natives:

But the inhabitants of this region live in a feeling of their dependence on the power of nature and this gives them a tranquil submissiveness in its destructive eruptions. If their cottages are smashed or buried or swept away, then they [like the Greeks?] build another on the same spot, or nearby.

The Calvinist fatalistic attitude of the local inhabitants especially impressed Hegel and he related it to their proximity to, and acceptance of, nature: to take out insurance "means to rob god."\textsuperscript{16} The religious attitude that Hegel idealized was clearly no longer the Greek-inspired and essentially subjective virtue-religion of his earlier writings. Rather he idealized an existing form of Christianity and sought its characteristic features in the relationship of the religious subject to the objective, natural world.

The important changes in Hegel's thinking between 1795 and 1797 were not a purely internal process. At least one significant formative influence on Hegel's development can be fixed with some precision: the aesthetic writings of Schiller. Many of Schiller's central philosophical ideas had already appeared in his Die philosophischen Briefe (published in Die Thalia, 1786); but despite similarities between passages in this work and Hegel's writings in Frankfurt, and despite the fact that the conclusion of Hegel's Phänomenologie des Geistes (Bamberg and Würzburg, 1807) ended by quoting part of a poem that had originally appeared in the Philosophical Letters, it is impossible to determine whether Hegel did in fact read Schiller's Philosophical Letters or whether he obtained the ideas and the poem from elsewhere. Few historians or biographers have attempted to establish the direct influence of the Philosophical Letters on Hegel's development.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{13} Translated in Kaufmann, op. cit. 308.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 309.
\textsuperscript{16} Rosenkranz, op. cit., 482, and Dokumente zu Hegels Entwicklung, 235.
\textsuperscript{17} The most relevant letter is the fourth. Baillie noted the origin of the poem in his translation of the Phenomenology. Glockner argued for the probability that Hegel read and was influenced by Schiller's Philosophical Letters. Glockner, op. cit. II, 23, n. 1.
Hegel did, however, avidly read several of Schiller's writings published while he was in Bern. Hegel was the only individual subscriber in Bern to *Die Horen*, a journal edited by Schiller with regular contributions from many of the literary and philosophical giants of the day, including Schiller, Goethe, Herder, the Humboldt brothers, Fichte, and, later, Hölderlin. Schiller's contributions to *Die Horen* included two of his most important philosophical works: *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (On the Aesthetic Education of Man), (1795-1796) and *Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung* (On Naive and Sentimental Poetry), (1795-1796).

The first work was serialized beginning with the first issue of *Die Horen*, which contained Letters 1-9, was continued in the second, containing Letters 10-16, and was concluded in the sixth issue, which contained Letters 17-27. In a letter to Schelling of April 6, 1795, Hegel referred to Schiller's essay on aesthetic education as a "masterpiece" and said that he had greatly enjoyed the first two issues of *Die Horen*. Although the articles were anonymous until the publication of a list of authors together with the contents for the year 1795 in issue 12, Hegel almost certainly recognized Schiller as the author—if not directly from the content or hearsay, then from the obvious similarity of parts of the essay to the opening statement of the first issue of *Die Horen*, which Schiller had signed. Schelling was able, in his response to Hegel's letter, to identify Schiller as the "probable" author.

The relevance of aesthetics for understanding nature had been apparent since Kant had conjoined the two in his *Kritik der Urtheilkraft* (Berlin and Libau, 1790) as the objects of the application of the principles of purposiveness by the cognitive faculty of judgment (*Urteil*). Kant had conceived of judgment as something of a bridge between pure and practical reason, which had been the subjects of his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Critique of Pure Reason) (Riga, 1781, 1787) and *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (Critique of Practical Reason) (Riga, 1788). In *Über die ästhe-

---

18 A "Subscription-Register" (previously unnoted in the literature) was published in 1795 and apparently distributed with issue 12. It is unpaginated. In both editions to which I have referred in the University of Chicago's Joseph Regenstein Library the register was bound with issue 12 (either at the beginning, following the title-page for the issue, or at the end, following the issue, and the bound volume of the year). The register lists "Hoffmeister M. Hegel." The "M," set in Antigue, denotes the title Magister conferred by the Tübingen seminary and leaves no doubt that the subscriber was unequivocally Hegel. In addition to Hegel there were three book dealers in Bern, who subscribed to a total of 13 copies.

19 Briefe, I, 25. Hegel's reference to Schiller's essay in this letter conflated its title with Lessing's classic *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (Berlin, 1780), in which Lessing set forth his Enlightenment vision of the history of religion as a progression from primitive superstitions to a natural religion of virtue for its own sake. Hegel had been deeply impressed by Lessing at an early age. His conflation of titles may have been a Verschreiben, or it may have been Hegel's intent to praise Schiller's essay by likening it to Lessing's.

20 Ibid., I, 28.
Schiller and Hegel

**tische Erziehung des Menschen** Schiller further developed aesthetics to embrace “that most perfect of all the works to be achieved by the art of man: the construction of true political freedom.” Schiller was largely concerned with the work of the “pedagogic or the political artist” for whom man is both material, goal, and artist. Schiller thus expanded aesthetics into a comprehensive system of diverse intellectual faculties, incorporating Kant’s notion of judgment together with elements derived from Rousseau. Aesthetics subsumed not only art and nature, but also society. The influence of Rousseau’s pedagogy, especially *Emile* (Paris, 1762), was evident throughout Schiller’s work on the aesthetic education of man, and the work began with a quotation from Rousseau: “If it is reason which makes man, it is sentiment (sentiment) which leads him.”

Although Hegel’s concern in Bern with the problem of popular education (*Volkserziehung*) has been the source of some controversy, stemming from different definitions of *Volkserziehung* (with Herder and Pestalozzi as counterposed models), it is clear that Hegel had read and been greatly impressed by *Emile* in his youth, and Hegel was certainly concerned with the problem of education in the broadest, Enlightenment sense of the development of society and culture to freedom.

Two specific aspects of Schiller’s argument in *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* were likely to have had a decisive influence on Hegel’s development in 1795-1796. First, Schiller treated the subject-object dichotomy as an objective or natural schism that entailed a pervasive dichotomy between reason and nature. This contrasted to the subjective opposition of free inclination and moral obligation as Hegel had formulated it. Second, Schiller asserted that the objective schism could be overcome through an aesthetic synthesis that brought about a reconciliation of the two through a concrete category of mediation that was identified with nature.

---


22 *Ibid.*, 19. This passage indicates the bases of the link between history, politics, and aesthetics which was of central importance for the evolution of historical thought in the German enlightenment. For a discussion of this, see Peter Hans Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley, 1975), 59ff.

23 *Die Horen: eine Monatschrift herausgegeben von Schiller*, 1 (January 1795), 1.

24 It is interesting to note that Hegel did not adopt Schiller’s specific solution in all its details, e.g., he did not adopt the role of the urge to play (*Spieltrieb*). In fact, when developing the notion of love in Frankfurt, Hegel remained closer in some respects to Schiller’s earlier position in the Philosophical Letters. In *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* love was mentioned only in passing, and then only as an example of freedom, not its ultimate expression. See, e.g., Schiller, *op. cit.*, 11. In the Philosophical Letters, in contrast, love was “the ladder by which we climb to the likeness of God.” Schiller, *Essays Aesthetical and Philosophical*, trans. anon. (London, 1884), 390. In *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 13, Schiller referred more generally to “the ladder of
thus played a dual role as a part of and a model for the reconciliation of subject and object. Although Schiller tended to describe the origins of man's separation from nature in mythic terms as had Rousseau, he vividly described the result of man's unnatural loss of freedom, especially the internal dichotomy which arose within man and which was to be resolved only through man's reconciliation with nature:

But man can be at odds with himself in two ways: either as savage, when feeling predominates over principle, or as barbarian, when principle destroys feeling. The savage despises Civilization and acknowledges Nature as his sovereign mistress. The barbarian derides and dishonours Nature, but, more contemptible than the savage, as often as not continues to be the slave of his slave. The man of Culture (der gegildete Mensch) makes a friend of Nature, and honours her freedom whilst curbing only her caprice.\(^{25}\)

For Schiller the essence of man consisted in man's refusal to accept his relation to the world—the schism between subject and object, man and nature—as permanent, for man had attempted to overcome the dichotomy. But the process of surmounting the schism involved man's acceptance of the dichotomy. Consequently, man rationally retraced the steps of his own natural development and "has the power . . . of transforming the work of blind compulsion into a work of free choice, and of elevating physical necessity into moral necessity." Schiller viewed man's development as a sort of circle: the originally united became separated and finally reunited.\(^{26}\)

And even thus does he, in his maturity, retrieve by means of a fiction the childhood of the race: he conceives as idea, a state of nature, a state not indeed given him by any experience, but a necessary result of what Reason destined him to be; attributes to himself in this idealized natural state a purpose of which in his actual natural state he was entirely ignorant, and a power of free choice of which he was at that time wholly incapable. . . . \(^{27}\)

Moreover, Schiller's conception of nature had profound implications for his view of society and history, anticipating Hegel's later dialectical theory. Of course, Schiller found "an astonishing contrast between contemporary forms of humanity and earlier ones, especially the Greek" (ibid., 31), as was characteristic of Enlightenment writers. Schiller, however,


\(^{26}\) Separation and reunion was a common theme in Schiller's poems. See, e.g., "An die Freude" and "Der Naturkreis."

\(^{27}\) *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 11.
tried to deal with one of the central antinomies of Enlightenment thought, the contradiction between the view of Enlightenment as progress and the view of the development of civilization as a regression, involving the continual loss of a primeval and natural freedom. Hegel's failure to resolve the dilemma had led to his intellectual impasse in Bern.

Hegel was significantly influenced by Schiller's attempt to resolve the problem. Following Rousseau, Schiller sharply differentiated between individuals and the social whole; he characterized the historical process as necessary and beneficial for humanity but as entailing something of a loss or alienation for the individual:

I readily concede that, little as individuals might benefit from this fragmentation of their being, there was no other way in which the species as a whole could have progressed. With the Greeks, humanity undoubtedly reached a maximum of excellence, which could neither be maintained at that level nor rise any higher.

Schiller attempted to incorporate aspects of both progress and regress in his historical account of the development of culture or civilization (*Kultur*):

If the manifold potentialities in man were ever to be developed, there was no other way but to pit them one against the other. This antagonism of faculties and functions is the great instrument of civilization (*Kultur*)—but it is only the instrument; for as long as it persists, we are only on the way to becoming civilized. (*Ibid.*, 39.)

He dramatically depicted the results of this process: “One-sidedness in the exercise of his powers must, it is true, inevitably lead the individual into error; but the species as a whole to truth.” (*Ibid.*, 41.)

For Schiller the ideal reconciliation could not be achieved by a simple return to the Greeks. Such a return was historically impossible. Moreover, Schiller viewed the idealization of the Greeks as anachronistic. Indeed Schiller had a different and more historically sensitive understanding of the development of Greek society than had Hegel in Bern. Hegel had contrasted Positive Christianity to the ancients and had traced the rise of Positivity to the loss of political freedom resulting from the decline of the Roman Empire. But Schiller noted that even the Golden Age of Greek culture arose only after the political decline of democracy and freedom in the city-states; and Schiller incorporated this fact into his fundamental explanation of the rise of culture and the arts:

As long as Athens and Sparta maintained their independence, and respect for laws served as the basis of their constitution, taste was as yet immature, art still in its infancy, and beauty far from ruling over the hearts of men.... When, under Pericles and Alexander, the Golden Age of the arts arrived, and the rule of taste extended it sway, the strength and freedom of Greece are no longer to
be found. Rhetoric falsified truth, wisdom gave offense in the mouth of a Socrates, and virtue in the life of a Phocion. (Ibid., 67.)

Schiller's view that culture flourished with the decline of individual political freedom had obvious contemporary political implications which Hegel resisted in 1796 and was to accept ambivalently only in the _Phänomenologie_ some ten years later. Yet Schiller did not believe that contemporary society was in a hopeless state of disintegration; on the contrary, his optimism in the political and cultural regeneration of society and man pervaded the opening remarks to, and indeed the whole project of, _Die Horen_.

The concrete process of social development for Schiller formed a crucial mediation between the ideal and the real as it would, later, for Hegel. The process was inseparably bound up with a specific view of nature. Nature played a double function as model for the reintegration of subject and object and as an essential component of the dichotomy and its resolution: "Nature in her physical creation points the way we have to take in the moral. Not until the strife of elemental forces in the lower organisms has been assuaged does she turn to the nobler creation of physical man." (Ibid., 45.) Nature played a central role in the developmental process, and Schiller characterized nature as the "instrument" of man's spiritual growth.

Although Schiller's use of "nature" was an extension of Rousseau's "state of nature," Schiller used the notion in a less sociological and metaphorical sense; the double function which nature played in his schema, to be adopted by Hegel in Frankfurt, was the result of an underlying shift in the conception of the natural or phenomenal world itself: viewed as a harmonious whole, nature was a model for the reintegration of subject and object, man and nature. Yet this view of nature also implied that something like a subject-object dichotomy existed within nature, within the object, for the harmony of nature was seen as the consequence of antagonisms and strife within nature, a view which was happily also held by pre-Socratic Greek thinkers who viewed nature as inherently dynamic.

The model of nature underlying Schiller's general philosophical perspective and shaping his developmental schema of society represented an important change from the dominant view of nature characteristic of early Enlightenment writers. The view of nature as the harmonious union of antagonistic forces paralleled contemporary developments in the physical sciences.28 Within philosophy the view resulted from the union of a

---

28 The scientific method with which Schiller most closely identified philosophy was chemistry. Like Kant and Fichte he saw the processes of chemical analysis and synthesis as concrete examples of the interaction and union of subject and object. Cf., e.g., Immanuel Kant. _Critique of Pure Reason_, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York, 1965), 24, n.a., 660; _idem_, _Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics_, trans. Carus et al., rev. Lewis White
monism (derived from Spinoza and legitimized by Mendelssohn) and the hypostatization of Leibniz's idealist hylozoism (by Leibniz's disciple Christian Wolff). Elements of a new attitude towards nature emerged during the course of the Sturm und Drang cultural movement against the prevalent French, neo-classical aesthetics. Although a late-comer, Schiller had been a leading figure in the Sturm und Drang. Against the neo-classicists' passive, mimetic treatment of an essentially static nature, the partisans of the Sturm und Drang raised the battle cry of an all-encompassing, irreducible and dynamic nature. The most coherent articulations of the new view of nature appeared with the abatement of the Sturm und Drang. A dynamic view of nature played an important role in Herder's theory of language. Later Herder was to portray nature itself as a creative, artistic process, differing from art only in that nature was internally complete and was both material and means of the creative process. In Ideen zur Philosophie des Geschicrete der Menscheit (Riga and Leipzig, 1784-91), Herder represented human history in extended analogy with nature. The first three books of the Ideen were an evolutionary natural history: dynamic, inorganic matter combined to form living beings, from which man eventually emerged. Goethe expressed the basic features of the new attitude towards nature in a fragment written in the early 1780s:

There is eternal life becoming and stirring in nature, and yet it does not proceed further. It is eternally transforming itself and is at no moment standing still. . . .

Mankind are all in it and it in all.

In the Kritik der Urtheilskraft Kant systematically treated developmental
MICHAEL H. HOFFHEIMER

and dynamic aspects of nature, although he ultimately ascribed such aspects not to the objective world but to the faculty of judgment.34

The conception of nature as a self-creative process resting on the harmonious resolution of internal conflicts was closely connected to the emergence of new attitudes towards history and society, for the social world was part of the natural world and social process paralleled natural process. In one of his historical studies Schiller had directly compared social and natural history: "All of world history is an eternally repeated struggle over this contested spot of land between the lust for power and freedom, just as the history of nature is nothing but a struggle of the elements and bodies for their space."35 The aesthetic synthesis that Schiller proposed in Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen was an attempt theoretically to reunite natural and social history, and nature was component of and model for the sought after union. Most of Schiller's explicit references to nature and most of his naturalistic analogies in the work were based on organic nature. Similarly, Hegel was to express the concrete reintegration of subject and object in his Frankfurt writings through the category of "life."

The influence on Hegel of the last installment of Schiller's essay on the aesthetic education of man was manifest and has been discussed by other writers.36 The serious impact of Schiller's writings on Hegel's philosophical development was evident in Hegel's subsequent adoption of Schiller's characteristic use of such important terms as in itself (an sich), for itself (für sich), sublate (aufheben) and spirit (Geist).37 However, the

34 See Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York, 1951), 20, 206, 230, 245. Kant's subjective interpretation of the faculty of judgment was sharply criticized by the Naturphilosophie movement, which took off after 1797. Hegel was to criticize Kant's view repeatedly and in detail in numerous works in Jena (1801-1803).


37 Glockner, op. cit., II, 78; Kaufmann, op. cit., 24. G. A. Kelly is, perhaps, the only writer to question the importance of Schiller for Hegel's development. Kelly argues that Hegel would have considered Schiller to be merely an aesthetician, popularizer, or historian, not a speculative philosopher. He tends to limit Schiller's influence on Hegel's philosophy to the peculiar use of Geist. George Armstrong Kelly, Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis: Studies in Political Thought (Princeton, 1978), 58-59. However, the argument rests on a historically suspect differentiation of aesthetics and philosophy as well as certain problematic assumptions about Hegel's interests in the period of his development before 1799. Kelly further challenges the specific influence of Schiller's notion of Aufhebung (sublation) by saying that it is "pervasive in the German literature of the time." (Ibid., 79.) This, too, is questionable. Schelling, for instance, only adopted the term in the sense used by Schiller in letter XVIII some five years later. Attempts have been made to find a similar use of this term by Goethe without success. See the Glossary entry by the editors in On the Aesthetic Education of Man, 305. Another recent work on Hegel's political thought has emphasized the difference between Schiller's aesthetics and Hegel's more systematic philosophy. See Bernard Cullen, Hegel's Social and Political Thought:
ultimate significance of Schiller's essay for the development of Hegel's view on nature, history, and for his dialectical method is greater still than this terminological borrowing might suggest. Its most direct, pervasive, and shaping influence was precisely in the more general and regulative function that nature assumed in Hegel's later writings as the model of organic development conceived as reconciled dichotomy.

The possible influence of Schiller's essay Über naive und sentimentale Dichtung which was serialized in the last two issues of Die Horen in 1795 and the first issue of 1796 (appearing from November to January) has been less frequently cited as a possible influence on Hegel's intellectual development. But it is most likely that Hegel, as a subscriber to Die Horen, did read it. Nature played a central role in Schiller's treatment of the two world-views that were the subject of the essay. The work opened:

There are moments in our life when we accord to nature in plants, minerals, animals, landscapes, as well as to human nature in children, in the customs of the country people and of the primitive world, a sort of love and touching respect, not because it pleases our senses nor satisfies our intellect or taste (the opposite of both can often be the case) but merely because it is nature.

Schiller went on to observe, "... nature for us is nothing other than voluntary existence, the continuation of things through themselves, existence according to its own unchangeable laws." Schiller defined man's relationship with nature as a form of love, although we do not actually love the objects of nature but "an idea represented by them." Schiller used love especially in relation to organic nature: "In them we love the calm, creative life. . . ." The use of love and life foreshadowed the relation of the categories of love and life in Hegel's writings in Frankfurt.

Schiller explained the attraction that nature had for man in terms similar to the account of man's development given in his work on the aesthetic education of man; in the developmental process nature was both what we were and what we will become—a reference both to the ancient idea of "dust to dust" and to the circular development away from and back towards nature and freedom. Schiller thought that there were two fundamental kinds of relations and attitudes of man to nature, which he associated with the Kantian dichotomy between Vernunft (Reason) and

---

*An Introduction* (New York, 1979), 29. The present essay attempts to show the limitations of the distinction assumed by both these writers through an examination of Schiller's notion of nature.

38 The actual dates when Die Horen was published and delivered in Jena and other valuable historical information (such as the identity of anonymous contributors) are in Paul Raabe, Die Horen: Einführung und Kommentar (Stuttgart, 1959). Another important study of the journal is Günter Schultz, Schillers Horen: Politik und Erziehung. Analyse einer deutschen Zeitschrift (Heidelberg, 1960).

Verstand (Understanding). On the one hand there was a childlike relation to nature; man became nature; there was no disharmony between the two. Schiller identified this naive outlook with the ancients, children, and some moderns, notably Goethe. On the other hand, there was a sort of nostalgic attitude towards nature, based on a separation from nature. This sentimental outlook was generally characteristic of Schiller's contemporary society, and the outlook lay at the basis of sentimental or reflective poetry, in which Schiller included his own poetry. In this sentimental relationship nature was separate, but man was still related to it, striving to overcome the separation and regain nature and his original harmony and freedom. In both the naive and sentimental relations nature was the driving-force of the poetic spirit; however, a naive relation resulted in a realistic literature (the poet attempted to depict nature directly), while a sentimental relation resulted in idealism (because the poet was primarily concerned not with nature itself, but with the impression nature made on him). Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung was far more than a typology of classical and romantic literature; it was a penetrating analysis of basic attitudes towards the world implicit in various literary productions. In Schiller's exposition of these attitudes, the presentation was generally historical; nature played a key role as an analytic tool in the differentiation of the various attitudes reflected in the history of literature and in Schiller's account of the historical evolution of the different attitudes.

The essays Schiller published in Die Horen in 1795-1796 profoundly affected Hegel's philosophical development. Schiller's writings pointed the way beyond the impasse Hegel had reached in his previous, subjective approach to religion. After 1796 Hegel became increasingly concerned with objective, ontological problems, and his expression of the absolute idealist synthesis in Frankfurt in terms of love and life reflected the creative application of Schiller's aesthetic theory of nature. Hegel's commitment to concrete mediating categories for the reconciliation of subject and object became a permanent feature of his world view and was the animus for much of his subsequent philosophical development.

University of Michigan.

Ibid., 24.