

Absolute Spirit as a Work of Art

The aim of this paper is nothing less than to sketch the outline of a transcendental deduction of a non-metaphysical system of Justice, by appealing to the work of Plato, Kant, and Hegel, in precisely that order. This will be done by beginning with one notion of absoluteness (*Absolute Value*) and developing it into another (*Absolute Spirit*).

Our initial concern is to define Value in such a way that we can derive its basic species (Beauty, Goodness, Truth) and thereby clarify the question of what it would be for there to be an absolute (or non-relative) form of Value. We will then demonstrate a crucial insight of Plato's (*Value Reflexivity*), in order to show that Value is itself most valuable, Beauty is itself most beautiful, Goodness is itself most good, and Truth is itself most true, in turn to analyse the relations between these three fundamental forms of Value. The outcome of this is that the Good is the condition of the other two.

We will then aim to divide the Good into its own species (*Freedom* and *Justice*). It is here that we will establish a crucial connection with Kant, insofar as he provides us with the abstract means to conceive of Freedom as a form of Good, and thereby something which can function as a condition of other specific goods. We will then turn to Hegel to show the way that Kant's notion of Freedom can be applied to collectives (*Spirit*), and on this basis consider the ideal of a maximal collective (*Absolute Spirit*) and then derive the ideal of Justice as the collective Freedom which conditions individual Freedom. This leaves us with an account of Justice as the indefinite task of composing Absolute Spirit. The paper will close by considering the idea that this task is itself a form of Art as a species of Beauty.