

surface to the external conditions of our life, or the emphasis placed by decoration on other subjects." Some such function must be what Kojève has in mind when he speaks of art as among the things that will make men happy in the post-historical time. It is a kind of play. But this kind of art, Hegel contends, is not really free, "since subservient to other objects." Art is truly free, he goes on to say, only when "it has established itself in a sphere it shares with religion and philosophy, becoming thereby one mode more and form through which . . . the spiritual truths of widest range are brought home to consciousness." All this and, being Hegel, a good bit more having been said, he concludes, dismally or not I leave it to the reader to determine, "Art is and remains for us a thing of the past." And: "On the side of its highest possibilities [art] has lost its genuine truth and life, and is rather transported to our world of *ideas* than is able to maintain its former necessity and its superior place in reality." So a "science of art," or *Kunstwissenschaft*—by which certainly Hegel meant nothing remotely like art history as practiced as an academic discipline today, but rather instead a sort of cultural philosophy of the sort he himself was working out—a "science of art is a far more urgent necessity in our own times than in times in which art sufficed by itself alone to give full satisfaction." And further on in this utterly amazing passage he says, "We are invited by art to contemplate it reflectively . . . in order to ascertain scientifically its nature." And this is hardly something art history as we know it attempts to do, though I am certain that the present rather anemic discipline grew out of something as robust in its conception as Hegel meant for it to be. But it is also possible that art history has the form we know because art as we knew it is finished.

Well.

As Marx might say, you can be an abstractionist in the morning, a photorealist in the afternoon, a minimal minimalist in the evening. Or you can cut out paper dolls or do what you damned please. The age of pluralism is upon us. It

does not matter any longer what you do, which is what pluralism means. When one direction is as good as another direction, there is no concept of direction any longer to apply. Decoration, self-expression, entertainment are, of course, abiding human needs. There will always be a service for art to perform, if artists are content with that. Freedom ends in its own fulfillment. A subservient art has always been with us. The institutions of the artworld—galleries, collectors, exhibitions, journalism—which are predicated upon history and hence marking what is new, will bit by bit wither away. How happy happiness will make us is difficult to foretell, but just think of the difference the rage for gourmet cooking has made in common American life. On the other hand, it has been an immense privilege to have lived in history.