

The Expression of the Divine in Plant Sculpture (according to Hegel's Lectures on Fine Art and his Phenomenology of Spirit)

Mahboubeh Akbari Naseri¹, Shamsolmolook Mostafavi², Shahla Eslami³

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Abstract: In the “phenomenology of the spirit”, there is evidence of absolute Identify as divine order. For Hegel, the divine order has a rational essence; therefore, the infinite divine order must be present in a finite being in order for the spirit to realize itself in the world. This movement of the spirit appears in “natural religion” and in parallel in symbolic art. “Plant Sculptures” are the first embodied form of the divine order. This primitive form is first shown as simple “columns” on which the least “work” has been done. These columns are mainly architectural components. Independent plant Sculptures are rarely found, because at this step the spirit is not free and its knowledge of itself is limited to the knowledge of plants. There are innocent in “plants religion” who lost with the onset of animal life and the resulting struggle and dynamism. With the end of natural religion and symbolic art, plant sculpture continue to repeal “Aufhebung” form in religions and the art of later periods. Plant religion is the beginning of the expression of the divine commandment embodied in religions.

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Homepage: phm.znu.ac.ir

1. *PhD. student of comparative philosophy of art, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Law, Theology and Political Science, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. mahboubeh.akbari@srbiau.ac.ir.*

2. *Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Tehran North Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran (corresponding author), sha_mostafavi@yahoo.com.*

3. *Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Law, Theology and Political Science, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. sh-eslami@srbiau.ac.ir.*

Introduction: The fundamental problem in Hegel's philosophical system is the "appearance of spirit" and studying its becoming process throughout history. From Hegel's point of view, this historical and transcendental attitude toward spirit in *Phenomenology of Spirit* overlaps with the growth and exaltation of religion. Religion and God are related to the divine order in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In *phenomenology*, three basic homes are defined for the appearance of spirit through religions. The first home is natural religion, the second home is the Greek beauty religion, and the third is revealed religion. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, we can find the evidence of absolute spirit identify as divine order; but in some texts, it is not believed that Hegel considered them the same. For Hegel one of the effective ways of expressing the divine order is religion; and the other two ways, that is, art and philosophy, each have an important and unequal share.

In beginning with "natural religion", Hegel seeks to examine religion in its simplest and most "direct" form, where there is no gap between man and nature. Therefore, where nature itself is divinized, first in the form of light and then in the form of plants and animals, it causes the appearance of the divine order (Stern, 2002). The spirit, as long as it is in itself, is like nothingness, and when it is externalized, it is constructed in its movement, evolved, and eventually comes to abstraction. From this point of view, natural religion and in parallel, pre-art is justified. The religion of plants and flowers is at the beginning of the process of the spirit. The first plant sculptures are the beginning of the embodied form of the divine order. The spirit is striving for self-consciousness, it must recognize itself through itself. This established essence must eventually be manifested in various human forms.

The beginning of the appearance of spirit as embodied is in second step of

natural religion in India and Egypt through plant and animal sculptures. Plant sculpture is the beginning of the manifestation of the incarnate divine order, then we see it more evolved in animal sculptures. After that, spirit finds itself in animal-human sculptures and with the self-consciousness of spirit in Greek human sculptures, man feels at home. But Hegel sees the most perfect aspect in human-God (Christ) form, to which sculpture is no longer the answer.

One of the fundamental problems in Hegel's philosophy is the matter of God. The God of Hegel's philosophy is not the same as God in Christianity, it is a "logical idea" understood by "absolute spirit" and expresses a logical necessity. The "word" (logos) with which Hegel equates God with it, is not the word John's Gospel, it's the Hegelian Reason (Ardabili, 1397 SH).

Findings: In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel makes brief references to the art of sculpture about the expression of the divine,

but in *Lectures on Fine Art* he deals with it in details (Hegel, 1975). In *Lectures*, he focuses on classical Greek sculptures, but does not mention plant sculpture, which is the beginning of sculpture and the movement of spirit in religion and art; however Hegel's brief references in *Phenomenology* informs us. Some religions, such as Zoroastrianism and Judaism, did not want to embody form of the divine order because of their particular views, but the Indian, Egyptian, Greek, Christian religions used art of sculpture to express the divine.

In the chapter on natural religion of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel devotes a very short section to the religion of "plants and animals". In his *Lectures*, he does not mention directly the plant sculpture. These sculptures are extremely simple, primitive and abstract belonging mainly to the prehistoric art. Where Hegel has an eye on plant sculptures he considers them as a subsidiary object. For example, when he talks about the materials for making sculptures, he says:

“Among various kinds of material in which sculptors fabricated image of gods, one of the oldest was wood” (Hegel, 1975). It seems that the beginning of the appearance of divine commandment embodied is the plant columns that has persisted in various religions in a sublated form. In the natural religion, which is related to symbolic art, religious architecture, that is, the construction of ziggurats, temples and tombs, are of special importance. Stagnation with frozen movement of the sculpture in space, depending on the freedom of the spirit, begins with natural religion and plant sculpture. And it is perfected in Greek art religion, and finally this movement is no longer sustained by sculpture, and it is pursued by the human body in the theater. Thus, from Hegel’s point of view, the serious end of art of sculpture is in Greek religion and their ideal art. However, countless sculptures with religious themes continue to exist in the

Christian religion all over the world.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The results of this study showed that in *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Lectures on Fine Art*, the first step of embodiment of spirit in plant religion, that is, plant sculptures has been neglected. Among the arts, sculpture, even its perfected form, has its own limitations. Where the “saying” of the Logos takes the place of visual expression, sculpting is no longer the worker. Plant sculpture rarely has been possible independently, which indicates the lack of independence of the spirit in natural religion. Due to the plant columns that have roots in the soil like trees, at this step of natural religion, the freedom of the spirit is very limited. Although plant sculpture does not have a significant role in the expression of the divine order, it continues to the end of Hegel’s declaration of the necessity of art, and after that in modern period. The pillar of the Christ crucified sculptures are the plant sculptures that are present from the beginning of the

process of the embodiment of spirit. However, the expression of these sculptures is no longer an urgent need of spirit, because the spirit has found the superior expression (logos).

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