



AESTHETICS

A COMPREHENSIVE ANTHOLOGY

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY STEVEN M. CAHN, STEPHANIE ROSS,
AND SANDRA SHAPSHAY

WILEY Blackwell

Aesthetics

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Second Edition

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Steven M. Cahn, Stephanie Ross,
and
Sandra Shapshay

WILEY Blackwell

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Preface

The study of aesthetics concerns the arts broadly conceived, as well as the nature of aesthetic experience, which includes our responses to beauty, sublimity, ugliness, and other such qualities found in works of art, nature, the built environment, and the course of everyday life. Although the term “aesthetics” to denote this area of study goes back only to the 18th century with the work of Alexander Baumgarten, the field has had a long and distinguished history dating back to classical antiquity. Aesthetics is currently the scene of provocative philosophical exploration, and one which has become increasingly connected to work in disciplines outside of philosophy such as art history, psychology, neuroscience, evolutionary biology, gender studies, and critical race theory. This comprehensive collection of Western historical and contemporary sources offers instructors the opportunity to construct courses in aesthetics combining as wished classic works along with recent contributions that afford students a sense of the rich history as well as the cutting edge of the discipline. The aim to bring this second edition firmly into the 21st century is evidenced with the introduction to Part I Classic Sources. As in the previous edition, we begin with a selection from Paul Oskar Kristeller’s “The Modern System of the Arts,” which, until recently, had been taken to be the definitive proof that the concept of “fine arts” (the “system” comprised of painting, sculpture, architecture,

music, and poetry) originated with Batteaux in the 18th century. But this selection is now followed by James O. Young’s 2015 paper, challenging this orthodoxy, and arguing that these “fine arts” really coincide with Plato and Aristotle’s notion of the “imitative arts,” and thus is not truly a “modern” system at all. Students and instructors are invited to explore Part I with this recent historiological controversy in mind. Other major updates to this edition include: the addition of important 20th century texts by W.E.B. Du Bois and Alain Locke on the intersection of race, politics, and the arts; newer translations of texts by Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer, as well as newly excerpted selections from G.W.F. Hegel, Leo Tolstoy, and R.G. Collingwood; the inclusion of additional modern texts on the relationship between art and morality (e.g. J.-J. Rousseau’s “Letter to M. d’Alembert on the Theatre”), and on tragedy (e.g. with David Hume’s “Of Tragedy”); and a significantly re-edited Part III Contemporary Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art curated and introduced by Stephanie Ross. The contemporary section, with selections from Amie L. Thomasson, Mary Mothersill, Eileen John, Jenefer Robinson, A.W. Eaton, Mary Devereaux, Yuriko Saito, and Carolyn Korsmeyer, presents a more gender-balanced view of the field, and acknowledges the robust contribution women philosophers have made to present-day aesthetics.

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Part I
Classic Sources

The Modern System of the Arts

Paul Oskar Kristeller

Paul Oskar Kristeller (1905–99) was
Professor of Philosophy at
Columbia University.

I

The fundamental importance of the eighteenth century in the history of aesthetics and of art criticism is generally recognized. To be sure, there has been a great variety of theories and currents within the last two hundred years that cannot be easily brought under one common denominator. Yet all the changes and controversies of the more recent past presuppose certain fundamental notions which go back to that classical century of modern aesthetics. It is known that the very term “Aesthetics” was coined at that time, and, at least in the opinion of some historians, the subject matter itself, the “philosophy of art,” was invented in that comparatively recent period and can be applied to earlier phases of Western thought only with reservations. It is also generally agreed that such dominating concepts of modern aesthetics as taste and sentiment, genius, originality and creative imagination did not assume their definite modern meaning before the eighteenth century. Some scholars have rightly noticed that only the eighteenth century produced a type of literature in which the various

arts were compared with each other and discussed on the basis of common principles, whereas up to that period treatises on poetics and rhetoric, on painting and architecture, and on music had represented quite distinct branches of writing and were primarily concerned with technical precepts rather than with general ideas. Finally, at least a few scholars have noticed that the term “Art,” with a capital A and in its modern sense, and the related term “Fine Arts” (Beaux Arts) originated in all probability in the eighteenth century.

In this paper, I shall take all these facts for granted, and shall concentrate instead on a much simpler and in a sense more fundamental point that is closely related to the problems so far mentioned, but does not seem to have received sufficient attention in its own right. Although the terms “Art,” “Fine Arts” or “Beaux Arts” are often identified with the visual arts alone, they are also quite commonly understood in a broader sense. In this broader meaning, the term “Art” comprises above all the five major arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry. These five constitute the irreducible nucleus of the modern system of the arts, on which all writers and thinkers seem to agree. On the other hand, certain other arts are sometimes added to the scheme, but with less regularity, depending on the different views and interests of the authors concerned: gardening, engraving and the decorative

Paul Oskar Kristeller, from “The Modern System of the Arts” in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12(4), 1951 (Part I), pp. 496–515, 521–522, 525–526 and 13(1), 1952 (Part II), pp. 20–21, 24–29, 32–39, 42. © 1951, 1978 University of Pennsylvania Press. Reproduced with permission of University of Pennsylvania Press.

arts, the dance and the theatre, sometimes the opera, and finally eloquence and prose literature.

The basic notion that the five “major arts” constitute an area all by themselves, clearly separated by common characteristics from the crafts, the sciences and other human activities, has been taken for granted by most writers on aesthetics from Kant to the present day. It is freely employed even by those critics of art and literature who profess not to believe in “aesthetics”; and it is accepted as a matter of course by the general public of amateurs who assign to “Art” with a capital A that ever narrowing area of modern life which is not occupied by science, religion, or practical pursuits.

It is my purpose here to show that this system of the five major arts, which underlies all modern aesthetics and is so familiar to us all, is of comparatively recent origin and did not assume definite shape before the eighteenth century, although it has many ingredients which go back to classical, medieval and Renaissance thought. I shall not try to discuss any metaphysical theories of beauty or any particular theories concerning one or more of the arts, let alone their actual history, but only the systematic grouping together of the five major arts. This question does not directly concern any specific changes or achievements in the various arts, but primarily their relations to each other and their place in the general framework of Western culture. Since the subject has been overlooked by most historians of aesthetics and of literary, musical or artistic theories, it is hoped that a brief and quite tentative study may throw light on some of the problems with which modern aesthetics and its historiography have been concerned.

II

The Greek term for Art (*τέχνη*) and its Latin equivalent (*ars*) do not specifically denote the “fine arts” in the modern sense, but were applied to all kinds of human activities which we would call crafts or sciences. Moreover, whereas modern aesthetics stresses the fact that Art cannot be learned, and thus often becomes involved in the curious endeavor to teach the unteachable, the ancients always understood by Art something that can be taught and learned. Ancient state-

ments about Art and the arts have often been read and understood as if they were meant in the modern sense of the fine arts. This may in some cases have led to fruitful errors, but it does not do justice to the original intention of the ancient writers. When the Greek authors began to oppose Art to Nature, they thought of human activity in general. When Hippocrates contrasts Art with Life, he is thinking of medicine, and when his comparison is repeated by Goethe or Schiller with reference to poetry, this merely shows the long way of change which the term Art had traversed by 1800 from its original meaning. Plato puts art above mere routine because it proceeds by rational principles and rules, and Aristotle, who lists Art among the so-called intellectual virtues, characterizes it as a kind of activity based on knowledge, in a definition whose influence was felt through many centuries. The Stoics also defined Art as a system of cognitions, and it was in this sense that they considered moral virtue as an art of living.

The other central concept of modern aesthetics also, beauty, does not appear in ancient thought or literature with its specific modern connotations. The Greek term *καλόν* and its Latin equivalent (*pulchrum*) were never neatly or consistently distinguished from the moral good. When Plato discusses beauty in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, he is speaking not merely of the physical beauty of human persons, but also of beautiful habits of the soul and of beautiful cognitions, whereas he fails completely to mention works of art in this connection. An incidental remark made in the *Phaedrus* and elaborated by Proclus was certainly not meant to express the modern triad of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. When the Stoics in one of their famous statements connected Beauty and Goodness, the context as well as Cicero’s Latin rendering suggest that they meant by “Beauty” nothing but moral goodness, and in turn understood by “good” nothing but the useful. Only in later thinkers does the speculation about “beauty” assume an increasingly “aesthetic” significance, but without ever leading to a separate system of aesthetics in the modern sense. Panaetius identifies moral beauty with decorum, a term he borrows from Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, and consequently likes to compare the various arts with each other and with the moral life. His doctrine is known chiefly

through Cicero, but it may also have influenced Horace. Plotinus in his famous treatises on beauty is concerned primarily with metaphysical and ethical problems, but he does include in his treatment of sensuous beauty the visible beauty of works of sculpture and architecture, and the audible beauty of music. Likewise, in the speculations on beauty scattered through the works of Augustine there are references to the various arts, yet the doctrine was not primarily designed for an interpretation of the "fine arts." Whether we can speak of aesthetics in the case of Plato, Plotinus or Augustine will depend on our definition of that term, but we should certainly realize that in the theory of beauty a consideration of the arts is quite absent in Plato and secondary in Plotinus and Augustine.

Let us now turn to the individual arts and to the manner in which they were evaluated and grouped by the ancients. Poetry was always most highly respected, and the notion that the poet is inspired by the Muses goes back to Homer and Hesiod. The Latin term (*vates*) also suggests an old link between poetry and religious prophecy, and Plato is hence drawing upon an early notion when in the *Phaedrus* he considers poetry one of the forms of divine madness. However, we should also remember that the same conception of poetry is expressed with a certain irony in the *Ion* and the *Apology*, and that even in the *Phaedrus* the divine madness of the poet is compared with that of the lover and of the religious prophet. There is no mention of the "fine arts" in this passage, and it was left to the late sophist Callistratus to transfer Plato's concept of inspiration to the art of sculpture.

Among all the "fine arts" it was certainly poetry about which Plato had most to say, especially in the *Republic*, but the treatment given to it is neither systematic nor friendly, but suspiciously similar to the one he gives to rhetoric in some of his other writings. Aristotle, on the other hand, dedicated a whole treatise to the theory of poetry and deals with it in a thoroughly systematic and constructive fashion. The *Poetics* not only contains a great number of specific ideas which exercised a lasting influence upon later criticism; it also established a permanent place for the theory of poetry in the philosophical encyclopaedia of knowledge. The mutual influence of poetry and eloquence had been a permanent

feature of ancient literature ever since the time of the Sophists, and the close relationship between these two branches of literature received a theoretical foundation through the proximity of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* in the corpus of Aristotle's works. Moreover, since the order of the writings in the Aristotelian Corpus was interpreted as early as the commentators of late antiquity as a scheme of classification for the philosophical disciplines, the place of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* after the logical writings of the *Organon* established a link between logic, rhetoric and poetics that was emphasized by some of the Arabic commentators, the effects of which were felt down to the Renaissance.

Music also held a high place in ancient thought; yet it should be remembered that the Greek term *μουσική*, which is derived from the Muses, originally comprised much more than we understand by music. Musical education, as we can still see in Plato's *Republic*, included not only music, but also poetry and the dance. Plato and Aristotle, who also employ the term music in the more specific sense familiar to us, do not treat music or the dance as separate arts but rather as elements of certain types of poetry, especially of lyric and dramatic poetry. There is reason to believe that they were thus clinging to an older tradition which was actually disappearing in their own time through the emancipation of instrumental music from poetry. On the other hand, the Pythagorean discovery of the numerical proportions underlying the musical intervals led to a theoretical treatment of music on a mathematical basis, and consequently musical theory entered into an alliance with the mathematical sciences which is already apparent in Plato's *Republic*, and was to last far down into early modern times.

When we consider the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, it appears that their social and intellectual prestige in antiquity was much lower than one might expect from their actual achievements or from occasional enthusiastic remarks which date for the most part from the later centuries. It is true that painting was compared to poetry by Simonides and Plato, by Aristotle and Horace, as it was compared to rhetoric by Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and other writers. It is also true that architecture was included among the liberal arts by Varro and Vitruvius, and painting by Pliny and Galen, that

Dio Chrysostom compared the art of the sculptor with that of the poet, and that Philostratus and Callistratus wrote enthusiastically about painting and sculpture. Yet the place of painting among the liberal arts was explicitly denied by Seneca and ignored by most other writers, and the statement of Lucian that everybody admires the works of the great sculptors but would not want to be a sculptor oneself, seems to reflect the prevalent view among writers and thinkers. The term *δημιουργός*, commonly applied to painters and sculptors, reflects their low social standing, which was related to the ancient contempt for manual work. When Plato compares the description of his ideal state to a painting and even calls his world-shaping god a demiurge, he no more enhances the importance of the artist than does Aristotle when he uses the statue as the standard example for a product of human art. When Cicero, probably reflecting Panaetius, speaks of the ideal notions in the mind of the sculptor, and when the Middle Platonists and Plotinus compare the ideas in the mind of God with the concepts of the visual artist they go one step further. Yet no ancient philosopher, as far as I know, wrote a separate systematic treatise on the visual arts or assigned to them a prominent place in his scheme of knowledge.

If we want to find in classical philosophy a link between poetry, music and the fine arts, it is provided primarily by the concept of imitation (*μίμησις*). Passages have been collected from the writings of Plato and Aristotle from which it appears quite clearly that they considered poetry, music, the dance, painting and sculpture as different forms of imitation. This fact is significant so far as it goes, and it has influenced many later authors, even in the eighteenth century. But aside from the fact that none of the passages has a systematic character or even enumerates all of the “fine arts” together, it should be noted that the scheme excludes architecture, that music and the dance are treated as parts of poetry and not as separate arts, and that on the other hand the individual branches or subdivisions of poetry and of music seem to be put on a par with painting or sculpture. Finally, imitation is anything but a laudatory category, at least for Plato, and wherever Plato and Aristotle treat the “imitative arts” as a distinct group within the larger class of “arts,” this group seems to include, besides the “fine

arts” in which we are interested, other activities that are less “fine,” such as sophistry, or the use of the mirror, of magic tricks, or the imitation of animal voices. Moreover, Aristotle’s distinction between the arts of necessity and the arts of pleasure is quite incidental and does not identify the arts of pleasure with the “fine” or even the imitative arts, and when it is emphasized that he includes music and drawing in his scheme of education in the *Politics*, it should be added that they share this place with grammar (writing) and arithmetic.

The final ancient attempts at a classification of the more important human arts and sciences were made after the time of Plato and Aristotle. They were due partly to the endeavors of rival schools of philosophy and rhetoric to organize secondary or preparatory education into a system of elementary disciplines (*τὰ ἐγκύκλια*). This system of the co-called “liberal arts” was subject to a number of changes and fluctuations, and its development is not known in all of its earlier phases. Cicero often speaks of the liberal arts and of their mutual connection, though he does not give a precise list of these arts, but we may be sure that he did not think of the “fine arts” as was so often believed in modern times. The definitive scheme of the seven liberal arts is found only in Martianus Capella: grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Other schemes which are similar but not quite identical are found in many Greek and Latin authors before Capella. Very close to Capella’s scheme and probably its source was that of Varro, which included medicine and architecture in addition to Capella’s seven arts. Quite similar also is the scheme underlying the work of Sextus Empiricus. It contains only six arts, omitting logic, which is treated as one of the three parts of philosophy. The Greek author, Sextus, was conscious of the difference between the preliminary disciplines and the parts of philosophy, whereas the Latin authors who had no native tradition of philosophical instruction were ready to disregard that distinction. If we compare Capella’s scheme of the seven liberal arts with the modern system of the “fine arts,” the differences are obvious. Of the fine arts only music, understood as musical theory, appears among the liberal arts. Poetry is not listed among them, yet we know from other sources that it was closely linked with grammar

and rhetoric. The visual arts have no place in the scheme, except for occasional attempts at inserting them, of which we have spoken above. On the other hand, the liberal arts include grammar and logic, mathematics and astronomy, that is, disciplines we should classify as sciences.

The same picture is gained from the distribution of the arts among the nine Muses. It should be noted that the number of the Muses was not fixed before a comparatively late period, and that the attempt to assign particular arts to individual Muses is still later and not at all uniform. However, the arts listed in these late schemes are the various branches of poetry and of music, with eloquence, history, the dance, grammar, geometry, and astronomy. In other words, just as in the schemes of the liberal arts, so in the schemes for the Muses poetry and music are grouped with some of the sciences, whereas the visual arts are omitted. Antiquity knew no Muse of painting or of sculpture; they had to be invented by the allegorists of the early modern centuries. And the five fine arts which constitute the modern system were not grouped together in antiquity, but kept quite different company: poetry stays usually with grammar and rhetoric; music is as close to mathematics and astronomy as it is to the dance, and poetry; and the visual arts, excluded from the realm of the Muses and of the liberal arts by most authors, must be satisfied with the modest company of the other manual crafts.

Thus classical antiquity left no systems or elaborate concepts of an aesthetic nature, but merely a number of scattered notions and suggestions that exercised a lasting influence down to modern times but had to be carefully selected, taken out of their context, rearranged, reemphasized and reinterpreted or misinterpreted before they could be utilized as building materials for aesthetic systems. We have to admit the conclusion, distasteful to many historians of aesthetics but grudgingly admitted by most of them, that ancient writers and thinkers, though confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical function or content, or to use such an aesthetic quality as a standard for grouping the fine arts together or for making them the subject of a comprehensive philosophical interpretation.

III

The early Middle Ages inherited from late antiquity the scheme of the seven liberal arts that served not only for a comprehensive classification of human knowledge but also for the curriculum of the monastic and cathedral schools down to the twelfth century. The subdivision of the seven arts into the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) seems to have been emphasized since Carolingian times. This classification became inadequate after the growth of learning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The classification schemes of the twelfth century reflect different attempts to combine the traditional system of the liberal arts with the threefold division of philosophy (logic, ethics and physics) known through Isidore, and with the divisions of knowledge made by Aristotle or based on the order of his writings, which then began to become known through Latin translations from the Greek and Arabic. The rise of the universities also established philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence and theology as new and distinct subjects outside the liberal arts, and the latter were again reduced from the status of an encyclopaedia of secular knowledge they had held in the earlier Middle Ages to that of preliminary disciplines they had held originally in late antiquity. On the other hand, Hugo of St. Victor was probably the first to formulate a scheme of seven mechanical arts corresponding to the seven liberal arts, and this scheme influenced many important authors of the subsequent period, such as Vincent of Beauvais and Thomas Aquinas. The seven mechanical arts, like the seven liberal arts earlier, also appeared in artistic representations, and they are worth listing: *lanificium*, *armatura*, *navigatio*, *agricultura*, *venatio*, *medicina*, *theatrica* [fabric making, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatrics]. Architecture as well as various branches of sculpture and of painting are listed, along with several other crafts, as subdivisions of *armatura*, and thus occupy a quite subordinate place even among the mechanical arts. Music appears in all these schemes in the company of the mathematical disciplines, whereas poetry, when mentioned, is closely linked to grammar, rhetoric and logic. The fine arts are not

grouped together or singled out in any of these schemes, but scattered among various sciences, crafts, and other human activities of a quite disparate nature. Different as are these schemes from each other in detail, they show a persistent general pattern and continued to influence later thought.

If we compare these theoretical systems with the reality of the same period, we find poetry and music among the subjects taught in many schools and universities, whereas the visual arts were confined to the artisans' guilds, in which the painters were sometimes associated with the druggists who prepared their paints, the sculptors with the goldsmiths, and the architects with the masons and carpenters. The treatises also that were written, on poetry and rhetoric, on music, and on some of the arts and crafts, the latter not too numerous, have all a strictly technical and professional character and show no tendency to link any of these arts with the others or with philosophy.

The very concept of "art" retained the same comprehensive meaning it had possessed in antiquity, and the same connotation that it was teachable. And the term *artista* coined in the Middle Ages indicated either the craftsman or the student of the liberal arts. Neither for Dante nor for Aquinas has the term Art the meaning we associate with it, and it has been emphasized or admitted that for Aquinas shoemaking, cooking and juggling, grammar and arithmetic are no less and in no other sense *artes* than painting and sculpture, poetry and music, which latter are never grouped together, not even as imitative arts.

On the other hand, the concept of beauty that is occasionally discussed by Aquinas and somewhat more emphatically by a few other medieval philosophers is not linked with the arts, fine or otherwise, but treated primarily as a metaphysical attribute of God and of his creation, starting from Augustine and from Dionysius the Areopagite. Among the transcendentals or most general attributes of being, *pulchrum* does not appear in thirteenth-century philosophy, although it is considered as a general concept and treated in close connection with *bonum*. The question whether Beauty is one of the transcendentals has become a subject of controversy among Neo-Thomists. This is an interesting sign of their varying attitude toward modern aesthetics, which some of them would like to incorporate in a

philosophical system based on Thomist principles. For Aquinas himself, or for other medieval philosophers, the question is meaningless, for even if they had posited *pulchrum* as a transcendental concept, which they did not, its meaning would have been different from the modern notion of artistic beauty in which the Neo-Thomists are interested. Thus it is obvious that there was artistic production as well as artistic appreciation in the Middle Ages, and this could not fail to find occasional expression in literature and philosophy. Yet there is no medieval concept or system of the Fine Arts, and if we want to keep speaking of medieval aesthetics, we must admit that its concept and subject matter are, for better or for worse, quite different from the modern philosophical discipline.

IV

The period of the Renaissance brought about many important changes in the social and cultural position of the various arts and thus prepared the ground for the later development of aesthetic theory. But, contrary to a widespread opinion, the Renaissance did not formulate a system of the fine arts or a comprehensive theory of aesthetics.

Early Italian humanism, which in many respects continued the grammatical and rhetorical traditions of the Middle Ages, not merely provided the old Trivium with a new and more ambitious name (*Studio humanitatis*) but also increased its actual scope, content and significance in the curriculum of the schools and universities and in its own extensive literary production. The *Studia humanitatis* excluded logic, but they added to the traditional grammar and rhetoric not only history, Greek and moral philosophy, but also made poetry, once a sequel of grammar and rhetoric, the most important member of the whole group. It is true that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries poetry was understood as the ability to write Latin verse and to interpret the ancient poets, and that the poetry which the humanists defended against some of their theological contemporaries or for which they were crowned by popes and emperors was a quite different thing from what we understand by that name. Yet the name poetry, meaning at first

Latin poetry, received much honor and glamor through the early humanists, and by the sixteenth century vernacular poetry and prose began to share in the prestige of Latin literature. It was the various branches of Latin and vernacular poetry and literature which constituted the main pursuit of the numerous "Academies" founded in Italy during that period and imitated later in the other European countries. The revival of Platonism also helped to spread the notion of the divine madness of the poet, a notion that by the second half of the sixteenth century began to be extended to the visual arts and became one of the ingredients of the modern concept of genius.

[. . .]

The rising social and cultural claims of the visual arts led in the sixteenth century in Italy to an important new development that occurred in the other European countries somewhat later: the three visual arts, painting, sculpture and architecture, were for the first time clearly separated from the crafts with which they had been associated in the preceding period. The term *Arti del disegno*, upon which "Beaux Arts" was probably based, was coined by Vasari, who used it as the guiding concept for his famous collection of biographies. And this change in theory found its institutional expression in 1563 when in Florence, again under the personal influence of Vasari, the painters, sculptors and architects cut their previous connections with the craftsmen's guilds and formed an Academy of Art (*Accademia del Disegno*), the first of its kind that served as a model for later similar institutions in Italy and other countries. The Art Academies followed the pattern of the literary Academies that had been in existence for some time, and they replaced the older workshop tradition with a regular kind of instruction that included such scientific subjects as geometry and anatomy.

The ambition of painting to share in the traditional prestige of literature also accounts for the popularity of a notion that appears prominently for the first time in the treatises on painting of the sixteenth century and was to retain its appeal down to the eighteenth: the parallel between painting and poetry. Its basis was the *Ut pictura poesis* of Horace, as well as the saying of Simonides reported by Plutarch, along with some other passages in Plato, Aristotle and Horace. The history of this notion from the sixteenth to the

eighteenth century has been carefully studied, and it has been justly pointed out that the use then made of the comparison exceeded anything done or intended by the ancients. Actually, the meaning of the comparison was reversed, since the ancients had compared poetry with painting when they were writing about poetry, whereas the modern authors more often compared painting with poetry while writing about painting. How seriously the comparison was taken we can see from the fact that Horace's *Ars poetica* was taken as a literary model for some treatises on painting and that many poetical theories and concepts were applied to painting by these authors in a more or less artificial manner. The persistent comparison between poetry and painting went a long way, as did the emancipation of the three visual arts from the crafts, to prepare the ground for the later system of the five fine arts, but it obviously does not yet presuppose or constitute such a system. Even the few treatises written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that dealt with both poetry and painting do not seem to have gone beyond more or less external comparisons into an analysis of common principles.

[. . .]

V

During the seventeenth century the cultural leadership of Europe passed from Italy to France, and many characteristic ideas and tendencies of the Italian Renaissance were continued and transformed by French classicism and the French Enlightenment before they became a part of later European thought and culture. Literary criticism and poetic theory, so prominent in the French classical period, seem to have taken little notice of the other fine arts. [. . .]

Yet the *Siècle de Louis XIV* was not limited in its achievements to poetry and literature. Painting and the other visual arts began to flourish, and with Poussin France produced a painter of European fame. Later in the century Lulli, although of Italian birth, developed a distinctive French style in music, and his great success with the Parisian public went a long way to win for his art the same popularity in France it had long possessed in Italy.

One of the great changes that occurred during the seventeenth century was the rise and emancipation of the natural sciences. By the second half of the century, after the work of Galileo and Descartes had been completed and the Académie des Sciences and the Royal Society had begun their activities, this development could not fail to impress the literati and the general public. It has been rightly observed that the famous *Querelle des Anciens et Modernes*, which stirred many scholars in France and also in England during the last quarter of the century, was due largely to the recent discoveries in the natural sciences. The Moderns, conscious of these achievements, definitely shook off the authority of classical antiquity that had weighed on the Renaissance no less than on the Middle Ages, and went a long way toward formulating the concept of human progress. Yet this is only one side of the *Querelle*.

The *Querelle* as it went on had two important consequences which have not been sufficiently appreciated. First, the Moderns broadened the literary controversy into a systematic comparison between the achievements of antiquity and of modern times in the various fields of human endeavor, thus developing a classification of knowledge and culture that was in many respects novel, or more specific than previous systems. Secondly, a point by point examination of the claims of the ancients and moderns in the various fields led to the insight that in certain fields, where everything depends on mathematical calculation and the accumulation of knowledge, the progress of the moderns over the ancients can be clearly demonstrated, whereas in certain other fields, which depend on individual talent and on the taste of the critic, the relative merits of the ancients and moderns cannot be so clearly established but may be subject to controversy.

Thus the ground is prepared for the first time for a clear distinction between the arts and the sciences, a distinction absent from ancient, medieval or Renaissance discussions of such subjects even though the same words were used. In other words, the separation between the arts and the sciences in the modern sense presupposes not only the actual progress of the sciences in the seventeenth century but also the reflection upon the reasons why some other human intellectual activities which we now call the Fine Arts did not or could not participate in the same kind of pro-

gress. To be sure, the writings of the *Querelle* do not yet attain a complete clarity on these points, and this fact in itself definitely confirms our contention that the separation between the arts and the sciences and the modern system of the fine arts were just in the making at that time. [. . .]

VI

[. . .]

The decisive step toward a system of the fine arts was taken by the Abbé Batteux in his famous and influential treatise, *Les beaux arts réduits à un même principe* (1746). It is true that many elements of his system were derived from previous authors, but at the same time it should not be overlooked that he was the first to set forth a clearcut system of the fine arts in a treatise devoted exclusively to this subject. This alone may account for his claim to originality as well as for the enormous influence he exercised both in France and abroad, especially in Germany. Batteux codified the modern system of the fine arts almost in its final form, whereas all previous authors had merely prepared it. He started from the poetic theories of Aristotle and Horace, as he states in his preface, and tried to extend their principles from poetry and painting to the other arts. In his first chapter, Batteux gives a clear division of the arts. He separates the fine arts which have pleasure for their end from the mechanical arts, and lists the fine arts as follows: music, poetry, painting, sculpture, and the dance. He adds a third group which combines pleasure and usefulness and puts eloquence and architecture in this category. In the central part of his treatise, Batteux tries to show that the "imitation of beautiful nature" is the principle common to all the arts, and he concludes with a discussion of the theatre as a combination of all the other arts. The German critics of the later eighteenth century, and their recent historians, criticized Batteux for his theory of imitation and often failed to recognize that he formulated the system of the arts which they took for granted and for which they were merely trying to find different principles. They also overlooked the fact that the much maligned principle of imitation was the only one a classicist critic such as Batteux could use when he wanted to group the fine arts together with

even an appearance of ancient authority. For the "imitative" arts were the only authentic ancient precedent for the "fine arts," and the principle of imitation could be replaced only after the system of the latter had been so firmly established as no longer to need the ancient principle of imitation to link them together. [. . .]

VII

Having followed the French development through the eighteenth century, we must discuss the history of artistic thought in England. The English writers were strongly influenced by the French down to the end of the seventeenth century and later, but during the eighteenth century they made important contributions of their own and in turn influenced continental thought, especially in France and Germany. [. . .] Early in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Richardson was praising painting as a liberal art, and John Dennis in some of his critical treatises on poetics stressed the affinity between poetry, painting and music.

Of greater importance were the writings of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, one of the most influential thinkers of the eighteenth century, not only in England but also on the continent. His interest and taste for literature and the arts are well known, and his writings are full of references to the various arts and to the beauty of their works. The ideal of the *virtuoso* which he embodied and advocated no longer included the sciences, as in the seventeenth century, but had its center in the arts and in the moral life. Since Shaftesbury was the first major philosopher in modern Europe in whose writings the discussion of the arts occupied a prominent place, there is some reason for considering him as the founder of modern aesthetics. Yet Shaftesbury was influenced primarily by Plato and Plotinus, as well as by Cicero, and he consequently did not make a clear distinction between artistic and moral beauty. His moral sense still includes both ethical and aesthetic objects. [. . .]

The philosophical implications of Shaftesbury's doctrine were further developed by a group of Scottish thinkers. Francis Hutcheson, who considered himself Shaftesbury's pupil, modified his doctrine by distinguishing between the moral sense and the sense of beauty. This

distinction, which was adopted by Hume and quoted by Diderot, went a long way to prepare the separation of ethics and aesthetics, although Hutcheson still assigned the taste of poetry to the moral sense. A later philosopher of the Scottish school, Thomas Reid, introduced common sense as a direct criterion of truth, and although he was no doubt influenced by Aristotle's notion of common sense and the Stoic and modern views on "common notions," it has been suggested that his common sense was conceived as a counterpart of Hutcheson's two senses. Thus the psychology of the Scottish school led the way for the doctrine of the three faculties of the soul, which found its final development in Kant and its application in Cousin. [. . .]

VIII

Discussion of the arts does not seem to have occupied many German writers of the seventeenth century, which was on the whole a period of decline. The poet Opitz showed familiarity with the parallel of poetry and painting, but otherwise the Germans did not take part in the development we are trying to describe before the eighteenth century. During the first part of that century interest in literature and literary criticism began to rise, but did not yet lead to a detailed or comparative treatment of the other arts. [. . .]

These critical discussions among poets and literati constitute the general background for the important work of the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and of his pupil Georg Friedrich Meier. Baumgarten is famous for having coined the term aesthetics, but opinions differ as to whether he must be considered the founder of that discipline or what place he occupies in its history and development. The original meaning of the term aesthetics as coined by Baumgarten, which has been well nigh forgotten by now, is the theory of sensuous knowledge, as a counterpart to logic as a theory of intellectual knowledge. The definitions Baumgarten gives of aesthetics show that he is concerned with the arts and with beauty as one of their main attributes, but he still uses the old term liberal arts, and he considers them as forms of knowledge. The question whether Baumgarten really gave a theory of all the fine arts, or merely a poetics and rhetoric with a new

name, has been debated but can be answered easily. In his earlier work, in which he first coined the term aesthetic, Baumgarten was exclusively concerned with poetics and rhetoric. In his later, unfinished work, to which he gave the title *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten states in his introduction that he intends to give a theory of all the arts, and actually makes occasional references to the visual arts and to music. This impression is confirmed by the text of Baumgarten's lectures published only recently, and by the writings of his pupil Meier. On the other hand, it is quite obvious, and was noted by contemporary critics, that Baumgarten and Meier develop their actual theories only in terms of poetry and eloquence and take nearly all their examples from literature. Baumgarten is the founder of aesthetics in so far as he first conceived a general theory of the arts as a separate philosophical discipline with a distinctive and well-defined place in the system of philosophy. He failed to develop his doctrine with reference to the arts other than poetry and eloquence, or even to propose a systematic list and division of these other arts. In this latter respect, he was preceded and surpassed by the French writers, especially by Batteux and the Encyclopaedists, whereas the latter failed to develop a theory of the arts as part of a philosophical system. It was the result of German thought and criticism during the second half of the eighteenth century that the more concrete French conception of the fine arts was utilized in a philosophical theory of aesthetics for which Baumgarten had formulated the general scope and program. [. . .]

The broadening scope of German aesthetics after Baumgarten, which we must now try to trace, was due not only to the influence of Batteux, of the Encyclopaedists, and of other French and English writers but also to the increasing interest taken by writers, philosophers, and the lay public in the visual arts and in music. Winckelmann's studies of classical art are important for the history of our problem for the enthusiasm which he stimulated among his German readers for ancient sculpture and architecture, but not for any opinion he may have expressed on the relation between the visual arts and literature. Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), too, has a notable importance, not only for its particular theories on matters of poetry and of the visual arts, but also for the very attention given to the latter by one

of the most brilliant and most respected German writers of the time. Yet the place of the *Laokoon* in the history of our problem has been misjudged. To say that the *Laokoon* put an end to the age-old tradition of the parallel between painting and poetry that had its ultimate roots in classical antiquity and found its greatest development in the writers of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early eighteenth century, and thus freed poetry from the emphasis on description, is to give only one side of the picture. It is to forget that the parallel between painting and poetry was one of the most important elements that preceded the formation of the modern system of the fine arts, though it had lost this function as a link between two different arts by the time of Lessing, when the more comprehensive system of the fine arts had been firmly established. In so far as Lessing paid no attention to the broader system of the fine arts, especially to music, his *Laokoon* constituted a detour or a dead end in terms of the development leading to a comprehensive system of the fine arts. It is significant that the *Laokoon* was criticized for this very reason by two prominent contemporary critics, and that Lessing in the posthumous notes for the second part of the work gave some consideration to this criticism, though we have no evidence that he actually planned to extend his analysis to music and to a coherent system of the arts.

The greatest contributions to the history of our problem in the interval between Baumgarten and Kant came from Mendelssohn, Sulzer, and Herder. Mendelssohn, who was well acquainted with French and English writings on the subject, demanded in a famous article that the fine arts (painting, sculpture, music, the dance, and architecture) and belles lettres (poetry and eloquence) should be reduced to some common principle better than imitation, and thus was the first among the Germans to formulate a system of the fine arts. Shortly afterwards, in a book review, he criticized Baumgarten and Meier for not having carried out the program of their new science, aesthetics. They wrote as if they had been thinking exclusively in terms of poetry and literature, whereas aesthetic principles should be formulated in such a way as to apply to the visual arts and to music as well. In his annotations to Lessing's *Laokoon*, published long after his death, Mendelssohn persistently criticizes Lessing for