merly imparted to the image. In the modern collection, the icon became a work of art, as Victor I. Stoichita shows concerning the garland Madonnas in the cabinets of Antwerp amateurs (in Groote, 1994). Ultimately, the religion of art for art, with its own rites, substituted for Christian practices. Is it any wonder, then, that the traditionalist Pope John Paul II concluded that "art for art's sake which only refers to its author, without establishing a rapport with the divine world, has no place in the Christian conception of the icon" (*Duodecimum Saeculum*, 1987)?

The thesis calls for a few nuances. Allowing for exceptions, the adoption of an aesthetic posture and the new type of relationship to the work of art that it implies was found at first in a limited number of intellectual and social elites and did not touch the immense majority of believers, who continued to maintain more traditional relationships with their images, relationships in which artistic judgment played only a very secondary role. It is in this sense that one can understand the refusal in March 1794 of the Museum of Arts opened by the revolutionary French government to accept a Saint Jerome from Gaspand De Crayer into its collections, for fear that such paintings "would serve only to feed the fanaticism further."

Moreover, certain images produced for precise liturgical, pastoral, or spiritual ends (paintings of missions, popular engravings, ex-votos) lent themselves very badly to the new discourse of aesthetic celebration because they did not comply with the criteria of excellence decreed by the academies. Moreover, the officiants of the new cult of the beautiful did not have strict enough terms to censure the processes and works that seemed to them to be incompatible with the rules in use in the modern artistic field and especially everything that recalled the ancient bonds between the artist, the religious person, and the patron: Charles Perrault at the end of the seventeenth century *(Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes)* and Stendhal at the beginning of the nineteenth century *(Voyages en Italie)* thus took an ironic stance toward the habits and moral prejudices that called for donors to be present in the paintings that they had done. The discredit that struck the religious images that could not be reduced to aesthetic discourse beginning with the seventeenth century bore proof *a contrario* of their survival and of the permanence of the religious sentiments that they continued to inspire in certain categories of the population at least, as one observes in the scornful judgment passed on the ex-voto in the *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert. Finally, the too clear-cut distinction made between the epoch of images-objects of veneration and that of the art object of admiration and pleasure undoubtedly underestimates the medieval aesthetic and the long heritage of Neoplatonic philosophy, from Pseudo-Dionysius to Michelangelo, which favored the development of the arts within Christianity.

From the sixteenth century onward—earlier here, later there—art in the service of religion loses the preponderant place it had held since late antiquity or the High Middle Ages. The rather strict control over images introduced by the Tridentine decree (1563) certainly did not condemn medieval art to a rapid disappearance, as has been at times suggested, but it ultimately drove the church to adopt a position of extreme prudence—indeed, of suspicion—regarding stylistic or iconographic innovations. The attempts that were more or less aimed at the revival of sacred art (pre-Raphaelites, German Nazarenes, the Sacred Art of Father Couturier) did not succeed in reversing this process; it was thereafter outside of the institutional orders of the church, its liturgy, and its dogmas that the most brilliant artistic careers were made and that the modern artistic field was formed.

The appearance of matters of artistic blasphemy (in literature Théophile de Viau and Molière, in painting Gustave Courbet for *The Burial at Ornans,* George Grosz for his *Crucifixion with Gas Mask* at the origin of a series of trials between 1928 and 1931) attests as well to this reciprocal distancing between the religious and artistic fields.

The Religion of Art. The autonomy claimed for the field of art, the affirmation of the aesthetic position with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Kantian criticism led to new theoretical formalizations and new experiences of the relations between and art and religion that go well beyond the simple substitution of one for the other. One might seek to annul the respective distance between the areas of religion and art, as Father Couturier and the initiators of Sacred Art attempted, by trying to make religious art the site of an avant-garde at once spiritual and aesthetic. Or one might work to invest art with a new sacrality that owes nothing to the institution of the church, or the liturgy, or even the religious subject, strictly speaking, of the artwork. Finally, one might try to escape the strict limits of Christianity to reconcile an intense religious sentiment, enthusiasm for Greco-Roman antiquity, and admiration for Islam.

It is thus that from Gotthold Ephraim Lessing to August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Friedrich Schlegel, and via Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, there is affirmed a will to go beyond Christianity and to find an art acceptable to the three great religions. Despite their divergences and their hesitations, these efforts favor the creation of religious works of which the subject matter is not Christian, and they anticipate the formation, in the nineteenth century, of a secular religion of art, which would have Albrecht Dürer and Raphael for its patron saints. Goethe goes so far as to venture that whoever has science and art, has religion as well; whoever has neither of those two has no religion either.

Inspired originally by Novalis, but taken up and developed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the Jena Romantics, the concept of art-religion *(Kunstreligion)* defines art as a divine service that is not conceived of as a service rendered to God, for the absolute resides in the person who is capable of the sublime: art itself—at least Greek art—is in itself a religion. The beautiful is an intuition of absolute Spirit; art is invested with an ontological function of revealing transcendental truths in a way inaccessible to profane cognitive activity. From the circles of German Romanticism, these theories, which make art into the privileged place of knowledge, are disseminated in all of Europe, including artistic milieus.

Finally, how is one not to see in the reflection of von Ramdohr about Caspar David Friedrich's *Cross in the Mountains (Tetschen Altar)*—from now on landscape painting wants to climb onto the altars—a penetrating definition of the ambitions of nineteenth-century art?

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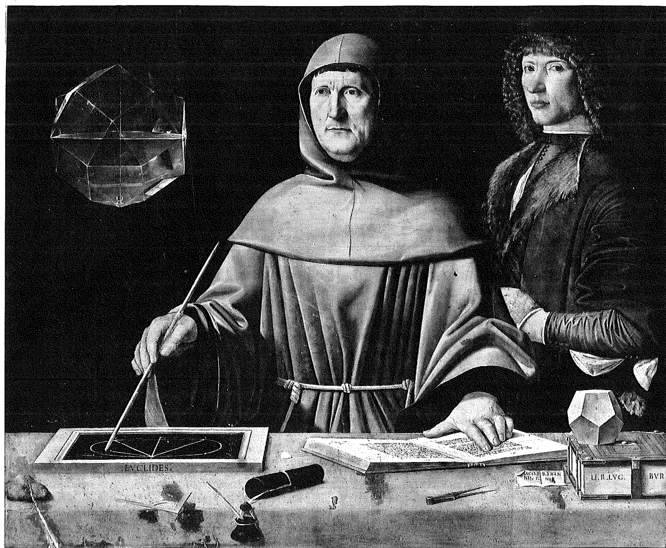
OLIVIER CHRISTIN

Translated from French by Terri Gordon

RENAISSANCE ITALIAN AESTHETICS. It is difficult to speak of Renaissance aesthetics in general terms, as if there were an established doctrine representative of all reflection on art in that period. The large number of works dedicated to artistic topics from the fourteenth to the late sixteenth century actually suggests that attempts to codify principles of artistic creation are as manifold as Renaissance art itself. There is, indeed, a variety of different, more or less elaborated views on art written in Latin or in the vernacular. They take the shape of scientific treatises making much use of perspective studies, or else align themselves in the tradition of erudite humanist dialogues and letters. Both genres, the "scientific" and the humanist, are sometimes united in one and the same text, revealing the writer's competence in both fields. Among the earliest authors of treatises exploring topics devoted to the nature of art are Italian poets of the late thirteenth century. They are soon followed by fourteenth-century humanists who elevated poetry to the rank of liberal art. A new phenomenon appears in fifteenth-century Italy with the artists breaking out of the realm of mere craftsmanship (which medieval culture had assigned to them) and addressing their own reflections on art to fellow artists as well as to the learned public. Finally, philosophers made rich contributions to the Renaissance discussion of art. Although they were initially relegated to the role of observers passively witnessing the discovery of perspective by mathematicians and artists, they soon gave thought to how the geometrization of space and bodies in the arts might affect the perceptional theories of their time and developed concepts supportive of theories of artistic creation. Moreover, they emphasized human inventiveness to the extent that "creativity" became a central theme in their philosophies.

The distinction between poets, humanists, artists, and philosophers is not a strict one, because Renaissance authors typically excelled in more than just one field. In addition, Renaissance dialogues that examine topics related to art offer a vivid picture of intensive discussions across disciplines that were differently demarcated in those days. The philosopher Marsilio Ficino, for instance, appears in Cristoforo Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses* (1475), and Landino is himself one of the representatives of humanism in Ficino's *Commentary on Plato's Symposium* (1469). A generation later, the poet Torquato Tasso wrote a dialogue, *Il Ficino, o vero dell'arte,* in which both Landino and Ficino converse on art. Although Ficino occupied a unique position in the intellectual life of the early Renaissance, other examples could be cited to show how freely similar views, opinions, and theories circulated in different fields—making it in some cases difficult to determine precisely the authorship of a single idea or a concept.

Poets and Humanists. The poets' reflections on art—whether incorporated in the classical form of a "poetic" or laid down in treatises, dialogues, or letters—are an indispensable source for an overall appreciation of the Renaissance discussion of art. The poets' theories of inspiration and, more specifically, their claim to truth (and not just



RENAISSANCE ITALIAN AESTHETICS. Jacopo de Barbari, *Portrait of Luca Pacioli* (1495), oil on wood, 99 × 120 cm; Museo Nazionale die Capodimonte, Naples. (Photograph courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.)

verisimilitude) paved the way for the humanist emancipation of poetry from grammar and rhetoric. Already Albertino Mussato (1261–1329) had conceived of the poet as a *poeta doctus* and an enunciator of "truth," whether dealing with fictional or historical events. As to the poet's relationship to history, Mussato announced proudly that he, for instance, was in ancient Troy "before" the city's founder himself appeared there—implying that his knowledge of past events was rooted in a historical memory accessible to divinely inspired poets like himself. Although Mussato found a severe critic in the Dominican Giovanni di Mantua, who defended the Thomist position according to which truth needs to be anchored ontologically, many later poets and humanists followed in his footsteps. His conviction that poetry represented a *theologia mundi* is echoed in Francesco Petrarca's and Giovanni Boccaccio's writings with their assertion that the poet's fables have the same origin as the stories of Scripture and therefore harbor a divine message. In line with this view is Pico della Mirandola's (1463–1494) project of a "poetical theology" that aimed at unifying ancient and biblical traditions. Asked about the sense of the *poetica figmenta* that "veil" the true nucleus of their fables, poets and humanists answered that divine wisdom needed to be "protected" from profanation. More significantly, they also pointed out that figurative speech bears the mark of "inventiveness." Authors such as Leonardo Bruni (1377–1444) and Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) attributed poetic figures to a creative natural disposition, called by Roman poets *ingenium*. This natural disposition uncovers similarities between objects and between words that cannot be

detected by reason alone and it translates them, in the field of poetry, into figurative language. Landino (1424–1498) therefore suggested that poetry, being the art of vesting truth with the beauty of metaphoric garments, occupied an intermediary position between unreflected myth and rational philosophy. Other humanists such as Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406) argued, with Mussato, Dante Alighieri, and Petrarca, that poetry, insofar as it embraces all of the liberal arts, is itself philosophy. Salutati also justified poetic speech by emphasizing the salutary effect it has on the recipient, to whom it transmits not only the poet's encyclopedic knowledge but also his inspired state of mind. Salutati is alluding to the Platonic doctrine of *furors*, which was discussed by poets and humanists long before Ficino offered his elaborate version of it. The concept of poetry as an activity unto itself added to the "nobility" of poetical production and provided a basis for the notion of the poet as a creator and as an *alter deus*. Variations on the creator-poet theme can be found in almost all works that emphasize the inventive nature of poetry, most importantly in Pierre de Ronsard's *Abrégé de l'art poétique* (1565), Sir Philip Sidney's *A Defence of Poetry* (1595), and Lope de Vega's *Arte nueva de hacer comedias* (1607). A particularly striking passage is offered in "A Defence of Poetry": "Onely the poet disdeining to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow in effect into *another nature:* a making things either better then nature bringeth foorth, or quite a new, . . . so as he goeth hand in hand with nature" (Sidney, 1973, p. 78).

The other powerful doctrine of the time was Aristotle's theory of imitation and whose *Poetics* became available in the original in the fifteenth century. Although Latin translations followed, it is only after Francesco Robortello's *In librum Aristotelis de Arte Poetica Explicationes* (1548) that many other commentaries began to appear (not all of which promoted an Aristotelian stand). Robortello himself worked within the limits of the ancient author's philosophy, for instance, by conceiving poetry as the product of a natural process of intellection. In a similar vein, Julius Caesar Scaliger, in his *Poetice* (1561), connected poetical theory with Aristotle's psychology when he reflected on the effect of pleasure on the soul.

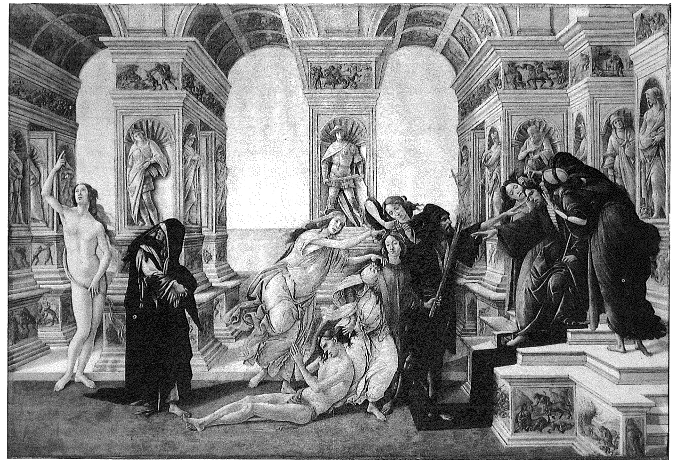
The Artists. A fruitful connection between humanist studies and art theory is found in the works of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), the only Renaissance artist whose systematic studies included perspective as well as painting, sculpture, architecture, and theory of inspiration. In the dedication of *Della pittura*, Alberti stated to his fellow artist Filippo Brunelleschi that mathematics revealed the emerging of art "from roots within Nature itself" (Alberti, 1972, p. 32), implying that the measures used by painters have their origin in nature's creations. Central to this understanding is the concept of "proportion," which is derived from the observation of physical objects and their relations to other objects and is then transmitted to works of art through the use of perspective. Related to the notion of proportion are comparisons as a means of accuracy: "There is in comparison a power which enables us to recognize the presence of more or less or just the same" (ibid., p. 53). This power *(vis)* is also needed for conceiving the outlines of a painting, especially if the painting is a *storia* involving many figures whose spatial relations have to be carefully designed. Most remarkably, the theory of composition that Alberti developed in that context also serves as a basis for artistic creativity, which earlier artists such as Cennino Cennini did not think of stimulating. The humanistically well trained Alberti sought help to that effect from two established disciplines, rhetoric and poetry. Although he recommended the reading of poetical works as an essential source for developing the *storia* (a step that in rhetoric corresponds to *inventio*), he used rhetorical schemes as a way to systematize the sequence and variation of figures (equivalent to *ordo*). The strength of his theory of composition lies in his idea of figures that are not to be understood abstractly but always in connection with the *storia* they represent (Kuhn, 1984, p. 163). Composition thus exerts a "double" visual impact on the artist's creative disposition, through the cohesion of narrative and figurative elements and through the mutual correspondence between these elements.

Unlike Alberti, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) rigorously opposed the idea of "ennobling" art by linking it with humanist studies. Although Leonardo owed many insights to his predecessor, he legitimated the high status of painting not by borrowing from liberal arts but by understanding it as a science. As a consequence, he demolished the humanist opposition between "imitators" and "creators" by stating that all who deal solely with "words" condemn themselves to futile mimetic production. For him, a "discoverer" bases himself on "experience" mediating between "artful nature" and humankind (Vinci, 1970, C.A. 85a). The other prerequisite is mathematics, a tool that confers "certitude" on the scientific investigation of nature (W. An. III 241a; G 95b). There has been much debate concerning Leonardo's understanding of mathematics. It appears that for him the real power of mathematics does not lie in its ability to trace back reality to abstract laws, but, on the contrary, in its being instrumental in rendering nature's laws visible. This explains, for instance, the high status of mechanics as "the paradise" in which the fruits of mathematics can be found (E, 8b), or why water currents are being called "visible science" (ibid, 54b). Painting as the discipline par excellence that captures the visible world by the use of mathematics (perspective and geometry) is therefore a science and at the same time an art in that it is creative. Theory of science parallels theory of art, and both disciplines are considered "second creations." Nevertheless, it is only of the painter that Leonardo says that he is the perfecter of nature. The scientist's (i.e., the engineer's) inventions can never compare to nature's

creations, "because in her inventions nothing is lacking and nothing is superfluous, and she does not use counterweights, but places there the soul, the composer of the body" (*Leonardo da Vinci: Engineer and Architect,* 1987, p. 109). Not so the painter's work, which, born of nature, as the source of all visible things, can even surpass her finite basic creations by producing infinite new compounds of natural forms. As a consequence, the art of painting is a "grandchild" of nature and also related with God (Ash. I, 15b; 16a).

Most of Michelangelo Buonarroti's (1475–1564) aesthetic views are dispersed throughout his *Rime*—beauty in visual arts being, as it were, expressible through the veil of poetry only. A distinctive feature of his artistic understanding is the rejection of the mathematical expression of reality, particularly in respect to the human body, although he did admit that proportions "please" the eye (and also applied them to the buildings he designed). In contrast to his contemporary Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), who was aware that beauty ultimately escapes mathematical formulation but still recommended the use of proportions, Michelangelo did not view beauty as a calculable harmonious concord of lines and colors. The actual measure is not performed by the compass in the artist's hand, but by his *intelletto,* a term that for Michelangelo translated Plotinus's *voûs noûs* (reason, intuition) and also had features typically associated with the *ingegno.* Warren Cheney aptly coined the notion of "creative proportion" to characterize Michelangelo's art (Clements, 1961, p. 33). The possession of *intelletto,* however, does not dispense with the process—and torment—of artistic creation. The beauty discerned by the "external eye," explained Michelangelo, penetrates the artist's soul and "grows" therein to a new "shape." Through the artist's technical skills, that new shape (the terms used are *concetto, immagine,* and *idea*) will eventually outlive nature's creations. In this respect, "Cause to effect bows and gives way, whence nature is bested by art" (ibid., p. 12). This also justifies why, even though all forms preexist in nature (another Plotinian notion), the sculpted stone is worthier than the untouched rock. Nevertheless, art is ultimately not superior to nature, because it is nature herself that gives art the power to overcome her. This is in harmony with Michelangelo's ideal of an effortlessness, or spontaneous creation, that is modeled after nature's own mode of creation—requiring no preparatory studies, no instruments, and no measurements.

The Philosophers. The advancement of fine arts accompanied by the enhancement of technical skills suggested to many Renaissance philosophers the return of the golden age. They did not, however, develop an actual aesthetics—something that emerged as an independent philosophical discipline only in the eighteenth century. They nevertheless worked with concepts that clearly reveal the impact of artistic themes and procedures. The most visible expressions of that impact are the many terms they used associated with notions of order, symmetry, and harmony: *ordo, numerus, modus, mensura (immensurabilitas), commensuratio, commensurabilitas, convenientia partium, consonantia, concordia, dispositio, harmonia, proportio, proportionabilitas, forma, species, figura, figuratio, adaequatio, congruitas, pulchritudo, formositas, venustas, elegantia, gratia.* Although not all of these terms refer necessarily to a reflection on art, the concentration of some of them does indicate an interest in aesthetic categories. More significant, of course, are concepts clearly reminiscent of artistic topics or philosophical problems that are encoded in aesthetic terms. Nicholas of Cusa, or Cusanus (1401–1464), for instance, not only employed almost all of the terms above, but also elaborated the philosophical foundation of "proportion," the use of which he strongly recommended for the fine arts. Moreover, the notion of proportion was of major importance because "every inquiry is comparative and uses the means of comparative relation [*proportio*]" (*On Learned Ignorance,* 1981, 1, 1, p. 50). This is a lesson one can learn also from Alberti, with whom Nicholas of Cusa shared some of his mathematical studies. He focused his attention, however, on the presuppositions of a comparative relation. Such a relation does not equalize the terms it relates, but only opens up a perspective under which similarity can be established. On the one hand, because similitude requires a notion of dissimilitude, proportion must be understood as a derivative of sameness and otherness. On the other hand, its substantiation requires that the opposite terms, from which it stems metaphysically, be unified. This is effected by the famous doctrine of the *coincidentia oppositorum,* which, translated into modern terms, represents the condition of the possibility of any opposition. There is only one opposition for which no adequate proportion can be found, and that is the distance between the finite and the infinite. Nicholas of Cusa offered a brilliant solution to this problem in *The Vision of God,* a work that employs a recently discovered technique in portraiture that makes the face appear to be watching observers independently of the position they take. To him, this exemplified the absolute seeing of God as an unmovable "omnivoyant" who "encompasses at one and the same time each and every mode of seeing" (*The Vision of God,* 1985, vol. 2, p. 121), and is thereby present to every individual visual act. Whereas human seeing is "contracted," that is, perspectively determined and thus finite, divine vision is integral and infinite. Although "uncontractible" in itself, absolute vision functions as the "contraction of contractions," meaning the totality of all perspective sights. Whether this subtle speculation on vision has had an impact on the actual practice of painting is difficult to establish, although Leonardo, for instance, was apparently acquainted with Nicholas of Cusa's works, which were discussed in learned Milanese circles (Cassirer, 1963, pp. 48ff.). He could certainly have drawn on the philosopher's view that man is a *secundus deus* be-



RENAISSANCE ITALIAN AESTHETICS. Sandro Botticelli, *Calumny of Apelles* (1495), tempera on wood, 62 × 91 cm; Uffizi, Florence. (Photograph courtesy of Alinari/Art Resource, New York.)

cause he is himself a creator whose mind produces mathematical and rational notions that measure God's creation.

Renaissance scholars are sometimes disappointed to find that Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), the Florentine friend of Alberti and the brothers Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo and inspirer of Sandro Botticcelli (Cheney, 1985), did not himself attempt to codify principles of aesthetics. But in fact, as André Chastel's (1975) study on the Florentine philosopher shows, Ficino took a deep interest in optics and perspective, reflected on the applicability of the Vitruvian canon, and even developed a scale of colors—not to mention his studies on musical theory. It is true that Ficino did not analyze single works of art. The primary object of his aesthetic investigation was beauty in natural bodies, and in that his approach was no different from an artist's point of view. Ficino distinguished between shape *(figura)* and beauty *(pulchritudo)* of bodies, in terms that echo Vitruvius's definition of *symmetry* and *eurythmy* and also some aspects of Alberti's aesthetic categories *pulchritudo* and *concinnitas* (Alberti, 1988, 9, 5, pp. 302ff.). Whereas shape can be described in terms of agreeable arrangements of parts and colors, beauty is "act, vitality, and a certain grace shining in itself through the influence of its own Idea" (Ficino, 1985, 5, 6, p. 93). Because beauty is related to vitality, the soul, which gives life to the body, is defined as the artist *(artifex corporis)* fashioning the body from inside. To that effect, the soul predisposes the body for its final shaping by introducing three intelligible components: disposition *(ordo),* measure *(modus),* and aspect *(speties).* Disposition has to do with the distance between the body parts; measure is responsible for the shaping of the parts by using the scale of geometric progression (surface–line–point); aspect provides the accord of light, shadows, and lines (ibid., p. 93f.). Ficino's description of the soul's operations on the body as an artistic process is one that can easily be applied to his understanding of the artist's work. More significantly, it exemplifies a Renaissance mentality that was not content with adorning living space, but also strived to "aestheticize" the world of thought (to the extent that psychology was also conceived in aesthetic terms). The human soul in Ficino's metaphysics eventually "re-forms," that is, reshapes, the face of the universe in the soul's effort to understand it (Albertini, 1997,

pp. 130–147)—intellectualizing thus becoming an equivalent of beautifying.

Many more Renaissance authors have aestheticized their philosophies or used features of artistic creation as paradigms for epistemological and metaphysical notions. Charles de Bovelles (1479–1567), Francesco Patrizi (1529–1597), Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), and Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639), for instance, made abundant use of these conceptual transformations. Patrizi, whose work bridges fourteenth-century humanism and early modern science, not only wrote on various humanistic disciplines and the philosophy of nature, but also managed to link the two divergent study fields through the use of geometry. He applied the methodical rigor of geometry to history and rhetoric and took its spatial quality as a basis for the studying of physical bodies. Reflecting on the presuppositions of corporeity, he discovered that space—being at the same time corporeal (three-dimensional) and incorporeal (without the bodily quality of resistance)—is prior to the world of bodies. In *Nova de Universis Philosophia* (1591), Patrizi defines space as what "communicates to them [bodies] all of its points, lines, surfaces, and depths, . . . so that they possess those things that it retains for itself" (Patrizi, 1943, p. 239). He insisted that geometric bodies are not abstracted from physical bodies but are to be thought of as being actualized in nature as their primary space. Interpreted in the context of sixteenth-century art theory, this concept of (absolute) space can be understood as a response to the mathematically constructed space in the artist's shop that still rested on the Aristotelian assumption that space is what is being occupied by a body. The aesthetic dimension of Patrizi's theory of space becomes evident if one considers that space is related to light—also an "incorporeal body"—and that light is the first to "fill" physical space (ibid., p. 244). This dimension has been acknowledged by artists, in particular by El Greco (1541–1614), who held Patrizi's metaphysics in high esteem.

Looking at how artistic categories have been employed in the works of Renaissance philosophers, one understands why no independent aesthetic discipline emerged from their reflections on art. More appealing than the examination of the ontological status of an artistic object, more significant than the analysis of pleasure derived from harmonies and proportions found in artworks, and certainly more urgent than questions related to taste, was the global quest for harmony. It was that quest that gave rise to new metaphysics and new cosmologies, in which the universe itself was considered as an object of "beautification." Not content with mere symmetry and regularity in the planetary order, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), for instance, searched for the divine *disegno* in the way the cosmos is structured, a scheme that he considered to be governed by rules of artistic disposition. As is well known, Kepler embodied his aesthetically determined vision of the heavenly order in a model of nesting polyhedrons—which has been recently interpreted as an arrangement of "cosmopoetic" figures (Hallyn, 1993, p. 182). The demands of Renaissance art theory, with its ideal of harmonious disposition, which could be codified in many different ways, pervaded philosophical discourse and eventually reached the threshold of modern science.

The contribution of Renaissance philosophers to the refinement of aesthetic categories lies in their elaboration of notions that were basic to the artistic discussions of their time. Their interest in aesthetic principles was, in a sense, an extension of their desire to make their own intellectual work conform to the highest standards of art and beauty.

[*See also* Alberti; Architecture, *article on* Italian Renaissance Aesthetics; Artist; Origins of Aesthetics; Perspective; Rhetoric; *and* Vasari.]

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REPRESENTATION. [*To clarify the role of the concept of representation in aesthetics, this entry comprises three essays:*

Conceptual and Historical Overview
Depiction
Resemblance

The first essay is an overview of the general topic of representation as it has been treated in the history of aesthetics. The second essay analyzes two of the main theoretical accounts of pictoral depiction: perceptual theories and symbol theories. The third essay, on resemblance, discusses a topic that has been important in the history of aesthetics but that has been marginalized by various critiques of it since the 1960s. For related discussion, see Fiction; Goodman; Gombrich; Imagery; Mimesis; Perception; Photography, *article on* Catachresis; Portraiture; *and* Realism.]

Conceptual and Historical Overview

Plato gave birth to aesthetics when Socrates claims in book 10 (598b) of *The Republic* that a painting is a representation that aims to reproduce only the appearance or image of an object. In this brief passage, Plato both suggests a criterion for a painting's representing a certain object and begins to raise deep skeptical questions about the value of such representation. The criterion, properly spelled out, stands up remarkably well despite much criticism and many proposals of alternatives in the contemporary literature of aesthetics, and the skeptical questions have proved remarkably difficult to answer.

The criterion for a painting's representing an object, which Plato describes as aiming to reproduce its appearance, might be spelled out as follows: a painting represents a certain object if and only if its artist intends by marking the canvas with paint to create visual experience in viewers that resembles the visual experience they would have of the object. One might add that the intention must be successful in the sense that the following conditional is true: if the painting is seen in normal conditions, then it will produce visual experience similar to that of the object, such that the intention is recoverable from this experience.

The idea that resemblance could be sufficient for representation has been attacked by Nelson Goodman (1976). Borrowing freely, his counterexamples to this claim are as follows: twins resemble but do not represent each other; reprints of a painting resemble the painting more than it resembles what it represents, yet both the painting and its reprints represent the objects seen in them and not each other; a fabric sample both resembles the fabric and (in a sense broader than that intended to be captured by our criterion) represents it, but it is not a pictorial representation (depiction) of it. Our criterion as spelled out refers to resemblance between visual experiences of a painting and an object and not to resemblance between the objects themselves, but the Goodman's counterexamples are not affected by this difference, because the objects in question will generate similar visual experiences.

The other clauses of the criterion do eliminate such counterexamples, however. These clauses include reference to the intention of the artist and to her marking a canvas with paint as the manner of fulfilling that intention. Twins, fabric samples, and reprints are not created in that way with those intentions behind them. Goodman's counterexamples do show that resemblance is not sufficient for representation, but Plato's criterion does not claim that it is.

Goodman held that resemblance is not necessary and is not an important factor in pictorial representation either. According to him, depiction depends on a conventional symbolic system similar to language in its referential functions but different in the formal structure of its symbolic system. Aesthetic symbols are, for example, syntactically and semantically dense, that is, small differences in them make for different symbols and they pick out small differences in their objects. They typically refer by exemplification, that is, by referring to some of their own properties. These are interesting features of aesthetic representation, but Goodman's main thesis that such representation depends on conventional symbols has been successfully attacked, most notably by Flint Schier (1986).

Schier points out that, in order to recognize represented objects in a painting, one does not require semantic rules to relate its parts to their referents or syntactic rules to relate these parts to each other. Recognition of represented objects normally depends only on one's ability to recognize the real objects represented. One simply assimilates the perceptual experiences of painting and object. Schier proposes a criterion of pictorial representation based on this point. Roughly, something is a picture of an object if one can naturally interpret it visually as such, if this interpretation depends only on one's being able to recognize the object.