

Alfred Baeumler: Aesthetics

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Abstract

Following one of our research topics we present here the first English translation of the text ‘Aesthetics’, written by the philosopher Alfred Baeumler. Here we have a deep, innovative, insightful and rigorous work.

Keywords: Alfred Baeumler, Aesthetics, Plato, Socrates, Denis Diderot, Johann Goethe, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Hesiod, Homer, Plotinus, Pythagoras of Samos, Dante Alighieri, Augustine of Hippo, Bonaventura, Ulrich von Strassburg, Thomas Aquinas, Marsilio Ficino, Gian Paolo Lomazzo, Giordano Bruno, Aristotle of Stagira, Marcus Fabius Quintilian, Leon Battista Alberti, Albrecht Dürer, Leonardo da Vinci, Giorgio Vasari, Federico Zuccaro, Julius Caesar Scaliger, Clement of Alexandria, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

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INTRODUCTION

Alfred Baeumler’s Aesthetics was published in 1934 (Baeumler, 1934), and was employed for this translation. This is an excellent text that needs to be put into the hands of researchers because it shows us a pre-1945 Baeumler. This is because after the end of the war Baeumler was interned for three years in concentration camps in Hammelburg (Baviera, Germany) and Ludwigsburg (Baden-Württemberg, Germany). Since it has been claimed that around one million German prisoners of war died in American and French occupation areas, mainly due to inhumane living conditions and neglect to provide adequate food, water, and medical care (*Hoc in disputatio est in aeternum*), we do not know what effects these facts may have had on him. And we want to be sure to have the original deep, innovative, insightful, visionary, influential, rigorous, humanist, controversial, multifaceted and revered Alfred Baeumler.

It would be a good idea, in a future edition of this text in English or Spanish languages, to translate the Greek, Latin and Italian words and expressions into those languages.

The text is ordered as follows:

First Section: The Idea of Beauty

- Plato. a) Symposium. b) The Republic. c) Nomoi.

- Plotinus. a) Spirit and form. b) Art and Nature. c) The beautiful soul.
- Augustinus. a) Beauty. b) Number. c) The Highest Good. Theodicy.
- Middle Ages and Renaissance. a) Bonaventura and Ulrich von Strassburg. b) Thomas Aquinas. c) Dante. d) Ficino. Lomazzo. e) Bruno.

Second Section: The Concept of Art

- Aristotle. a) Ποίησις - Τέχνη (Poiesis - Techne). b) Μίμησις (Mimesis). c) Τὸ καλόν (The Beautiful).
- Rhetoric. a) Generā dicendī. b) Περὶ ὑψους (On the Sublime). c) Quintilian.
- Theory of Art. a) Polycletus. Aristoxenus. b) Judgment. Ἰκκροῦσις. c) Vitruvius
- Middle Ages and Renaissance. a) Middle Ages. b) Dante. c) Alberti. d) Dürer. Leonardo. e) Vasari. f) Zuccaro. g) J.C. Scaliger.

Epilogue

Text of Alfred Baeumler’s Aesthetics

First Section: The Idea of Beauty

I. Plato

Aesthetic reflection was not sparked by the phenomenon of art, but by the phenomenon of the beautiful; this is the first and most consequential event in the history of aesthetics. In Plato’s writings lies the founding document of this science, hidden, if not concealed. Behind it, however, looms the mountain

range of Pythagorean thought, barely accessible to interpretation anymore.

Plato has become the teacher of beauty for millennia through the Symposium and Phaedrus. He did not become so through observation of beautiful forms in nature or through critical consideration of existing art forms, he became so through his enthusiasm for beauty, which was one with his pedagogical Eros. In Plato's aforementioned 'most beautiful' dialogues, the concept of Eros enters into a marriage with the concept of the beautiful, whose philosophical magic corresponds to the enchantment of the author by the living beauty of Athenian youths. The indefinite but intense light with which the concepts of beauty and love are surrounded here has had an enormous impact. It was not possible to think the problem further, because there was no 'problem'; but it remained to evoke the mood and the words again and again, it has happened countless times. In the Republic, Plato became the unwilling discoverer of art. He 'discovers' it by radically questioning it (as 'imitation'). Thus the philosophy of art has the strangest beginning: it begins by disputing its object. The book that contains its founding document has the state-military education of the youth as its main theme; at the same time, it represents the sharpest polemic ever written by a philosopher against art.

One must recognize this fact in all its bluntness, but not try to save art for Plato's system by appealing to his own poetic talent or in any other way. The attempt to construct an aesthetic system out of scattered remarks by Plato on the beautiful and art is completely hopeless. Rather, it must be stated: the Greek Plato lays the foundation for aesthetics without intending to, just as the Greeks became the great people of art without wanting 'art'. After all, nothing would have been more incomprehensible to them than the *kalokagathia* of the classical ideal.

In the Sophist, the tone is struck that comes to fruition in the Laws: no longer 'the beautiful' is the theme, no longer 'imitation', but art; however, art as holy art, the foundation of a state that is removed from development and based on the ancient standards of measure.

a) Symposium

Agathon celebrates Eros as the most beautiful of the gods: he is first the most beautiful because he is the youngest of the gods, delicate and supple in form (*ὑγρὸς το εἶδος*). There is always war between Eros and formlessness (*ὁσχημοσύνη γάρ καὶ Ἔρωτι ηρόος ἀλλήλων ἀεὶ πόλεμος*, Symp. 196a). Socrates refutes Agathon: if Eros were beautiful, as the latter says, he would not run after the beautiful; he is longing for the beautiful, or rather for procreation in the beautiful. For there is no longing for the ugly. Agathon was right in saying that for the gods existence is ordered through Eros

towards the beautiful; for there is no Eros towards the ugly (Symp. 201a).

Platonic aesthetics begins with the distinction between beautiful (*καλόν*) and ugly (*αἰσχροτόν*). This distinction must not be interpreted 'artistically', in the modern sense. *For the Greek, beautiful and good are the same*. Health is beautiful, life that fulfills itself is beautiful, measure and everything perfected in itself is beautiful. Thus the Greek uses the word 'beautiful' in precisely that broad sense in which we still use it today. Apparently, for him this concept stood in a primordial relation to the idea of the living. 'The living is beautiful', this is the first principle of Hellenic aesthetics. Its most powerful formulation is found in Hippias Major (288e), where it is stated that even the most beautifully crafted vessel could not make any claim to being judged beautiful next to a mare, a girl, and all other beautiful things. When Goethe, admiring sea snails and hermit crabs on the beach at Venice, exclaims: '*What a precious, magnificent thing a living being is! How well-proportioned to its condition, how true, how existing!*', he describes the concept of *καλόν*.

This panhellenic view is a premise for Plato's doctrine of Eros (the following according to Symp. 206c to 212a). The irresistible drive of the living being towards procreation seizes animals and humans with equal power, when it drives them to procreate in community with the other. *There are two kinds of immortality: some animals and humans procreate in the beautiful according to the body; others procreate in the beautiful according to the soul*. For the body strives for immortality as well as the soul. By bringing forth an offspring and leaving it behind in place of the old, the mortal preserves itself, and thereby itself partakes in immortality. The reverence for immortality causes every being by nature to honor that which has sprung from it. While here preservation happens through and by means of change, the divine preserves itself by remaining entirely the same in relation to everything for all eternity. To this beautiful corresponds a different community than that of the bodies. Lover and beloved live there much more intimately together than even parents with their bodily children; they are bound to each other by a firmer friendship, since more beautiful and immortal children stand between them.

At this point (Symp. 209c ff), where Plato paints pedagogical Eros, already outlining the program of the Republic, the idea of the supreme agon breaks through in the doctrine of love. Friendship is the birthplace of immortal fame. Only as a work of friends can the Greek imagine the state, and solely emerging from competition about the supreme form of the state can Plato envisage his own fame. This is proven by the words that build the bridge from the Symposium to the Republic: 'And everyone would rather see such children born to him than human ones, if he looks at Homer and Hesiod and the other great poets, envying them for

leaving behind such children who procure them immortal fame and memory, since they themselves are so; and if you wish, like Lycurgus left behind children in Sparta,

saviors of Sparta and, to put it so, of Greece' (Symp. 209c f).

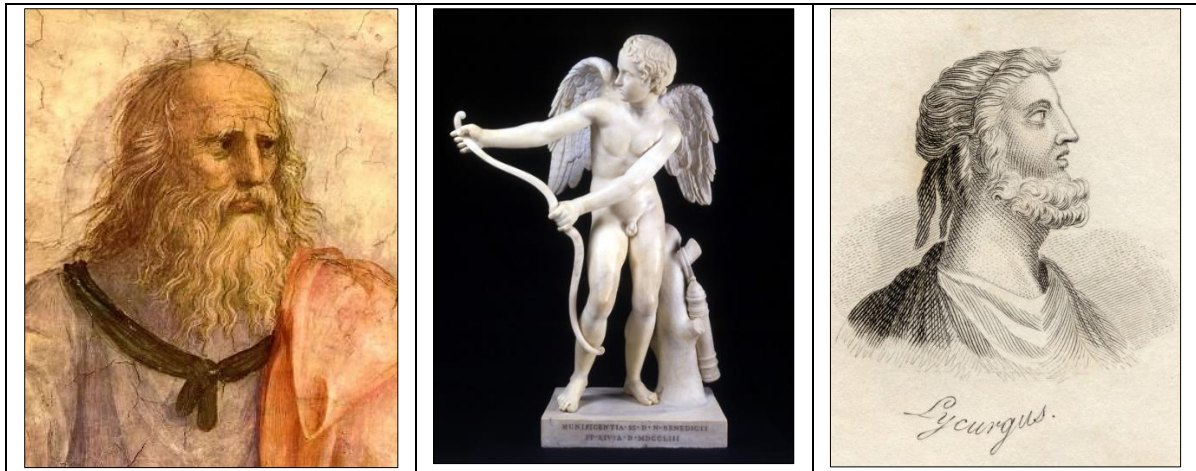


Figure 1: From left to right: Plato, Eros, Lycurgus

Now only comes the turn towards the exuberant that is peculiar to the feast (210a ff). Abruptly, next to Plato the politician and educator stands Plato the lover, in a deeply mysteriously enthusiastic sense. The true thought process of the lover is that he cannot love a beautiful body without recognizing that the beauty in any one body is sister to that in other bodies, and that it would be nonsensical not to regard the beauty in all bodies as one and the same. *With that, the 'high sea' of the beautiful has been reached: from beautiful bodies the path leads to beautiful conduct, from there to beautiful insights, and only lastly does he who obtained the highest vision, the supreme initiation, attain to the vision of Beauty.* Only for him who can behold Beauty itself (αὐτο το χαλᾶς) does life truly become worth living. In intoxicated words the enraptured one proclaims this Beauty as a *'Being eternally uniform with itself, by itself, and for itself'* (αὐτο και αὐτό μεθ' αὐτοῦ μονοειδές αἰεί ον, Symp. 211b).

Being finally reveals itself as the Beautiful, from which everything individually beautiful is descended, and just as Being is one, and not becoming, so this Beautiful is 'first, eternally being and neither becoming nor perishing, neither growing nor diminishing, further neither beautiful here ugly there, nor soon so soon otherwise, also not beautiful in this respect ugly in that, also not beautiful here ugly there, as for some it is beautiful for others ugly'.

b) The Republic

Plato's work on the state, brought forth from pedagogical eros, expression and symbol of the height of manhood of life, is not only a 'system' but a moment in the existence and life of Athens itself. The first coherent discussion of art, which begins in the second book of the Republic and ends in the third, reaches in its concluding section the word 'Kalokagathia' (Rep. 401e ff), which

had been cautiously saved up to that point. The final thought is that only a youth who has admitted beauty into his soul from the earliest youth onward and always nourishes himself with it will become a Kalos kagathos. *This is the purpose of musical education* (μουσική τροφή): *together with gymnastic training it should so develop the warrior (courageous) and philosophical disposition of the young man until both are in due correspondence* (Rep. 411e).

What does it mean, then, to take beauty into one's soul? (Rep. 401e). Surely not: to behave aesthetically, although Plato (typical case!) already grazes upon the concept of 'taste' in the passage cited above (Rep. 402a): the youth will correctly love and hate without initially being able to state the reason, taste is a judging power of the soul that precedes consideration or investigation, as 18th century aesthetics put it. But if Plato demands the influence of music for his guardians, he does so not because he considers 'art' to be an educational asset, but because he considers music a necessary means of upbringing in the same sense as an appropriate diet. Just as the properly educated man will abstain from Syracusan feasts, Attic bakeware and Corinthian girls, so will he reject music that indulges in all harmonies and rhythms, no matter how soul-elevating or soul-enlarging it may otherwise be; indeed, precisely the soul-elevating and enlarging effect of music and poetry is what prompts Plato to undertake his critical examination. Expression and participation for their own sake are completely denied by him. Much may be expressed; but there is only one correct attitude (εὐσηχημοσύνη, Rep. 401a; 404d f). Just as the simplicity of gymnastics brings health to the body, so the simplicity of music engenders temperance in the soul (Rep. 404e). Neither the independence of the form nor the abundance of the content is at issue, but solely the adequacy of the effect for a certain political-educational purpose. There

is only one correct music for the statesman just as there is only one correct diet for him. Insofar as music and poetry have meaning at all, they are related to one thing: the attitude of the warrior. According to Plato, the guardians are to be defined as ‘fighters in the supreme contest’ (ἀθληταί οι ἄνδρες τον μεγίστου ἀγώνος, Rep. 403e). From this the strict exclusion of all arousing, sweet, voluptuous and plaintive musical modes follows of itself. For these harmonies and rhythms necessarily correspond in life to lack of composure (ἀσχημοσύνη, Rep. 401a). The musical modes are inseparable from the political order of life. ‘Nowhere are the musical modes changed without the most important laws of the state suffering damage’ (Ονάμως γάρ κινούνται μουσικῆς τρόποι ανεν πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων, Rep. 424c). *Only two musical modes must exist: a warlike one, corresponding to the spirit of the courageous battle array, the bold deed and the brave endurance, and a lighter, peaceful one, arising from the free agility of the soul, and suited to support prayer, persuasion or instruction* (Rep. 399a ff).

According to modern views, art reflects life in its boundless manifoldness, purified. For Plato there is no manifoldness, no changing expression, no individuality, but also no aesthetically self-contained form. And yet he was the first to talk about art with unprecedented expertise. He mocks the madness, of the poet, and thereby gives at the same time the highest description of the poetic imagination (Ion 533 ff, compare Phaedrus 245a), where μανία is solemnly acknowledged. However much has been written about this contradiction, one thing seems to have been overlooked so far: that Plato does not have a theoretical relationship with art as Aristotle does, but a practical one; that he approached the problem of art, in other words, as politician and educator. For him, art is in the positive as well as negative sense a political phenomenon. It is banished from his political community not only by the ‘intellectualism’ of the dialectician, but just as much by the passion of the founder of the state and educator. We are not raising here the question of what comes first, Plato the thinker or the politician. It suffices to acknowledge that the problem must also be seen from the perspective of the actor.

It is handed down that Plato destroyed his own poems when he turned to Socrates. The historical phenomenon of his philosophy first became possible at all through Attic tragedy. Nothing would have been more obvious than for Plato to become the greatest eulogist art has ever had. Why did he not become so at his height of manhood, he who was so destined for this task that he became it even against his own will? After all, he could also (as his later interpreters did) have incorporated art into his system, as a pure theoretician, with some kind of safeguards. Why did he fight it? For a purely ‘theoretical’ interpretation of the Republic, it will always remain

something striking that Socrates, after everything has already been said, returns once more to poetry, seemingly long since disposed of. To be sure, a logical progression can be stated to the extent that the conceptual determination and evaluation of imitative activity can only occur with the necessary precision after the theory of ideas has been developed. But why did Plato devote two extensive sections below and above the summit of the theory of ideas to poetry? The composition of the whole is determined by this. The reference to Plato's interest in art does not seem sufficient to me to account for this arrangement. In the Republic we have before us the depiction of an agon: the contest between the philosopher and the poet, between Plato and Homer. The work thus fulfills the demand that it poses to the man through its own definition of the guardian. The continual reference to the poet, and in particular the peculiarity of composition in Book 10, is explained by this; neither a repetition nor an amplification is present there, but a fulfillment: the contestation of the most magnificent musical agon of antiquity. In the presence of the best youths of Athens Plato wrestles with the greatest of poets.

Homer, the poet who together with Hesiod had given the Hellenes their gods, to whom all of Greece owed its education, whose works were taken in hand in order to learn how one ought to arrange one's life (Rep. 606e), this poet had to be the mortal enemy of anyone who wanted to proclaim a new law of life to the Greeks. There cannot be two lords of education; if Plato rules, Homer cannot rule. After all, poetry does have an influence on life, it is an educational-political power. What does this look like in Homer's case? In public, Plato says, he did not appear as an educator; if one can say of him that during his lifetime he was authoritative for the education of certain individuals who revered him on the basis of associating with him and handed on to later generations a way of life that one could call Homeric, in the way that Pythagoras was revered in a special manner as educator, and as his students still stand out from all other men in expressly calling their conduct of life Pythagorean (Rep. 600a ff). Is Homer also an educator, a founder of the state? What state has he founded! Diversity, disorder, unleashing of all passions is the consequence of his indiscriminately imitative art. A state that is in proper order would contradict itself if it tolerated the imitative poet within its borders, for he allows a bad constitution of state (κακή πολιτεία, Rep. 605b) to prevail in souls. Plato's ‘good’ Politeia thus stands against Homer's ‘bad’ Politeia. But good is the one that is not based on imitations but on the truth in educating the youths. Between truth and untruth there can be no reconciliation, no compromise. Only one power can rule the city. Who would not hear the overtone of highest triumph in the words with which Socrates proclaims the unconditional victory of dialectic over poetry? (Rep. 398a f).

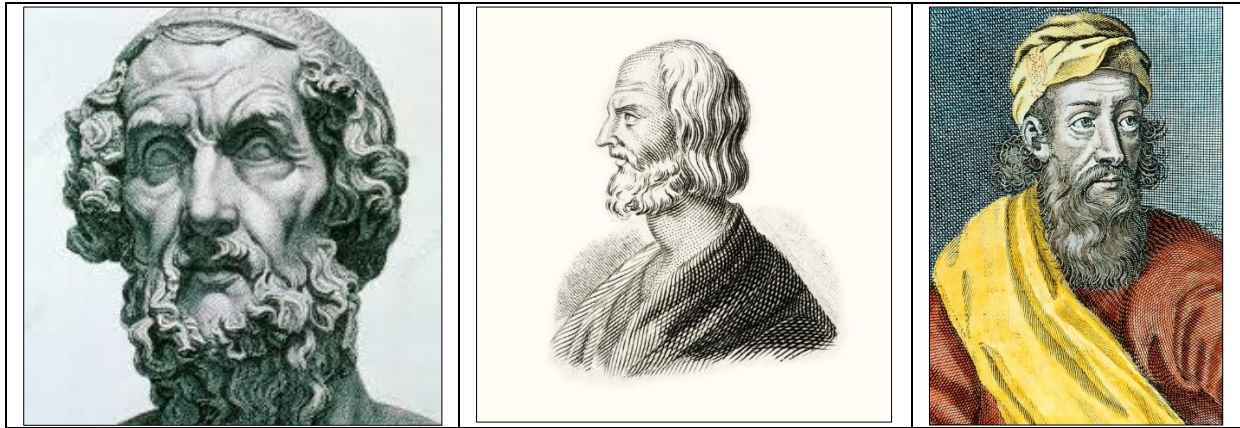


Figure 2: From left to right: Homer, Hesiod, Pythagoras

Between philosophy and poetry, says Socrates openly confessing at the pinnacle of victory at the end of the conversation, there is an ‘old enmity’ (*παλαιὰ διαφορά*, Rep. 607b). Now, according to Plato's will, the dispute is settled. The first half of the tenth book is filled with the splendor of the most perfect triumph: not only does the poet stand in second place as an imitative artist in relation to the reality and truth of his structures, but he also has to be satisfied with third place. A train of thought of unrelenting logic assigns him the place in the dark. First place is due to the ideas, second place to the objects made according to them, only third place belongs to the

works of art and poetry that imitate the world of objects. Compared to the doubly non-self-sufficient existence of the work of art, even the structure delivered to becoming and time of nature or craft gains an appearance of solidity. Only that which transcends time, remaining equal to itself, is truly real; what arises and perishes in time has only a derived existence. Far from all truth, however, are the products of an imitative art which can only make everything because it does not create full, complete objects, but merely takes individual features from things, whereby even this little has the character of a shadow image (Rep. 598b).

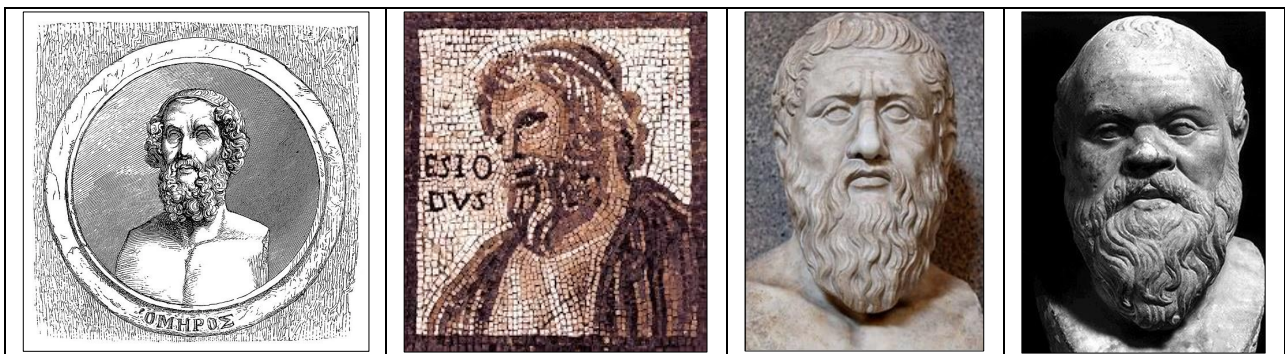


Figure 3: From left to right: Homer, Hesiod, Plato, Socrates

Just as Greek art begins with the geometric style, which does not imitate but divides and measures, so Greek aesthetics – after almost all the great possibilities of art have been fulfilled, begins with Plato's war of annihilation against the mimetic arts. Before the crucial question is asked as to what imitation (*μίμησις*) actually is, Plato has his Socrates once again confirm what feelings of love and reverence he had nourished since his youth for Homer, the great teacher of tragic poets. ‘But truth must count for more than men’ (Rep. 595c). Thus shielded by the invocation of truth, the dialectician opens the investigation against the poets. It is an artifice that this investigation begins with painting. Plato's interest in the visual arts cannot be compared with his passionate interest in poetry. The painter is only introduced in the *Politeia* so that the attack can be carried out all the more surely and annihilatingly over the

terminus of ‘making’ (producing) (*ποιεῖν*, Rep. 596c). The craftsman (*δημιουργός*) who wants to make a bed or a table directs his gaze towards the one originally existing idea of the bed or table (Rep. 596b). How far removed he is from the one who brings forth the ideas as their creator (*φύσιουργός*, Rep. 597d), from God! But even if the craftsman can never succeed in bringing forth an idea, he is still an honest man, and clearly to be distinguished from those miracle men and jacks-of-all-trades, each of whom claims to be able to make everything that a craftsman can produce by virtue of his knowledge and skill in his respective field. In this respect the imitative jack-of-all-trades resembles the sophist, who also understands everything that goes on between heaven and earth (cf. Gorg. 456). By using the word ‘sophist’ (Rep. 596c) Plato relates his battle with the poet to the agon with his philosophical opponents. In both

cases it is about the same error: sophists and imitative artists remain attached to appearances without penetrating to being and truth. They are content to conjure up everything once more by the cheap means of a mirror, but what they make is untrue, it is apparition-like, not archetypal (φαινόμενα, οὐ μέντοι ὄντα γε ποὺ τῇ ἀληθείᾳ, Rep. 596e). This gives rise to that climax: painter-craftsman-god, in which the lowest place in the series of demiurges falls to the artist (Rep. 597b ff). On this level stands the tragic poet along with all other imitators, 'in third place down from the ruler and the truth' (τρίτος τις ἀπὸ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς ἀληθείας, Rep. 597e). Can a more miserable profession be conceived than this production of shadow images? (εἰδῶν δημιουργία, Rep. 599a). Would not the one who can express himself in works prefer to devote himself to this rather than mere imitation? 'Would he not rather want to be the one praised (ὁ ἐγκωμιάζόμενος) than the one praising (ὁ ἐγκωμιάζων)?' (Rep. 490b). With that, the climax is reached: the poet receives the deadly blow.

If Homer dares to speak imitatively about the greatest and noblest things, about battle and the art of war, about founding states and education, one must thus speak to him: 'Dear Homer, if you are there, where truth and excellence are concerned, not the third downward, an image maker, as we have recognized the imitative artist to be, but rather the second and therefore able to recognize what institutions make people better or worse at home and in the state, then tell us: which state has been better constituted through you, as Lacedaemon has through Lycurgus and as through many others so many great and small states? But you, which city calls you the originator of good laws and its benefactor?' It would be worthy of more precise examination which passages of the Homeric poems are 'crossed out' by Plato. *Above all, they seem to be those passages that point to the 'Pelagian' background of the Homeric world.* Particularly clear in this respect is the beginning of the third book of the *Politeia*, where the popular notions of Hades and the cult of the dead are rejected. In any case, Plato's struggle against Homer is a multi-layered phenomenon. At the top, the founder of the state struggles against the founder of the state, then the man of the geometric style against the man of imitation, at the same time the representative of the Aryan conquering race against the remnants of the pre-Indo-Germanic folk belief in the Ionian epic, all summed up in the struggle of the dialectician against the poet (incidentally, in an overall presentation Plato's struggle against the tragic poets, to whom he himself once belonged, would appear no less important than his struggle against Homer. But Homer is also the 'leader' of the tragedians).

The 'many', to whom Homer's verses and those of the other poets sound pleasant in the ear, stand in contrast to the boys and men who are supposed to mean freedom and fear slavery more than death (Rep. 387b). This difference between the many and the freedom-lovers corresponds to the difference between those who

admire beautiful colors, shapes and sounds, who run everywhere where something is 'made', and those who love the truth. The former resemble dreamers who admire shadows; the latter alone lead a life without deception. The juxtaposition of the poet and the dialectician is grounded in the difference between the many and the one, between that which appears and true being. Just as true knowledge relates to that which is, not to the individual things surrounding us, so true love of the beautiful does not relate to sounds, forms and colors, but to 'the beautiful itself'. In this juxtaposition of 'beautiful things' and 'beauty itself' (καλὰ πράγματα and αὐτὸ τὸ κάλλος) the Platonic train of thought reaches its climax (Rep. 476a ff). Only the philosophers are able to grasp the ever constant; the others wander about in the universe of things like musicians in the universe of harmonies and imitative artists in the universe of forms and passions (cf. Rep. 484b).

c) Nomoi

Nothing is more difficult for modern man than to shake off aesthetic formalism. One can hardly put oneself into a mode of thinking that is completely foreign to any opposition between form and content. And yet this mode of thinking is not at all 'primitive', but rather that of the oldest culture. When we speak of measure and symmetry, we have in mind the idea of formal relationships between 'things', abstract numbers or lines. The concept of symmetry has even been narrowed down to the meaning of 'opposite equality'. However, the concepts of measure and symmetry, the oldest and most venerable that philosophy has, are not produced by a formal mode of thinking, but stem from a pure substantial thinking, which we can also call a thinking in symbols. It is peculiar to this thinking that it subordinates the universe and man to a 'third factor' which is not something external and foreign to them, but their common and essential aspect. This third factor is measure, not as form but as content; not as abstract law but as concrete determination of being. The concept of the norm of measure contains an aesthetics that is neither a 'doctrine of beauty' nor a 'doctrine of art', these spheres have not yet diverged either, but quite simply an aesthetics of order.

The arts that man invents and practices, whatever their kind may be, can never have any other content and form than the measure inherent in the whole into which he is born. *There are two 'arts' in particular that testify to the cosmic order: music (to which dance always belongs) and architecture.* They are the oldest, the cosmic arts. The history of art begins with them. It does not begin with the cave paintings of hunting peoples, for these are not intended productions in which a state of life represents itself, it starts where the rhythmic order of life translates itself into the rhythm of an intended work. *Life has been rhythmic from the very beginning; only man, however, is able to represent the rhythm of the universe in self-created orders. The earliest of these representations is the sacred dance*

according to sacred music. Music and dance, the firstborn of the eternal norm of measure, are followed by architecture, which is 'frozen music' in a deeper sense than the witty phrase means.

The earliest art is followed by the earliest aesthetics. Since art is not a product of 'development', not a creation of need, but the human representation of the divine order of the universe, it does not seem surprising that from the very beginning insight (θεωρία) is connected with it. From Pythagoras to Vitruvius, from there through the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and up to the present, the arc of an aesthetics of the norm of measure spans. It would be difficult for us to reconstruct this arc if an important piece had not been preserved right in the middle. We find this piece in Plato's late writings.

Where Plato expresses himself about his favorite subject, education, for the last time, in the seventh book of the *Nomoi*, the speaker from Athens, summing up everything preceding, says: 'No one should allow himself any deviation in song and dance from the sacred songs and the whole dance style of our youth as established by the state, any more than any violation of any other law' (Laws 800a). We know the idea, it already underlies the *Politeia*, but there it is pushed back by the polemic against the imitative artist. Now the cheerful noise of competition has died away, in the stillness the eternal lines of being emerge commandingly. Thus the original meaning of the word *Nomos* also becomes visible. Let it then, it is said in the same speech of the Athenian shortly before, 'be accepted as a settled matter this curious institution that songs have been elevated to the status of laws, and let the example of the ancients guide us herein, who gave this name to song accompanied by the cithara; so that they too, perhaps, were not very far from the conception we have just characterized, even though, as it were in their sleep or rather like one only half awake, they had only a dreamlike notion of it' ('Λέγομεν μὲν δὴ, φαμέν, τὸ ἄτοπον τοῦτο, νόμους τὰς ᾠδὰς ἡμῖν γεγονέναι, καὶ καθάπερ οἱ παλαιοὶ ἴστε περὶ κιθαρῳδῶν ὄντως πως, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὠνόμασαν, ὥστε τάχ' ἂν οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι παντάπασί γε ἀφεστῶτες εἶεν τοῦ νῦν λεγομένου' etc. (Laws 799e). A question in the 'Problems' of the Aristotelian school refers to the same tradition: 'Why are the songs called *nomoi* which they sing', *Probl. XIX 28*).

Plato, the politician and aesthete of the eternal norm of measure, probably dips back into the same tradition from which Pythagoras also came. That in the *Nomoi* the circle of Greek history is transcended, that Egypt is repeatedly mentioned as the preserver of the old norms, is no coincidence. The same idea of *Nomos* underlies the ancient culture of the Chinese. It is represented by E. M. von Hornbostl as follows: 'Since earliest times the pan pipes in China were sacred norms of measure (Lü=norm). The music office is part of the ministry of Li, the laws that 'are rooted in the great universe', 'through which the ancient rulers could

receive the Tao of Heaven', obedience to which is the highest duty and the only means to remain in accord with the course of the world. At the time of the equinoxes, when Yang and Yin hold the scales even, all measures are re-examined. Every new dynasty seeks to restore the correct measures of primeval times, convinced that only the loss or disregard of the norms could have caused the downfall of their predecessors. The basis of the system is the pipe of 1 foot in length, which gives the fundamental tone. Starting from it, the following pipes are alternately given 2/3 and 4/3 of the length of the preceding pipe. The system is thus a metric chain of fifths and fourths... The tones, engendering each other in alternation of feminine and masculine, follow the cosmic law. It is this, not musical intention, which is realized in the absolute pitches: the Lü are in harmony with the phases of the cosmic cycles of time, the melody of the cult music is transposed to the pitch of the month' (The norm of measure as a means of cultural-historical research. '*Festschrift for P. W. Schmidt*'. 1928, p. 304 f). All the peculiarities of the system described here are also found in Plato.

1. There is no separation between form and content: form is content, content is form.
2. The system is unchangeable. Any change means a violation of the law of life. From this follows an enormous strictness; standardization is precise and must be adhered to most exactly.
3. The system is metric. The basic measure appears both as 'quality' and 'quantity', as tone, as well as distance or number.
4. World and man: The basic idea is that of a metric world harmony, into proper relation with which man must set himself.
5. Male and female: The division of the sexes extends into the essence of being and finds expression in two different genders of tone.

From the ancient songs and dances, says the Athenian of the *Nomoi*, the most suitable ones must be selected for the state. In doing so, it will prove necessary to distinguish the songs suitable for the female and male sex according to a certain norm, and to assign them the appropriate harmonies and rhythms, for harmony and rhythm must correspond to the matter itself. But the difference is to be designated as follows: the sublime and what calls for courage is to be recognized as the male kind, while the inclination to the orderly and the temperate, on the other hand, as more appropriate to the female sex (μεγαλοπρεπές - κόσμιον καὶ σῶφρον, Laws 802e). Here is the origin of the concepts of grace and dignity. Cicero refers to this passage when he speaks of *venustas* and *dignitas*. From this distinction Vitruvius draws the principle for classifying the orders of columns of the Greek temple.

The *Politeia* had not allowed the aesthetic problem to unfold. The image-making arts had been pushed to the fore, music on the other hand, by far the most important art for antiquity (Laws 669b), had indeed

been made the basis of the educational work, but had not been considered in the theory. Fully consistent with this, the ‘Pythagorean concepts’, as we can call them, harmony and measure, had been presupposed, but remained concealed. It is as if the sun of the day of battle had dazzled the starlight. Now, as the sun sinks, they emerge. At the end of the *Philebos* Socrates states: ‘Now then the essence of the good has found refuge with us in the nature of the beautiful. For due measure and fitting proportion (symmetry) evidently everywhere come to be beauty and virtue’ (Νῦν δὴ καταρέφενεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν. Μετρίότης γὰρ καὶ συμμετρία κάλλος δῆπου καὶ ἀρετὴ πανταχοῦ ξυμβαίνει γίνεσθαι. Now, certainly, the power of the good in the nature of the beautiful has taken refuge in us. For moderation and harmony, beauty and virtue without a doubt, happen everywhere. *Phil.* 64e). Beauty, symmetry and truth now stand side by side. This ‘beauty’ is obviously no longer that of the *Symposium*, this ‘truth’ obviously no longer that of the *Politeia*. They find their reconciliation in symmetry, one step more and they will find themselves in number (*Timaeus*!).

In the *Philebos* the relationship of subjective pleasure to the order of things is examined and the result is ‘that pleasure is neither the first nor the second possession, but that the first lies in the realm of measure and moderation and fitness and everything that must be assumed to partake of the nature of the eternal’ (*Phil.* 66a). It is therefore only a provisional determination when it was said earlier: to the beauty of those regular bodies which are not occasionally beautiful but always and in themselves beautiful there correspond also peculiar feelings of pleasure which have no resemblance to sensual titillation (*Phil.* 51c). Plato is not concerned with determining these feelings, but rather with declaring that in the face of eternal harmony the subjective feelings are without significance and even in the best case are to be placed last in the table of values. It belongs to the formalistic thinking inappropriate to these matters when one sees in such a passage of the *Philebos* only a reference to mathematics, not a reference to the essence of being. While it is certainly permissible to think also of mathematics here, one must not conceive its constructs formalistically but must grasp them ontologically.

The immediate continuation of the problem that could not be solved in the *Politeia* is contained in the dialogue *Sophistes*. Here, in the course of the conversation, the image-producing art (εἰδωλοποιικὴ τέχνη, idol image making technique) is subdivided. Two kinds of imitative art must be distinguished: the first is the depictive (εἰκαστική), the second the semblance-producing art (φανταστική). The essence of the former (art of likeness-making) consists in preserving the symmetries of the model (παράδειγμα) in length, breadth and depth, and also in applying the appropriate natural colors to each part (*Soph.* 235d f). Don’t all imitators do that? Theaitetos asks. No, is the answer; in an artwork of great height, in that case the upper parts would appear

too small, the lower too large, because we see the latter from close up, the former from a greater distance. The images are therefore not given the actual symmetries, but those that appear beautiful) [**Footnote in the original edition.** In Kantian language this means that the image follows not the constitutive but the regulative principles of pure reason]. However incidentally this distinction may be made, it becomes clear that the aesthetic problem has been taken under consideration anew.

The rays of Plato's philosophy of old age gather in the *Timaeus* and are reflected from there into the millennia. In the *Timaeus* the beauty of regular bodies is praised, which is to be understood as an eternal one, not as one that only appears to the subject (*Tim.* 53b). The sentence sounds like the magic formula of Pythagoreanism: ‘All good is beautiful, and what is beautiful is not without the right measure’ (Πᾶν δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καλόν, τὸ δὲ καλὸν οὐκ ἄμετρον, all that is good is beautiful, and that which is beautiful is not unconscionable, *Tim.* 87c). Ugly (αἰσχροῦς), on the other hand, is what lacks measure (cf. *Soph.* 228a).

The conceptual implementation of Pythagoreanism in the field of the aesthetic as well as the pedagogical problem is contained in the ‘*Nomoi*’. The basic concept of the part of this work that belongs here is the concept of order (τάξις). The investigation begins with the reminder of the festivals of the gods, which the Muses' leader Apollo and Dionysus attend. There was no young creature that was able to keep its body or voice still even for a moment. The choral dance that accompanies the festivals suits this agility; at the same time it accomplishes the first work of education. One who understands the choral dance is well educated, one who does not understand it is uneducated (*Laws* 654a). This simple thought stands before an infinite background.

Only man has a sense for order and disorder in movements, for which we use the words rhythm and harmony. For only man is given the gods as fellow choristers (*Laws* 653e). One could call this thought the fundamental thought of an aesthetics of primordial times. The crucial thing is that here man is opposed to all other beings with all determination: not because he is a natural being, but because he is friends with the gods does he have a sense for harmony and rhythm of movement. Measure and order are of divine origin, which is the first proposition of Platonic-Pythagorean aesthetics. That form and content cannot fundamentally be separated is the second. When we say, ‘he sings beautifully’ (καλῶς) and ‘he dances beautifully’, we also want to say at the same time that he sings beautiful things (καλά) and dances beautiful things (*Laws* 654b f). One cannot sing beautifully and dance beautifully unless the content of what is sung and danced were beautiful. The posture or song of the brave is beautiful, of the coward ugly. Therefore, the proposition generally applies: Posture and song are beautiful when they are an expression of the

excellence (ἀρετή) of the soul or body, whether directly or through images; the opposite applies to baseness (Laws 655 b).

In summary: the chorus is a work of art based on τάξις, which is able to educate the unruly youth to τάξις. (Formulation by Jolles, *Vitruv's Aesthetics*, p. 53). The centering of the investigation on the concept of τάξις includes the downfall of the theory of ideas. Assuming the concept of measure, there can no longer be any metaphysical difference between model and image; the image likeness has been replaced by a (symbolic) 'representation'. The difference in being between model and image is suspended, because the system of norms of measure excludes such a hierarchy. Also in the work of art the eternal order can be 'imitated', i.e. represented. All this is implied in the words: 'whether directly or through imagery' (εἴτε αὐτῆς εἴτε τινὸς εἰκόνοϛ, either from herself or from some image, 655b).

In the Politeia there is at some point the phrase: the poets would have to imprint the image of the good constitution (ἀγαθὸν ἄκουσμα ἡδονῆς, Symp. 401b) on their poems. The Nomoi have the same idea, but they go far beyond the Politeia by completely releasing the image (as a representation of order) from the curse of the theory of ideas. The things do not 'partake' in measure at a greater or lesser distance, but they either represent it (symbolically) or they do not. The degree of being of the 'imitating' work of art in this sense is not inferior to that of everything else that exists.

Not slowly and investigatively, but quickly and dictatorially the main question is answered in Laws 655d ff. Plato stands before the multiplicity of talents, habits, characters, fates. Is a corresponding multiplicity of rhythms and harmonies to be permitted on the basis of this human element? We already know the answer from the Politeia, now it just comes even more insistently, decisively: the right lawgiver will bring the poets by persuasion or, if he does not succeed in this way, by force to represent in rhythms and harmonies with beautiful and praiseworthy words only the movements and manners of prudent, brave and also otherwise efficient men (Laws 660a). That is the purpose of the Nomoi: through the decree and power of the law to maintain order among men. If necessary, men must be forced to be orderly. With the prerequisite of the measure standard, this idea lacks any violent character. Multiplicity is aberration, order and truth is only one. The right lawgiver does not rape but builds on the foundation of unwritten laws (cf. Laws. 793a ff). This is the ground on which the Egyptians erected their state system. And only the Spartans besides them understood what matters: Not in innovations, in the overthrow of the ways of song and life lies salvation, but in the preservation of what corresponds to the eternal orders and can never change. Therefore, among the Egyptians, no painter or other artist is permitted to direct his inventiveness towards anything other than what corresponds to native custom. There, the

paintings and statues made ten thousand years ago are neither in any way more beautiful nor uglier than those made today (Laws 656d f).

In this context, the problem of feeling, which we know from the Philebus, also returns. For the judgment of musical art, the feeling of pleasure that it arouses is essential (Laws 658e f). But not the pleasure of this or that should be decisive, but only that of the most educated and virtuous. Prudence and courage are the supreme judges of art: that is Plato's last word on practical aesthetics. His aesthetics has been content aesthetics from the beginning, now it receives the final formulation. Not feeling is decisive, but right feeling; but this is determined by the right content. The right feeling is that which is in harmony with order. The aesthete and the educator Plato fight one and the same fight against feelings that contradict order.

Insofar, negatively formulated, the climax of the whole train of thought lies in Kleinias' phrase that all innovations can be traced back to 'disorderly feelings' (ἄτακται ἡδοναί, 660b). This is not to be understood, as Apelt translates, as 'undisciplined lust for pleasure', but as any feeling that opposes τάξις. Thus the investigation concerning feeling culminates in the demonstration that not mere pleasure feeling, and mere opinion can be decisive for judging musical art. This demonstration is combined with resuming the concept of imitative arts (τέχναι εἰκαστικαὶ καὶ μιμητικαί. 667d ff). The feeling is dependent, we can say. Not the joy makes the like like and the symmetrical symmetrical, but that is so in reality (cf. Laws 667e f). Thus for the judgment what ultimately counts is not feeling, but the thing. One must call true art that one which achieves likeness in the imitation of the beautiful, (...ἐκείνην τὴν ἔχουσαν τὴν ὁμοιότητα τῷ τοῦ καλοῦ μιμήματι, Laws 668b). For the aesthetic problem, this formulation signifies culmination and conclusion. As an imitation of the beautiful, mimesis has been made a participant in the highest dignity. The aesthetics of the norm of measure has fully prevailed over the theory of ideas.

In the seventh book, the aesthetic and pedagogical line of thought is continued without leading to new results. But in another respect the last word is spoken here. Once more Plato immerses himself in the mood and tone of the agonal 'Politeia'. The tragic poets appear and ask: 'Dear strangers, may we enter your city and territory? And may we introduce and present our poetry there, or what do you think about that?' (Laws 817a f). 'You highly esteemed strangers', is the answer, 'we ourselves are poets of a tragedy and possibly even of the most beautiful and best one. Our whole political system is in its structure nothing other than an imitation of the most beautiful and best life and this is in our opinion the only true tragedy. So you are poets, but we no less, namely for the same field, thus rivals and competitors for the prize of the most beautiful drama, and such an achievement can, if our hope does not deceive

us, succeed only for legislation corresponding to the demands of truth'. Plato has remained the same, and yet now the aspect is reversed. In the *Politeia* he used the concept of imitation to bring his concept of education and the state to victory over Homer's 'bad *Politeia*'. But in the wisdom of his old age he takes up the concept of imitation in order to characterize his state with it: this state is the highest work of art, but 'work of art' only in the sense that the world ordered by the gods is a work of art.

Literature. On the Aesthetics of Antiquity in General:

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On Plato:

Übersetzung des Symposions nach K. Hildebrandt. Übersetzung des *Philebos*, *Sophistes*, *Timaios* und der *Nomoi* nach O. Apelt.

II. Plotinus

At the end of their most vigorous time, in the fifth century, the Greeks had epics and tragedies, temples and statues, pictures and poems in abundance, but amidst the richest artistic life they did not feel the need for aesthetic reflection. Despite the luxuriantly continued artistic activity, this reflection does not occur in the following centuries either. Philosophy rises up, mathematics and natural sciences unfold, there is historiography and rhetoric, a poetics and a theory of music, but the science of aesthetics remains in the form in which Plato left it behind. Only in Plotinus does it appear as an integral part of a closed system. Plotinus is the first systematizer to write treatises on the beautiful: *περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ*, *περὶ τοῦ νοητοῦ κάλλους*, and in that respect he is the first 'aesthetician'. Aesthetics (as it has been understood so far) is a daughter of Hellenism; it is the evening star of philosophical systematics. Plotinus occupies the same position at the end of ancient philosophy as Hegel does at the end of the epoch of Christian philosophy.



Figure 4: From left to right: Pythagoras, Plotinus, Aristoteles, Porphyry.

Plato stands at the threshold of Hellenism, Plotinus at its end. In between lie 500 years. Plotinus is related to Platonic Athens roughly as Leibniz is to the time of the Hohenstaufens. It has long been recognized how little Plotinus has to do with the real Plato, how often in later times Plotinus was meant when one referred to Plato. *How deep in truth the contrast is becomes clear in no field more than in the aesthetic one.* The whole philosophy and pedagogy of *τάξις*, which is present in the *Politeia* in an undeveloped form, developed in the *Nomoi*, remains alien to 'Neoplatonism'. Not by chance does the treatise *περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ* begin by rejecting the concept of symmetry (see below p. 20 f). Beauty does not consist in symmetry, but rather in what 'shines forth' in symmetry, and that is precisely what is lovely (*οἱ καὶ ἐνταῦθα φατέον μᾶλλον τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ συμμετρίας ἐπιλαμπύμενον ἢ τὴν συμμετρίαν εἶναι, καὶ τοῦτ' εἶναι τὸ ἐράσιμον*, Enn. VI. 7, 22). With this proposition Plotinus is not arguing against an outside opinion but delimiting his world against another world. Nothing makes the 'subjectivism' of Neoplatonic philosophy so strikingly clear as this turning away from the objective norm of

measure. If we ask where the vague expressiveness, the shimmering quality of a proposition like the one just quoted stems from, we will be referred back to Plato's *Symposium*. Plotinus' philosophy means: some concepts of Plato, combined with the main concepts of Aristotle, fused by a foreign, ardently glowing breath of life in a spirit unknown to Greekdom.

Plotinus stands uncomprehendingly opposed to the scientific tendency of Aristotelian art theory: cognition of the existent insofar as it exists under the form of the made. But since the idea of shaping is immanent in Aristotle's fundamental distinction between form (*μορφή*) and matter, Plotinus, as it were without intending it, falls within the aesthetic province. 'Spirit' as a shaping principle, the shaped as the beautiful, with that the conquest has taken place.

The combination of Platonic and Aristotelian concepts into a new unity has not been undertaken for the first time in aesthetics by Plotinus. Already Cicero combined the Platonic idea with the Aristotelian notion

of purposive activity and thus was able to draw a picture of the artist that has not been without significance for the history of aesthetics. In the Orator (2, 7 ff), Cicero depicts the speaker as he should be, perfect eloquence: the original is always 'still more beautiful' (pulchrius) than the image. Even beyond Pheidias' sculptures we can imagine still more beautiful ones; and when this artist created Zeus and Athene, he did not merely copy; 'rather, in his mind was a certain outstanding image of beauty which he kept firmly before his gaze as he guided head and hand to make likenesses ...' (sēd ipsiūs in mente insidēbat spēcīēs pulchritūdinis eximiā quaedam, quam intūēns in eāque dēfixus ad illiūs similitūdinem artem et manum dirigēbat).

Here Plato appears for the first time in literature with the full force of his authority as a witness for an aesthetic theory. It is the Plato of the theory of ideas; the Plato of the Nomoi is forgotten. Under the influence of Aristotle the problem of shaping comes into the foreground; under Plato's influence this problem is interpreted 'metaphysically' (or theologically). Plotinus sets the example for the following centuries of how one can flee on the path across form into the formless, of how nihilism and aesthetics are to be connected. 'So let us flee to the beloved homeland', it says towards the end of the treatise On the Beautiful. 'And what does this flight consist in and how does it take place? We want to rush out onto the sea as Odysseus from the sorceress Circe or from Calypso, as Homer puts it, and indicates it, I think: he was not content to stay, although he had the pleasure that one sees with the eyes and enjoyed the fullness of perceptible beauty. For there is our fatherland, from whence we have come, and there is our father' (Enn. I. 6, 8).

A) Spirit and Form

In Plato, a tremendous shaping force had thrown reality onto the state. In Aristotle, a differently oriented shaping force had completed the begun conquest of the scientific cosmos. *Now, at the end of the philosophy of antiquity, at the entrance to Hellenistic scholasticism, it is no longer a matter of conquest: philosophy has become a means for guiding souls home. Only through Plotinus is Plato finally turned into a theologian.* Even at the height of the theory of ideas, in the Politeia, Plato's gaze reaches down from the eternal and immutable to the laws of education and the state. Plotinus' treasure, on the other hand, is directed solely to the 'One'. The polis with its laws, its youths and men has sunk, the individual gives himself alone to the contemplation of eternal shaping and re-shaping. The forms of human coexistence have become invisible, meaningless, in the darkness of the world the light of the Good alone shines and responding to it shining up here and there is that which is related to it.

In contrast to Plato, Plotinus does not have a personal relationship to art. His inwardly turned spirit feels the body as an impediment. When his student

Amelios asks him to sit for a painter, he refuses: one should not leave behind to later times a shadow image of the shadow image as something worth seeing (Porphyry, 'Vita Plotini', beginning). In doing so, every pathetic stance against the 'body' is absent. His attitude is not one of struggle, but of flight. (important for his position on sensuality is his argument with the Gnostics. Enn. II. 9). Sensuous appearance is not declared evil, but only inadequate. *The Plotinian cosmos is devoid of tension or conflict; within this cosmos, all occurrences transpire effortlessly, quietly, and without violence.* Shape does indeed 'take possession' of matter, but this taking possession is not an impressing, but a happening. The demand can never arise that possession 'should' take place, since there is no should in this world. The power to shape is in the soul, which is therefore called the shaping soul (ψυχὴ μορφοῦσα, Enn. I. 6, 6). When the divine soul 'touches' something, it overpowers it and makes it beautiful. The overpowering is thus to be imagined like being touched by a gentle breeze.

There is no imperative to shape matter; everything is as it is. For the soul, on the other hand, there is the sacred command of purification, i.e. the return to the highest form. The inner eye, which begins to see when the outer one closes, cannot immediately behold the full radiance of beauty. 'So the soul must become accustomed, it must first see the beautiful activities, then the beautiful works, not those created by the arts, but by the men whom one calls noble; and then look at the soul of those who do these beautiful works'. The approach to this supreme beauty, the beauty of the soul, takes place in the manner of stripping off all matter. Here Plotinus chooses a simile from the activity of the sculptor. However, this does not mean that his mysticism has an aesthetic sense, but rather that his aesthetics is to be understood mystically. 'Turn inward to yourself and look at yourself; and when you see that you are not yet beautiful, do as the sculptor, ... chisel away what is useless, and straighten what is crooked, cleanse the dark and make it bright and do not cease to work on your image with your hands until the divine radiance of virtue shines forth from you ...'. If at last, Plotinus continues, you are only you and alone together with yourself and nothing impedes you any longer from becoming one, but you are 'wholly and entirely pure, true light, not measured by magnitude, not encircled by shape within narrow limits, also not distended into a magnitude by infinity, but entirely immeasurable, greater than all measure and exalted above all quantity', then you yourself are the seeing power, then ascend, you need no more guidance, gaze steadily, for only such an eye beholds the great beauty. If the eye is unpurified or weak, it does not see the entirely bright. That which sees must be made akin and similar to that which is seen: 'No eye can see the sun that has not become sunlike; so no soul sees the Beautiful that has not become beautiful' (Enn. I. 6. 9, on the concept of 'removing', cf. Borinski I, p. 169 f).

The treatise *'On the Beautiful'* begins in the tone of the calmest investigation with the question of what beauty, which is found in the realm of sight, hearing, actions, sciences and virtues, really is. It is said almost universally that a harmonious proportion of the parts to one another and to the whole (συμμετρία τῶν μερῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλα καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὅλον) and additionally a beautiful coloring constitute visible beauty; to be beautiful means for visible things and indeed for everything else to be symmetrical, to have measure in oneself. Accordingly, there could only be a composite beauty, not a simple beauty. Furthermore, the whole could be beautiful while its individual parts would not need to be but would only be insofar as they contribute to the beauty of the whole. But if the whole is beautiful, the parts must also be beautiful, for a beautiful thing cannot be composed of ugly constituents. According to the doctrine of symmetry, the light of the sun and colors, since they are simple, would be excluded from being beautiful; and likewise gold and the sparkle of the night. But one and the same face can appear beautiful at one time, not beautiful at another, without the symmetry of its parts changing. Thus beauty must be viewed as something that is added to the symmetrical; the symmetrical must obtain its beauty through something else. Concordance does not make it: even false doctrines can be in concordance. Virtue in turn is a beauty of the soul, but in what sense could it be symmetrical? Even if the soul has several parts, they cannot be symmetrical as magnitudes or as numbers, for in accordance with what proportion should the composition take place? And in what should the beauty of spirit consist when it exists alone? (Enn. I, 6, 1). These are the fundamental considerations with which Plotinus undertakes his attack on the Pythagorean-Platonic doctrine of symmetry and number. The crux of the argument clearly lies in proving that beauty can only be simple. The example of light is highly characteristic: while Pythagorean thought proceeded from the structure of the world and from music, Plotinus connects to the exciting phenomenon of light. Moreover, for him as the thinker of the 'One', the emphasis on the simplicity of the beautiful was a self-evident demand. Otherwise, the highest One would have had to be denied the predicate of beauty. From the spiritualizing tendency of his philosophy there necessarily follows the attack on the archaic metaphysics of symmetry, which had already resisted Plato's theory of ideas.

The way in which this attack is conducted is of exemplary significance for the future. In order to dethrone symmetry as a law of the world, one must first formalize it. Once form and content are separated, the game is won, because then only a formal concept of order has to be fought. By splitting off the formal concept of the 'symmetrical' from the undivided phenomenon, Plotinus retains an unquantifiable, purely qualitative, simple 'content' which is now considered to be truly beautiful. This content must be present everywhere something is to be called beautiful, just as a body can

only be called golden if it is golden throughout. From now on there is a new kind of 'content aesthetics': the 'spiritual' content, independent of form, has been discovered (on the relationship of this theory of beauty to the theodicy problem, see below p. 30 ff).

The beautiful content is perceived and judged directly by the soul. 'For there is a beauty that is grasped at first glance, which the soul somehow perceives and pronounces; in recognizing it, it approves it and somehow conforms to it; when its gaze falls on the ugly, however, it turns away, refuses it and rejects it, for it does not harmonize with the soul and is alien to it' (Enn. I. 6. 2). Beauty is thus a simple quality that the soul perceives directly by virtue of its affinity. This raises the question of the cognition of beauty. Plotinus says that beauty is recognized by a corresponding faculty in the soul, which judges in union with the rest of the soul. But perhaps, he adds, the soul alone also decides, measuring beauty according to the idea that dwells within it (Enn. I. 6. 3). The soul rejoices and is moved when it becomes aware of the trace of what is kindred to it. Beauty appears where the originally formless participates in form (μετοχή εἶδους). What does not have a share in Logos and form-tendency is utterly ugly. But also ugly is what was not completely mastered by shape and concept (μὴ κρατηθὲν ὑπὸ μορφῆς καὶ λόγου), because matter did not allow a shaping completely corresponding to the form-tendency.

Whatever form is present in the perceptible world stems from the soul and thus from the spirit. For that which is unnatural, there is no idea in the spiritual, just as there is also no form in the arts of that which is contrary to art. A congenital paralysis of the foot is based on the fact that the formative power could not master matter; a paralysis due to accident, on the other hand, is based on damage to the exemplary form (Enn. V. 9. 10). The opposite of beauty is ugliness. It is defined as a foreign admixture in the soul, as a turning toward the corporeal and the material (Enn. I. 6, 5). True being belongs only to that which has form; the truly existent is also the beautiful, the not truly existent is the ugly. At the same time, the former is the good, the latter the evil (Enn. I. 6. 6). 'Where beauty decreases, being also acquires a lack. Therefore being is also desirable, because it is the same as beauty, and beauty is lovable because it is being' (Enn. V. 8. 9).

B) Art and Nature

In the treatise on spiritual beauty, although Plotinus does not actually turn to the artist's creative work, he begins setting forth his thoughts with an example that makes his 'idealist' doctrine of the artist and art completely clear. Let us imagine, he says, two blocks of marble, one devoid of all articulation and unworked, the other mastered by art and fashioned into the image of a god. The one created by art appears beautiful not because it is a stone, otherwise the other would be equally beautiful, but by virtue of the beautiful form which art has imprinted on it (παρὰ τοῦ εἶδους ὃ

ἐνῆκεν ἡ τέχνη, V. 8.1). 'This form was not inherent in the material, but existed, even before entering the stone, in the mind of the sculptor, and in it, not insofar as he had eyes and hands, but insofar as he shared in art. So in art this beauty was much higher. For it did not enter into the block of marble, but remaining itself, sent forth from itself a lesser [beauty]; and the latter did not remain pure in it either, and obeyed the will of the sculptor only to the extent that the stone yielded to art'. Art is thus beautiful in a higher and truer sense, because it (and not the work) possesses beauty (μειζόνως καὶ ἀληθεστέως καλή ἐστι τὸ κάλλος ἀχοῦσα τὸ τέχνης, V. 8. 1). For everything that spreads itself forth gives up something of its essence, power from power, and so also beauty from beauty; every creative principle is in itself stronger than that which it creates: καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ποιῶν πᾶν καθ' αὐτὸ κρεῖττον εἶναι δεῖ τοῦ ποιουμένου (ib.). Plotinus is aware that in this doctrine he has overcome Plato's mimesis theory with its denigration of artistic activity. 'Since the arts possess beauty, they add something to everything deficient, just as Pheidias did not form his Zeus after any perceivable model, but as Zeus would look if he ever appeared before us' (V. 8. 1).

The value of individual arts now no longer depends on their relation to the appearing model, but on their greater or lesser distance from the non-appearing idea (form). And Plotinus assumes that the imitative arts in the narrower sense (painting, sculpture, dance and pantomime), which take something sensory as their model, can only be traced back to the realm of supersensible forms through the 'logos' of man. Music, on the other hand, which directs all its thoughts to harmony and rhythm, corresponds to the music in the sphere of pure spirit.

Would completely distort Plotinus' doctrine if one ascribed to it any privileging of the 'artist' in the modern sense. What we call artistic activity is here integrated into a much more comprehensive activity which, according to its rank, is not comparable with the generative power of nature. In order to determine the relationship between nature and art, we must refer to Plotinus' concept of the creative power. *The creative is one, the created many*. The resting wisdom (φρόνησις) of the world must not be confused with human striving for wisdom, which springs from a lack. He who still has to reflect resembles a cithara player practicing; once he has mastered his instrument, he no longer needs to reflect. So it is with the highest creative power: it does not seek wisdom but possesses it, and therefore it rests (its creation is therefore a beholding, Enn. IV. 4. 12). Nature, however, is an image (ἄλμα) of wisdom. It creates without knowing. Without choice and purpose it passes on what it has to matter (Enn. IV. 4. 13). Nature, because of its immediate relation to the creative power, is 'more beautiful' than art. Life takes precedence over symmetry. 'An uglier living thing is still more beautiful than a beautiful statue'. Why? Because it is more desirable; but this is because it has soul; the soul in turn

receives light and beauty from the Good (VI. 7. 22). There is a climax of formedness, whereby the living takes precedence over the dead, even if the latter partakes of symmetry. This climax can be imagined according to the analogy of Plotinus' 'light metaphysics', according to which spirit, life, love, beauty take the place of the highest, inaccessible light, from where formedness (soul-likeness) diminishes more and more towards the darkness of formlessness.

The intellectual principle of construction always remains the same. The beauty of color arises from the fact that the darkness in matter is overcome by the presence of the incorporeal light. Therefore fire as such is also more beautiful than the other bodies. It shines and glistens, as befits form. 'With sounds it is insensible harmonies that produce the sensible ones; they let the soul become aware of the beautiful by showing it in something else what is akin to it' (I. 6. 3).

C) The Beautiful Soul

Plotinus' aesthetics can be summed up in the formula: the source of beauty is the beautiful soul. The philosopher of the soul also adopted the concept of the beautiful soul (the combination of words itself does not yet exist in this form) from Plato. We turn to inner beauty, the beauty of the soul, when we turn to outer beauty. The object of the soul's love is always only the soul itself. 'Not form, not color, not any size, but the soul itself, colorless, bearing within itself colorless self-control and the radiance of the other virtues: to perceive within yourselves or to behold in another, magnanimity, just sense, pure self-discipline, courage with its serious countenance, dignity and chastity, which unfold in a calm, undisturbed soul condition, stirred by no excitement and no passion, and shining above all this the spirit, the godlike' (I. 6. 5).

Plotinus' system is based on the principle of the doubling of being. The produced being is understood and derived from a producing one. Everything external is grounded in an internal, every external form presupposes a creative 'inner form'. In this respect, the concept of the inner form (τὸ ἔνδον εἶδος) is the highest concept in Plotinian aesthetics. The inner form is the principle of inner beauty that remains after abstraction of the external. The house that the builder has erected is beautiful because it coincides with the inner form, with the idea of the house in his mind. It is 'a visualization of the indivisible in plurality' (I. 6. 3).

In the hovering character of the aesthetic basic concept εἶδος, the hovering character of Plotinian philosophy finds its expression. Εἶδος is everywhere present, being equivalent to ἰδέα, where the distance between the form-producing principle and matter is meant to be emphasized. In other passages, on the other hand, εἶδος is identical with μορφή: the shaped. This ambiguity and elusiveness of the key concept corresponds to the elusiveness of the Neoplatonic

concept of beauty. There is no form resting here in its own dimension. All form is only a 'reflection' of the highest form. We have tried to express this fact in some places by translating εἶδος as 'form-tendency'.

Abolition of being-form resting in its own symmetry and thus in the symmetry of the universe, this is, viewed historically, Plotinus' most consequential act. For understanding his aesthetics, the statement is above all important that the producer is stronger than the produced (see above p. 23). Form emanates from spirit as the ray of light emanates from the sun; it comes over matter; one cannot think here of any actual creating and moving. What happens here is not a dynamization of the realm of forms, but merely the withdrawal of the forming principle from the world of appearances. The soul makes beautiful, says Plotinus. But the principle of the soul, so must be answered from the standpoint of dimension aesthetics, deprives of soul. This principle takes from things the inherent measure; it makes their 'symmetry' something borrowed. The view of the world of Plotinus is characterized by the notion that form suffers a loss of power when it passes into matter. For it follows that true power exists only in the non-material. This is the 'ideal' formula for the devaluation of any appearing form.

The beauty of the soul, the inner form, is the generative principle of appearing beauty, the external form. Beauty thus 'is' twice: first in the soul, then in matter. In the νοῦς is the ἀρχέτυπον for all that is formed (Enn. V. 9. 9). 'What now exists like forms in the perceptible, stems from there; but what is not (shaped), does not' (ib. 9, 10 and 11). In these sentences from the treatise on spiritual beauty, the principle of the doubling of being emerges with unsurpassable clarity. At the same time it becomes clear that philosophy and science gain nothing by tracing back appearing beauty to the beauty of the soul. The systematic finding of an idle 'doubling of being' corresponds exactly to the position Plotinus occupies in the history of philosophical concepts: he himself did not increase the stock of concepts but merely used the existing one to represent a new state of soul; he did not conquer a new piece of world but showed the existing world in a new psychic illumination. In Plotinus the idea has become the highest good, and the most important expression of this transformation is the emergence of the notion of beauty. 'Beauty' is the expression that being is lovable. The world-historical significance of Plotinus lies in the fact that he was the first, even if with borrowed means, to formulate an erotic relationship of man to being.

Lovely is not the appearing form, but rather that from which the form is produced; lovely is not the appearing Being, but the true Being, which sustains in life all that appears. Lovely is the power which preserves as Being all that exists. Truth, Beauty, Goodness, and Being are the same. There is nothing else that would be desirable beyond this highest Good. How carefully Plato took care to isolate the feeling of pleasure in its domain

and keep it away from where it is a matter of cognizing being! But if he allowed it, then he took care that the 'symmetrical' structure of being became all the more clearly visible (see above, p. 14 f). In this distinction the passionate man proves himself a Greek. This distinction is abolished by Plotinus, and 'beauty' is the expression for it. Beauty and passionate love belong together: not in the naive sense meant by the Greek myth of Aphrodite, but in a sublime-rapturous sense. One must relate to the highest, to the world of ideas, with not only the head but also the heart. The realm of ideas is not a realm of coldly admired essences, but a spiritual world grasped with the heart. To raise oneself up to it is bliss. 'Elevation' from the dust of earthly life, the 'everyday', that is the effect of all genuine contemplation of ideas. Beauty is the expression for this 'elevating' character of the spiritual world.

Modern philosophy of beauty, with all its sentimentality and unfruitfulness, is rooted in Plotinus' philosophy. Plotinus' aesthetics is an aesthetics of the highest good. From this it follows of itself that it is a 'content aesthetics'. This new content aesthetics is separated from the aesthetics of symmetry by the rapturous negation of the world of appearances, expressed methodically by the doubling of being and form. In addition to the appearing symmetry we are to conceive another one from which the former only 'shines forth' (see above p. 18). One possible consequence of this doctrine is that now all appearances are sought out and examined with regard to the shining-forth beauty, that from every form the conclusion about the highest formative is drawn. Plotinus created the mental type of theodicy, and as the originator of this mental type he has incidentally also become the originator of aesthetics as a universal doctrine of beauty. The appearing beauty bears witness to the presence of the highest good in the world. In what follows we see everywhere, where the idea of the highest good and theodicy emerge, at the same time the aesthetic worldview emerge. With it is connected each time the standpoint of content aesthetics and the unconditional privileging of natural beauty above everything that human beings have produced artificially. If the highest beauty is in the spirit, but the spirit shines forth directly from the creations of nature, above all from the living soul, then what is made by man necessarily recedes. Thus we see in Plotinus natural beauty exalted at the expense of that beauty which art is capable of; we find natural light named as the first example of the beautiful, and in all thinkers of theodicy (with the exception of Hegel) we will find the hymn to nature again.

The philosophy of the beautiful seems to point us the way to the principle of formation. If one reads Plotinus' words about the inner form and about the creative work of the sculptor, one could be strengthened in this opinion. But Plotinus has become an aesthetician of artistic creation only through a misunderstanding of later thinkers. Already the real natural form is indifferent

to him, even more indifferent is the artistic form. His theory of art arises solely through an intensification of the concepts of 'bringing forth' and 'creating'. Intensification into the supersensible is indeed the principle of rapture in general, but no cognition is gained through intensification; blurring of boundaries can have an 'elevating' effect, but certainly not an enlightening one. Plotinus' path from form to the principle of all formation, from external appearance to inner form, this path 'inward', to the soul, this path of spiritualization of an alleged 'external', it is nothing other than a subtle means of denigration, invented by a spirit fleeing the world of appearances. The beautiful appearance becomes delimited so that the spirit can be boundlessly beautiful. For the ascetic human being, the path of de-delimitation is a holy path. In science and philosophy, on the other hand, this path is easy to take, with edifying effect, but it proves itself scientifically and philosophically as an unfruitful aberration. This becomes most evident in view of the ambiguity that is necessarily connected with a doctrine of beauty in the sense of Neoplatonism. Plotinus' system allows the sensuous appearance to 'participate' in the beautiful. It is indeed only a reflection of spiritual beauty, but still a reflection. This thought underlies that two-facedness of the philosophy of the beautiful which has remained with it to this day. With this thought one can justify everything and condemn everything. The appearance is acknowledged, but it is also not acknowledged again, for it is only an image of something that is there, and not 'now' and 'here'.

Literature

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III. Augustinus

In his examination of early Christian literature, Overbeck came to the insight that viable Christian literature could only come about in the forms of what already existed (F. Overbeck to F. Nietzsche, Jan 31, 1882) (Nietzsche, Overbeck, Oehler, & Bernoulli, 1916). *The new content by no means developed new forms for*

itself, it merely appropriated those already existing. 'Christianity sublimates all things', Overbeck had written earlier to Nietzsche, 'but basically it remains the same' (April 7, 1879). This 'basically' is paradoxical, for 'basically' everything has changed, only the form has not. For one who thinks historically, forms are by no means insignificant, and early Christianity's dependence, indeed that of the entire Middle Ages, on the antique stock of forms and ideas is a phenomenon worth reflecting upon.

What applies to literary forms applies equally to philosophical concepts. The Platonic theory of ideas had already been made serviceable by Plotinus to a spirit foreign to it. The relation of man to the spiritual world had been defined as an affective one, as a relation of longing and love; the watchword 'back', the parole for flight, had attached itself to it. Both could be interpreted Christianly. Likewise, the most important change that Plotinus had made to the concept of the idea offered itself for Christian interpretation. The archetypes of things now no longer appeared as independent entities or powers, but rather as thoughts of the *voûç*. The Platonist among the Fathers of the Church, Augustine, thus had, as the historical observer might say, 'only' to 'replace' the *voûç* of the Neoplatonists with the personal God of the Christians, and a Christian doctrine of ideas was there. From now on, the ideas dwell in the intellect of God; they are thoughts of the almighty Creator, the prototypes of His creation, which, while everything formed after them arises and perishes, themselves remain eternally unchanging. This 'only' is just as paradoxical as Overbeck's 'basically'. For in reality, not of the logical context, which is also a 'reality', but with regard to individual human beings who adopted this new conception of the idea, nothing has remained the same. What can appear as a small change in logical terms signifies for human beings the collapse of a world. This can be recognized with all desirable clarity in our field. Augustine went through the school of Roman rhetoric; as a rhetorician, as he himself relates, he composed (a now lost) treatise '*On the Beautiful and Fitting*' ('*De pulchro et apto*'). If we look at his remarks on the beautiful in later writings, we find them in complete accordance with ancient tradition. Undoubtedly, Augustine himself was of the highest sensitivity towards beauty as a human being. Nevertheless, every statement he makes testifies to a new relationship to nature and art.



Figure 5: From left to right: Augustinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Pseudo-Dionysius and the celestial hierarchy.

A) Beauty

In the Book 4 (approx. Chapter 13) of the ‘*Confessions*’, Augustine asks: ‘What is beautiful, and what is beauty? What is it that attracts us and makes us friends of the things we love? They would not attract us to themselves if they did not have charm (*dēcus*) and form. And I observed and saw that with bodies there is something that somehow makes up a whole and is therefore beautiful, but something else that makes them charming (*dēcēre*) because it conforms to something else, just as a body part conforms to the unity to which it belongs, or as a shoe conforms to the foot, and similar things’. The distinction between *pulchrum* and *aptum* in this sense is traditional in Greek aesthetics and Roman rhetoric. In Book 10 (approx. Chapter 34), when Augustine speaks of the beautiful things that humans produce, the beautiful things, the manifold beauty (*pulchra*) of the one beauty (*pulchritūdō*) that is their origin, are contrasted in a wholly Platonic way. In the midst of this Platonizing sentence, this is the compositional principle of the *Confessions*, falls a word that blows up the entire ancient metaphysics of beauty. ‘For the manifold beautiful things, which are conveyed through souls into skillful hands, come from that beauty which is above souls, and to which my soul sighs day and night’ (*Quōniam pulchra trāiēcta per animās in manūs artificiōsās ab illā pulchritūdine vēniunt quae super animās est, cū suspīrat anima mea diē ac nocte*). The sudden turn to the soul’s own troubled self and its relation to God is what is surprising. The soul that sighs day and night cannot linger with beauty. The terrible seriousness of the relationship to God precludes any relationship to apparent beauty: all other relationships founder on this most real of relationships. Augustine relates to art as a whole just as much as a ‘realist’ as Plato related to the mimetic arts. His realism is radical, removing and devaluing everything that could distract the troubled soul from its exclusive relationship with God. When humans turn to works of art, they turn outward, to what they create, and abandon within themselves the one who

created them. And just as much when they abandon themselves to the beauties of nature. ‘The eyes love beautiful shapes in varied alternation’, says Augustine, ‘they love bright and graceful colors. But my soul must not let itself be bound by them; it must remain bound to the one who created all this.... Seductively the light, the queen of colors, which pours itself out over everything visible, approaches us even when we, busy with other things, do not notice it; and when it suddenly disappears, a longing for it remains behind, and when it is gone for a long time, our mind becomes gloomy’. Thus Augustine describes the natural beauty of light, to which Plotinus also gave special mention. But now the sudden insertion: ‘O light that Tobias saw when he guided his son on the path of life with closed eyes’, etc. ‘That is the true light, which is one, and all are one who see it and love it. That physical light, on the other hand, seasons the blind lovers of the world with alluring but dangerous sweetness’. The whole thinking of the early Christian era is based on the contrast between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, and art collapses together with nature into the abyss of carnality. Paulinus of Nola refuses to have an image made of himself and his wife, because one cannot portray the *homō cōelestis*, and one should not portray the *homō terrēnus* (Panofsky, *Idea*, p. 71; cf. above p. 19).

B) Number

The eminent position that Augustine occupies as a mediator between antiquity and the middle Ages, even in the history of the aesthetic problem, would not be explicable from the remarks quoted alone. *The inward turn, the turn against the ‘flesh’, is characteristic of all early Christian writers. It necessarily had a destructive effect. Augustine, on the other hand, did not only have a destructive but also a preserving and constructive effect.* Everywhere else, the founder of the Latin Church anticipated the harshest, cruelest questions for the thinking of posterity, in the aesthetic realm he behaved conservatively and preserved one of the greatest and most important ideas of antiquity. The idea that

Neoplatonism had expelled and believed it had destroyed, the idea of symmetry or the measure inherent in things, is taken up by Augustine and united with Christian-Neoplatonic metaphysics. Thereby, alongside Plato, Augustine joins the ranks of mediators of the Pythagorean system of thought, whose main concept is number, measure, rhythm (*nūmerus*). His structure of thought is the last of antiquity: the, admittedly contradictory, synthesis of Pythagoras (Plato) and Plotinus.

In the Neoplatonic system, the Platonic duplication of being had been eliminated in terms of the content of the doctrine by the fact that matter, as the dark and formless, appeared as a non-being (μη ὄν) in contrast to the forming light. This monism of theory was contradicted by the practice of escape, through which the reality of that which one fled was practically confirmed. Matter, which was theoretically a μη ὄν, constituted practically the not quite negligible world of the 'external', to devote oneself to which was a falling away from the 'spirit', in Christian Neoplatonism from God. Apparently, Augustine's adherence to the Pythagorean tradition makes this situation even more complicated, since in addition to the existing, but theoretically denied, duplication of being, there is now the idea of universal order, which contradicts Neoplatonic thought. Precisely the idea of order, however, offered Augustine the possibility of expressing his strict monism, the monism of the Creator God.

God has ordered everything according to number, measure and weight, the world as God's creation is beautiful, nature is one great hymn of praise to the Creator. This could be extracted from Romans 1:20, while a justification of art as a human work was not possible in view of Acts 17:29. When the idea of the unity and omnipotence of the Creator was held with such unconditionality, as was done by Augustine, it was possible to incorporate the Pythagorean world as the world of God into the new Christian system. *The duplication of being in Platonism was now replaced by the contrast between God and the world: in the face of this dualism, however, a twofold accounting was possible. As the 'external', the world was a μη ὄν; as 'creation' it was an immaculate work of eternal wisdom.*

In Plotinian terms, the beauty of nature would have had to be described in a completely indeterminate way as a 'shining through' of spiritual beauty. But if we find the Plotinian motif of flashing forth in Augustine again, it has a new meaning. When the human spirit transcends itself, the eternal primal number, divine wisdom itself, flashes towards it from its inner abode (K. Eschweiler, 'Die ästhetischen Elemente in der Religionsphilosophie des hl. Augustin', 1909, p. 47). The concept of symmetry, excluded by Neoplatonism, re-enters the doctrine of beauty and is made serviceable to the new, Christian theodicy. An entire program of aesthetics lies in the words of Augustine's treatise 'De

ordine': 'Contemplating earth and heaven, he perceived with pleasure nothing but beauty, and in beauty the figures, in the figures the dimensions, and in the dimensions the proportions' ('... terram coelumque collustrāns sēnsit nihil aliud quam pulchritūdinem sibi placēre. et in pulchritūdine figūrās, in figūris dimēnsiōnēs, in dimēnsiōnibus numerōs', Eschweiler, p. 12). Plotinus had risen from visible beauty to the One as the source of beauty. Augustine goes from the idea of supreme beauty further to the concept of beauty, from there to the concept of form, from there to the concept of measuredness, from there to the concept of proportion (rhythm). Led by the concept of order, he travels the path back to appearance. Alone because of this act, Augustine must be counted among the most influential shapers in the history of aesthetic science [**Footnote in the original edition:** Of course, there are also passages in Augustine's works that allow the Neoplatonic doctrine of beauty with its duplication of beauty to shine through. Thus Conf. X, 6, where the light and sound and fragrance of nature is contrasted with a kind of light and sound and fragrance that belongs to God and the inner human. Or when carnal numbers and spiritual numbers are distinguished (Eschweiler, p. 13 note 2)].

A much-noted definition of Augustine's (after Cic. Tusc. 4, 31) reads: *Omnis enim corporis pulchritūdō est partium congruentiā cum quādam colōris suāvitātē (De Civ. Dei 22, 19)*. Further characteristics of beauty enumerated by him are: *ūnitās, aequālītās, similitūdō, convenientia (prōportiō), ordō*. He repeatedly uses the sentence that composite beauty as a whole is more beautiful than in the part (Eschweiler, p. 11). Certainly this was the common property of Greek aesthetics, but it had been destroyed by Neoplatonism. We owe the preservation of the idea of measure to Augustine's unusual aesthetic talent and his education through Roman rhetoric.

C) The Highest Good. Theodicy

That Augustine finds the 'measure' of the world primarily in the form of rhythm (*nūmerus*) corresponds to the dynamism of his being and thinking, which is foreign to the idea of a resting substance. Being is moving and moved life. God is indeed the unchangeable truth (*veritās incommūtābilis*), but not a resting truth and not a resting being but living truth and true vitality. Since every enhancement of being (life) is at the same time an enhancement of perfection and bliss, for life is perfection and bliss, in God being and truth, perfection and bliss coincide in the highest enhancement. From this point of view, God is called the highest good (*summum bōnum*). To strive for truth, to turn to God, means at the same time to long for life and bliss. The relation of the soul to God as the *summum bonum* is that of enjoyment, whereby 'to enjoy' means as much as to love for its own sake and is to be distinguished from 'to use' (cf. J. Bernhart, 'Augustinus. Ein Lesebuch', 1922, p. 144).

If form-weakness is being-weakness, and lack of form is lack of being, while enhancement of form, on the other hand, is enhancement of being, then beauty is a necessary expression of the strength of being, then God, the *ēns reālisissimum*, as it was later called, is also the highest beauty. ‘You my Father, You my highest good, You beauty above all beauties’, Augustine says in the Confessions (*Mī Pater summē bonē, pulchritūdō pulchrōrum omnium*, Conf. III, 6). And in another passage: ‘Late have I loved You, You old and new Beauty, late have I loved You’ (Conf. X, 27). From this point of view, ‘beauty’ is a word for the union of truth, perfection and supreme pleasure in the highest being. Could it be just a coincidence that in Augustine’s description of the rapture of the soul to God, that phrase seems to appear for the first time which later in Dante and in the Renaissance denotes the irrationality of the experience of beauty? Beauty is portrayed there as an ‘I know not what’. *But Augustine describes as an experience that he is sometimes transported into a strange state and feels in it an ineffable sweetness* (‘...You send me into a strange state and into I know not what sweetness...’, *ad nescio quam dulcēdinem*, Conf. X, 40). Augustine knows beauty as form, as rhythm, and as the *summum bonum*. However, his aesthetics, which encompasses everything that antiquity thought about the beautiful, is not yet exhausted. The idea of the *summum bonum* as the beauty above all beauties, the emotional conception of the concept of truth, the emergence of the concepts of love, bliss, light, all this indicates that the ultimate impulses of Augustine’s thinking again and again coincide with Neoplatonism. This becomes particularly clear in view of the idea of theodicy. In the Plotinian system this idea was possible without contradiction; Augustine, however, had adopted the concept of *numerus*, he could not at the same time assert and deny a general order of being, as he had to do if he admitted relatively disproportionate, relatively arrhythmic (*innūmerosē*) parts of creation. What is meant by a relative-rhythmic? The idea of theodicy and the concept of *numerus* exclude each other: either being is ordered in itself, or certain parts need a ‘justification’.

The whole in the sense of Plotinus is not an order expressed in numerical relationships, but a symphony of different intensities of being. Each intensity level corresponds to a certain degree of beauty, since being has only what has form. The ‘whole’ here is thus a harmony of stronger and weaker beauties. The individual beautiful is both beautiful and ugly: the former insofar as the form tendency has prevailed, the latter insofar as matter reigns. Unrestrictedly beautiful is only the spirit. Neoplatonic theodicy is concerned with the defense of the less beautiful, with the justification of the weaker role of being. Here the idea of theodicy is inseparable from the idea of form. Nothing that exists at all is bad in itself, but only by comparison with the more perfect. Considering the whole, in its place it is (relatively) good (Enn. III. 2, 17). The ‘whole’ in the Plotinian sense is not an ordered whole like the Pythagorean cosmos, but a

whole of relative participation. According to the symmetrical view, on the other hand, there are no ugly places in music or in the structure of the world, not even relatively ugly ones. Everything is beautiful only through its own commensurability and commensurability with the whole, but everything is equally beautiful. This ‘whole’ is not a picturesque whole composed of light and shadow, in which the shadow is just as necessary as the light, but a substantial whole in which everything has the same necessary relation to the ‘whole’.

In Augustine, the idea of theodicy has a different meaning: we do not know God’s plans, we cannot survey his work. What sounds to us like the harshest dissonance may, seen from his perspective, bear within itself the meaning of infinite beauty. With the idea of sin and evil, an antithetic enters into thinking that is completely unknown to Plotinus. ‘The contest is no longer pleasing to him who is defeated, yet it would not be beautiful if he had not fared ugly’ (*Nūllī autem vērō lūdī āgōnisticī placent, sed tamen cum eius dedecōre decōrī sunt*, Eschweiler, p. 53 n. 3). The aesthetic dialectic that emerges here takes on the cruelest form as soon as the idea of predestination comes into play. Seen from this perspective, God’s permission of evil becomes an aesthetic problem to be solved: even the creation of the evil ones (angels or men) makes sense in the ‘poem’ of the whole. (... *atque ita ordinem saeculōrum tamquam pulcherrimum carmen ex quibusdam quasi antithētis honestāret*, Eschweiler, p. 51 n. 1). The comparison with the painting with its black spots also recurs (*ib. n. 2*), indeed death is compared with the muses in a declamation (Eschweiler, p. 52 n. 3 and 4). With all this, the ancient idea of cosmos and the Pythagorean concept of symmetry are incompatible.

IV. Middle Ages and Renaissance

The unknown man of the 5th century AD, who under the effective name of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite brought the Neoplatonic system down to a few simple formulas and thus handed it down to the Middle Ages, has had a lasting influence on the history of aesthetics. Through him primarily the Neoplatonic concept of the beautiful is transmitted to the following centuries. Medieval aesthetics has two main sources: alongside Aristotle, who defines art theory, Augustine and Dionysius for the theory of beauty. Art theory and theory of beauty proceed completely separately alongside each other (cf. below p. 65 f). A ‘beauty of art’ does not exist for the whole Middle Ages. The predicate of beauty accrues solely to God and his creation. One thinks as Chrysostom had already thought: ‘Who does not despise all the creations of art when in the stillness of heart he admires early in the morning the rising sun...’ (A. von Humboldt, ‘*Kosmos*’ II, p. 30). When in the 9th century one enumerates the seven most beautiful things in the world, one names the heavenly vault, sun and moon, a greening fruit garden, the sea, the chorus of believers and the righteous, and the *rex pacificus* (F. von

Bezold, 'Das Fortleben der antiken Götter im mittelalterlichen Humanismus', 1922, p. 35).

Between early Christianity in Asia Minor, Africa, and Rome and the High Middle Ages lie 900 years of history. At the height of Scholasticism, in the works of Thomas Aquinas, something of Hellenic sensibility for beauty shines forth again, reflected from a pure mirror: so tremendous is the turn of events. 'The Lord himself, according to Clement of Alexandria, was devoid of all beauty in his outward appearance'. Thomas, on the other hand, writes: 'Everything that is good and noble in the created must necessarily be in God in the best and noblest way' (cf. M. Dvorak, 'Kunstgeschichte als Geistesgeschichte', 1924, pp. 70 f). There is the old

contrast between 'inside' and 'outside', soul and flesh; here the most finely elaborated idea of an order of all values founded in God.

It does not seem impossible to present the entire theological-philosophical system of Thomas Aquinas from the point of view of beauty. For everything is good, i.e. ordered toward God. From this universal order emanates a splendor which can be interpreted as God's joy: God simply delights in all things because each, with its essence, is in actual accord (cited op. cit., p. 95). No longer does alien splendor frighteningly shine into the decayed world (*sæculum*), rather, the world lies as ordered creation in the light of grace.

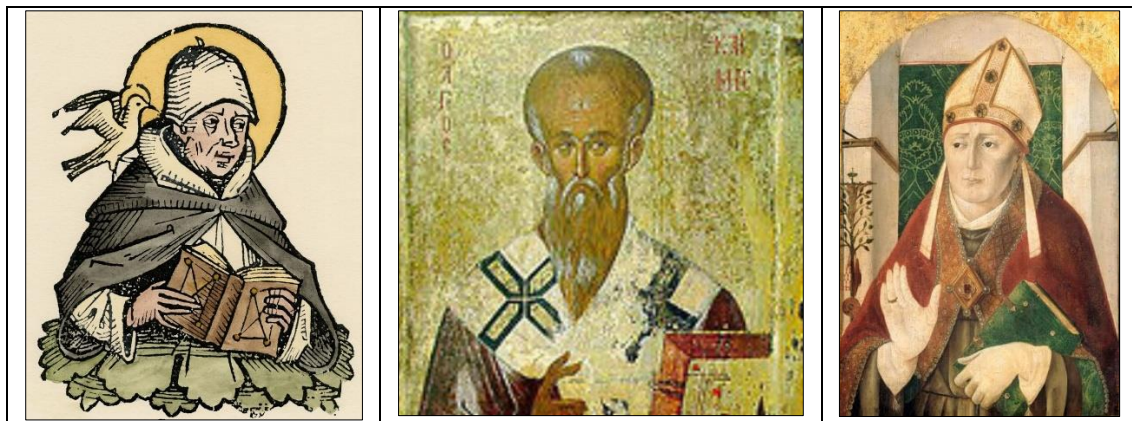


Figure 6: From left to right: Thomas Aquinas, Clement of Alexandria, Bonaventura.

A) Bonaventura and Ulrich Von Strassburg

Bonaventura links Neoplatonic light metaphysics with the contrast between sin and grace. Things are ordered according to their likeness to God. In man, to whom the light of reason is given, likeness is greatest; through grace this light is enhanced even further. The divine light is the fundamental and primordial form of all things. 'Nothing is without light, because it is form, and form gives being' (E. Lutz, 'Die Ästhetik Bonaventuras. Festgabe für Clemens Baeumker', 1913, p. 209). Grace is opposed by sin as the created light is opposed by matter. The ground of beauty is thus form or light; these two are beauty itself. The true, the good and the beautiful are identical, yet the good as such is object of the appetitive faculty; it is beautiful in relation to the *vis cōgnōscitīva* (ibid. pp. 209 f).

Like Bonaventura, Albertus Magnus, his pupil Ulrich von Strassburg, and finally Thomas Aquinas draw from the treatise of Pseudo-Dionysius on the divine names. The commentary on this text that is fundamental for medieval aesthetics stems from Albertus Magnus (*ōpūsculum dē bonō et pulchrō*). Pseudo-Dionysius speaks of *concinnitās* and *nītor* (Ἐναρμονία καὶ ἀγλαΐα), which both resemble light because they spring from the highest source of light. As all good springs from God's goodness, so all wisdom springs from His wisdom and all beauty from His beauty. By sharing in His essence,

through love of His own beauty God holds everything together (According to M. Grabmann, Sitz.-Ber. der Bayer. Akad. d. Wies. 1926, p. 60). Following this, beauty is defined by Ulrich von Strassburg as *consonantia cum claritate*. 'As the physical light is the cause of the beauty of all colors, so is the *lūx formālis*, the light shining in the forms, the beauty of all forms' (ibid. pp. 58 f). I see in this an attempt to resolve the contradiction, evident in Augustine, between the universal idea of order (*cōnsōnāntīa*) and light metaphysics (*clārītās*). Symmetry (*cōnsōnāntīa*) is brought into a necessary connection with *clārītās*. The light of form radiates only over what is so formed that it stands in proportion to it (ibid. p. 35). The light of form hovers only over things that are in due proportion.

B) Thomas Aquinas

Through Thomas, the reconciliation between the idea of symmetry and light metaphysics carried out in Albert's commentary is fused with Aristotelianism. The concept of the beautiful includes *claritas* and *debita proportio*. Proportionateness of parts is the characteristic of corporeal beauty. (*Pulchrum autem respicit virt cognoscitivam: pulchra enim dicuntur, quae visa placent. Unde pulchrum in debita proportionem consistit, quia sensus delectatur in rebus debite proportionatis, sicut in sibi similibus.* According to Baumgartner in 'Überwegs Grundriß'. II. 1915, p. 503). Although the beauty of

appearances is dealt with here, the modern notion of merely phenomenal beauty should be rejected. In accordance with the ancient concept of measure, it is entirely a matter of objective beauty. 'The faculty of sensory perception is here inserted merely as an intermediary between the well-proportioned object and the human being who recognizes the beauty of the object' (H. Brinkmann, 'Zu Wesen und Form mittelalterlicher Dichtung', 1928, p. 5).

The good and the beautiful are one. What is good is striven for its own sake; what is beautiful must first, according to the form it possesses corresponding to the archetype in God's intellect, be recognized, which

recognition takes place through the eye and ear. Only the actual senses of cognition (quī maximē cōgnōscitīvī sunt), sight and hearing, come into consideration here: only what is seen and heard can be called beautiful, but not what we taste and smell. Beautiful is what pleases in and of itself in cognitive apprehension (. . . Pulchrum autem id, cūius ipsā apprehēnsiō placet.. After Baumgartner p. 502 f).

In what manner finally in the *Summā Theologiae* the concepts of *intēgritās sive perfēctiō* are added and connected with the doctrine of the Son and of the Father, no longer belongs to our theme.



Figure 7: From left to right: Albertus Magnus, Dante Alighieri.

Max Dvorak attempted to construct a connection between the aesthetics of the high Scholastics and the new art of the Gothic ('*Art History as History of Ideas*', p. 102 and passim). I consider neither a subjective nor an objective (unconscious) agreement to be possible. The prerequisites are missing for this: an independent aesthetic reaction and an independent aesthetic reflection. What does not succeed even within antiquity, to harmonize aesthetic reflection and transformation of styles, since the most important motive-ideas remain unchanged, also does not succeed in the Middle Ages. Certainly the tremendous upheaval that takes place in the 13th century also expresses itself in the forms of thought, just as in the style of the simultaneously arising art. But one must not observe the aesthetic concepts if one wishes to recognize this parallelism. One must turn to the metaphysical central concepts. In aesthetic reflection the ancient tradition remains predominant. A correspondence between aesthetic theory and the style of art can only be determined beginning with Alberti.

C) Dante

According to the content of his work Dante belongs to the Middle Ages; according to the style in which he expresses this content, he is the first person of a new time (see below p. 67 f). The metaphysics of light and the highest love, the aesthetics of the *summum*

bōnum (if this expression may be permitted) is presupposed everywhere in the *Divine Comedy*.

La divina bontà, che da se sperne
Ogni livore, ardendo in se scintilla
Sì, che dispiega le bellezze eterne.
(Parad. VII, 64 ff)

Luce intellettuale piena d'arndre,
Amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
Letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.
(Parad. XXX, 40 ff)

When Dante touches upon the aesthetic problem in the theoretical writings, he expresses himself in agreement with Scholasticism. But he does not do so without making a personal addition. Speaking of the soul, he says that it acts through bodily organs, and then acts correctly when the body is built rightly and fittingly in all its parts. 'And when it is rightly and fittingly built, then it is beautiful in the whole and in the parts; the proper order of our limbs excites a pleasure from I know not what kind of wondrous harmony...' (E quand'egli è ben ordinato e disposto, allora è bello per tutto e per le parti; che l'ordine debito delle nostre membra rende un piacere di non so che armonia mirabile... Convivio, c. 25).



Figure 8: From left to right: Marsilio Ficino, Gian Paolo Lomazzo, Giordano Bruno.

D) Ficino, Lomazzo

Nothing can make the continuity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance clearer with regard to the doctrine of the beautiful than the fact that Marsiglio Ficino still composed a commentary on the writing of Dionysius about the divine names. It fits the conventional conception of the Renaissance so little that Ficino thinks more ‘medievally’ here than the High Middle Ages, that his concept of beauty is more spiritualistic, more hostile to the body than that of the high Scholastics. The reason for this is simple: Ficino is an extreme Neoplatonist, while the high Scholasticism on the other hand stands under the influence of Aristotle. But Aristotelianism educates one to respect the world of the senses.

The high Scholasticism only arrived at an aesthetics insofar as it took up Neoplatonic strands of thought. From Aristotle, an aesthetics was not attainable for it, because art (in the narrower sense) did not exist as an independent domain of being for the theoretical human of the Middle Ages. In addition, the only Aristotelian passage (Met. XII, 3; see below p. 51) that could have provided stimulus was obscured by Albert's commentary, which rendered $\chi\alpha\lambda\acute{\eta}\nu$ as *bōnum*. (According to Grabmann op. cit. p. 31 f). Grabmann's observation that the later Aristotelian commentators of nominalist orientation expressed little or nothing at all about the beauty of spiritual and bodily kinds (op. cit. p. 21) is of historiographic significance. It confirms our thesis that the countermovement to the metaphysics of beauty issues from Aristotle. But ‘nominalism’ as well, which at the end of the Middle Ages also could not produce an aesthetics because art was still not an ‘object’, only brought forth the aesthetics of the concept of style in the 19th century. The founding of the *Academia Platonica* in Florence (1470) by Cosimo de Medici is of no small importance for the history of aesthetics. Without this founding and the works that emerged from it, the old metaphysics of beauty would

perhaps have been buried under the new onslaught of Aristotelianism in the 16th century, and art theory would have held the field alone.

Gemistos Plethon and Marsiglio Ficino, the leading minds of the ‘Academy’, speak of Plato but mean Plotinus, through whom in their opinion the wisdom of Pythagoras and Plato was first unveiled to us. Ficino translates Plotinus into Latin (Florence 1492): with this deed begins that posthumous existence of Neoplatonism which reaches its late climax in the aesthetics of German classicism and in Hegel's philosophical system. The significance of Ficino's commentaries on the *Symposium*, *Phaedrus* and the *Enneads* for the history of the theory of beauty has been elucidated by Panofsky (Regarding the following: ‘*Idea*’ p. 28ff). A priestly rather than a philosophical spirit blows through the Florentine ‘Academy’, in accordance with the character of Neoplatonism. The ideas as the ‘true substances’ are immanent in the mind of God; earthly things are only their images. Knowledge has only become possible for humans because their souls, from their pre-earthly existence, have preserved impressions of the ideas, like sparks of the divine primal light, which have almost gone out but can be brought to shine again through teaching. The aesthetic trait of the Neoplatonic system asserts itself when Ficino above all refers to the cognition of the beautiful for this theory of cognition. The idea of the beautiful impressed upon the mind enables us to recognize and judge visible beauty. What we enjoy in this cognition, the triumph of *eidos* over matter, is ultimately a victory of divine reason. That beauty in turn is referred to as a ‘ray’ from the countenance of God goes without saying. Ficino not only closely follows Plotinus with regard to the general mood but also in details. The rule of form over matter is formulated by him as *imperium formae super subiectum* (Panofsky, *Idea*, p. 94). Since *subiectum* (ὕποκειμενον) means as much as material (matter), this is the first formulation within

modern times of the later classical theory of beauty and art.

In his commentary on the Symposium, following Plotinus closely, Ficino refutes the view that beauty consists in the proper order of all parts. The notion of beauty's simple, qualitative essence, which alone fully accords with the metaphysics of light, seems here to want once more to eliminate the transmitted elements of classical proportion aesthetics. But the Renaissance Neoplatonist is not inclined to surrender proportion aesthetics. To save it he devises a kind of 'schematism': between the incorporeal beauty of the idea and the beauty of bodies intermediate members are inserted (*preparazioni incorporee*), whose characteristic is well enough accounted for by proportion aesthetics. The aim of the investigation is to prove that beauty is a gift from above. The quantitative determinations peculiar to beauty are indeed recognized, but only in order to figure as proof of the incorporeal character of beauty. Comparing this new subordination of the proportion-aesthetic element with the coordinate integration of the same element in the period of high Scholasticism, a fanatic trait cannot be mistaken in the former.

Here already the theology of a church preludes, a church which is no longer the 'catholic', Germanic-Romanesque church of the Middle Ages. The theology of the Counter-Reformation announces itself. *One is hardly surprised to rediscover Ficino as the most important source for the art theorist of the Counter-Reformation, Mannerism* (the proof of Lomazzo's dependence on Ficino was furnished by Panofsky. 'Idea', p. 52 ff). The tendency of this new, quasi non-naïve metaphysics of the beautiful aims at deriving symmetry from a supreme principle, i.e. from God.

Characteristically the new spirit expresses itself not so much positively in a new determination of beauty as negatively in a new accentuation of the Neoplatonic concept of ugliness. For Zuccaro, oriented in an Aristotelian-Scholastic manner (cf. below p. 78 f), matter is a 'thoroughly suitable and compliant substrate of the idea', whether of the human idea of the artist or the divine one. In contrast, for the Neoplatonic theorists of Mannerism matter appears as a resistant principle of evil and ugliness. 'It is now the *prava disposizione della materia* that causes the faults or errors of natural phenomenon, and the task of the artist as a 'minister of divine grace', as one of these authors puts it verbatim, consists in leading natural things back to their original state intended by their eternal creator' (Panofsky, *Idea*, p. 53).

The theologization of the concept of beauty expresses itself at the same time in the form of a theologization of the artist's vocation. The activity of the artist is interpreted as a struggle against 'matter', the artist becomes a colleague of the priest. In a manner of speaking he has to conjure matter and magic out of it

again the archetype it had received and which it only reluctantly gives up again.

Formally the same synthesis lies before us between the concept of art and the concept of beauty that is achieved on another level by Zuccaro and Bellori (cf. below p. 83). *The Idea of Beauty, which for centuries had remained essentially independent of the theory of art, now becomes the main content of the theory of art.* G. P. Lomazzo accomplishes the synthesis ('*Trattato dell' arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura*', 1585. '*Idea del Tempio della pittura*', 1590). Cautiously and with wise reservation in the early renaissance Alberti had set the concept of beauty in relation to art. Now by means of Lomazzo in the final consequence of Neoplatonism art is swallowed up by the idea of beauty. 'While Ficino' says Panofsky, 'in his writings had concerned himself with beauty yet not with art, and art theory had until now not concerned itself with Ficino, now we stand before the memorably significant historical fact that the mystical-pneumatological theory of beauty of Florentine Neoplatonism, after passing the interval of a whole century, is resurrected as mannerist metaphysics of art' (*Idea*, p. 55). This fact is less striking than Panofsky seems to assume. Rather, the rapprochement and repulsion between metaphysics of beauty and theory of art is the covert law underlying aesthetics as history of ideas in the past.

E) Bruno

The spirit not of the Renaissance as such but rather of its Neoplatonic branch condenses itself in the person and effect of Giordano Bruno. This man's position between the Middle Ages and modern times, between the Florentine Academy, its Plotinism and Kabbalism on the one hand, the modern view of nature and the revived Aristotelianism on the other is of eminent importance. Bruno influences German idealism far beyond his century, exercising the strongest influence as an aesthetic thinker.

The problem of 'beautiful' art that did not exist in the Middle Ages is at least seen in the 14th century. The aesthetes of the Renaissance certainly do not yet think of conceiving art as a mere realization of beauty. They linger by the notion of a certain relationship between art and beauty, and therein lies their wisdom. In the epoch following the Renaissance this measured relation between the two is dissolved, beauty casts itself into the role of master over art. In the aesthetes of Mannerism it first becomes the humble maidservant of beauty; in Giordano Bruno by contrast artistic activity, conceived universally, moves into the center but receives all its meaning and content through the concept of beauty. Bruno carries through the possibility implicit in Neoplatonism of interpreting the metaphysics of the One and the Beautiful on the basis of Aristotle's concept of ποιεῖς.

Bruno is the philosopher of 'life' in the sense of Plotinus, i.e. the philosopher of the soul and spirit. But he lets the 'One' stream forth into the world and swell up into the world soul. (From the historical point of view, a revival of the Stoic notion of immanence was overcome by Plotinus). How much he remains a Neoplatonist here is evident from his position regarding the concept of symmetry. The ancient doctrine of measure is cited by him as being ascribed to Orpheus, who calls the universal reason (L'intelletto universale) the 'eye of the world', 'because it sees all the things of nature within and without so that everything generates and maintains itself not only inwardly but also outwardly in its peculiar symmetry' ('*De la causa*', 2. Dial. Op. it. I, p. 174). Plotinus, it says further, calls her the father or first progenitor. By Bruno himself however she is called the 'inner artist' (artefice interno). So we should presumably also imagine to ourselves the inner artist as outer artist. But the development of the thought does not correspond to this demand. Quite like in Plotinus the inner formative force emerges dominantly. In order to have firmness and constancy, it says in the preface of the *Eroici furori*, all things of the universe must have weight, number, order and measure, so that they can be administered and ruled with justice and reason (Op. it. II, p. 290). The universe is subject to the law of Adrastea (a Plotinian phrase), and only those can approach the 'spiritual sun' who harmonize themselves with the divine inward harmony and the symmetry of the laws inherent in all things (ib. p. 334). That this means merely a rhetorical insertion of the concept of symmetry in that system which has robbed it of its actual value becomes clear through the continuation. All heroes and not merely animalistically loving ones have God as the object (of their love), strive toward divine beauty which first communicates itself to the souls and shines back (risplende) in them; from them, better through them, it first communicates itself to the bodies. Therefore it comes that the correctly formed feeling (*l'affetto ben formato*) loves corporeal beauty only so far as it is indication (indice) of spiritual beauty. 'It is always a certain spirituality that attracts us to the body; yet its name is beauty. This consists not in greater or lesser dimensions, not in definite colors or forms but in a certain harmony and consonance of limbs and colors' (Anzi quello che n'innamora del corpo, è una certa spiritualità, che veggiamo in esso, la qual si chiama bellezza; la qual non consiste nelle dimensioni maggiori o minori, non nelli determinati colori o forme, ma in certa armonia e consonanza de membri e colori, ib. p. 336). This is proved by the affinity of the mind with the more acutely and penetratingly perceiving sensory organs.

We see here the same attempt undertaken as we found in Ficino. *The concern is to do justice to a certain extent to outer form while retaining the Plotinian concept of 'inner form'*. This attempt is bound again and again to founder on the inexorable dialectic of the once assumed opposition of 'outside' and 'inside'. Its terminological expression finds this failure in the replacement of the

clear concept of symmetry by the altogether indefinitely remaining concepts of armonia and consonanza.

The blend of Platonic and Aristotelian concepts so characteristic for Neoplatonism has perhaps never found a more succinct expression than in Bruno's words: matter unites itself with the form of the universe 'so that the nature of the body, which is not beautiful in itself, so far as it can participate in beauty, since indeed there is no beauty that does not consist in a certain appearance (specie) or form, and no form that is not produced by the soul'. And indeed all forms of all things bear the form of the soul in themselves, so all things are thus ensouled (animato). (*De la causa*, 2. Dial. I, p. 179). From this follows, although it is not expressed, that all things also are beautiful in some degree. Aristotle's principle of form is combined with Plato's principle of idea and from this there emerges aesthetic idealism. Spirit (spirito) is the true reality (atto) and the true form of all things; soul (anima) is placed above matter and reigns (signoreggia) in the compound, effecting the union and constancy of parts (ib. p. 183). So in summary, says Bruno, we have an inward formal principle (principio intrinseco formale), that exists eternally and for itself. Only sophists hold substance to be perishable, because they wrongly call substance what emerges from the compound. But this is only an accident that dissolves into nothing. They say what emerges from the compound is truly the man, which is truly the soul, which is either the perfection or the energy (entelechia) of the living body, or even merely a thing that arises from a certain symmetry (certa simmetria) of bodily constitution (complessione) and the limbs (ib. p. 184).

Everything is reduced to the opposition of an unfathomable soul and an ensouled structure. The fundamental thought of all boundless thinking, that the soul has no measure, experiences at the end of the dialogue an ingenious formulation. World, soul and Godhead are fully present in the whole and in each part. One should not imagine this corporeally and spatially (corporalmente e dimensionalmente) but rather in the manner in which a voice is present as a whole in a whole room and in each part of it, for it is understood wholly everywhere. So the words which I now speak are understood wholly by all present, the wordplay with *tutto* and *tutti* that follows is untranslatable, even if thousands were here; and if my voice could reach the whole world, it would be there as a whole for the whole (ib. p. 189). Even if the mysterious presence of sound had already been employed by Plotinus to prove that the soul is a whole in itself but at the same time appears in many (Enn. VI, 4, 12), the manner in which Bruno employs the thought shows a heightening here. The forefeeling, in this heightening, of the dissolution through Mannerism and High Baroque of any even just phenomenally symmetrical visible form, the anticipation of the grand centuries of music that are approaching seems to be contained in it. Nothing can more contradict the clear bodily awareness of presence and the feel for proportion

of the Renaissance than this conclusion of the dialogue with its intense making-present of the mysterious omnipresence of the disembodied tone.

The universe is one, infinite, immobile; it moves not locally, because there is nothing outside it, it could move itself into, since it is all things. It can become neither smaller nor larger, for it is infinite; nothing can be added to the infinite nor taken away from it, for it has no parts which could be proportioned to one another (perché l'infinito non ha parti proporzionabili. 5. Dial. I., p. 239). In these sentences the thought that bursts asunder form reaches its culmination. They are the epitome of the 'philosophy' of a man oriented more literary than philosophically. Here for the first time we find the modern type of priest without a church in pure form. Philosophy, inspired by theology, the concept of 'infinite' life and 'absolute' spirit: this is the prelude of German idealism and modern philosophy of life. What the inspired man of letters Bruno propounds is genuine philosophy of life: never can the infinite be captured and contained by form, it is absolute unity, it has no comparable parts. By the Renaissance beauty had been posited in 'comparability' (Dürer). At the threshold of the Baroque Bruno sees the essence of beauty in incomparability.

A writer who had understood the concept of the One, the Infinite, the soul, inner form, had to become of necessity in the 16th century a herald of genius. The proximate cause is the new Aristotelianism: the 'Poetics' is translated and commented upon, Scaliger's Poetics appeared in 1561. 'So there are 'regolato' of poetry', it says in the first dialogue of the *Eroici furori*, 'who with toil and trouble barely let pass Homer as poet but among whom Virgil, Ovid, Martial, Hesiod, Lucretius and still many others are set among the number of rhymers (versificatori), because they measure them all according to the rules of Aristotelian poetics'. These 'beasts' completely miss the uniqueness and incomparability of the 'heroic' poet. Homer was not in his (innate) kind (nel suo genio) a poet who would have depended on rules, he is rather the cause of rules (è causa delle regole); rules may be good for those who feel more inclined to imitate than to invent. They have also only been collected by someone who was not himself a poet of any sort (sorte) but only understood how to collect the rules of this one sort (namely the Homeric one) for the use of one who did not want to become another kind of poet but one like Homer, who did not follow his own Muse but appeared

as ape of the Muse of another (scimmia della musa altrui) (II, p. 310).

The curse word of the Middle Ages for the artist was that he was the ape of nature (cf. below p. 61). The late Renaissance, which saw the artist in his pride, coins the new curse word of the 'ape of the muse of another'. The relationship of genius to the rules has not been described more clearly and decidedly even later (of course Bruno says hardly anything that the author of Τύφοι βύθιος would not already have known). Scaliger, who calls the poet 'another God' (alter deus), has arrived at a similar definition of the artist from completely different assumptions.

It is no coincidence that unrestricted thinking reaches a climax in grasping the peculiarity of genius: 'You conclude quite correctly that poetry is not born of rules, except in terms of incidental externalities. Rather, the rules are derived from poetry: and therefore there are just as many kinds and species (geni e specie) of true rules as there are kinds and species of true poets'. 'But then how are the true poets recognized?' asks the interlocutor. 'By the song of the verses; besides, by the fact that this song delights or instructs us or instructs and delights at the same time' (II, p. 310 f).

In the contrast between poet and versifier, the contrast between the 'inner form' and the 'proportions' appears before us once more. The level of fundamental decisions, however, has now been abandoned. The new insight is empirical-psychological in character; it merely amounts to a justification of the diversity of human dispositions and talents. The final formula is that there are and can be just as many kinds of poets 'as there can be and are human ways of feeling and inventing' (II, p. 311).

Literature

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Figure 9: From left to right: Denis Diderot, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Plutarch.

Second Section: The Concept of Art

I. Aristotle

Aristotle did not found a doctrine of beauty, but a doctrine of art. This theory of art did not have the brilliant fate of Plato's metaphysics of beauty.

It lies in the nature of Aristotle's questioning that it is less easily accessible, that above all it cannot be understood by the enthusiasts who have so willingly attached themselves to Plato, who is innocent of this. The theory of art lacks the enthusiastic *ἰδέσθαι*. Not because it would be 'sober': properly handled, it leads like any philosophical science to the knowledge of being.

Aristotle developed not only a general doctrine of being and a doctrine of action, but also a doctrine of art, taking the word in the broadest sense. Above the external division into physics, metaphysics, ethics and logic, which follows the content of the treatises, the division of the sciences into practical, productive and theoretical (*ἐπιστήμη πρακτική, ποιητική, θεωρητική*), which Aristotle himself mentions and substantiates convincingly at important points, has been wrongly relegated to the background (Met. V, 2; 1026; in a different order Top. V III, 1, 156). Aristotle only drew the basic lines for the productive science. The intention is recognizable, the execution is missing. The gaps in the tradition are also painfully felt here. Nevertheless, the influence of the philosophy of *πύσις* has been tremendous. Throughout the centuries, the trace of this philosophy extends, which in its unity is less easily recognizable than the metaphysics of the beautiful, but which surpasses the latter in terms of its significance for scientific cognition.

One must be warned against the repeatedly futile attempt to derive Aristotle's theory of art in the narrower sense from the remnants of the Poetics. Only when what art means in general for Aristotle is understood can an attempt be made to interpret the existing elaborations on the poetic art. Fundamental for Aristotle's philosophy of art are the Physics, the

Metaphysics, the Politics, and the Rhetoric. Here the Politics is of particular importance, especially in its first, third and eighth books. Furthermore, attention must be expressly drawn to the fallacy of the undertaking to smuggle in the delimitation between art in general and what later ages called 'fine art', i.e. between art in the broader and narrower sense, by simply passing off the later doctrine as Aristotelian. For such a substitution there is not the slightest support in Aristotelian terminology. (This proof was provided by A. Döring's book *The Art Doctrine of Aristotle*, 1876). The invention of an Aristotelian 'fine art' betrays the notion, completely inadequate to the history of the aesthetic problem, that aesthetics has been handed down to us from antiquity solely as a 'philosophy of the beautiful', while it is none other than Aristotle who is the inaugurator of a powerful counter current.

It is highly unlikely that among Aristotle's lost writings there was also an investigation on the beautiful. For Aristotle investigated nature, the soul, the state, human action, the forms of speech and thought, of poetry and of being in general, but he never made 'the logical' or 'the psychic' or 'the political' the object of an investigation. Just as little could this have happened with 'the beautiful', whose concept is so characteristic for Platonic philosophy. The place in the system where one would believe one has to look for a doctrine of the beautiful is already occupied by the concept of art. Just as it is not possible to think the concept of 'the beautiful' with Aristotle's method, so it is not possible to give the concept of art a place in Plato's system such as is done in the division cited above by Aristotle. The 'metaphysical' distinction between *ὄντα*, *ὄντως ὄν* swallows up all other possible distinctions. In the realm of *ὄντως ὄν* there are no differences of being, in the realm of *ὄντα* it does not make sense to make any. Neither from Plato's nor from Plotinus' school has a poetics or theory of art emerged. From the perspective of the philosophy of beauty, such a theory would refer only to an 'externality'. But the external appears here as unimportant and accidental. Only when one does not see it tainted with the flaw of

contingency can one consider it worthy and capable of a theory.

So the course of events cannot be imagined like this: Plato discovered the idea of beauty, Aristotle, less artistically gifted and in accordance with his 'empirical' orientation, was not interested in the metaphysics of beauty, or else a treatise by him on it has been lost. Only through Plotinus, then, was the philosophy of beauty firmly established, and ever since, aesthetics has been secured against falling into positivistic and naturalistic doctrines. Through Neo-Platonic philosophy, the creative spirit of the artist, the animating soul, was put in its right place. Just as the tree does not bear blossoms and fruit at the same time, so little, F. Koch thinks in line with the previous view, should one demand from Plotinus the determination of the 'technical' of the inner form (F. Koch, *Goethe and Plotinus*, 1925, p. 139).

This schema: Neo-Platonic inwardness on one side, outwardness of a formal theory of art on the other, is based on nothing other than Neo-Platonic philosophy itself. However, it is not fruitful to define with value distinctions like 'inward' and 'outward'. Plotinus is no more 'inward' a philosopher of art than Aristotle, but Aristotle is a scientific philosopher, while Plotinus is a teacher of salvation. It is not different psychological attitudes that are at issue here, but philosophical methods. The contrast between an unrestricted and a formal-analytic thinking, as it confronts us in Plotinus and Aristotle in peerless vividness, has lost none of its topicality over two millennia. Neither in antiquity nor in modern times has Neo-Platonic thinking ever turned to the theory of art.

Theory of art is simply something other than determining the technique belonging to the inner form. The separation of 'technique' and 'inner form' already contains a theory, namely that theory of art which corresponds to the metaphysics of 'the beautiful'. It is precisely this theory that conceals the greatest danger of all for a cognition of art: it is this that necessarily leads to the real work of art being torn apart into soul-like form and technical phenomenon on the path of 'spiritualization' and 'internalization'. The unfruitfulness of all Neo-Platonic concepts with regard to the cognition of art is based on this. A Platonist has never addressed the forms of the work of art and the problem of art history; and when Goethe and Schiller turned from their Neo-Platonic world of thought to the real work of art, they forgot their metaphysical formulas and turned to Aristotle.

There is an antagonism between the metaphysics of beauty and the theory of art that reaches down into the depths of the philosophical problem as such. It is quite correct when a recent aesthetician says: someone could construct a complete system of aesthetics without knowing of the existence of a poetic art, a music, a painting (M. Dessoir, *Aesthetics and General Theory*

of Art', 2nd ed. 1923, p. 591, [**Footnote in the original edition.** One could raise the question of what right we still have to place the word 'Aesthetics' over the present contribution. However, this concept has both a narrower and a broader meaning, just as the concept of metaphysics does. Just as metaphysics can mean *prima philosophia*, but also 'metaphysics', so too can aesthetics mean the 'doctrine of the beautiful', but also the *prima philosophia* with respect to the appearance of art.]). *Neo-Platonism has made the aesthetic independent and has thus introduced the art-scientific positivism into philosophy in the first place.* While the inner form takes shape at one pole, at the other the pure 'technique' takes shape. It is inadmissible to impute this idea of the 'outer form' to those who are unable to recognize in the metaphysics of 'the beautiful' the solution to the aesthetic problem.

The traditional view of the exclusive significance of Plato for the history of the aesthetic problem is all the more unreasonable since precisely the 'Platonizing' philosophy of Plotinus took over the important concept of form (εἶδος) from Aristotle. Plotinus exposes the concepts of εἶδος (μορφή) and ὕλη to the fiery climate of the theory of ideas and thus, from Aristotelian germs of thought, gains a system contradicting the Greek genius, which through the mysticism with which it surrounded the concepts of form and formation was able to influence the imagination of the Christian millennia. Plotinus was able to derive elements of mood from the Platonic writings, but he took the constructive concepts from Aristotle. And only because they originally belonged to an understanding of being as shape was he able to use them as he did. The fact that Aristotle is the first great thinker of the organism may not be unrelated to the fact that his basic concepts are called εἶδος and ὕλη. It is conceivable to develop his system as a philosophy of the formation and transformation of all that is. If there has ever been an 'aesthetic' explanation of the world, then it is this one, whereby of course the word 'aesthetic' has to be understood in a sense other than the customary one, neither 'metaphysical' nor formalistic, but ontological.

The world that Aristotle's concepts reveal unfolds in the light, it is a world of day and definiteness of form. The same thinker who criticizes the concept of the idea, from whom the notion of a beauty in itself remains completely remote, coins the word εἶδος into a term that philosophy has not been able to dispense with ever since, above all not the theory of the beautiful when it ventures into the field of art that is alien to it in terms of its origin. For Aristotle, εἶδος is constitutive of being in the realm of nature as well as in that of art. Everywhere where an indeterminate becomes 'something' in relation to an ordering and shaping principle, there is ὕλη, and εἶδος is that in relation to which there is ὕλη. What distinguishes artificial things from all others is that their εἶδος does not lie in them themselves. The work of art is separated from all natural formations by the fact that its

existence is preceded by an image (design) in the soul of a producer (ἀποτέχνης γίγνεται, ὃν τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, Met. VI, 7, 1032a). This definition of art refers to everything that is produced, to cookery and medicine as well as to architecture and the other arts. The principle of production in the producer is either reason, or skill, or some power (Met. V, 1). That which produces and that which is produced are similar (ὁμοειδές Met. VI, 7, 1032a. [Footnote in the original edition: ‘ἡ τέχνη ἀρχὴ καὶ εἶδος τοῦ γιγνομένου, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἐτέρῳ’. De an. gen. II, 1, 734a; vgl. ib. II, 4, 740b. Ferner Met. XI, 3, 1070a.]). In this respect there is no difference between the productions of nature and those of art. The only difference is that in art, both the εἶδος and the material cause of the movement lie in something other. The word ποιεῖν refers to the material moving cause [Met. VI, 7, 1032b]. So it relates to the work, the craftsmanship and skill. What happens by nature or by necessity has its principle in itself; but what happens by art can be or cannot be, since its principle lies in something other [Eth. Nic. VI, 4].

A) Ποίησις – Τέχνη (Poiesis – Techné)

In the domain of action (πράττειν) we do not find a contrast like that between the producer (ποιεῖν) and that which is produced (τὸ ὄν ποιούμενον, Eth. Nic. VI, 4a). Action (πράττειν) turns back upon itself, production (ποιεῖν) leaves behind an independently existing thing. In action, the goal lies in the activity of the agent itself; in production it lies in that which is produced (Eth. Nic. VI, 5, 1140). Therefore, in judging action the nature of the agent is decisive; while in production, the judgment depends solely on the quality of that which is produced (Eth. Nic. II, 3, 1105). A distinction must be made between what happens κατὰ φύσιν [according to nature] and what happens κατὰ τέχνην (according to art). Τέχνη means not only artistic practice but also that on which cultivated artistic practice is based, namely theory. The corresponding Latin word ars likewise means teaching, science. As ‘art’ in the comprehensive sense of the word, thus including achievement, τέχνη is defined by Aristotle as ‘a state involving reason and understanding for effecting something’ (ἥ τις μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς ποιητική, Eth. Nic. VI, 4 1140a; cf. Döring op. cit., pp. 49f).

It seems that Aristotle also recognized productions that do not meet the requirement of μετὰ λόγου ἀληθοῦς, i.e. productions that owe their existence to custom or mere instinct. Döring sees this well-founded in the fact that in art it is the quality of the work that matters, and that deliberation and understanding are important only insofar as the objective result depends on them (Döring op. cit., pp. 72 f). However, poetic thinking necessarily raises itself to theory, just as practical thinking in ethics, economics and politics unfolds into a theory of itself.

Once the physician has determined that this or that remedy has helped in a particular disease, he

proceeds to the proposition that it helps everyone. From such inductively obtained general propositions a system of rules develops, and with that the theory is complete (Döring op. cit., p. 77). All these rules are strictly related to a single point of view, that of the purpose of the art in question. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle has left us an example of a methodical theory of art. In rhetoric, Döring rightly says, ‘we have at least one example of a theory of art in the Aristotelian sense, which thus worthily stands side by side with the theories of ethical action in ethics and politics for the field of art’ (ibid., p. 78). And not unjustly Döring points out at the same place what merit Aristotle deserves for developing the concept of ‘theory of art’. All those numerous words ending in -ik that have passed into modern languages remind us of this merit.

The significance of τέχνη as theory of art is related to the fact that ‘for almost all arts’ a distinction can be made between the craftsman (δημιουργός) and the artist (ἀρχιτεκτονική). In addition, there are those who have achieved perfect theoretical training with regard to theories of art (πεπαιδευμένος περὶ τὴν τέχνην, Pol. III, 11, 1282a). The highest degree of skill in art, as attained by Pheidias and Polycletus, is called wisdom (σοφία, ἀρετὴ τέχνης, Eth. Nic. VI, 7, 1141a). There are arts that are necessary for man (τέχναι πρὸς τἀναγκαῖα οὔσαι) and others that, while not necessary, serve for entertainment (πρὸς διαγωγὴν ὄντα, Met. I, 1. 981b). The former are for use (utility), the latter for pleasure; the former have a purpose, the latter have no purpose. The inventors of the latter, because their inventions do not serve utility, are considered ‘wiser’ (ibid.), thus occupying a higher rank. This valuation corresponds to the later division of the arts into lower (‘mechanical’) and higher (‘liberal’).

Man derives pleasure from skillful imitations. It is therefore obvious to seek the criterion for distinguishing art in the narrower sense from art in general in the principle of imitation, and to divide the arts into useful and entertaining, i.e. imitative. However, this would be nothing but a misunderstanding, as the investigation of the concept of imitation proves.

B) Μίμησις (Mimesis)

Art either accomplishes what nature is unable to achieve, or else it imitates nature (ὡς ἡ τέχνη τὰ μὲν ἐπιτελεῖ ἃ ἡ φύσις ἀδυνατεῖ ἀπεργάσασθαι, τὰ δὲ μιμεῖται, Phys. II, 8, 199a).

Döring gives this foundational proposition the interpretation: ‘It is about the completely similar result of the operation of nature and art because of the purpose prevailing in both. If the house arose by nature, it would become just as it now does through art. And conversely, the products of nature, if they could also be produced by art, would turn out exactly as they now do by nature. ‘So with the word μιμεῖσθαι the immanent purposiveness of nature is to be pointed out (Döring op. cit., p. 82).

The common mistake is to interpret the concept of imitation mainly from the Poetics, whereas it has a general meaning, and the Poetics can only be interpreted on the basis of the general concept of imitation. To imitate means 'to make like' (Döring, p. 146). In German we express this meaning by connecting the verb *nachahmen* with the dative: to imitate nature. If, on the other hand, we say *nachahmen* and put the accusative, the meaning of mere copying is close at hand. In view of Aristotle's concept of living nature, we have no reason to give the concept of imitation, wherever it appears in him, a positivistic interpretation. For 'nature' for Aristotle is not a totality of existing things, to use a later word *natura naturata*, but φύσις, creating nature, *nātūra natūrāns* (cf. Döring, p. 149, note).

What then do we have to understand by imitation in the aesthetic sense in Aristotle? I believe with Döring that in answering this question one has to start from the important passage in the 5th chapter of the 8th book of the Politics. Here the senses are classified according to whether they are capable of perceiving an image of the characteristic (ὁμοίωμα τοῖς ψυχαῖς). 'It turns out, then, that in one part of the perceptible things the characteristic does not exhibit an image, as for example in the impressions of touch and taste; but it does in the visual impressions' (Pol. VIII, 1340a). Sculptors and painters are not mere copiers of reality, Aristotle also does not ascribe to the tragedian the imitation of existing characters, but rather the imitation of actions, but rather imitators of human nature as it manifests itself in emotional movements (affects). The principle of imitation sets the artist the goal of achieving the arousal of affects through the imitation of sounds, forms and colors. Of course this too is an 'imitation', but art must have an object after all. What matters is how this object is defined. If it is understood as a dead, 'positive' phenomenon, then the principle of imitation is deadly; if on the other hand it has the breadth and depth of human life, then it will be difficult to find a more correct principle of art.

Man differs from other living beings in that the instinct for imitation is innate in him from childhood and he is particularly skilled at imitation. The pleasure in imitations is also innate in humans. Things that we see in reality with discomfort, we look upon with pleasure when they confront us in an exceptionally successful image (εἰκόν). This pleasure goes back to the pleasure in learning. If one does not know the imitated object, the pleasure in execution, coloring or something similar remains (Poetics c. 6). Certainly, this is spoken soberly, but perhaps not as soberly as it sounds in our over-rationalized language. And it already contains in itself the observation which a few hundred years later is stated by Plutarch as follows: 'For that which is ugly in essence can never become beautiful; but imitation finds applause when it represents a thing, be it beautiful or ugly, in the most similar manner' (Plutarch 'Dē audiendīs poētīs' c. 3). The word μίμησις here is unmistakably tending

toward the concept of representation. Translated as 'imitative representation', it is not unjustly used in the famous Aristotelian definition of tragedy: 'Tragedy is the imitative representation of a serious and self-contained action of magnitude, in embellished speech ... performed by characters in action and not narrated, which through pity and fear accomplishes the purification of such emotions' (Poetics c. 6).

Aristotle does not speak of an imitation of the beautiful. On the other hand, he mentions the procedure of painters of unifying here and there scattered existing things into one (Pol. III, 11, 1281b). The doctrine of the choice of parts seems to have belonged to Hellenic popular aesthetics, to the ἐξωτερικοὶ λόγοι (Eth. Nic. VI, 4, 1140a). It already appears in the conversation conducted by Socrates with the painter Parrhasios in Xenophon (Mem. III, 10), taken entirely from the mouth of the people. Not infrequently one encounters the view that with this idea of a procedure of selection and producing something new through combination, the horizon of the concept of imitation is surpassed in the direction of the 'ideal'. However, that story, circulating in antiquity and repeated a thousand times, of the painter Zeuxis who gathered together the five most beautiful maidens of his home city Croton in order to form his Helen from their individual beauties (Cic. de inv. II, 1), is not an expression of an idealistic view of art, but precisely of naturalism. For the point is: only in nature can the most beautiful details be found. This naturalistic doctrine is so disconsolate because it ties the artist to a specific empirical phenomenon, to obvious nature, to what is there, to which he remains bound even as a selector. To the picked-up thought of the selection of parts, Aristotle opposes in the same Politics the deeper and more correct thought of an intrinsic lawfulness of technical contexts: 'No painter', he says, 'would allow the animal in his picture to have a foot exceeding proportion (συμμετρία), however beautiful it might be, and no shipbuilder would tolerate this in the stern or any other part of the ship, and just as little would a conductor let a voice which surpassed the whole chorus in strength and beauty sing in the chorus' (Pol. III, 13b, 1284, trans. by Rolfes). In such insights the power of Aristotle's fundamental idea of the independence of artistic production proves itself. For what seems to be said here is nothing other than that the unity of the produced whole is decisive, not the beauty of the parts.

C) Τὸ Καλόν (The Beautiful)

The concept of 'beautiful' as an aesthetic guiding concept is unknown to Aristotle. He uses this concept as it was customary in Greek everyday life. Beautiful above all is the natural and vital which is appropriate to its condition. A comparison of the structures of art with the structures of nature from the point of view of beauty is not considered, just as in general the chasm between nature and art and the relation of the two across this chasm is foreign to antiquity. When Aristotle recommends including drawing among the

childish occupations because it helps one to better judge works of art (Pol. VIII, 2, 1338a), he is not thinking of pictures and statues but of technical structures. So he recommends technical, not artistic, drawing. And when immediately afterwards he has to commend drawing for sharpening one's eye for 'beautiful bodies', what is meant is: one who can draw will not be subject to any deception about the order and proportion of bodies in which their perfection manifests itself. When music is spoken of, which Aristotle treats with particular attention and love, it says: one should pursue it in youth so that in later years, when one no longer practices it, one has the ability to distinguish the good from the bad (τὰ καλὰ κρίνειν. Pol. VIII, 6, 1340b). This already sounds quite like 'formation of taste', but it cannot be meant so because the assumption, namely the notion of an 'art-beautiful' existing in and for itself and making demands on taste, is completely missing. Beautiful, as defined in the Rhetoric, is what, because it can be chosen for its own sake, is praiseworthy, or what, because it is good, is therefore pleasant precisely because it is good (Rhet. I, 9, 1366).

Certainly we no longer find in Aristotle the strict, exclusive relation of music to the attitude of life that we find in Plato. Rhythms and harmonies resemble the true nature of anger, mildness, courage and what is opposed to them: in listening, our mood changes (μεταβάλλομεν τὴν ψυχὴν ἀκρόσμενοι τοιούτων, Pol. VIII, 5, 1340a). For education Aristotle draws the same conclusions as Plato. The Doric mode, measured and firm, which is in accordance with the manly character, has the advantage (Pol. VIII, 7, 1342b). But Aristotle already makes the distinction between an ethical-pedagogical and an aesthetic relationship to music. For education, the dignified modes are suitable; for mere listening (πρὸς ἀκρόασιν) to what others play, the exciting and intoxicating tonalities come into consideration (Pol. VIII, 7, 1342a).

Nowhere here is the beautiful spoken of in reference to art in the modern sense. Also in the Poetics there is not a single passage in which 'the representation of the beautiful' would be declared as the purpose of the poetic art. (On this see Döring op. cit., pp. 93 ff). The only passage, in the seventh chapter of the Poetics, which employs the concept of the beautiful positively, gives the common Greek conception of the beautiful known to us - it states that whether it is found in a living being or otherwise in a thing consisting of parts, beauty consists in magnitude and order (Τὸ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν; cf. Rhet. I, 5, 1361). Beautiful, so we can say in general, is that which is in its order. Beautiful is the good, the seemly, the honorable. In a living being we describe the opposite of life as ugly (αἰσχροτόν); in an artistic construct, e.g. in a house, we call it bad (μοχθηρόν, Top. I, 15, 106 a). How widely the concept of the beautiful is conceived by Aristotle is shown by a passage from the Metaphysics, which states: the beautiful and the good differ in that the former appears only in actions, the latter

also in unmoved things. The main characteristics of beauty are: order, commensurateness, and delimitation (τάξις, συμμετρία, τὸ ὀρισμένον), and they are found to an eminent degree in mathematical science (Met. XII, 3, 1078 b). For mathematics has to do (according to Met. V, 1, 1026 a) with that which is unmoved in material things.

Only fragments remain of Aristotle's philosophy of art. (For a complete presentation, above all the 'Problemata' stemming from his school, especially their 19th section, would have to be drawn upon). The significance of his intervention is almost better gathered from tradition than from the extant pronouncements. The later doctrine of rhetorical art and the theory of music have been determined directly or indirectly by Aristotle. It lay in the spirit of his thought, oriented towards the work, to stimulate and influence the cognition of all working and creating. To him the work is a being; to cognize beings is the task of philosophy. It was left to later times to understand what exists as a mere existent. Aristotle sees in that which exists through art a kind of being, not a kind of existent. His philosophy does not attempt to behold the fiery center of life; it knows the shaping force only in relation to that which is shaped by it.

The benefit that Aristotle means in the history of philosophy as a whole is not insignificant precisely in the realm of the aesthetic problem. Never could the phrase about 'Raphael without hands' have been coined, not even in the remotest tradition, by a mind schooled in Aristotle. For his theory of art is based on the great idea of the unity of the creative process. Here there is no 'inner' and no 'outer', but matter, work, and form. The form is not present as something higher which is then 'materialized', but rather the undivided process is envisaged. Without the work in which it is consummated, it would be meaningless. For the construction (of a house), to finally allow Aristotle's favorite example to take effect, 'is in the constructed and happens and is at the same time with the house' (Ἡ γὰρ οἰκοδόμησις ἐν τῷ οἰκοδομουμένῳ, καὶ ἅμα γίγνεται καὶ ἔστι τῇ οἰκίᾳ. Met. VIII, 8, 1050a; trans. by Rolfes).

II. Rhetoric

The significance that rhetorical tradition has for the history of the aesthetic problem is far too little known and investigated for anything adequate to be presented here. It immediately becomes apparent that Aristotle here, as in the theory of music, takes the lead. By classifying in his Rhetoric the kinds of linguistic expression as means of rhetorical influence and dealing with them in context under general points of view, he lays the foundation for an understanding of linguistic utterances from perspectives other than purely grammatical or logical ones. Much more than his Poetics, his Rhetoric gave his successors the first thoroughgoing example of an analysis of form.

A) Generā Dicendī

Of particular importance for aesthetics are those distinctions which were handed down in the schools of rhetoric under the names of the different λέξις, i.e. the ways of linguistic expression. The starting point here are the chapters 2-7 of the third book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. Aristotle's pupil Theophrast wrote a treatise on the four good ways of expression (ἀρεταὶ τῆς λέξεως) which unfortunately we can no longer reconstruct. We do not know whether Theophrast wanted to understand the styles as norms, or whether, which seems more probable to me, he derived them from the peculiarities of the three greatest Greek prose writers. [Footnote in the original edition. Kroll on Cicero's Orator (1913) p. 78. In this context, Kroll uses the phrase: 'just as aesthetic criticism always lags behind literary production...'. It is the business neither of poetics nor of rhetoric to set up norms a priori. However, neither of them lags behind anyone, insofar as it makes no sense to say that the one who cognizes lags behind that which is to be cognized]. In any case, the first attempt is made here to theoretically classify the formed according to characteristics. It is the first approach to a doctrine of style rather than a doctrine of the style itself. The praxis of recognizing style is conquered without having the concept of style itself. Without doubt this earliest cognition of types of formation was only possible on Aristotelian scholarly ground.

For the reconstruction of the generā dicendī, Cicero's Orator (c. 23 ff, 75-99) is primarily available.

Cicero distinguishes three genera: the tenue (the plain style), the medium (the middle style) and the grave or ornātum (the high style) (Cf. below p. 57). The perfect orator should master all three kinds. To the objection that there has not yet been such an orator, he replies by referring to Plato that we can have a thing in spirit (animō) even if we do not see it (Or. c. 29, 101). This phrase shows that Cicero was indeed able to appropriate Platonic pathos, but that he had no idea of what was called cognition in Aristotle's school. It is all the more regrettable that Theophrast's treatise has been lost.

Just as philology, literary criticism in antiquity reached a high level. Hans von Arnim gives us a picture of the enterprise from which rhetorical style criticism emerged (*Life and Works of Dio of Prusa*, 1898, pp. 134 ff; pp. 153 ff). In Hellenistic Greece, which was closed off from politics, the glorious past is the only subject of intellectual life. Since there is a lack of content, nothing new can be created. Thus the talent for form directs itself toward the goal of understanding what the ancestors achieved. A special genre consists of speeches praising or criticizing people, animals, objects of nature or art. Syncrisis (σύγκρισις) belongs among the favorite forms of sophistic rhetoric. The point is to find all the praiseworthy qualities of an object and to highlight them in the best light, and then to weigh the advantages of two objects against each other. Plutarch wrote a Syncrisis on Aristophanes and Menander, Dion a Syncrisis of the three Philoktets. The particular experts on aesthetic criticism are simply called κριτικοί.

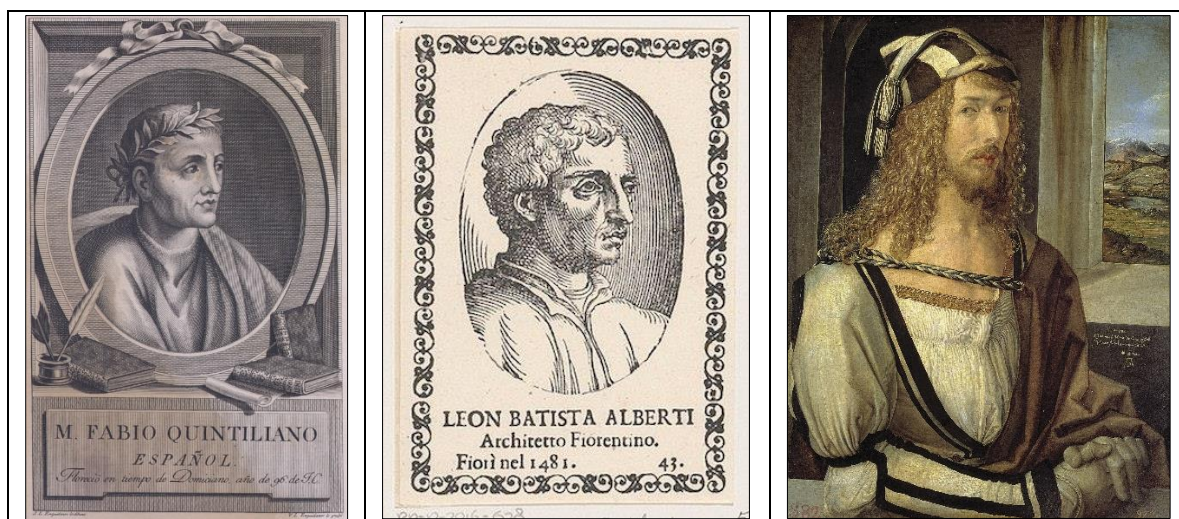


Figure 10: From left to right: Marcus Fabius Quintilian, Leon Battista Alberti, Albrecht Dürer.

B) Περὶ ὕψους (On the Sublime)

The ancient masterpiece of style-critical observation, neither more nor less, is the treatise On the Sublime (Περὶ ὕψους), which originated, according to Kaibel's conjecture, at the end of the 1st century AD and has been preserved for the most part. The author of the highly personal work asks what artistic means the effect of the 'high' in poetry and rhetoric is based on. He does not give the best recipes which anyone can follow; his

intention is much rather 'to show the gifted pupil the way by which, under certain conditions and through penetrating study, he may attain to the height of ancient models: he is to learn and reflect, immerse and try himself, he is to feel and experience the sublime, he is to understand that only what gushes forth out of his own excited soul has a sublime effect, that only a style identical with the inner man is a justified style' (G. Kaibel, *Hermes*, 1899, p. 117).

Of course, it would be wrong to conclude from the priority given to ‘greatness of soul’ (μεγαλοψυχία) that the aesthetics of the author consist in simply tracing the grand style back to the great man. Nature is presupposed by him; it goes without saying that a petty, slavish soul cannot express itself greatly. The grand style is an echo of a great soul (ὕψος μεγαλοφροσύνης ἀπήχημα, Section 9). But the subject of the treatise is not soul and nature, but art. Forms are compared and analyzed, not the psychology of the subjective ‘nature’. The danger of all subjective-psychological consideration in aesthetic questions lies in the fact that the problem is suffocated in embryo by the answer ‘genius!’ - it appears solved before it is even properly posed. The danger of the objective-formal treatment on the other hand lies in the aesthetic problem shifting into the question of a recipe for the production of works of art. However, these two dangers are not of equal rank. The first is deadly; in the second case, on the other hand, a problem still emerges: the question of the limits of the teachability of art. There can be no doubt about the methodological advantage of the objective-formal method. The significance of rhetorical theory for the development of the aesthetic problem is based on this.

The question of the teachability of art belongs to the iron stock of rhetorical theory. It was raised right at the beginning by the author of the treatise ‘*On the Sublime*’. Is there really any doctrine (τέχνη) of the grand style at all, since many believe that these things can never be traced back to rules? What a great nature has, they say, must be born, not taught (γεννᾶται τὰ μεγαλοφυῆ, καὶ οὐ διδασκὰ παραγίνεται). The works of nature ‘degenerate’ under the influence of rules. But nature, the author objects with determination, by no means proceeds unmethodically; to be sure, it is always the original principle of coming into being, yet the decision in the individual case is the affair of method, without which even genius is uncertain (Section 2). Such words have double weight when spoken by a man who everywhere demonstrates the liveliest understanding of the nature of genius. **[Footnote in the original edition.** Individual analyses of the author of περὶ ὕψους are still unsurpassed today; such as section 10 (Sappho), section 16 (Demosthenes) and others]. In a brilliant excursus on the relationship between genius and rule, for example, the author says that it is precisely because of their greatness that great minds sometimes stumble, while small ones are always safe from falling (Section 33). Precisely because he knows genius, he considers a doctrine of art, a tradition necessary. He knows that even the greatest genius is not alone in the world. Before the eyes of the living there must always stand the writers and poets of the past as present models, and no one should shy away from asking in each individual case what those would have done here (Section 13). In the spirit of a Greek this process necessarily takes on the form of an agon. Noble Eris directs this struggle: ‘Beautiful and worthy of highest fame is this struggle of the world and wreath, in

which even falling short of one's predecessors is not without honor’ (‘*On the Sublime*’, Section 13).

For the Greek the great predecessor is present as an individual, to enter into competition with whom is honorable, a conception extraordinarily well suited to keeping the relationship to the past alive. For the Roman, who lacks the conception of competition as a principle of masculine existence, the danger of traditionalism associated with any imitation of formed models becomes acute. When Quintilian speaks of imitatio, it has a different meaning than in the author of the treatise on grand style: the former always has in view the difference between emulous zeal (ζῆλος) and imitation (μίμησις), while the Latin thinker thinks not so much of human beings (as nature) as of the once minted form, the style. Imitation made Roman literature great; tradition is what it owes the memorability and transmissibility of its great models to. Through the principle of schooling that underlay it from the beginning, Latin literature has become the school of style for peoples. Not by chance does Quintilian's book on the orator contain, alongside the first formulation of the concept of style in art, also the first definition of the relationship between teacher and pupil, the first theory of school pedagogy. If we look for the practical pedagogy of the Greeks, we find it in a work that narrates nothing but the lives of great individuals, in Plutarch's *Parallels*. The agonistic Greek sees the man, the Roman sees the work, and with it at the same time what can be taught and appropriated. To be sure, this Roman esteem for the once minted form can degenerate into pettiness, it can lead to over-schooling; yet a great principle lies in it nevertheless. In any case this esteem provides an extraordinarily favorable ground for the cognition of artistic things. In Greece too, after all, a firm style of life and art could only take shape through doctrine and tradition, only through immanent confrontation within an interconnection of deeds and works.

Under these perspectives, Latin rhetoric gains a special significance: what in the history of the arts takes place as it were subterraneously and silently, the confrontation with the tradition of forms, has for the first time been brought into the light of consciousness by the orators. The great theorist of tradition and style is Quintilian, whose significance for the history of aesthetics as well as for the history of pedagogy can hardly be overestimated.

C) Quintilian

In every respect Quintilian venerates Cicero as his master; in theory, however, he goes far beyond him. In the principle, to be sure: art is a more reliable guide than nature (ars est dux certior quam natura; Cicero, ‘*De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*’ IV, 4, 10), he agrees with him. But the concept of artes is redefined by him. Cicero separates the orator's art from science: there is science only of things that are known, the orator's activity is based on mere opinions (Cicero, *De Oratore* II, 7). This

echoes Aristotle's separation of a logic of truth from rhetorical logic of probability. Quintilian objects, however, that while the orator only states what is probable, he knows that it is only probable. And besides, the orator also follows a definite method. Like all arts, the art of oratory consists in insight and exercise (*inspectio et exercitatio*). 'An art consists in the fact that he who has learned does it better than he who has not learned' (Quintilian II, 17, 39 and 42). Following this, Quintilian raises the question of which art rhetoric belongs to. In the answer he distinguishes arts that are entirely founded on insight (*inspectio*) without any exercise (*actiō*), like astrology, then those that fulfill themselves in exercise (*πρακτική*), like the art of dance, and finally those that attain their goal through the perfection of a work presented before the eyes (*ποιητική*), like painting. Rhetoric belongs to the second kind, that is, it has its form in *agendō* (Quintilian II, 18, 1 f).

In this classification, science and art are brought together under one perspective. The distinction between arts of action and arts of work completion seems to go back to Aristoxenus, who is said to have distinguished between musical and apotelestatic arts (music, poetry, dancing - architecture, painting, sculpture) (according to R. Westphal, '*Die Musik des griechischen Altertums*', 1883, pp. 12 f). Poetry is to be thought of in conjunction with music and dancing. The principle of the division into arts of movement and arts of rest could be called the opposition of time and space. In the 'musical' arts the acting human being himself is the work. Insofar Nietzsche's distinction between Dionysian and Apollonian art may be recalled here (The Birth of Tragedy 1: 'Man is no longer an artist; he has become a work of art...').

Artist, artwork and work are theoretically carefully distinguished by Quintilian (II, 14, 5; X, 1, 1). The work of oratory and the orator is speech (*orātiō*). However, there is a distinction that applies to all three, and that is style (*genus dicendī orātiōnis*). Not only in appearance (species) do artes, artifices and opera differ, but also in style, just as Etruscan statues differ from Greek ones, Asian orators from Attic ones (X, 1).

The 10th chapter in the 12th book of the '*Institutio Oratoria*' is epoch-making in the history of aesthetics because it contains a much-read concrete doctrine of style (something similar was given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Demetrius Phalereus). The extraordinary sentence with which Quintilian introduces his exposition looks forward to Montesquieu and Winckelmann: 'All these styles of which I speak have their own lovers as well as their own originators, and therefore there is still no perfect orator and perhaps no perfect art either, not only because one thing is more prominent here and another there, but also because one and the same form has not pleased everyone, partly because of differences in temporal and local conditions,

partly because everyone has his own taste and bent' (*Suōs autem haec operum generā, quae dīcō, ut auctōrēs sīc etiam amatōrēs habent; atque ideō nondum est perfectus orātor ac nesciō an ars ulla, non solum quia aliud in aliō magis ēminent, sed quod non ūna omnibus formā placuit, partim condiōne vel temporum vel locōrum, partim iūdicīō cūiusque atque propositō. XII, 10, 2 f*).

The concept of taste is fully developed within the framework of rhetorical schooling already in Cicero's time. 'Things of art and science are judged correctly or incorrectly by all through a hidden sense without any artistic or scientific method' (*Omnēs enim tacitō quōdam sensū sine ullā arte aut ratiōne, quae sint in artibus ac ratiōnibus rectā ac pravā diiūdicant, Cicero, De Oratore III, 50*). Quintilian speaks of the feeling of a certain faculty of judgment (about the witty) that is akin to the palate (*...quod sentitur latentī iūdicīō, velut palātō... VI, 3, 19*). In antiquity, however, one does not proceed to a doctrine of feeling or aesthetic judgment but remains within the sphere of the formed. Not a theory of taste, but a doctrine of style is the theoretical expression of the discovery of 'taste'.

In Chapter 10 of Book 12 Quintilian first speaks of paintings, then of statues. The overview he gives of the traditional artistic judgments of antiquity is of the greatest historical importance (XII, 10, 7 ff). After Quintilian has judged the species, that is, the individual modes of expression of a number of orators, and has spoken of the Attic, Asianic and Rhodian styles, he repeats the doctrine of the three kinds of poetry and rhetoric (XII, 10, 58 ff). The grand style (*ἀδρὸν, grande atque robustum*) is meant to move and shake, the simple style (*λεπτὸν, subtile*) to report and instruct, while the third, intermediate style (*medium, σφρηγὼν, floridum*) is to appease and delight the audience. *Gravitas* corresponds to the grand style, *acumen* to the simple style, *lénitas* to the intermediate style.

What the rhetorical doctrine of style lacks is precisely that by which it could first become a historical-critical means of cognition: consideration of time. Quintilian recognizes the importance of innate nature but has no idea of the importance of time. In this respect he remains stuck at the rough distinction between earlier and later in the sense of crude and refined. The sense is there for individual differences of style, not for styles of time. Nevertheless, one should not underestimate the art of distinction evidenced here. The genera *dicendī* are styles, which is: not metaphysical entities, but human-historical modes of comportment. The general technique of linguistic expression is particularized by the distinction of style; but thereby an approximation to the phenomena of history becomes possible.

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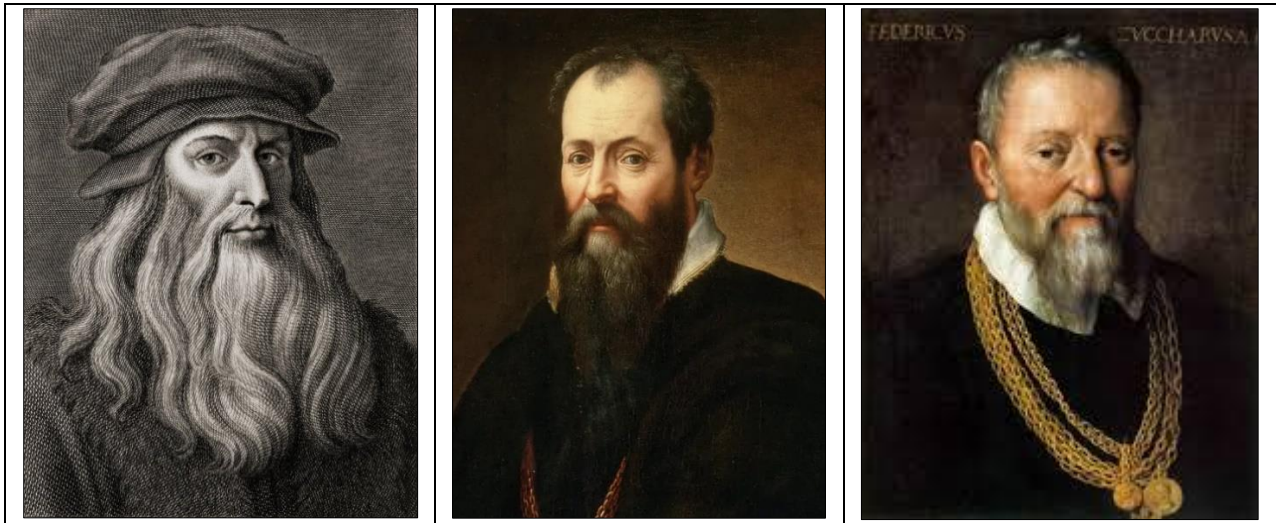


Figure 11: From left to right: Leonardo da Vinci, Giorgio Vasari, Federico Zuccaro.

III. Theory of Art

A) Polyclethus. Aristoxenus

If art in the narrower sense belongs to art in general (τέχνη), then it follows of itself that theory is not foreign to it. The kind of 'insight' corresponding to art in the narrower sense was not further determined in antiquity or later. A theory of art in the modern sense, i.e. a theory that takes art as its object, was unknown to the ancients. But quite early they attempted to grasp the measured content of a work of art in theoretical form. Music and architecture seem to have been the first arts for which there was a 'doctrine'. The height of musical theory in Aristoxenus suggests a long preceding tradition. Among the temple builders it seems to have been a very early custom for each to theoretically, and that means probably mainly according to measurements, describe his temple (H. Brunn, *Gesch. d. Griech. Künstler II.*, pp. 342ff; cf. Otto Stein, *'Die Architekturtheoretiker der it. Renaiss.'*, 1914, pp. 4f). For poetry the situation was quite different: the prevailing notion of the aid of the Muses and the influence of the god (μυθία) did not permit theory and norm. We who are accustomed to speaking of 'the' art and 'the' artist can now hardly imagine any more that for the ancients there was no uniform 'art' encompassing poetry, architecture, painting and music. The ancients did not think subjectively from the experience of 'the' artist, but objectively from the work and its origin. For them, the poetic art had no connection with the other arts, for what would the painter have had to do with Apollo and the Muses? Yes, the unaesthetic realism went so far that bronze sculpture was strictly separated from working marble. There is no 'sculpture', there are only men who can work both bronze and marble. This objective, work-related mode of contemplation runs through all of antiquity.

The first theoretical treatise on art of which at least the name is still preserved derives from a bronze founder. Polyclitus' 'Canon' was a treatise on the proportions of the human figure. In the third book of Vitruvius' work on architecture, a part of it is probably preserved for us. Amazing, almost incomprehensible, with what triumph this meager fragment of ancient aesthetic of measure shines through the centuries. For the Renaissance artists, the few sentences of Vitruvius appeared as the embodiment of the τέχνη of antiquity.

The greatest music theorist of antiquity, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, emerged from the school of Aristotle. Two moments are to be distinguished in his doctrine: the general musical theory and the doctrine of the three styles of melody-making (τρόποι μελοποιίας). Traces of the doctrine of the three styles are already found in Plato, and a member of the Academy, Heraclides Ponticus, also wrote on music. But it was only on the basis laid by Aristotle of a division of modes (ἁρμονίαι ἡθικά, πρακτικά and ἐνθουσιαστικά; Politics VIII, 7, 1341 b) that stylistic characterization could be systematically carried through. The three styles are: the diastaltic trope, which corresponds to tragedy (heroic); the systaltic trope, characterized by love feelings and lament; and between them stands the hesychastic trope as the symbol of equilibrium of soul. Choral lyric and epic correspond to it (H. Abert, *'Die Lehre vom Ethos in der griech.'*. Musik, 1899, pp. 66 ff).

B) Judgment. Ἔκφρασις

Since anything but an aesthetic attitude in the modern sense can be attributed to the Greek, nothing is more astonishing than the fact that so many works of art were created among them. This presupposes a high esteem for art, without, however, finding anything in the transmitted views on art corresponding to this practice.

A history of the esteem of art in antiquity would be highly desirable. The first task would have to be to investigate, on a broad basis of monuments, the relationship of art to myth. Then the aesthetics of the artists would have to be elucidated; and finally Greek popular aesthetics would also have to be ascertained. Without recourse to 'that great fundamental force of all Greek life, agon', which appears here as the rivalry between cities, in order to obtain an equally perfect structure as is already present elsewhere (Jacob Burckhardt in his lecture on the Greeks and Their Artists; Lectures, 4th ed., 1919, p. 166), the phenomenon of Greek art will never be explained.

The first thing that strikes us today is the different valuation of the individual arts. According to Aristotle, the technically most perfect works (τεχνικώτατα) are those in whose production chance has had the least influence; the most banal those whose production entails detriment to the body (Politics I, 4, 1259). Already the juxtaposition of these two viewpoints is striking. The contempt for bodily labor has its deeper reason, it is not in turn to be 'aesthetically' explained. Above all the sculptors are affected by this contempt, while the painters seem to have been ranked higher from the beginning (this valuation survived into the Renaissance and still stands in the background of the *paragone literature*, i.e. that debate carried to exhaustion over whether painting or sculpture deserves precedence). To me, the contempt for the sculptor, above all the sculptor in metal, in comparison with the painter seems sufficiently justified by the 'keeping away from the fiery furnace', by the latter's more aristocratic technique. One should not think only of the deformation of the body associated with the hard work but must understand this itself again symbolically. Sculpture in bronze belongs to the Nibelung craft of the pre-Indo-Germanic Mediterranean peoples. The conquering race breaking into the Aegean region from the north found a high technical civilization, which it appropriated to be sure, but to which it did not subordinate itself spiritually. The martial values brought along remained intact to the end: contempt for physical labor and acquisition. The higher esteem of the painter is understandable if one assumes that his art was regarded as native and imported. In fact, painting could be viewed as a daughter of drawing. *According to Burckhardt's happy remark, anecdotes about painters, but not about sculptors were recounted.* Presumably because painters were counted as belonging to good society, whereas it was assumed about a sculptor that he stemmed from the pre-Indo-Germanic population which, though not annihilated by the conquerors, was nevertheless despised by them. Artistic skill thus coincided with 'ugliness', i.e. inferiority in relation to race. Bronze sculpture is here only an example for the civilized artistic skills in general. *This finds expression in the mythical figure Hephaistos: the master of all arts is ugly and serves the gods for laughter, but he is yet included among the gods with genuine Hellenic sense of justice.*

The agonistic style of the Greeks' lives seems to have had an influence on their artistic judgment. The question of 'who was the 'best' in an art form' was self-evident to them. In the conversation that Socrates has with Aristodemos in Xenophon, the following artists are ranked highest because of their 'wisdom' (σοφία): for his epic poetry, says Aristodemos, I admire Homer the most; for his dithyrambs, Melanippides; for his tragedies, Sophocles; for sculpture, Polyclitus; and for painting, Zeuxis (Mem. I, 4, 3).

However, one should be careful not to read our modern judgments about art into such statements. With true Hellenic nonchalance, Plutarch brings out the enduring Greek view of artistry even in late antiquity. No well-endowed youth, he says at the beginning of the *Life of Pericles*, has ever, upon seeing the Zeus of Pheidias or the Hera of Polyclitus, therefore wanted to become a Pheidias or Polyclitus. Indeed, in this context Plutarch also names the poets Philetas, Anacreon and Archilochus, but (according to Burckhardt's remark) no tragedian. If a work gives us joy through its beauty, the creator does not necessarily deserve respect; often enough it happens that we admire a work and despise its master (Pericles c. I, 2). Almost the same phrase about Pheidias and Polyclitus is found in Lucian's little piece 'The Dream', which allows us to look more deeply into the judgmental attitudes of ancient people than any other testimony.

In addition to the art-theoretical writings of the kind of Polyclitus's 'Canon' and Aristoxenus's teachings on music or the literature of grammarians, rhetoricians and critics, there are also writings of a different kind about art from the Hellenistic period. These include Plutarch's essay on the question of how young men should read the poets. It says that very different things can be gleaned from the works of poets, just as bees, goats, pigs and other animals variously pursue the flowers, stalks, roots, seeds or fruits in the meadows. Some leave out nothing regarding the myth, others pay particular attention to what is new, yet others focus solely on the beauty of expression. And finally, there are those who read in order to strengthen their own rectitude (de aud. poet. c. 11). The latter ethical-pedagogical view can probably be regarded as the one held in highest esteem. It corresponds to the Greek's naive, content-focused perception. In the same work by Plutarch there is the characteristic anecdote: when Timotheus brings an Artemis on stage who rages like a maenad, someone shouts to him: That's the kind of daughter you should have!

Focused entirely on content is the literature of those art connoisseurs and lovers who have left us descriptions (ἐκφράσεις) of works of visual art. We have from the two Philostrati descriptions of (real) paintings that still enchanted Goethe. Kallistratos applied the procedure to statues as well. Here it is a matter neither of art criticism in general, nor of stylistic criticism. Rather,

in ekphrasis the interest in the formal does not refer to the object, but to the rhetorical form of the description itself. So this is about transferring from one art form to another. A good example of this kind is found in Lucian's writing 'Zeuxis'.

C) Vitruvius

Alongside Quintilian's system for teaching the art of rhetoric stands, as the only completely (at least decently) preserved work from antiquity on art, the book by Vitruvius. The Roman undoubtedly had an extensive Greek technical literature, now lost, in front of him. The universal character of his theory, which is expressed in six fundamental concepts, is based on the fact that the overarching concept is not art as a human-historical phenomenon, but beauty. The concepts of rhetoric relate to a world of historical forms, and lead to the classification of such forms. Vitruvius's concepts, on the other hand, originate from a sphere in which man appears not as a personally willing and shaping entity, but merely as a natural being, bound to the harmony of the universe. Hence the strictness of Vitruvian measurements: they are originally of a sacred nature. The temple is not a product of individual humans or peoples, but an image of eternal order. Just as the concepts of rhetoric have an original affinity with the historical world so Vitruvius's concepts of measurement are originally and essentially hostile to history.

Art theory proceeds from the given nature, beauty theory from the inventive human. We recognize what methodological consequences this has from Vitruvius's approach to the problem of style. In the phenomenon of the three temple orders he had before him a historical material that could well have invited the discovery of the concept of style. Within rhetoric the concept of style had found a fixed place; in architectural theory it found no place. Vitruvius's division is twofold, not three- (or five-) fold, as Walter rightly noted (Gesch. d. Ästh. i. Alt., p. 807). Vitruvius contrasts the strict form of the Doric temple with the more delicate, slender and ornate forms of the Ionic and Corinthian orders. In contrast to this bipartition, the expected tripartition does not emerge. But if, despite the historical diversity, Vitruvius holds fast to the division into two, this has its profound meaning. Bound up with the doctrine of the world order is the distinction between a masculine and a feminine potency. By starting from the cosmic potencies of the masculine and the feminine, Vitruvius does not characterize a historically present style as masculine or feminine, otherwise nothing could have prevented him from also finding a designation for the third of the existing styles but constructs the essence of the three orders according to the measure of the world order. There is a way of building that corresponds to the man, and a way of building that corresponds to the woman, an architecture of dignity and an architecture of grace. Already Plato distinguishes two kinds of beauty corresponding to the male and female character (above p. 13). Cicero once cites this distinction as a generally

known and familiar one: 'There are, however, two kinds of beauty, in one we find charm, in the other dignity; we must regard charm as feminine and dignity as masculine' (Cum autem pulchritudinis duō generā sint, quōrum in alterō venustās sit, in alterō dignitās: venustātem muliebrem dūcere debemus, dignitatem virilem, de off. I, c. 36).

In the third book of *De Oratore*, Cicero admires the combination of utility on the one hand and grace and dignity on the other in the works of nature. The constitution of the world, he says, is so arranged for the security and salvation of all, that the sky is round, the earth lies in the middle, the sun keeps its course, approaches the winter sign in order then to rise again on the other side, etc. Not the slightest change in this order is possible without everything falling apart. Every living being, every tree, but also every artistic creation such as a ship shows the same combination of purpose and beauty. We recognize it best in the temple. 'The columns support the structure of the temple and the hall, and yet their usefulness is no greater than their dignity. The familiar gable of the Capitol and the other temples was brought forth not by grace, but by necessity. For in considering how rainwater could drain off on both sides, the purpose of the house was combined with the dignity of the gable. And if the temple stood in the sky where there is no rain, it would lack the dignity peculiar to it without the gable' (*De Oratore* III; 46, 180).

This is not rhetorical exaggeration, but genuine Pythagorean Platonism. There is no difference between functionality and beauty, in the essence of things both are one. The dimensions of the temple are grounded in the heavens; the temple is beautiful because its dimensions are an image of the absolute dimensions. Hence the strictness of the norm. Natural growths and artificial structures are equated with this order and beauty. They exist only insofar as they participate in this beauty or imitate it.

Walter aptly points out that Vitruvius does not think of historically deriving the Greek architectural styles from the relationship between support and load, but rather has only the 'law of forms' in mind, and his conception is intuitively mathematical, not dynamically practical (Gesch. d. Ästh., p. 801; 803). However, this is neither arbitrariness nor narrow-mindedness of an individual, but the consequence of the basic ancient conception of architecture.

Six categories are listed by Vitruvius: *ordinatio* (τάξις), *dispositiō*, *eurhythmia*, *symmetria*, *decor*, *distributio*. *Prōportiō* (belonging to the definition of *ordinatio*) is the correct measurement of the individual parts of a building based on a unit of measurement chosen from one of the building's own members. In the case of the temple, the unit of measurement is taken from the ground plan (the front width). The correct measurement of each part and the overall form of a work

based on the chosen unit of measurement (*modulus, rata pars*) is called *prōportiō* (ἀναλογία) (According to Jolles, Vitruvius *Āsth.* 1906. Pp. 9 ff).

The concepts of *symmetria* and *eurhythmia* are the aesthetically decisive ones: *Symmetria* is the content-determined *prōportiō*, i.e. a dimensional ratio of a specific character. *Symmetria* arises from *proportio*; not every *prōportiō*, however, leads to *symmetria*, but rather, as Jolles puts it, the *prōportiō* must be ‘worked out’ into *symmetria*. The definition of *symmetria* is: ‘*Symmetria* is the harmony arising from the building's own members, i.e. on the basis of the *modulus (rata pars)* there should be a responson between the individual parts and the overall appearance’ (*Item symmetria est ex ipsius operis membrīs conveniēns consensus ex partibusque separātīs ad ūniversae figurae speciēm ratae partis responsus*) (Vitruvius, *de arch.* ed. Rose, p. 12).

Decisive about this definition is that it determines the relationship between the individual parts and the overall appearance as *consensus* (harmony). The question still remains to be answered as to which dimensional ratios make correctly calculated proportions beautiful, or which dimensional ratios allow the ‘harmony’ to emerge from itself. Such ratios can be expressed in numbers. The beauty of a building thus depends on suitable numbers. These numbers are taken from the proportions of the human limbs. Nature has constructed the human body according to certain proportions; temples for the gods must be erected accordingly. ‘If nature has thus composed the human body so that its limbs correspond in their dimensional ratios to the overall form, the ancients seem to have been right in also observing an exact proportional relationship between the individual members and the appearance of the whole (*universa figurae species*) in the execution of buildings’ (*ibid.* p. 66). One measures by finger width and hand breadth, by foot and ell. But these dimensions are distributed across a ‘perfect number’ (τέλειος, *nūmerus perfectus*). The name Plato does not appear by chance at this point: Vitruvius is in the midst of Pythagorean-Platonic number speculation.

Earlier research either ignored such passages or misinterpreted them, dismissing them simply as ‘mysticism’. Thus Jolles speaks of Vitruvius's ‘number aesthetics’, giving the impression that these are formal games, while what emerges here is a metaphysics in which a specific view of the universe and of man and of their relationship to each other is formulated in numbers (Plato, *Tim.* 31 f). Vitruvius's teaching must not be detached from its mythical background; the mythical was as self-evident to his time as the aesthetic is to us today. **[Footnote in the original edition.** The myth appears everywhere in Vitruvius with complete ingenuousness. Characteristic is the charming story of the origin of the Doric temple order, which is said to have existed first. The oldest temple in the city of Argos, which Dōrus built for Hērā, happened to have this form. After colonies had

been founded in Asia Minor on the command of the Delphian Apóllōn and the Carians and Leleges had been driven out, temples were built there, first indeed for the *paniōnian* Apóllōn. When they wanted to set up the columns but had no *symmetriae* for them, they measured the imprint of a male foot and applied this to the height of the man. They found that the foot amounts to one sixth of the male height. ‘Thus the Doric column has since then represented the proportions, strength and beauty of the male body in a building’ (*Itā Dōricā columna vīrilis corpōris proportiōnem et firmitātem et venustātem in aedificiīs praestāre coepit*). For the Ionic column, the proportion of a woman's foot to the height of the female figure was taken. It was found that this proportion was 1:8 (*De arch.* p. 84 ff)].

Not a formal aesthetics, but a content aesthetics is hidden in Vitruvius's categories. The beautiful proportions are not devised by an artist and are therefore not subject to changing tastes. They are the sacred, eternal lawfulness of nature, of the very ‘structure’ of the world, and forth a treason they are beautiful. Vitruvius's theory of beauty is by no means limited to architecture or even to art in general. Everything well-ordered is beautiful, whether it be the universe, the state, the human body, the household, a tragedy or a statue (cf. Jolles, p. 99). The work of art has a special status only insofar as it is designed for the human eye or ear. Here a new lawfulness comes into play which, in contrast to the cosmic one, could be called the optical and auditory. The concept of *eurhythmia* refers to this. ‘*Eurhythmia* is the beautiful appearance, i.e. in their composition the limbs should present a view that is correct in its dimensions’ (*Eurythmiā est venustā speciēs commodusque in compositiōnibus membrōrum aspectus.* *De arch.* p. 12).

Symmetria refers to beauty itself, *eurhythmia* to beauty for our eye. That *symmetria* is perceived is in itself irrelevant; since it is based on numbers, it can also be heard or recognized in some other way. For the artist, of course, it is not a matter of indifference that the works of architecture present themselves to the eye. The question arises for him whether and to what extent he should accommodate the needs of the eye. Here two directions are possible. One rejects working *eurhythmically*. This is how the Egyptians and the earlier Greek artists worked strictly *symmetrically* (Jolles, p. 100). Diodorus relates (I, 98) of a statue whose one half was worked on Samos and whose other half was worked in Ephesus; when the parts were joined together they matched so well that it was as if the whole statue had been fashioned by a single person (Jolles, p. 91). The canonical style, which disregards any consideration for the subjective view, could not be better characterized than by this story. The other direction is not canonical but *mimetic*, i.e. here the beautiful proportions are not represented as they are in themselves, but attempts are made to ‘imitate’ those proportions that are beautiful to our eye. For example, if the height of the columns were calculated *symmetrically* correct, the view would still

fall into the realm of the ugly, because the human eye does not always perceive the correctly calculated and intrinsically beautiful as such. In places where the eye deceives, the symmetry must be softened ('tempered') until the impression of symmetry also arises (Jolles, p. 28). That in which the eye deceives itself must be compensated for by calculation, says Vitruvius (Ergō quod oculus fallit, ratiōcinātiōne est exaequandum. De arch. p. 74). 'For the eye demands beauty, and if its pleasure is not flattered by proportion and additions to the units of measurement, so that what is lacking is intensified by tempering, the beholder will be presented with an empty and unbeautiful sight' (Venustātem enim persequitur vīsus, cūius sī nōn blandimur voluptātī prōportiōne et modulōrum adiēctiōnibus, utī quod fallit temperātiōne adaugeātur, vastus et invenustus conspicientibus remittētur aspectus. ib. p. 75).

This consideration for the laws of the eye seems self-evident to us today, but it was not to antiquity. For the ancients there is an enormous difference between symmetria and eurhythmia. In our language we would

have to say: symmetria (συμμετρία) expresses eternal lawfulness, eurhythmia (εὐρυθμία) merely imitates what is desired in a particular place in the work of art by virtue of the subjective lawfulness of our visual organ. The modifications of symmetria conditioned by this, too, of course seek nothing other than to assert symmetria itself. But for ancient thinking in its strictness, this is already too much. Only what is constructed according to the laws of symmetria is true; everything else is an illusion similar to the truth. Greek art ultimately took the path of eurhythmia; Plato decidedly took the side of the older 'symmetrical' art.

Literature

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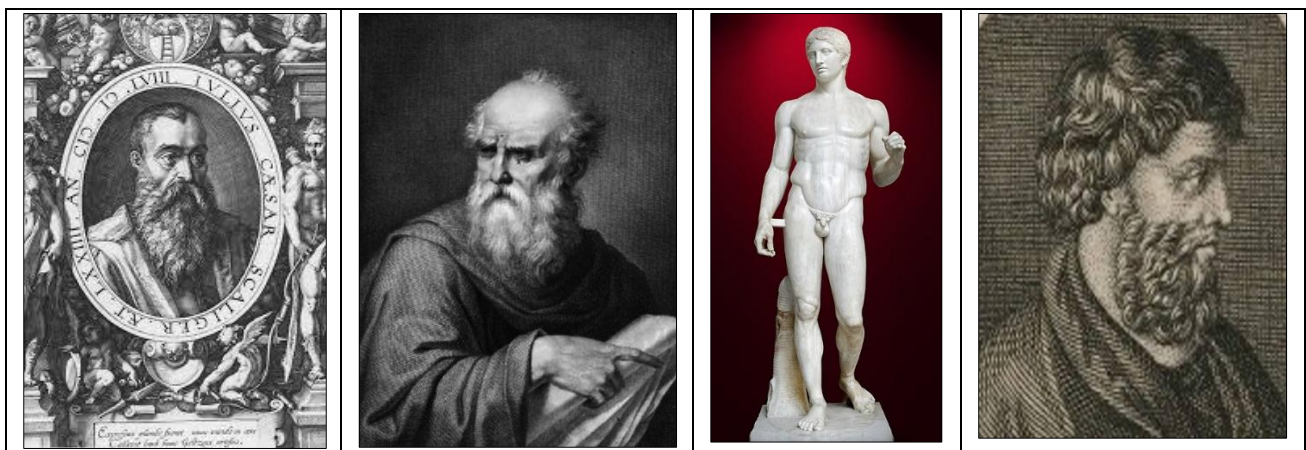


Figure 12: From left to right: Julius Caesar Scaliger, Vitruvius, Polycletus' Doryphoros, Aristoxenus.

IV. Middle Ages and Renaissance

A) Middle Ages

The notion of art as it had developed in Hellenism is completely alien to the Middle Ages. An independent reflection on art in the narrower sense, even in the simplest form, does not occur among the Scholastics. While the notion of artistic creation has not been unknown since Plotinus, it does not have the power in itself to make the aesthetic problem visible. If occasionally God's creation is compared to that of an artist, it is done not to pay art an honor, but rather 'in order thereby to facilitate the understanding of the nature and working of the divine spirit, or, in rarer cases, to make possible the solution of other theological questions' (Panofsky, Idea, p. 20). Thomas Aquinas occasionally speaks of the architect who conceives in his mind beforehand the form of the house, which is as if it were the idea of the house to be realized in matter (cf. Panofsky, p. 85). But this is always just a passing on of Aristotelian goods. The problem of art in the narrower

sense, which had already received scant attention in Aristotle, did not exist for a time which moreover still lacked access to the master's Poetics.

In the Middle Ages, the artifex is the originator of every 'artificial' work, who conceives the form of the work beforehand in his mind. *The artist is not creator but realizer of an idea, craftsman.* Artistic life and artistic practice fully correspond to this view: the artist does not appear as an individual but as a member of a corporation that possesses both the art theory and the right to practice art. It would be wrong to regard this form of artistic life as 'primitive'; it is as fully valid as any other, as proven by the works. Coming from the Mediterranean context, what first strikes one is the absence of written-down theory. A canon like that of Polycletus or a literature like that which Vitruvius drew from is unthinkable here. This is not a deficiency but the natural consequence of the corporate principle of the Germanic peoples: in place of theory stands the tradition of lodges and masters; the

closed workshop, the master-journeyman relationship (which of course also exists in the South) achieves everything here without exception. This artisanal mode is possible only with an art that is wholly in the service of others, which is wholly dependent on the client. But still even in Dürer's day the artist concludes a contract with the commissioner just like an artisan.

The lack of any art theory becomes quite clear when one considers the *artes*. Following ancient tradition, one distinguishes the *artes liberales* from the *artes mechanicae*. The former include grammar (literature), rhetoric, dialectic (philosophy), arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory; the latter include weaving, armor making, navigation, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theater arts. The liberal arts are purely theoretical in nature, only they are worthy of the free man after whom they are named. The mechanical arts are purely practical without a theoretical basis. In the place of theory there is the artisanal tradition. An exception is medicine: its basis lies in physics, hence the name *physicus* for the doctor (Schlosser, 'Kunsttheorie' S. 66). The seven liberal arts were compared to the seven planets, the mechanical arts were held in little esteem. They are referred to as 'illegitimately born' by theology. Their name is derived, in a truly medieval etymology, from *moecha* (adulteress) (Borinski I, p. 89). The dominant idea here is that of the unconditional superiority of nature as God's first creation over all the artificial arrangements of man. 'Only nature really creates. Man is dependent on artificially (mechanicē) imitating nature in his work. His work is therefore spurious, 'unreal': *adulterinum*'. Borinski sees in this a peculiar combination of Aristotle's dictum that art imitates nature as far as possible for it with the notion of Adam's curse.

What we today call the arts finds a place neither among the *artes liberales* nor among the *artes mechanicae*. In the 'stone encyclopedia' on the Campanile in Florence they appear once in the entourage of the *mechanicae* (Schlosser p. 66). But philosophically, their position remains entirely undetermined. It is the achievement of the following centuries, in accordance with the change in style, to give them a position in the intellectual world of man. Viewed purely intellectually, 'nothing would have been more obvious' than to assign the arts a place among the *artes liberales* where the art of rhetoric maintained itself undisputed. But the power of tradition and the profoundly justified view of the artisanal nature of the artist prove stronger. By virtue of the theoretical character of his 'art', the humanist, the poet-philologist and elegant speaker enjoys high honors in the later Middle Ages. After all, already in antiquity poetry was considered nobler than all the other arts. Only after the visual artist in the Renaissance had entered into a relationship with theory did an equation between poet and painter, sculptor and architect become possible. It is not the idea of the artist's creative power that sets the

process in motion, but rather the idea that the artist's activity has something to do with the *artes liberales*.

B) Dante

As the enigmatic figure of Plato guards the threshold of ancient aesthetics, so Dante's closed spirit guards the threshold of modern aesthetics. In one place in the '*Divine Comedy*' a metal counterfeiter is referred to as a 'good ape of nature' (Inf. XXIX, 139). This echoes the medieval view of the artist as a mere imitator of nature, as a maker of 'spurious' works. Nature, we read in Canto XI of the *Inferno* (99 ff), has its origin in the divine intellect and in divine art (*dall'divino intellètto e da sua arte*), while art by contrast is only as it were a grandchild of God (*a Dio quài e nipòte*). That nature is far above all art, that she is firstborn, goes without saying for the theologian Dante. In Purgatory, Polyclitus's marble is given as an example of art overcome by nature (X, 32 f).

It sounds quite different when Dante compares the sometimes distracted path of the creature to the highest light with the artistic will to form (*intenzion del' arte*): just as the soul reaches it, so does this will of the 'deaf' matter not always achieve the goal of form (Parad. I, 127 ff). The philosophical content of the simile points to Dante's Aristotelian-Thomist concept of the world and the heavens; the way in which the artist emerges here, however, makes us prick up our ears. The real Dante shines through at such moments, the self-confident artist, the shaping spirit. What Dante teaches is the Middle Ages; he himself is no longer the Middle Ages. He is the first person who speaks our language. The Ghibelline, the passionate patriot, the great loner amidst the communal world of the Middle Ages, he, and not Petrarch, the melancholy poet, is the first 'modern man'. The lyricist and orator Petrarch is very proud of what he writes, but for him this means that he has succeeded in recalling the Muses from exile. It is highly characteristic of the self-confident yet at the same time so temporally bound manner of this man, how he explains the non-occurrence of poetry among the *artes liberales*: it is above all of them and encompasses them all (Borinski I, p. 119). Dante does not have these worries; he feels himself to be an artistic creator. His new human form of existence is expressed completely in his relationship to the work. He is the embodied concept of a new style; his artistic consciousness manifests itself as a consciousness of style. No ancient, no medieval artist is equal to him in this regard. This is no longer the humble craftsman of the Middle Ages without a name, who recedes behind his work. With the pride of a man who has glimpsed the unseen and articulated it in words, Dante steps before his people and posterity. What an un-medieval sound strikes our ears when we hear the poet say to Virgil in the *Inferno* (I, 86 f):

Tu se' solo colui, da cui io tolsi
Lo bello stile, che m'ha fatto onore.

To gain fame through art, through style, which is not thought of in Christian terms. A new attitude to life finds expression here: 'to attain the eternal in a worldly way' (Borinski I, p. 103). We may deduce this from the words that Dante addresses in the depths of hell (XV, 84 f) to his former teacher, the rhetor Brunetto Latini.

M'insegnavate come l'uom s'eterna

The poet who creates for posterity, who produces an eternal work, makes himself an eternal figure. The power of even the mightiest earthly imagination fails to depict the light of the highest love (Parad. XXXIII, 142), so speaks the Dante who immortalizes the content of Christian Middle Ages in his poem. This content would correspond to a work without a name. But in producing this work, as an active human being, as the creator of a new style that will be an object of admiration for all posterity, he emerges as an individual. Invisible above his work stands: I dared it! Petrarch, the educated man, is proud of his 'style of writing'; Dante, the artist, creates his work by imperiously impressing his style on the subject matter of the present.

C) Alberti.

Two events determine the fate of aesthetics in the era of the Renaissance and the Baroque. One is the rediscovery of Vitruvius in the second decade of the 15th century, the other is the text reconstruction of Aristotle's Poetics (Pazzi's Latin translation, 1536). Alberti draws his work on architecture (also in 10 books, first printed in 1485) from Vitruvius' work; Aristotle, on the other hand, becomes the legislator of poetic theory through J. C. Scaliger (1561). Lessing's struggle against French tragedy is at the same time a struggle against Scaliger's Aristotelianism.

The difference between Vitruvius' and Alberti's theory corresponds to the difference between ancient art and the art of the Renaissance. The background of Vitruvius' book is formed by myth and Pythagorean-Platonic metaphysics. Thus ancient art also frees itself with its magnificent definiteness of form from the background of myth. Alberti's book is without background. It is as simple, present and clear as the Italian architecture of the period, which has taught us to see the building as a cube with a facade. Although it has a specific style, the temple is at the same time an organism with the unfathomability of the living. Alberti's building is no longer all-round and unfathomable, it is a showpiece turned towards the viewer, as a whole it is 'facade'.

It will be no coincidence that in the very country that witnessed Dante's imperious artistry, the foundation for modern art theory is laid. What strikes every viewer coming from the Hellenistic and medieval theories of beauty as if by a stroke is the self-confidently bold realism with which Alberti places the activity of the artist at the center of the theory. One sometimes hears the

opinion expressed that the modern concept of the artist originates from the Renaissance. This is an error: the Renaissance did indeed place the artifex as a type alongside the poet, the scholar, the statesman; but this artifex is much more an engineer than an artist in our sense. According to Alberti, the art of the painter and architect is based on science, namely mathematics. This constitutes the break with the Middle Ages: the artist is no longer a craftsman who draws from the workshop tradition and the practical experience of a master, but an independent entrepreneur guided by his own intellect and scientific theory. 'The hand of the workman serves the architect only as a tool' (Alberti's preface to his work on architecture).

Through this (humanistic) foundation in science comes that sharply rational trait in Alberti's theory which makes it historically something absolutely new.

In his treatise on painting (1435) Alberti develops the doctrine of the visual pyramid. The definition of painting reads: 'Painting will therefore be nothing other than the artificial representation on a surface by means of lines and colors of a cross-section of the visual pyramid according to a certain distance, a certain viewpoint and a certain lighting' (L.B. Alberti's shorter art-theoretical writings, translated by H. Janitschek, 1877, p. 68 ff). What is overwhelmingly new about this explanation is the methodical attitude from which it arises. No longer the object, no longer beauty, no longer the general concept of artificial production as such is the starting point, but the specific process of painting itself. Soberly and factually Alberti describes the technique of painting, not its craft elements, but its essence. This is about something quite different from a canon in the sense of ancient aesthetics. The 'rule' does not refer to given proportions, but to an action guided and controlled by consciousness.

The work of visual artists is generally defined by Alberti as follows: they bring out images from bodies created by nature into the work they produce (*Artēs eōrum, quī ex corpōribus ā nātūrā procreātīs effigiēs et simulācra suā in opus promere aggrediuntur...*). This is done by removing or adding something to any given material. When working in wax or clay, the work is accomplished both by adding and taking away; others only take away, like stone sculptors. Painters, on the other hand, have their own technique (*propriō artificiō ēnituntur*, ib. p. 171). In this context, Alberti gives the description of the marble sculptor's procedure that has become classic: by cutting away the superfluous, he brings out the human figure, present and hidden inside the block, into the light (*Alīi solum detrahentēs velutī quī superflua discutiendō quaesītā hominīs figūrā intra marmoris glebam indītā atque abscondītā prōducunt in lūcem*).

The definition of the architect as a planner moving loads and joining bodies (On Architecture,

preface) has the same sober precision. Up to Alberti, art theory and theory of beauty go hand in hand. Attempts are certainly made to incorporate the artist who beholds beauty into the system of the metaphysics of the beautiful (Plotinus). In doing so, however, he loses his independence, since here art as such is not granted any independence. Alberti is the first who, since for him the independence of artistic activity is a prerequisite, is able to combine the concept of beauty with that of art without a destructive effect. His historical significance is based on this. Alberti finds himself somehow opposite Plotinus, with the telling difference that the latter stands at the end, the former at the beginning of a long period of development.

The process must not be imagined in such a way that Alberti simply adopted the old concept of beauty. Between the Middle Ages and the Quattrocento lies the conquest of 'reality' by art. When Alberti speaks of beauty, he no longer has the highest beauty in mind, which is one with the lovable and the good, but he thinks of the beauty of appearances. He is a naturalist; just as Quattrocento art is naturalistic compared to medieval art. The painter he describes is a keen observer of nature (Janitschek, p. 149 f). Those who rely on their inventive spirit (*ingénio*) without having a model in nature which they follow closely with their eyes or intellect (*Sènza avèr essèmpio alcùno d'àlla nàtura, quale con òcchi o mèn-te sèguano*) never learn to paint correctly, but only get used to their errors. 'That idea of beauties, which scarcely even the most experienced are able to recognize, flees from unexperienced minds' (*Fuggie gl'ingègni non periti quell'idèa delle bellèzze, quale i ben esercitatissimi appèna discernono*. Janitschek, p. 151).

In two passages of his work on architecture, Alberti defines beauty. In the second chapter of Book Six it says: Beauty is a certain harmoniousness with calculation of all parts in the whole to which they belong, such that nothing can be added, removed or altered without it becoming less commendable. (. . . ut sit pulchritūdō quidem certa cum ratiōne concīnnitāsūniversārum partium in eō cūjus sint: ita ut addī aut dēminuī aut immūtārī possit nihil, quin imprōbābilius reddātur) [**Footnote in the original edition:** I have rendered *concīnnitās* as 'symmetry'. Alberti does not use the Greek word: apparently out of aversion to the Greeks. He prefers the word *concīnnitās*, which is closer to him through the Roman-rhetorical tradition (Cicero)]. Of the principles (*praecepta*) of beauty and ornament it is said that they are borrowed from philosophy and adapted to the particular nature of the art in question (Book Six, Chapter Three, end).

Alberti gives the detailed exposition of his theory of beauty in Chapter Five of Book Nine of architecture. Symmetry (*concīnnitās*) arises through the combination of *numerus*, *finitiō* and *collōcātiō*. Alberti now strikes up a veritable hymn to symmetry. It encompasses the whole life and thought of man, it runs

through all nature. Everything nature produces has its measure set according to the law of symmetry. Nature knows no higher aspiration than that everything it produces be absolutely perfect. Without symmetry it would never reach this goal. 'Beauty is a certain harmony and consonance of the parts of a whole to which they belong, according to a definite measurement (*numerus, finitiō, collōcātiō*), carried out as symmetry, i.e. the most perfect and primary law of nature, demands' (. . . ita uti concīnnitās, hoc est absolūta prīmāriaque ratiō nātūrae postulārit).

These sentences stand in direct opposition to Alberti's art theory. Here an absolute, pre-existing beauty of nature is presupposed; art falls completely into dependence on this beauty and thus on nature. The previously so active artist now appears as an imitator: our ancestors had not unjustly declared that they imitated nature as the best artist of forms (*nātūram optimam formārum artificem sibi fore imitandam indixēre*). As soon as nature appears as artist, the artist must lose significance. The tension between Alberti's concept of beauty and his concept of art is evident.

For the relationship to Vitruvius, the comparison of the temple with the organism is characteristic: 'Just as in a living being the head, foot and every other limb stands in relation to the other limbs and to the whole rest of the body: so too in a building and especially in a temple all parts of the body are to be shaped so that they all correspond to one another, so that with any arbitrary individual part all the others can be measured exactly' (VII, 5). Seen from the outside, Alberti's agreement with Vitruvius is complete. But precisely the most important distinction, that between symmetry and eurhythmy, is missing. In this lies the whole contrast between the Renaissance and antiquity. The theory of beauty is there, the mythical background from which it no longer emerges. The speculative part of Alberti's work is a humanistic backdrop.

The connection of the aesthetic problem with a cosmological-anthropological number speculation is not something accidental but follows by necessity from the nature of ancient metaphysics of the beautiful. But just as little as the humanists write like Cicero and Virgil, just as little have ancient cosmological ideas really come to life in the Renaissance. Under the rule of the Christian concept of God, ancient cosmological ideas can only lead a sham existence. The sense of reality that lives in the cosmological speculation of the ancients also gives the works of art of antiquity their peculiar force of being. If one sees a Renaissance building after an ancient one, one suddenly finds oneself confronted by a detached, abstract existence. The degree of reality is not the same, the work is not embedded in cosmic symmetry, but appears in relation to the viewer and his eye. Of course, ancient builders also took the eye into account; however, there is a difference whether the work of art is constituted by consideration of the eye, or by the eye's circumspection,

or whether the changes conditioned by the eye are only understood as 'temperatures' of cosmic symmetry.

With subjective art begins also subjective aesthetics. The discovery of the visual pyramid and the definition of painting made possible by it as the representation of nature in relation to a subject is a symbolic event. The world no longer appears as a being of its own vital power, the formulas for this are merely repeated from the ancients, but it exists only in relation to a subject. This subject is by no means yet the lone creative 'genius', it is a technically constructing subject. But it is the point of relation to which the world exists.

The fundamental term 'nature', which now arises, denotes the world in its relation to human senses. Between the theory of beauty of antiquity and the theory of beauty of the Renaissance, the concept of the world surrounding us and related to our senses pushes itself. Thereby the world becomes a sensible world, i.e. 'nature'. In antiquity this relation is secondary; with the discovery of 'man' in the Renaissance it becomes primary. The 'subjectivism' of the Renaissance is a sober, objective subjectivism, which is connected with the strongest sense of the work. In artistic terms it is characterized by the discovery of the eye as mediator between the world and the ego.

For Alberti, it goes without saying that the work of art is there for the eye or the ear, and that its existence is exhausted in this. The passion for the eye characteristic of the Renaissance is already experienced and articulated by him. The eyes above all, he says, naturally desire beauty and harmony, and prove very obstinate and sensitive in this regard (*Et sunt praesertim oculi naturae praecipua pulchritudinis atque concinnitatis: et in ea re sese praestant morosos et admodum difficiles. IX, 8*). Often they cannot say at all what it is that offends them (*quidnam sit quod offendant nequeunt explicare*), unless their unconditional greed for beholding the beautiful is not fulfilled by (the object). In the forms and shapes of buildings there lies a natural sublimity and perfection that excites our inner being and makes itself felt at once (*quod animum excitat e vestigioque sentiatur. IX, 8*). Alberti indicates that he has experienced and observed in himself the process of aesthetic contemplation. He does not want to examine what it is that produces the pleasure. In any case, the judgment of beauty is effected not by mere conjecture but by an innate inner insight. (*Ut vero de pulchritudine iudices, non opinio, verum animis innata quaedam ratio efficiet. IX, 5*). What beauty and ornament are in themselves we can perhaps understand more clearly inwardly than express in words. (*Sed pulchritudo atque ornamentum per se quid sit quidve inter se differant, fortassis animo apertius intellegemus quam verbis explicari a me possit. VI, 2*).

The same artist who writes the half mathematical treatise on painting at the same time gives expression to the knowledge of the irrational character of

the aesthetic object. Strange union of rationality and mystery! We know it well, it is modern. In Alberti it occurs for the first time; in the art and philosophy of the Baroque it finds its monumental expression (Leibniz!). The first rational artist discovers the mystery of aesthetic effect. *Only now does the subjectivism of the Renaissance reach its depth.* At the same time, however, the problematic nature of the new art and beauty theory also comes to light. The mysteriously become 'beauty' is pursued by the artist. The artist no longer wants merely to liberate the norm of measure hidden in things, or he only wants it in theory, but not in practice, he wants to produce beauty through his activity. Thus, despite its seemingly so coherent artistic form, the Renaissance involves a double movement: towards beauty man can only comport himself receptively, passively, as described paradigmatically by Plotinus. For the Renaissance, however, the artist is one who produces. He is no longer the humble craftsman of the Middle Ages, but the companion of the proud humanist. Through this, a profound division comes into the essence of the new artistic type.

Between the metaphysics of beauty, which corresponds to a different worldview, and the new concept of artistic activity, there is a contradiction. Activity is the newly won precious good; but the doctrine of the beautiful, which as an inheritance of the ancients already has the highest consecration, is not to be sacrificed. As a solution to this contradiction, Renaissance art stands before us with its humanization (relativization) of Beauty. Systematically formulated: the Renaissance invents the Style of Beauty. This expression unites opposites: the word style points to artistic activity, the word beauty to the passive attitude of man in relation to the normative measure contained in the world. Through the synthesis undertaken in the Renaissance, the norm is transformed into a result of artistic willing and doing, cosmic normative beauty becomes 'art beauty'. As style and as theory, art beauty is a discovery of the Renaissance. The peculiar intermediate position of this age, which can no longer be attributed to the Middle Ages and not yet to the modern age, is imprinted here. Until the 19th century, the newly created concept of art beauty has occupied Western culture.

D) Dürer. Leonardo

With the highest precision, Dürer expresses this tension in the dedication of his theory of proportion to Willibald Pirckheimer. 'However, if it has its right measure, it cannot be blamed even if it is made very poorly' (Lange und Fuhse, *'Dürers schriftl. Nachlaß'*, p. 208). The sentence is so meaningful because otherwise Dürer emphasizes the activity of the artist with no less emphasis than Alberti does. But the 'measures' stand even higher than everything the artist is able to do on his own. Dürer's concept of measure is that of Vitruvius and Alberti: the most beautiful things are the 'comparable' ones (*Vergleichung, compāratiō = concinnitās*).

Measurement makes sense only within a whole; symmetry (concinntās) refers to the relation of the parts to the whole.

To be sure, Dürer knows the ‘wondrous gift’ that enables one ‘to show his great power and art’ in something he dashes off with his pen in half a day on half a sheet of paper or carves with his little iron into a little piece of wood, while another works in vain with the utmost diligence for a whole year (Lange and Fuhse p. 221). But he does not want to know anything about any ‘spontaneity’ of the artist. **[Footnote in the original edition:** An ‘experienced skilled artist’ combines power and art, i.e. ποίησις and τέχνη. For this, cf. Beenken, Wolfflin-Festschrift. 1924, p. 184ff. Beenken rightly rejects Panofsky's idealistic interpretation of this passage. However, I cannot find proof of Dürer's ‘insecurity’ in his art theory: rather, the juxtaposition of the ‘measure’ perspective and the ‘power’ perspective is the core of Renaissance theory]. ‘The more accurately and similarly’ an image is made like a human being, the better the work turns out (Lange and Fuhse p. 351). As honey is gathered together from many flowers, so the good is collected from many beautiful things (Lange and Fuhse p. 300). For ‘master’ is nature and human delusion is a maze (Lange and Fuhse p. 351). ‘For your ability is powerless against God's creation’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 227). ‘Do not stray from nature into your own imagination, imagining you can find something better out of yourself; for you will be led astray. For truly art lies hidden in nature, he who can draw it out has it’ **[Footnote in the original edition:** ‘Reißen’ in Dürer's language: to work with lines. So: whoever is able to draw out beauty from nature, has it] (Lange and Fuhse p. 226). This does not mean that a ‘well-practiced artist’ must for each new work ‘copy lifelike images’. Rather, he represents what he has ‘long gathered inwardly from without’. In this way, ‘the secretly gathered treasure of the heart becomes manifest through the work and the new creature that one conceives in his heart in the form of a thing’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 227). When Dürer says in his drafts in his painters' book that a good painter is ‘inwardly full of figures’, he does not think of the artist as the originator of this beauty, that would be for him ‘a newly invented measure’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 351), but of the treasure of conceptions that the true painter has taken from nature and harbors within himself.

Like Alberti, Dürer also points to the inexplicability of beauty. ‘*What beauty is, that I know not, although it adheres to many things*’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 303). ‘Nobody knows that except God, to judge beauty’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 290). There are various kinds of beauty and various causes of the beautiful. Everyone should beware of believing too much in himself. ‘For everyone likes to make what pleases him like himself’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 229). In this form Dürer warns once more against arbitrariness and the contingencies of subjectivity. His concept of beauty is soberly material natural. ‘Utility is a part of beauty.

Therefore what is useless in man is not beautiful’ (Lange and Fuhse p. 304). Finally, it should be pointed out that Vitruvius' name (‘Fitruvius’) is mentioned by Dürer especially often and with special affection and reverence.

For the contemporary observer, there seems to be a contradiction between the art of Albrecht Dürer, which individualizes down to the smallest detail (‘not omitting the tiniest wrinkles and veins’, Lange and Fuhse p. 224), and the design of the painter's book, which was to deal with the measure of man, of the horse, of buildings, of perspective, of light and shadow and finally of colors (Lange and Fuhse p. 280 f). We believe that the scientific striving for the universal would have had to enter into a painful conflict with the artistic striving for the individual. However, not the slightest trace of a feeling of such conflict is to be found in Dürer. What he consciously aims at as a representational artist is to draw out the right thing from nature. For the rest, the represented may retain its particularity. One could say that in the concept of measure, the universal and the particular meet.

The joy that Dürer has in everything that contains a theory of the real, in Vitruvius, Euclid, perspective, is original and genuine. *As a representational artist he feels himself most profoundly akin to the scientific cognizer in his relationship to nature.* This seamless transition from art to science and from science to art is the hallmark of the Renaissance from Alberti on. The wondrous synthesis does not follow from the alleged ideal of the ‘Renaissance man’ but is a necessary consequence of the universal concept of nature held by the epoch following the Middle Ages.

The most perfect representation of the Renaissance synthesis is Leonardo da Vinci, the natural scientist and painter, theorist and engineer. In him the anti-Platonic element of the early Renaissance seems driven to an extreme: ‘If even the things we experience through the senses are doubted, how much more deceptive must those things be that are against sensory experience, like the essence of God and the soul, about which nevertheless endless disputes and controversies go on, and about which it really applies that whenever reasons fail, shouting takes their place, which surely cannot happen with secure things’ (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 68). Solely turned towards reality and tracking the secret law of the formation and transformation of its shapes, the eye of this powerful spirit rests inquiringly on the world of appearances. For him, painting is a natural science: just as science reconstructs nature in a way, so painting appears to him as nothing other than a ‘second nature’ (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 57). In an entirely un-humanistic way, the art of poetry is placed far below painting, which one has unjustly expelled from the number of the liberal arts (ib.). Painting is mute poetry (*poesia muta*), poetry blind painting (*pittura cieca*); but the blind man is more crippled than the mute! (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 31, cf. p. 37). The beauty of the world consists of ‘light, darkness,

color, body, figure, place and position, distance, proximity, motion and rest' (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 37). 'O wondrous thing, to make the intangible appear tangible, the flat relief, the near distant' (Ludwig, p. 101). Painting is philosophy of nature, since like it, it deals with the movement of bodies. Its fundamental law states: 'The object that moves away from the eye diminishes in size and color in proportion as it gains in distance' (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 15).

For Leonardo, neither the object nor the goal of painting is 'beauty' (in this respect, J. Wolff erroneously in L. da Vinci as Aesthete, 1901, p. 61 f). The object and goal of painting is nature, and beauty has a place in Leonardo's thoughts only insofar as it is a beauty of the works of nature. When he speaks of 'divine beauty', 'divine proportions', 'harmonious proportionality of the parts that make up the whole' (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 60, 42, 40), he is nevertheless not speaking of 'the' beauty, but of appearing beauties. For him, God is to be found only in creation. The artist who represents nature is God's grandson, and thus related to God (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 35, 19).

The harmony of proportionate limbs, which nature with all her powers is unable to maintain, is preserved and kept alive through painting (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 60). In this consists the superiority of painting over music, that it can lend duration to the 'perishable charms of mortals' (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 59). This seems to us a slight achievement. We judge the artist by the extent and depth of his 'personality'. In the 16th century, however, one was not yet enervated by the subjective genius concept of modern times. Leonardo is content to think through the idea of pictorial creation. Like all strong natures and epochs, he does not dream of new contents (the content is self-evident) but reflects on form. The wonder is that man can conserve the essence of "Nature" through recreative means. What constitutes the essence of the painter is not the invention of unheard-of objects, but that he is master of calling into existence beauties that move him to love them (È il signore di generarle). Everything that exists, be it for frightening, for laughing or pitying, valley floor or summit, desert or inhabited region, he is the master of it (egli non è Signore). What there is in the universe, he has first in spirit and then in his hands, 'and these are of such excellence that in equal times they produce a well-proportioned harmony, compressed into a single glance, as real things do' (Ludwig, Vol. 1, p. 18).

The power and the secret of the artist lies thus in making. Behind Leonardo's aesthetics stands a philosophy of productivity. The real humanities are for him those who perfect themselves in a work. They are first in the mind of the one who foresees them; however, they cannot reach their 'perfection without manual operation (which is first in the mind of its contemplator and cannot arrive at its perfection without manual operation. Ludwig, I. p. 70 ff). Here there is no contrast

between inside and outside, between head and hand, theory and practice, τέχνη and ποίησις belong together: what light and darkness, motion and rest is conceived with the mind alone without manual operation (is understood with the mind alone without manual work); from this 'science of painting' the activity is born (the operation then arises) which is much nobler than mere contemplation and speculation.

In regard to art theory, the scientific researcher Leonardo stands directly opposite the Neoplatonist Michelangelo. The activity of the sculptor is seen by Michelangelo in purely Plotinian terms (the mysticism of 'taking away', cf. above p. 20). Leonardo is free from all enthusiasm like Dürer. The activity of the painter is the highest because it resembles the highest activity. He could never have said like Michelangelo: 'One paints with the spirit and not with the hand...' (Cf. above p. 69).

E) Vasari

The Renaissance is naturally inclined and not idealistically inclined. Is not even Michelangelo as an artist a naturalist despite his Platonism? When Vasari wants to put forward a general dictum about art at the apex of the Renaissance, he says with the tone of convincing self-evidence: 'I know that our art is entirely and in the first place imitation of nature' (W. von Oßersitz, 'Vasari's General Art Views'. 1897, p. 7). It is thoroughly the art and the artist that the first successful historian of the visual arts has to deal with, not beauty and not the idea. Nevertheless, something new is already emerging in Vasari. Unselfconsciously, he once calls nature the mother of art, while on another occasion invention (*invenzione*) receives this honorary title. Design (*disegno*) stands opposite it as 'father' (von Oßersitz, p. 9). However, one should not relate this invention in a modern way to what is properly artistic, but rather the invention of the subject of the representation is meant (Schlosser, pp. 285 ff). Panofsky has shown in what form the 'idea' reappears in Vasari, now as an expression of what the Platonist denies through it: experience. From the knowledge of reality the idea now springs (Panofsky, pp. 33 f). In this conception naturalism of the Renaissance reaches its peak: the idea becomes the (attainable) 'ideal'. But Vasari is not significant as a theoretician, but as the creator of more recent art historiography. The deep contrast in which the new era stood to the Middle Ages is nowhere more evident than in his undertaking of the 'Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori et scultori italiani' (1550), this 'lineage and gallery of fame' (Heidrich, Contributions to the History and Theory of Art History 1917, p. 10) of the new art. It is not an unheard of conception of the essence of art or the artist that guides Vasari's pen, it is merely the self-confidence of a profession that has supplanted that of the celebrated humanists in public esteem. The concept of an artist's fame in connection with a down-to-earth pragmatism has produced the successful work that was first overcome as a type by Winckelmann's achievement. Vasari writes the

history of artists, not of art. He aims to sketch as vivid a picture as possible of individual personalities, not shunning even the most unsubstantiated anecdote. At bottom, however, all his figures are only 'modifications of the ideal artist type as it appears to him and his time' (Heidrich, Contrib. pp. 17 f).

With this, however, the historical significance of Vasari's achievement is by no means exhausted. This significance goes far beyond what the originator intended. His principle is fruitful: by depicting not only the artist but also acting as a critical connoisseur who always keeps the work in view, he is led of his own accord to the realization of contexts between works. The workshop word *maniera*, which we would probably do better to translate as 'make' rather than 'style', emphatically points to the realm of ποίησις; Schlosser conjectures that the famous characteristically stylistic expression of the *terribile*, which was applied above all to Michelangelo, was derived from the old rhetorical δεινὴ (Schlosser, p. 286). Probably the historico-philosophical schema which Vasari applies, albeit only externally, to his material is also borrowed from the realm of literary style criticism, which had long since distinguished between a golden, silver and brazen Latinity (Schlosser, pp. 277 f). *The transfer of the schema to the visual arts, however, is probably Vasari's personal property* (A. Philippi, 'The Concept of the Renaissance', 1912, pp. 51 ff).

Vasari does not know the application of the word *rinascita* to the stylistic character of the art reborn in the 13th century. But he already has a clear notion of the succession of the *maniere*. In the first edition of his work there is the remarkable statement that he wants to pay more attention to the order of the manners than to the chronology of the facts (osservare l'ordine delle materie più che del tempo, Philippi, p. 60).

F) Zuccaro

Relatively quickly the security of the High Renaissance is replaced by the restlessness of the High Baroque. In between lies an era of Counter-Reformation tensions which appears in art history under the not very fortunate name of Mannerism (cf. above p. 38). The art theorist of Mannerism is F. Zuccaro, whose work '*L'idea de' pittori, scultori et architetti*' was published in 1607. Mannerism, Greco is its most characteristic manifestation, turns away from what the Renaissance had understood by 'nature'; it despises the demands made on the 'correctness' of representation by the naturalistic theory of beauty. The light shines within, and what the artist creates springs from within the artist: the *disegno*, the drawing. The pre-drawing of the interior precedes the real drawing. *Disegno interno* is Zuccaro's main concept. 'Inside' and 'outside' diverge completely.

The problem that arises with this: how it is possible for the mind to form such an 'inner representation' is designated by Panofsky (see also

Guhl-Rosenberg, '*Künstlerbriefe*'. 1880. Vol. II. Pp. 4 ff) *as the problem of artistic creation*, and he believes that it is posed here for the first time (Idea, pp. 45 f). He overlooks or underestimates the non-Platonic tradition. The problem of artistic creation in general has already been posed by Aristotle. It is known to the Middle Ages, and it now only passes over to the field of art theory in the narrower sense with an admittedly peculiar accentuation. *When Zuccaro approaches the problem of artistic creation with the conceptual apparatus of high scholasticism, he moves entirely within the lines of Aristotelian tradition, which was always more vigorous than the Platonic and made itself less noticeable only because the problem of art was never able to attract attention to itself as strongly as the problem of the beautiful*. In another sense it was indeed 'the times' that set the old Aristotelian body of thought in motion again. It is the time when the Middle Ages was revived by the zealous activity of the leaders of the Counter-Reformation, the time of a new scholasticism and an important, universal founding of an order. The Jesuit order takes over the leadership. Structures of the highest artificiality, fantastically and calculatingly combining the wondrous arise. The analogy to the art of Mannerism, in which likewise a mystical spiritualism appears combined with a virtuoso and refined mastery of all effects, is obvious. Passion (imagination) and cold, intelligent will are united at work. Decisive is the devaluation of sensuality: with the aid of imagination the senses are brought under the rule of will.

Aristotle had taught and Thomas Aquinas had repeated that what appears in the artist's work is preformed in the artist's mind. This simple theory is elaborated by Zuccaro into a fantastic system of concepts. Basically this system arises through an immoderate exaggeration of the traditional concept of artistic activity, through a theologizing of Νόησις. This theologizing finds its expression in the reinterpretation of the term *disegno interno*, which is interpreted by Zuccaro as *segno di dio in noi*. There is agreement between the procedure of the human being who produces a work of art and the procedure of nature, which creates reality. Nature can be imitated by the artist because it also follows an intellectual principle in its productions (Panofsky, '*Idea*', pp. 48 ff). The essential goal of artistic representation indeed remains the imitation of reality, but nature within the artist, the senses, are completely disempowered. The senses are only called upon from above, the idea, by means of the imagination, first sets sensory perception in motion (Panofsky, Idea, p. 50).

The lasting result of this theological variation on the healthy Aristotelian idea of the pre-existent idea in the artist's mind was that separation between an 'inner' and an 'outer' of art which to this day does not cease to exert its disastrous influence. Characteristically, Zuccaro is also noteworthy and important as 'the oldest official representative of academism in the field of visual arts' (Schlosser, p. 346). The emergence of artist academies in

the era of Mannerism (Italy is the country of origin) may be no coincidence: if 'inner' and 'outer' diverge, then the 'outer' can become a matter of organization.

G) J.C. Scaliger

Poetics had lain fallow for centuries. Horace's epistle to the Pisos with its elegant coinages and practical hints seems to have satisfied all needs. The verse work of Hieronymus Vida (1520), the Virgil-enthusiastic bishop, hardly gives more than an independent reworking of Horace's *Ars poetica*. 'Then in 1561 appeared the treatise *Poetices libri septem*' by Julius Caesar Scaliger. *This book forms a deep incision in the history of aesthetics. It brought Pseudo-Aristotelianism to sole rule for centuries.* Like an immense concave mirror it seeks to capture within itself all rays of light of aesthetic science, in general everything that is connected in any way with it, as far as Latin antiquarian poetry is concerned' (E. Brinkschulte, 'J.C. Scaligers Art-Theoretical View's, 1914, p. 101). Scaliger, like Vida a glowing admirer of Virgil, is the ancestor of the Romanesque baroque poetics. Aristotle, whom he, a gifted linguist, reads in the original language, is elevated by him to the eternal dictator of art and art theory.

As an Aristotelian, Scaliger is not concerned with the 'beautiful', but with art, here with poetry. He does not know an idea or a beautiful in itself, idea means material to him. Selection is his most important principle. The *docēre cum iucunditate* borrowed from Horace (Scaliger's Poet. Ed. sec. 1581. p. 902) is also emphatically presented. For Scaliger the poet is an extremely active human being. In nature the perfect only occurs locally and temporally inhibited, artists have the task of uniting it (*E multīs in ūnum opus suum trānsferunt*. Poet. p. 285). This does not mean, we add, making the artist a mere tool. The Platonist places all activity in the idea, thereby making the artist a mere tool. On the basis of Aristotelianism, on the other hand, the artist receives the task of making it better than nature, of bringing its lawfulness present but obscured in things clearly and undistortedly to light. Scaliger is the first conscious theoretician of the classicism intended by the early Renaissance.

The poets should know nature better than it knows itself, they should master the norms that nature follows so well that they appear more as its legislators than as its imitators (*Ita ut nōn ā nātūrā didicisse, sed cum eā certāsse, aut potius illī dare lēgēs vidēantur*. Poetics; ib). They represent things not as they appear accidentally, but as they are according to their principles of being (*ipsīs nātūrae nōrmīs*). The classicist poetics and art doctrine of France is an elaboration and further development of Scaliger's thoughts. Boileau says: *rien n'est beau que le vrai*, that is Scaliger. And when Bouhours demands that the poet should preserve the essence of things, that he should never destroy the essence des choses, not even in order to elevate or beautify his material (cf. Baeumler, 'Kant's Critique of

Judgment', p. 35, note 5), he professes himself a follower of the same spirit. The final formula of this spirit will be that the artist should imitate 'beautiful nature' (Batteux), that is precisely what Scaliger means when he defines: poetry renders things in words not as they are but rather as they would be and could and should be. *Imitatio* is not only the principle of poetry but also of sculpture and painting. Objectivity is Scaliger's highest point of view. His criticism is never formal but directed at the object (material) [Footnote in the original edition: He criticizes that Homer makes the west wind blow in the wrong direction. Of the harbors described by Homer and Virgil, he prefers the latter's, because it is more practical for ships, Brinkschulte p. 19]. This certainly also has to do with Scaliger's professional attitude (he was a physician).

Through imitation the poet makes himself into another God, 'for of what the master craftsman of all things has created, the other sciences are so to speak portrayers; but since poetic science portrays the image of all that is and is not with greater accuracy, it seems not, like other sciences, merely to reproduce as an actor, but to create like another god, therefore the name shared with him seems to have been given it not by human agreement but by the providence of nature (... *vidētur sārē rēs ipsās, nōn ut aliā [scientiā], quasi histriō, nārārē. sed velut alter deus condere...* Poet. p. 6). The poet is not a mere copyist of reality, but creator of 'another nature'. Scaliger thus understands the word in the original and proper sense. He rejects the derivation from *fingerē*: the poet has not gotten his name from inventing, as is commonly thought, but from making: *Poētae īgītūr nōmen nōn ā fīgendō, ut putārent, quā fīctīs ūtērētur: sed initiō ā faciendō versum ductum est* (Poet. ib.).

In the 16th century it becomes important to equate Aristotle with reason (Borinski I, p. 222). Scaliger equates Virgil with nature ('Virgil our second nature'). This equation is then possible and meaningful if the notion underlies it, as is the case here: the lawfulness contained in nature has been portrayed by Virgil with such fidelity that no contradiction can exist between the two principles 'imitation of nature' and 'imitation of Virgil'. *Like Quintilian, Scaliger divides the arts into two groups: the works of one are only insofar as they are made, those of the other, after they have been made.* A temple, e.g., is still not 'there' as long as it is under construction. On the other hand, a song, a dance, a wrestling match exist only in the performance (Poet. p. 206; cf. above pp. 55 f). The main concept of ancient commensurability aesthetics (συμμετοχή, *cōnvēnientia*) is mentioned by Scaliger and related to verbal art. The *cōnvēnientia* is the 'cause' of beauty (Poet. p. 446). However, this is mere echo of Cicero and Vitruvius, the *cōnvēnientia* does not belong to Scaliger's basic aesthetic concepts.

The art theory of the Renaissance and Baroque reaches its peak in the 16th century in Scaliger's poetics,

in the 17th in the doctrine of G. P. Bellori. However great the time difference, the difference in tone and education between the two men may be, with regard to influence they have the same significance. Out of the giant shadow they still cast on the 18th century emerges German literary criticism and German art historiography. As Lessing stands in relation to Scaliger, so Winckelmann stands in relation to Bellori.

Librarian to Queen Christina of Sweden, friend of Poussin, most intimate enemy of his contemporary Bernini, *Antiquario di Roma* by virtue of his office, Bellori certainly occupies externally a more splendid, but almost exactly the same European position that later, in his Rome, was to accrue for a few years to the shoemaker's son from the Altmark, Winckelmann. *Through Bellori Raphael becomes the criterion of classicism*. Winckelmann adorns his first work, which revolutionized the 18th century, with a description of the Madonna Sistina just acquired for Dresden. In 1664 Bellori delivers that fundamental lecture on art before the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome which he later prefixed under the title 'L'idea della pittura, scultura ed architettura' to his work '*Le vite de' pittori scultori ed architetti moderni*' (1672). It is a 'programmatic writing' (Schlosser, p. 417). *It arises from the feeling that the times are torn and in need of a guide*. The voice of the classicist admonisher sounds not from the summit of achievement, but from the depth of the trough. Classicism arises from a feeling of stylistic decline. As the word 'Gothic' was used in the Renaissance to declare the preceding epoch infamous, so now, admittedly no longer in that victorious mood, the term 'Baroque' becomes the abusive epithet characterizing the preceding epoch. Classicism presupposes the explanation of a decline of art in one's own time.

By being the first to raise the issue about the corruption of our age, Bellori becomes the ancestor of all classicist endeavors down to our own time. The awareness of confronting a wrong direction, a wrong *maniera*, awakens the desire to establish the right style. Classicism means reflection on the right model. In reality there were two directions to which Bellori opposed himself: one he saw ossified in mannerism, the other abandoned to crass naturalism. Against Borromini and Bernini on the one hand, against Caravaggio on the other: that is the tactical situation. The practical solution is sought by elevating the art of the Greeks as the standard, now for the first time (Schlosser, p. 457), and relating the art of modern times (Raphael) to it by virtue of that schema already developed by Vasari. This creates a tradition which forms a prerequisite, not to be overlooked, for Winckelmann's recovery of the Greek original from the overestimation of the Roman tradition (cf. Schlosser, p. 458). The theoretical solution is already prefigured in this situation. The point was to prove, says Panofsky, that neither the Mannerists nor those who gloried in the name of Naturalists were right, that rather 'the true salvation of art had to be sought in a just mean

between these two equally reprehensible extremes, in that just mean which one had of course learned to revere as the infallible standard the antique, as an art not 'naturalistic' but precisely in its limitation to a 'purified' or 'ennobled' reality quite properly 'natural' (Panofsky, Idea, p. 59).

The task of the artist is to harbor an idea of beauty itself in his mind by imitating the highest artist, and to improve nature according to this idea. But the artistic idea is derived from sensuous experience. Through selection from the natural beauties of nature the idea is superior to nature, it is reality in pure form. 'Originating from nature it overcomes its origin and makes itself the model of art' (*originata dalla natura supera l'origine e fassi originale dell'arte*). Panofsky, Idea, p. 60). This sentence is the epigrammatic formulation of classicism. The word manner now receives the meaning: to work from an arbitrarily assumed habit without a model from nature. At the same time, however, working solely from the natural model receives the stamp of the contemptible. It has become possible to distinguish the nature to be imitated from 'common nature' (Panofsky, Idea, p. 62). In every respect, Bellori signifies the completion and conclusion of the aesthetic endeavors of the Renaissance. Not least (which Panofsky did not emphasize) because only now the idea and concept of the beautiful has been systematically incorporated into art theory. What Alberti began has now been carried through; the two lines running separately through the centuries, still avoided touching each other in Scaliger's poetics (since Scaliger does not speak of beauty), are united by Bellori. The extraordinary effect of his treatise stems from this: a simpler solution, a more perfect synthesis was inconceivable. There was no more problem, no more dispute between beauty and art, between Plato and Aristotle: the imitation of rightly understood beauty of nature had to produce with inner necessity the highest beauty of art. That is the secret of classicism. By transferring the concept of beauty to art, which had become possible through the matured concept of 'imitation', Bellori could become the lawgiver of art. He spoke to the practicing artist, but he did not speak of art but of beauty. It is no accident that his treatise first appeared as an academic oration: he would be worthy to be called the spiritual father of all art academies.

For the validity of art and the artist, Bellori's synthesis is of decisive importance. Only now is art grounded in the stars and superior to nature in every way. Bellori quotes passages from poets in which the highest beauty of a living being is expressed through comparison with a painting or statue, and finally disputes that Helena, as a natural woman, could have been beautiful enough to be the object of a ten year war. The Trojan War had in truth not been waged and sustained because of the imperfect beauty of a real woman, but because of the perfect beauty of a statue that Paris had abducted to Troy. Surveying the long debate winding through the centuries

around the problem of nature and art, one will surely always feel the story of the academic orator Bellori to be the most charming formulation of a well-thought-out solution.

The process completed in Bellori is formulated by Panofsky from his Platonic point of view in the happy phrase 'Elaboration of the idea into the ideal' (Idea, p. 62). By the word 'ideal' is to be understood what classicist artists and aestheticians have understood it to mean down to the present day: the beauty itself present in nature but to be regained by the artist from his own inner being, surpassing every individual phenomenon of nature. Through classicism, says Panofsky, the theory of ideas is transformed into a legislative aesthetics; classical art has not so much a normative philosophy about art running parallel to it as a constructive theory for art; Mannerism, on the other hand, neither, but a speculative metaphysics of art. The peculiar character of classicist practice and theory, at once invective and normative, is explained by its historical position between metaphysics (Mannerism) and empiricism (Naturalism) (Panofsky, Idea, pp. 62 f).

The historical significance of Bellori is certainly not yet adequately characterized by the catchword 'classicism'. The matter also wants to be seen from the other side. That academic oration forms only the introduction to a work dealing with actual Italian artists. Not a philosopher but a connoisseur, critic and antiquarian speaks in Bellori. Properly considered, his theory of the art of beauty is really only a high-flown façade. Behind it, however, we find a quite solid structure of art-historical cognition erected, a cognition certainly not derived from the 'idea' of art but built on thorough studies of the local Italian schools of painting. *Bellori not only completed the speculative line, but also the art critical and art historical one.* According to Schlosser's judgment (p. 455) it is he who has really fully established the division into 'schools' in art history. With this achievement Bellori comes very near the threshold of style criticism, historically connected with the 'Roman' Winckelmann.

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Epilogue

While working on the continuation the author has been faced with tasks that made it impossible for him to complete the work for the time being. For now he has no choice but to indicate the basic lines of the planned continuation by defining some points.

In the first part it has been shown in the history of the basic aesthetic concepts up to the 17th century that from Plato's foundation metaphysics of beauty and art theory run parallel to each other, repelling or uniting, and that herein is to be sought the 'secret law' of the entire development (cf. above p. 35). In the 'aesthetic' 18th century both tendencies reach their climax. Shaftesbury's Neoplatonism stands at its threshold. What Ficino was for the Renaissance, Bruno for the Baroque, Shaftesbury is for the 18th century. 'The beautiful making, not the beautifully made is the really beautiful' (Shaftesbury, Characteristics. Transl. by Robertson. 1900. II. p. 50). Consistent Platonism is always recognized by the independent being of the beautiful or artistic structure being denied. If there is a 'first beauty' of which everything else is only a 'shadow', then only an appearance of reality remains for the proportioned phenomenon. The difference between nature and art becomes insignificant, nature however retains priority over everything made. Through the artist the highest beauty takes effect, and the producer, like the observer, is related to it only through the 'sense of inward measures' (the sense of inward numbers, Characteristics. I, p. 217). *Nature in its unity is the archetype of all artistic beauty; the unity of the work of art is thus to be determined by analogy with the unity of the cosmos.* Shaftesbury translates the ancient idea of the standard of measure, of 'symmetry' into the subjective language of the 18th century. Genuine taste is related to the eternal norms. There is an education of taste, a formation of the 'beautiful soul'. The phrase about the 'beautiful soul', which does not occur in Shaftesbury but summarizes his whole philosophy, appears in a contribution by Wieland to Sulzer's Theory of the Fine Arts, article 'Naiveté' ('Allgemeine Theorie'. New expanded edition. III. 1793, p. 503). Herder translates the nature hymn from Shaftesbury's main work (the 'Moralists') and carries forward in his aesthetics the idea of the unconditional priority of natural beauty. *With Shaftesbury Leibniz exerts an influence on the century in the same direction. The concepts of perfection, harmony and beauty thus become central concepts of the 18th century, the aesthetics of nature moves into the center of speculation at the expense of the philosophy of art.*

At the same time Leibniz and Shaftesbury together promote the transition to the subjective-psychological treatment of the aesthetic problem. In Leibniz's school the transition to the subject is made via the concept of the monad as a representing force (Cf.

Robert Sommer, *Grundzüge einer Geschichte der deutschen Psychologie und Ästhetik*, 1892). 18th century aesthetics in Germany therefore leads by inner necessity not to a theory of art but to a theory of the producing aesthetic faculty, i.e. to the doctrine of genius. Kant's Critique of Judgment exerts its deepest influence through the proposition about genius: 'Genius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art' (Critique of J. §46). With his century Kant gives natural beauty precedence over artistic beauty (Critique of J. §42). Whether it makes sense to subsume the beauty of nature and art under one concept is not asked. It was no coincidence that the nature lover Goethe felt addressed by the treatment of art in the Critique of Judgment.

The concept of genius and the concept of nature thus belong together. The theory of genius is not connected with the theory of art. Voltaire, who has the rhetorical concept of style, is dismissive of the concept of genius, and gives his Philosophical Dictionary only a brief article against the concept of beauty. He is the antagonist to Shaftesbury; he remains a pupil of the great 17th century down to the last consequences. In the article 'Nature' of his dictionary he puts the words in nature's mouth: 'I am called nature, but I am wholly art'. Even more sharply in the 26th Dialogue of the Philosophical Dialogues and Conversations: there is no nature, everything is art. Sentimental Platonism abolishes nature in order to celebrate nature as the object of vague enthusiasm. The classicist still regards even nature as the deliberate achievement of a sovereign, and thus as an appropriate model for his own well-considered activity.

The struggle against the poetic rule, which is led by the 'art critics' in Switzerland and in Germany, is not the struggle of a better informed reason against 'rationalistic' narrow-mindedness, but it is the struggle of the English concept of nature against the French concept of art. Two styles are wrestling with each other, Shakespeare against Corneille; in theory, however, 'nature' stands against 'the rule', genius against the mere imitator, i.e. against the style tradition. In Storm and Stress the English taste comes to victory. However, it was not the breakthrough of a real new style: Schiller returns to the French model, Goethe and Romanticism finally mix together the most diverse style forms.

Lessing's 'Laocoön' lies on the line of dissecting the work of art, on which also the works of the poeticists and rhetoricians lie. Lessing does not share the psychologism of the century, it is a dissection of the technique, not a dissection of the feelings. But behind his work there is no peculiar and self-contained view of art. This is the difference between the genius Winckelmann and him that Lessing himself felt. The 'Laocoön' is the work of a scholarly critic; it does not express a new relationship to art, but only represents a peculiar special performance within the traditional form of poetics. In occasional remarks in the Hamburg Dramaturgy (79th piece) and in the painter scene at the beginning of Emilia

Galotti the old Neoplatonic view of art shimmers through. The artist's work is considered as merely a technical one: '... or do you think, Prince, that Raphael would not have been the greatest painter genius if he had been born unfortunately without hands' (Cf. above p. 51 and pp. 76f). In the same passage from Emilia Galotti the formula of Schiller's classical art theory is hinted at, which sets the activity of the artist in the annihilation of the 'material': 'Art must paint as plastic nature, if there is one, imagined the image: without the waste which the resisting material inevitably causes...'.

When at the height of German classicism the aesthetic problem becomes the main problem, when here the aesthetic attitude towards the world appears as the center of a humanistic religiosity, so from the point of view of the history of ideas we are not facing an intellectual new creation, but a rebirth and fulfillment of English Neoplatonism.

The aesthetics of German classicism is an aesthetics of the 'inner form' in the sense of Shaftesbury, for whom aesthetic enjoyment represents a kind of pious and virtuous behavior. 'For in its ultimate ground the immersion in the beauty of the world is for him an admiring devotion to the inward, spiritual power that produces form and order out of itself, an elevation to the primordial form, the primordial law, an even if only illusorily accomplished unification with the Absolute' (Chr. Fr. Weiser, *Shaftesbury und das deutsche Geistesleben*. 1916. p. 200).

The theological-erotic character of Neoplatonism (cf. above p. 25), translated in a way through Leibniz's philosophy of the representing force, finds its purest expression in Schiller's early work, the 'Philosophical Letters'. Alien perfection, sympathetically felt, becomes my own and elicits the consciousness of my own ennoblement, my own enrichment; I desire it because I exalt myself. 'Harmony, truth, order, beauty, excellence give me joy because they transport me into the active state of their inventor, their possessor... I converse with the Infinite through the instrument of nature, through world history, I read the soul of the artist in his Apollo'. The difference between nature and art is that the universe is not a pure imprint of an ideal, as can be the completed work of a human artist.

The art theory of classicism consistently works with a double concept of nature. Its whole pathos is directed against 'common' nature, against the mere imitation of reality. 'Art consists in the annihilation of nature as reality, and its restoration as a product of the imagination'. This is how W. v. Humboldt expresses himself, whose art theory agrees with Schiller's in all essential points (Humboldt's *Collected Works*, Vol. VII, 2, p. 584).

Behind the anti-naturalism, however, hides a higher naturalism, which one could call the naturalism of

the ideal. The artist seeks to represent the ideal, i.e. true nature. ‘...for all reality is more or less a limitation of that general truth of nature. Every individual human being is just less human the more individual he is; every mode of feeling is just less necessary and purely human the more it is peculiar to a specific subject. Only in discarding the accidental and in the pure expression of the necessary lies the grand style’ (Schiller on Matthisson's Poems). The artist's work consists in stripping away, in sublimating matter. From this follows the connection between the theory of art and the idea of aesthetic education.

The path to the true human being, to humanity in us, traverses the same stages of negation in the subject that the artist traverses in the representation of the object: only by annihilating the empirical ego do we rise to the pure ego. When in his main aesthetic work Schiller quotes Fichte, one Neoplatonist refers to the other. The universal human is at the same time the highest form and the highest content; in the ideal, content and form coincide, there is no contradiction between truth and beauty (Cf. Schiller's letter to Goethe of July 7, 1797).

The more form, the more truth; the more power and freedom, the less matter. In the Kallias Letters to Körner (January 25, 1793; February 23, 1793; also October 25, 1794), Schiller develops the idea that beauty is nothing other than freedom in appearance. We perceive beauty everywhere where form dominates mass, whether it is a plant, an animal or an artistic construct. Beauty is self-determination appearing. Coercion, unfreedom, brutality appear as ugliness. As Shaftesbury already says: ‘*Slavery is nothing but dissonance and disproportionateness*’ (Characteristics, Vol. I, p. 136). It is the mind alone that gives form; everything that lacks mind is ugly, and formless matter is deformity itself (ibid. Vol II, p. 132).

Plotinus' world-fleeing philosophy of freedom is transformed by Schiller into a world-powerful philosophy of freedom: true art, he says in the preface to ‘*The Bride of Messina*’, really and actually makes man free, by ‘awakening, exercising and developing in him a power to push the sensuous world, which otherwise weighs on us only as a crude matter, presses on us as a blind force, into an objective distance, to transform it into a free work of our mind and to master the material through ideas’.

In the ‘*Aesthetic Letters*’, this philosophy is developed into a theory of the shape that reconciles the opposition of nature and reason within itself. The construction moves most artfully beyond the distinction between artist, viewer, work of art and natural work; the concept of shape is defined so that it can take on both objective and subjective meaning. ‘The whole shape rests and dwells within itself, a completely self-contained creation, and as if beyond space, without yielding, without resistance; there is no force that struggled with forces, no gap where temporality could break in’ (15th

letter). This is not only a description of the ‘whole’ which the work of art is, but at the same time also a description of the state of mind in which the viewer and the producing artist are supposed to find themselves. Shapedness is the hallmark of the ‘middle attunement’ in which sensuality and reason are simultaneously active (20th letter). The aesthetic human being, and only he, is ‘a whole within himself’ (22nd letter). This is precisely what the famous formula aims at, that man is only wholly man where he plays.

The shape, removed from time, resting in itself, is a simile of the world. Shapedness means worldliness. The genuine work of art is a world unto itself, a microcosm, and the viewer of it, as soon as he comports himself appropriately, himself turns into a whole without lack. The transition into the aesthetic mood or into contemplation is characterized by the expansion of the subject into the wholeness of the world. The term for this is totality.

The philosophy of totality is a descendant of the old concepts of cosmos and symmetry. By incorporating Neoplatonic metaphysics of the matter-form relationship into itself, classical aesthetics emerges. In this, the ‘subjective’ Neoplatonic element emerges more strongly in Schiller (‘thus the real artistic secret of the master consists in his annihilating matter through form...’, 22nd letter), while Goethe moves closer to the old concept of symmetry and its objectivism. An intellectual form, he remarks explicitly against Plotinus' admired treatise on beauty, is ‘by no means diminished when it emerges in appearance, provided that its emergence is a true generation, a true propagation. The generated is no less than the generating; indeed, it is the advantage of living generation that the generated can be more excellent than the generating’ (Goethe, ‘*Maxims and Reflections*’, ed. by Max Hecker, 1907, p. 141. On Goethe's relationship to Plotinus, cf. the above mentioned work by Franz Koch, esp. pp. 28 ff).

The self-contained whole is the core concept of German classicism. In Schiller it bears the name shape, in Humboldt the name totality, in Goethe the name nature, and in Kant's philosophy the name system. The most perfect representation and the most perfect simile of that unity in multiplicity which we call world is the organism. The highest work of nature and the highest work of art are thus placed side by side under the same superior concept: both are representations of ‘systematic’ unity.

In the small treatise by K. Ph. Moritz ‘*On the Formative Imitation of Beauty*’ (1788) we have before us a development of thoughts corresponding in significance and content to Schiller's Aesthetic Letters, stemming from the soul of Goethe. ‘*The great connection of things is declared here to be the Only, the True, the Whole, that which supports itself on its center point from all sides and rests on its own existence.* Every beautiful whole

from the hand of the formative artist is in miniature an imprint of the highest beauty in the great whole of nature (Reprint. *'Monuments of German Literature'*, Vol. 31, p. 14). In the artistic 'power to act' lies the sense for the highest beauty in the harmonious structure of the whole; similar to nature itself, this power to act forms whatever it grasps into an independently existing whole (ibid. pp. 15f). There can be no difference between nature and art: 'As soon as it exists, the beauty of the formative arts stands with it (i.e. nature) on its great scale and does not want to be compared with it in its individual parts but thought and felt along with it in its total scope, as belonging to it' (ibid. p. 26, On the concepts of 'world' and 'whole' cf. A. Baumeier, Kant's *'Critique of Judgment'*, Vol. I, pp. 249 ff).

Against a naturalist like Diderot, for example, Goethe seeks to bring out the difference between nature and art. *'Nature organizes a living, indifferent being; the artist, a dead but significant one; nature, a real one; the artist, an apparent one'* (Diderot's *'Essay on Painting'*, Ch. 1). 'Nature is separated from art by an enormous chasm, which genius itself cannot cross without external aids'. This is what we read in the introduction to *'Propylaea'*. However, this does not cancel out Goethe's basic idea that the work of art is an analogue of the work of nature. Nature is not able to give permanence to the beauty she produces. Man, placed on the pinnacle of nature, regards himself once more as an entire nature 'which has yet again to produce a pinnacle within itself' (Goethe on Winckelmann, section 'Beauty'). This second peak is the work of art, which thus owes its existence to an ideal continuation of nature's productivity.

Thus already the work of Erwin von Steinbach appeared to Goethe, 'the great harmonious masses, enlivened into countless tiny parts: as in works of eternal nature, down to the tiniest fiber, everything shape, and everything purposive toward the whole' (On German Architecture). The greater the artist, the more his soul rises 'to the feeling of proportions, which alone are eternally beautiful' (ibid.). Goethe articulates the aesthetics of symmetry with majestic simplicity in the short essay *'Simple Imitation of Nature, Manner, Style'*. In order to fully understand what style is, we must first distinguish the faithful and diligent copying of nature letter by letter from another mode in which the artist is inventive and 'makes a language for himself' in order to express, in his own way, what he has seized with his soul.

Simple imitation is based on calm existence and a loving presence; manner seizes a phenomenon with a light, capable spirit, but style 'rests on the deepest foundations of cognition, on the essence of things, insofar as we are permitted to recognize it in visible and tangible forms'. The word style is thus meant to denote the highest degree that art is capable of achieving (Schiller uses the word in the same sense. Cf. above p. 88, 26). *A work of art then has style when the eternal*

order of things, the great symmetry, expresses itself purely in it.

Goethe's and Schiller's concept of style is a timeless value concept and as such is distinct from Winckelmann's historical concept of style. For Winckelmann, style is a temporal phenomenon, it has an initial phase, a climax and a final phase. With this one observation, Winckelmann becomes the founder of realistic art history. For classical aesthetics, styles are nothing more than 'kinds of the beautiful' (K. Ph. Moritz, *'On the Formative Imitation'*, reprint, p. 6). Winckelmann saw that beauty has a history. The beautiful does not spread out (in time) into kinds, so to speak, but it is a human creation and as such has a temporal development.

By virtue of a unique ability to experience, Winckelmann has replaced the Beautiful with Art: this is the basis of his immense significance. Just as Plato founded the aesthetics of the Beautiful, so Winckelmann establishes realistic art history. We find in him a similar paradox as in Plato, for the latter becomes the philosophical discoverer and theoretician of art through the polemic of the Politeia; Winckelmann, on the other hand, becomes the discoverer of the concept of style, although at the same time he is the greatest admirer of Plato and timeless beauty. 'An incomprehensible attraction to you, awakened not by shape and growth alone, let me, from the very first moment I saw you, feel a trace of that harmony which transcends human concepts and is attuned by the eternal connection of things' (Letter to von Berg, June 9, 1762). Winckelmann's theory of beauty is rooted like Plato's in his enthusiasm for friendship. It is the mistake of previous interpretations that the great historian has been placed very close to classical aesthetics of the ideal and totality on the basis of his Platonism, whose special root has been overlooked. *His most important discovery, the discovery of art as a historical phenomenon, was noticed neither by Goethe nor Schiller nor Humboldt.* And yet the author of the *'History of Art in Antiquity'* knew what the 'investigation of style in art' he had undertaken meant. 'For perhaps a century will pass before it succeeds a German to follow me on the path I have taken, and who has the heart where mine sits' (To Volkmann, July 16, 1764). The highest beauty is without definite content and expression. There is only one single concept of beauty, 'which is the highest and always the same' (*'History of Art'* VIII c 2, §10). This highest concept of beauty must remain indefinite because our knowledge consists of 'concepts of comparison', while beauty cannot be compared with anything higher (IV c 2, §21). 'The ancients sought to make their works perfectly beautiful, which is why they could not have varied very much. For beauty is an extremum and in the extrema there is no more variety' (*'Unknown Letters of Winckelmann'*, ed. Uhde-Bernays, 1922, p. 45).

Winckelmann deals with beauty in that section of his work where he depicts art among the Greeks, namely under the heading: *On the Essence of Art*. Beauty is designated by him as the highest end and focal point of art. Among the Greeks art reached its peak because beauty was valued higher by them than by any other people (IV c 1, §2 ff). To present the art of the Greeks Winckelmann calls the foremost intention of his history. His work has a double meaning: on the one hand, through the supreme beauty of the Greeks, it refers to the supreme beauty of nature, for 'much of what we might imagine as ideal was nature itself to them' (ib. §6). But this naturalism of the ideal is necessarily hostile to historical consideration.

In the '*Trattato preliminare*' (c 4, §13) Winckelmann says that one can still see in reality today figures like the Niobe and the Vatican Apollo. Of certain heads of deities which seem to have been made without observing reality, he suspects that they may be nothing but portraits of people who lived in ancient times (ibid.). If beauty had already been produced by nature in this way, nothing would remain for the artist but to become a collector and imitator. Such imitative art would have no history. But in the preface to the History of Ancient Art we read: 'the history of art should teach the origin, growth, change and decline of art, along with the different styles of peoples, times and artists, and demonstrate this as far as possible from the surviving works of antiquity'. Art as a historical being is the subject of the work, not a timeless beauty. Winckelmann says of the older Greek style, for example: 'Art was severe and harsh, like the justice of those times, which imposed death for the slightest crime' (VIII c 1, §17). He is also thinking purely historically when he says, 'with such strict concepts of beauty art began, as well-ordered states with strict laws, to become great, and the images were similar to the simple morals and men of their time' (ib. §12). One must assume, the '*Trattato preliminare*' repeats (c 4, §45), that art began, like states, by becoming great through strict laws. 'Art, which always keeps pace with poetry and eloquence, conformed like them to the spirit of the century' (ib. §124). So Winckelmann makes the unprecedented attempt (Montesquieu is his model) to relate the art of peoples and periods to the respective temperament, religion and form of government. Already in the description of Baron Stosch's engraved gems of 1759 he says: 'the knowledge of art consists mainly in the difference of manner and style both of nations and of centuries, and in the feeling for the beautiful; and I have particularly sought to emphasize and point out precisely this in the Egyptian, Etruscan and Greek pieces in this collection' (Donaueschingen ed. Vol. 9, p. 279). The unrelated addition 'and in the feeling for the beautiful' clearly shows the two-sidedness of the overall conception.

For his division of Greek art into four 'main periods', Winckelmann refers to Scaliger's Poetics and to the opinion of the ancients. Phidias brings about the

grand and lofty style. The time from Praxiteles to Lysippus and Apelles constitutes the period of the beautiful style, followed by the imitators' style (VIII c 1, §4). The four 'degrees of style' are also characterized as: the straight and harsh, the great and angular, the beautiful and fluent, and the imitative style (VIII c 3, §17). But not only the 'different artistic epochs' that succeed one another in one people are characterized. Next to the temporal criterion steps the spatial one, next to the idea of the style of periods stands the idea of the style of peoples. There is an Egyptian, an Etruscan and a Greek 'taste' (II c 1, §1). This taste is grounded in physique and temperament, i.e. in bodily constitution and disposition. Of the people of Egypt Winckelmann says that they did not seem created for pleasure and joy; he speaks of the 'melancholy of this nation', which produced the first hermits (ib. §7). For him, Greek art is inseparable from the freedom of the Greeks in religious and political respects. Monarchical constitution, superstition, inclination to the mysterious (II c 5, §22), as we find among Egyptians, Phoenicians and Persians, do not provide the ground for art in the Greek sense. To bring forth this growth required the favor of a mild sky and a free constitution. The Greek people were cheerful, they invented festivals and games; the serenity of their temper stands in contrast to the cruelty of the Romans with their bloody gladiatorial festivities (IV c 1, §9 f).

In Hegel's synthesis of Schiller and Winckelmann, the historical basic concept of style falls by the wayside. Hegel's aesthetics is, in accordance with the Platonic-Neoplatonic basic tendency, a pure aesthetics of content. The Platonic basic character of Hegel's system clearly emerges in the Lectures on Aesthetics. *The construction of the 'idea' of the Beautiful is at the center, not the concept of style.* Nevertheless, this aesthetics of content represents a new stage in the history of philosophical thinking about art. It is no coincidence that the epoch of Hegel is followed by the epoch of historical research into style. For although Hegel constructs the Beautiful as an 'idea', he does so with regard to art. Natural beauty, as recent research has shown, occupies only a very subordinate place in his system. For Hegel, beauty is artistic beauty, 'as it unfolds into a world of realized beauty in the arts and their works' (Aesthetics, '*Complete Works*' Vol. X, p. 107). Hegel thus disempowers natural beauty without, however, turning to the history of the art of real peoples. As I characterized it earlier in my selection from Hegel's Aesthetics, he provides a phenomenology of the (artistic) ideal. In this way, a historical philosophy of art arises in the medium of the absolute idea, a history of art that is a history of contents which have found artistic expression, and which at the same time demands and prevents a history of styles. For every new content corresponds its own mode of expression, which has its own lawfulness and its own history. But this lawfulness and this history cannot be considered in the aesthetics of content. Thus the concepts of style and of art history as style history had to be newly conquered in the struggle against

Hegelianism. In the art historian Carl Schnaase the Hegelian tradition comes to an end; with the style phenomenologist Jakob Burckhardt and the realistic historiography of art of the 19th century begins an epoch that carries out Winckelmann's original conception to the end.

It lies in the consequence of the Platonic aesthetics of content that it becomes a philosophy of the beautiful cosmos, i.e. a philosophy of nature. Hegel's historical genius conceived an aesthetics of content within the medium of history and spirit. The contradiction we found in Winckelmann thus comes strikingly enlarged and systematically formulated to light in Hegel. His aesthetics is a philosophy of the beautiful as a philosophy of historical art; it constructs the one idea of beauty as a historical phenomenon. The struggle of the 19th century was about the final elimination of the concept of the beautiful; it ended with the replacement of the concept of beauty by the concept of art. By constructing an independent 'world of art', Platonism in Hegel elevated itself to its ultimate contradiction. Without the construction of the one art, the discovery of historical art would have been impossible. Now that this discovery has been completed, a return to Hegelian constructions is no longer possible. The explication of the historical concept of style is one of the most important stages in the overcoming of Platonism altogether.

The hopelessness of the 19th-century philosophy of the beautiful is shown by Friedrich Theodor Vischer's aesthetics. Not guided by Hegel's historical genius, Vischer elaborated the aesthetics of natural beauty and thus drew the consequence of any genuine aesthetics of content. The original index of his aesthetics is an intellectual-historical document of the first rank: it shows what any aesthetics of content must ultimately lead to, namely a general symbolism, a *characteristica universalis*. The eye of the beholder traces shapedness wherever it is found, and the shapes of art are only one kind of manifestation of the universal principle of form (see above p. 90, 22 K. Ph. Moritz!).

In his later critique of his aesthetics, Vischer wanted to dismiss the section on natural beauty from his work. But, and this is decisive, he did not arrive at a new approach, but only made an insignificant change in view of the fundamental problem. Natural beauty should only not be assigned a 'main section'. The appearance should only be avoided that there is a beauty independent of a 'percipient subject' ('*Critique of My Aesthetics*', Critical Walks, Vol. IV, 2nd ed., pp. 224 ff). This presupposes that the percipient subject 'is the active factor in contact with the object'; natural beauty remains an 'independent world'. And with that remains the coordination of 'natural beauty' and 'artistic beauty' under the superior concept of beauty, there remains the Platonism of the philosophy of beauty, which prevents recognition of the real, never deducible style worlds of history. What

remains is the relation to the percipient subject, which blocks access to the real world of art. The beholding human is related to the cosmos; the world of art is created by active man and can only be understood by assuming a specific activity. Fr. Th. Vischer finally wanted to help himself (as did M. Deutinger, by the way, following Schelling) by assuming a specific artistic 'imagination'. But this concept is only useful if, unlike in Vischer and Deutinger, it is not meant to veil the contrast between contemplative and active behavior, but to designate stylistically creative productivity.

Turning away from the metaphysics of 'beauty' means: considering art as a historical phenomenon alongside other phenomena of culture. The place of the philosophy of absolute spirit is taken by a realistic philosophy of culture. It is no coincidence that Jacob Burckhardt became a leading figure, for it is he who establishes the historical concept of culture as the overarching concept of modern art history (On the contrast between Schnaase and Burckhardt cf. the collected essays by Ernst Heidrich: '*Contributions to the History and Theory of Art History*', 1917).

It is characteristic of the modern, realistic tendency of recent historiography of art that Franz Kugler opens his '*Handbook of Art History*' (1841) with a section on 'Art in its earlier stages of development'. Art of the 'crude', 'imperfect', 'primitive' kind belonging to the 'Northern European antiquity', the islands of the Great Ocean and the Mexicans is grasped and acknowledged as art in the historical sense. The work of art is now conceived not as a concretion of the idea of beauty, but as a historical individual brought forth by race, people, times, materials and technical conditions. With this anti-Platonic, realistic view of art, which finds its positivistic extreme in Gottfried Semper's book *On Style*, the relativization of art is necessarily linked. Historiography becomes involved in the problems of modern philosophy of history, and toward the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century it almost takes first place among those sciences in whose domain the struggle for the historical worldview is fought out. This struggle is still not over today. Only the positivistic and psychological extreme has come to an end. The great task that became visible in the 19th century now really stands before us for the first time.

In the epoch of Platonism, the question was: How is historical beauty (the historical work of art) possible? Now, on the other hand, the problem is: How is the independent existence of the work of art qua work of art within the historical context to be saved? Platonism dissolves the unique historical work of art into a 'case' of beauty. For it, unity is no problem: in the temporal the one timeless idea 'realizes itself'. All Platonic philosophy begins with a separation of the temporal and the non-temporal, and at all decisive points this original separation reappears. Here one can do nothing but rediscover the separation of the temporal and

the non-temporal everywhere in the phenomena. Conversely, historical consideration is always in danger of losing sight of the unity of the work of art, of what makes the work of art a work of art. It regards the work of art as a product among others, it considers it merely as an 'expression' of the race, people and time that created it. The peculiarity of the artistic expression, the conditions of the stylistic context are neglected. Art history is in danger of dissolving into general intellectual history or into history in general.

Dehio's great work on the '*History of German Art*' contains in its preface the sentences that have become famous: 'My true hero is the German people. I give German history in the mirror of art...'. Who would not happily agree with these words? Who would not like to consider German art as 'something inseparably connected with the wholeness of the life process of our people'? The historical reality of art, says Dehio in another passage (beginning of Book 3), does not arise 'simply from the self-movement of art problems to be thought of in isolation, it is created and borne by the whole human being'. Wherever we encounter more than a superficial change in art, a 'transformation in the general condition' must have taken place (ibid.). But it should be history in the mirror of art that is to be written here. This history has its own lawfulness, its own historical logic, its own 'development'. Only when the danger is averted that an essential problem disappears through the word 'expression' can we surrender ourselves to the historical consideration of art with a clear conscience.

That the work of art is an expression, that it is part of a whole of life, is self-evident to us today; the task is to free it from its isolation as a form of expression and to understand it within the context of the history of style to which it belongs. It is impossible to completely understand every individual work of art as 'expression', be it of an individual or a people. There is an independent history of forms of representation, for the elucidation of which modern art history owes much especially to Heinrich Wölfflin. To be sure, the great styles ultimately lead back to the category of expression; they are all expressions of the existence and creative power of peoples and races. Peoples and races have their own specific ideal of beauty, and no historical art form, as long as it is genuine, can exist independently of this art-immanent ideal. Insofar, every style has an 'idea' as its basis; however, this does not signify a return to Platonism. For we are not dealing here with a timeless ideal of beauty, but with the sublime historical image of real human beings. This sublime image is not fixed prior to historical development in its historical form but must first be inferred from the latter. The permanent must be recognized in change, change must be recognized on the basis of the permanent. In historical reality, the contents conditioned by racial disposition are overlaid by the received contents of foreign or related cultures ('influences'), and the form of the work of art is modified

according to the immanent, 'internal' laws of the development of form. Not everything is historically 'possible' at all times with an unchanged will to expression (Wölfflin). Therefore, the art of a people and a period cannot be derived from the enduring will to expression of a presupposed subject. In purely biological consideration of art, the 'transmission belt' between the general and the particular is missing just as it was missing in the cultural-historical view of art history previously in vogue, which gave the art historian Dvorak occasion for the witty comparison. From the most detailed and apt description of the culture of the Renaissance the art of the Renaissance in its historical concreteness cannot be derived. What is missing is that 'transmission belt' which will be found wanting wherever a general 'essence' is assumed, and a concrete historical form is to be derived from it. The concept of style eliminates this dualism between the general and the particular, between essence and appearance.

Art history as style history states: Art is indeed not an independent, but still an original phenomenon. This phenomenon has its own development, although during all phases of this development it remains connected to the ground of life from which it originates. Style is an objective phenomenon. It is impossible to derive it from typical experiences of a subject (the 'genius'). The view of art and the world originating from Dilthey's concept of experience leads only to a compilation of typical ways of seeing. But ways of seeing are not styles. Ways of seeing are inherent in races, peoples and individuals, and insofar they are the first, not further to be fathomed, as it were the primordial precondition of all artistic creation. Styles, on the other hand, are temporally historical structures.

The phenomenon of art cannot be derived from experiences and from efforts at expression. *Art can only arise from the desire to immortalize a content, and the expression of this desire is style. The monumental style stands at the beginning of all art.* The need for private confessions would never have produced great historical art. It is only because there is monumental art that there is also intimate and idyllic art.

'In the building the pride, the victory over gravity, the will to power should become visible; architecture is a kind of power-eloquence in forms, sometimes persuasive, even flattering, sometimes merely commanding. The highest feeling of power and security finds expression in that which has a grand style. The power which needs no further proof; that disdains to please; that responds with difficulty; that feels no witnesses around itself; that lives without consciousness that there is opposition to it; that rests in itself, fatalistically, a law among laws: that speaks of itself as grand style' (Nietzsche, 'Twilight of the Idols', Wanderings of an Untimely One, 11).

End of the Text

For the Greek words we employed the polytonic or accented Greek: it includes acute, grave, and circumflex accents on vowels, as well as smooth and rough breathing marks on initial vowels of words. It also includes other diacritical marks such as cornua, subscripts, etc. For Latin words we used Latin with accents and diacritical marks: it includes accents on stressed vowels, such as the acute accent or the macron. It may also include other diacritical marks such as the apex to mark long vowels, the underscore for short

vowels, etc. We would appreciate it if you could inform us of any errors so that we can correct them.

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