

HISTORY OF AESTHETICS

Vol. I

ANCIENT AESTHETICS

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Vol. I

ANCIENT AESTHETICS

edited by

J. HARRELL

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INTRODUCTION

I

The study of aesthetics proceeds along many lines, containing both the theory of beauty and the theory of art, investigating both the theory of aesthetic objects and of aesthetic experiences, employing both description and prescription, both analysis and explanation.

1. THE STUDY OF BEAUTY AND THE STUDY OF ART. Aesthetics has been traditionally defined as the study of *beauty*. However some aestheticians, convinced that the notion of beauty is indeterminate and vague and therefore not suitable for investigation, have turned rather to an investigation of arts, defining aesthetics as a study of *art*. Others preferred to deal with both beauty and art; they separated these two fields of aesthetics, but investigated them both.

Each of these two concepts—of beauty and of art—undoubtedly has a different range. Beauty is not confined to art, while art is not solely the pursuit of beauty. In some periods of history, little or no connection was seen between beauty and art. The ancients studied beauty and studied art, but treated the two separately, seeing no reason to associate them.

But so many ideas about beauty have evolved from the study of art, and so many ideas about art from the study of beauty, that for modern thinkers it is impossible to dissociate the two fields. Antiquity has treated them separately, but later periods have brought them together, being interested primarily in artistic beauty and the aesthetic aspect of art. These two spheres—beauty and art—have the tendency to converge—this is in fact characteristic of the history of aesthetics. An aesthetician may interest himself in either beauty or art, but aesthetics as an entity is a twofold study, embracing both the study of beauty and the study of art. This is the first duality of aesthetics.

2. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE AESTHETICS. Aesthetics is the study of aesthetic objects; it does however include the study of subjective aesthetic experiences. The examination of objective beauty and works of art has gradually led to subjective problems. There is probably not a single thing which someone somewhere has not regarded as beautiful nor anything whose beauty has not been denied. Everything or nothing may be beautiful, depending on the attitude one adopts. Thus, many aestheticians have reached the conclusion that the principle of their discipline is

neither beauty nor art, but the aesthetic experience, the aesthetic response to things—and that this is the proper concern of aesthetics. Some have even adopted the view that aesthetics is exclusively a study of aesthetic experience and can be a science only if it is psychological in approach. This is, however, too radical a solution: in aesthetics there is a place for both: for the study of the problems of subjective experience and of objective problems. Thus aesthetics has two lines of enquiry, this duality being as unavoidable as the first one concerning beauty and art.

This dual character of aesthetics may also be expressed through contrast between beauty conditioned by nature and beauty conditioned by man. Man is involved in aesthetics in several ways: he creates beauty and art, he evaluates them, he participates as an artist, as a receiver, and as a critic.

3. **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL AESTHETICS.** Man's participation in art is a participation of the individual as well as of social groups. Aesthetics is, therefore, partly a study of the psychology of beauty and art, and partly of the sociology of beauty and art. This is the third duality of aesthetics.

4. **DESCRIPTIVE AND PRESCRIPTIVE AESTHETICS.** Many books in the field of aesthetics do no more than establish and generalize facts. They describe the properties of things which we consider beautiful, describe experiences which those beautiful things provoke in us. But other books on aesthetics go beyond establishing facts: they include recommendations on how to produce good art and real beauty, and on how to evaluate them properly. In other words: apart from descriptions aesthetics deals also with prescriptions. It is not exclusively an empirical, descriptive, psychological, social or historical science: its other aspects have a normative character. The French aesthetics of the seventeenth century was chiefly normative, the British aesthetics of the eighteenth century was descriptive. This is the fourth duality of aesthetics.

As they would be in other disciplines, prescriptions in aesthetics may be based on empirical investigations. In this case they are simple conclusions from descriptions. But they are not always so based. They are derived in part not from established facts but from postulates and standards of taste which are favoured at a particular moment. In this case the duality between descriptive and prescriptive aesthetics is at its most extreme.

5. **PROPER AESTHETIC THEORY AND AESTHETIC POLITICS.** This duality of aesthetics is akin to another one: to the duality of theory and politics. Establishment of facts serves the theory of art, while recommendations serve the politics of art. The theory tends to give an universal view of art and beauty, while politics defends one of many possible conceptions of art. When Democritus demonstrated that perspective alters the shapes and colours of things and that we therefore see shapes and colours not quite as they are, he contributed to the theory of art; but when Plato demanded that the artist, ignoring perspective, should present shapes and colours as they are and not as we see them, he was indulging in politics of art. In still other words, the propositions of aesthetics are partly an expression of knowledge and partly of taste.

6. **AESTHETIC FACTS AND AESTHETIC EXPLANATION.** Aesthetics, like every other discipline, attempts first of all to establish the properties of the objects of its studies ; it investigates the properties of beauty and of art. But it also attempts to explain these properties, to say *why* beauty acts in certain way and why art has adopted certain forms and not others. There may be different kinds of explanation : aesthetics explains the impact of beauty psychologically and sometimes physiologically, it explains art-forms historically and sometimes sociologically. When Aristotle said that the beauty of things depends on their size, he was establishing a fact. But he offered an explanation of the fact when he said that things can be admired only if they are seen comfortably all at once, and too big things cannot be seen in this way. When he stated that art is imitation, Aristotle was (rightly or wrongly) establishing a fact, but he was explaining it when he said that man is naturally inclined to imitate. On the whole, ancient aesthetics was more concerned with establishing facts, while modern aesthetics lays greater stress on their explanation. This is the sixth duality that pervades aesthetics : the duality of establishing and explaining the facts and laws of beauty and art.

7. **PHILOSOPHICAL AND PARTICULAR AESTHETICS.** The most celebrated aesthetic theories have been inventions of philosophers : of Plato and Aristotle, Hume and Burke, Kant and Hegel, Croce and Dewey. But others are the work of artists, for instance of Leonardo, or the work of scientists, for instance that of Vitruvius or Vitelo. The Italian Renaissance possessed two great aestheticians : Ficino was a philosopher, Alberti an artist and a scholar.

All kinds of aesthetics may be empirical as well as aprioristic. There is, however, in philosophy a tendency towards apriority ; and hundred years ago Fechner opposed philosophical aesthetics from *above* and scientific aesthetics from *below* (*von oben und von unten*). The historian is bound to be concerned with both.

8. **AESTHETICS OF THE ARTS AND AESTHETICS OF LITERATURE.** Aesthetics takes its material from the various arts ; it is aesthetics of poetry, of painting, of music etc. These arts differ among themselves and their aesthetic theory moves along different lines. Actual contrasts divide *fine arts*, which appeal directly to the senses, from *poetry*, which is based on linguistic signs ; and it is only natural that aesthetic theories and ideas differ from each other, because some are based on literature, some on fine arts, some emphasize sensuous images, and others intellectual symbols. A complete aesthetic theory must embrace both : sensuous and intellectual beauty, direct and symbolical art. It must be aesthetics of fine arts as well as aesthetics of literature.

Let us sum up. Every aesthetician moves in accordance with his predilections, along one of these several lines. He may 1. take more interest in beauty or more interest in art, 2. in aesthetic objects or in subjective aesthetic experiences, 3. he may provide either descriptions or prescriptions, 4. he may work in the field of psychology or sociology of beauty, 5. he may pursue the theory or the politics of art, 6. he may either establish facts or explain and interpret them, 7. he may base his views on

literature or on fine arts. The aesthete may choose between those lines of his discipline; but the historian wishing to present the development of his subject has to pursue all these lines.

The historian will find that aesthetic ideas and interests have very much changed during centuries. The gradual convergence of the ideas of art and beauty, the gradual transformation of the study of objective beauty into a study of subjective experience of it, the introduction of psychological and sociological investigations, the abandonment of prescriptions for descriptions are significant phenomena of the history of aesthetics.

II

The historian of aesthetics has not only to study the evolution of various kinds of aesthetics, but he has himself to apply various methods and points of view. In studying older ideas about aesthetics it is not enough to take into account only those which have been expressed under the name of aesthetics, or have belonged to the definite aesthetic discipline or have applied the terms "beauty" and "art". It is not sufficient to rely solely on explicit written or printed propositions. The historian will also have to draw on the taste he observes of a given period and refer to the works of arts it has produced. He will rely not only on theory, but also on practice, on works of sculpture and music, poetry and oratory.

A. If the history of aesthetics were to be limited to what has appeared under the name of aesthetics, it would have to start very late, for it was Alexander Baumgarten who in 1750 first used the term. The same problems were however discussed much earlier under other names. The term "aesthetics" is not important and even after it was coined not everybody adhered to it. Kant's great work on aesthetics though completed after Baumgarten's, was not called "aesthetics" but "critique of judgment", while the term "aesthetics" Kant employed for quite a different purpose, namely to denote a part of the theory of knowledge, the theory of space and time.

B. If the history of aesthetics were treated as the history of a particular discipline, it would not begin until the eighteenth century (Batteux, *Système des beaux arts*, 1747), and would cover merely two centuries. But beauty has been studied much earlier within other disciplines. In many instances the problems of beauty were merged with philosophy in general, as in the case of Plato. Even Aristotle did not deal with aesthetics as a separate discipline despite the fact that he has contributed a great deal to it.

C. The history of aesthetics would be very superficial in its method of selecting materials, if it were to include only thoughts uttered in treatises devoted specifically to beauty. The Pythagoreans, who exerted such a strong influence on the development of aesthetics, probably did not compose treatises of this kind; anyway, no such treatise is known. Plato admittedly did write a treatise on beauty, but he expounded his main ideas about it in other works. Aristotle did not write treatises on this subject.

Augustine wrote one, but he lost it. Thomas Aquinas not only did not write a treatise about beauty, he did not devote even a single chapter to it in any of his works; yet he said more on the subject in scattered remarks than others have said in books devoted entirely to the subject.

Thus, in its choice of material, the history of aesthetics cannot be guided by any exterior criterion, such as a particular name, or a particular area of study. It has to include *all* ideas which have a bearing on aesthetic problems and which use aesthetic concepts, even if they appear under different names and within other sciences.

If this course is adopted it will become clear that aesthetic investigation began in Europe over two thousand years before a special name was found for it and a separate area of study. Already in those early days problems were posed and resolved in a way similar to that done later under the name of "aesthetics".

1. THE HISTORY OF AESTHETIC IDEAS AND THE HISTORY OF TERMS. The historian, if he wants to describe the development of human ideas about beauty, cannot confine himself to the term "beauty", because such ideas have appeared also under other names. Particularly in ancient aesthetics more was said about harmony, *symmetria* and eurhythmy than about beauty. Conversely, the term "beauty" was used to mean something different from what we now understand by the word: in the ancient world it signified moral rather than aesthetic virtues.

Similarly, the term "art" signified in those days all kinds of skilled production and was by no means confined to fine arts. It is therefore necessary for a history of aesthetics to consider also those theories in which beauty is not called beauty and art is not called art. This creates an eighth duality: the history of aesthetics is not only a history of *ideas* of beauty and art, but also a history of the *terms* "beauty" and "art". The development of aesthetics consisted not only in the evolution of ideas, but also in the evolution of terminology, and the two evolutions were not concurrent.

2. HISTORY OF EXPLICIT AND OF IMPLICIT AESTHETICS. If the historian of aesthetics were to draw his information solely from learned aestheticians, he would fail to present a full record of what in the past was thought about beauty and art. He must also seek information among artists and must take into account the thoughts which have found expression not in learned books, but in the prevailing opinion and in the *vox populi*. Many aesthetic ideas have not immediately found verbal expression, but have first been embodied in works of art, have been expressed not in words, but in shape, colour and sound. Some works of art allow us to deduce aesthetic theses which without being explicitly stated are nevertheless revealed through them as the point of departure and the basis of these works. The history of aesthetics, when understood in its broadest sense, is composed not only of explicit aesthetic statements made by aestheticians, but also of those that are implicit in the prevailing taste or in the works of art. It should embrace not only aesthetic theory, but also the artistic practice which reveals that aesthetic theory. The historian may simply read some of the aesthetic ideas of the past in manuscripts and books, others however he must

glean from works of art, fashions and customs. This is yet another duality in aesthetics and its history, the duality of aesthetic truths conveyed explicitly in books and those contained implicitly in taste or works of art.

Progress in aesthetics has to a large extent been achieved by philosophers but it has also been achieved by psychologists and sociologists. Artists and poets, connoisseurs and critics too have revealed a number of truths about beauty and art. Their particular observations about poetry or music, painting or architecture have led to the discovery of general truths about art and beauty.

So far histories of aesthetics have confined themselves almost exclusively to the ideas of philosophers-aestheticians and to theories explicitly formulated. In any discussion of antiquity the ideas of Plato and Aristotle have been considered. But what about Pliny or Philostratus? They have their place not only in the history of artistic criticism but also in that of aesthetics. And Phidias? He belongs not only to the history of sculpture, but also to the history of aesthetics. And the Athenian attitude toward art? It too belongs to the history of taste and aesthetics. When Phidias gave to a statue which was to be placed on a high column a disproportionately large head and the Athenians objected to this, both he and they were expressing an opinion on an aesthetic problem, raised also by Plato: whether art should take account of the laws of human perception and alter nature to suit them. The Athenians' opinion was similar to Plato's, while Phidias expressed the opposite view. It is only natural that their opinions should be placed alongside Plato's and be included in the history of aesthetics with his.

3. THE EXPOSITORY AND THE EXPLANATORY HISTORY. Among aesthetic ideas born in past ages, some are quite natural and self-explanatory. The historian may do nothing more than state when and where they have appeared. On the contrary, others can be made clear only when the conditions are known which gave rise to them: i.e., the psychology of the artists, philosophers and connoisseurs who voiced them, contemporary views on art, and the social structure and taste of their time. An eleventh duality of the history of aesthetics appears.

(a) Some aesthetic ideas have arisen through the direct influence of social, economic and political conditions. They have depended upon the régime within which the exponents of these ideas lived and upon the social groups to which they belonged. Life in Imperial Rome tended to produce conceptions of beauty and art different from those of Athenian democracy and different again from those evolved in medieval monasteries. (b) Other ideas have depended only indirectly on social and political conditions, being more influenced by ideologies and philosophical theories. The aesthetics of the idealist Plato bore little resemblance to the relativistic aesthetics of the Sophists, though they lived in the same social and political conditions. (c) Aesthetic ideas have also been influenced by the contemporary art. Artists have on occasion relied on aestheticians, but the reverse is also true; theory has sometimes influenced artistic practice, but practice has also influenced aesthetic theory.

The historian of aesthetics must take account of this interdependence; when presenting the development of aesthetic ideas, he must time and again refer to the history of political systems, of philosophy, of art. This task is as necessary as it is difficult because political, artistic and philosophical influences on aesthetic theory have not only been various, but tangled often obscure and unexpected. Plato's evaluation of art, for example, was modelled on a political system. This system was not that of Athens, however, where he was born and spent his life, but of distant Sparta. His conception of beauty was dependent on philosophy, but (especially in later years) not so much on his own philosophy of Ideas, as on the Pythagorean philosophy of numbers. His ideal of art was based not on Greek art of his own times, but rather on the art of the archaic era.

4. THE HISTORY OF AESTHETIC DISCOVERIES AND THE HISTORY OF PREVAILING IDEAS. The historian of aesthetics is concerned primarily with the origin and development of notions about beauty and art, with the formation of theories of beauty, of art, artistic creation and artistic experience. His aim is to establish where, when, in what circumstances and through whom those notions and theories have arisen. He tries to discover who first defined the notions of beauty and art, who first distinguished between aesthetic and moral beauty, between art and craft, who first introduced the precise concepts of art, of creative imagination, and of aesthetic sense.

There is yet another question which the historian of aesthetics must consider important: which of the notions and theories discovered by aestheticians have found favour and response, which have been accepted and have dominated people's minds. It is significant that Greek thinkers and the Greeks in general for a long time did not regard poetry as an art, that they did not see any resemblance or connection between sculpture and music, that in the arts they laid greater stress on rules than on the free activity of the artist.

Because of this (twelfth) duality in the historian's interests, the history of aesthetics moves along two lines. It is, on the one hand, a history of discoveries and progress in aesthetic thought and, on the other, a history of its reception, which investigates aesthetic notions and theories which have been accepted by the majority of people and have prevailed for centuries.

Aesthetics has moved along many lines and the historian must follow all of them.

III

1. THE ORIGIN OF AESTHETIC HISTORY. When does the history of aesthetics begin? If we are to understand the term in its widest sense, so that it embraces the "implicit" aesthetics, then its origins are lost in the mists of time and can only be settled arbitrarily. At some point the historian must break the evolution and state: this is where I begin. The present history proceeds in this way. By deliberately limiting its task, it begins the history of aesthetics in Europe, or more specifically, in Greece. It does not deny that outside Europe, to the East, and particularly in Egypt, there probably

existed not only implicit, but also an explicitly stated aesthetics. This belonged, however, to a different historical cycle.

Although the present history does not include non-European aesthetics, it nevertheless draws attention to the relationship and the interdependence between non-European and European aesthetics. The first of these contacts appears at the very outset.

2. EGYPT AND GREECE. Diodorus Siculus wrote* that the Egyptians claimed the Greek sculptors as their pupils. By way of example they cited the two brothers who worked as sculptors in the early period and made a statue of Apollo for the island of Samos. As was often the case with Egyptian sculptors, the brothers divided their work between them. One of them completed his portion on Samos and the other completed his at Ephesus, and yet the two portions fitted together so exactly that they appeared to be the work of a single artist. Such a result was only possible where a certain method of work was adopted. Egyptian artists had a rigorously defined system of lines and proportions which they applied unvaryingly. They would divide the human body into 21 portions and would execute each member of the body in accordance with that module. Diodorus called this method *kataskoeue*, which means "construction" or "fabrication".

Now Diodorus states that this method, very common in Egypt, "is not employed at all in Greece". The first Greek sculptors, like the creators of the Samian Apollo, had made use of the Egyptian method, but it is significant that their successors abandoned it. They abandoned not the measurements and canons, but the rigid systems. By doing this they not only introduced a different method, but a different conception of art.

The peoples of the ancient East, particularly the Egyptians, possessed an idea of perfect art and proportion, according to which they fixed their canons in architecture and sculpture.† They did not possess that kind of understanding of art which today we consider simpler and more natural. To judge by the surviving examples, they did not attach great importance to the representation of reality, to the expression of feelings or to giving pleasure to spectators. They linked their art with religion and the next world rather than with the world about them. They sought to embody in their works the essence of things rather than their appearance. They gave priority to schematized and geometric forms in preference to the organic forms of the world about them. The interpretation of the latter was left to the Greeks once they had broken with the East and set forth on an independent path which began a new era.

* Diodorus Siculus, I, 98.

† C. R. Lepsius, *Denkmäler aus Ägypten und Äthiopien* (1897). J. Lange, *Billedkunstens Fremstilling ar menneskeskikkelsen i den oeldste Periode*. W. Schäffer, *Von ägyptischer Kunst* (1930). E. Panofsky, "Die Entwicklung der Proportionslehre", *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, IV (1921), p. 188. E. Iversen, *Canon and Proportions in Egyptian Art* (London, 1955). E. C. Keilland, *Geometry in Egyptian Art* (London, 1955). K. Michałowski, *Kanon w architekturze egipskiej* (1956).

Greek aesthetics was first embodied in Greek art before it received any verbal expression. The first writers to give such verbal expression to it were the poets Homer and Hesiod, who wrote on function and value of poetry. It was only later, in the fourth, or possibly the fifth century B.C., that this subject was taken up by scholars, chiefly those of the Pythagorean school.

3. PERIODS IN AESTHETIC HISTORY. European aesthetics has evolved from the time of the ancient Greeks and is still evolving. This evolution has been continuous, but not without crises, halts, retreats and turning-points. One of the most violent turning-points occurred after the fall of the Roman Empire, and another during the Renaissance. These two turning-points, which were the turning-points in the history of European culture as a whole, enable us to divide its history into three periods: the ancient, the medieval and the modern. This is a well established chronological division that has stood the test of time.

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ANCIENT AESTHETICS

The history of ancient aesthetics, which forms the origins and foundation of European aesthetics, covers nearly a thousand years. It begins in the fifth century B.C. (or even perhaps in the sixth) with a period that was still evolving as late as the third century A.D.

Ancient aesthetics was largely the work of the Greeks. At first it was exclusively their achievement, but later it was shared with other nations: we have in view this change when we say that aesthetics was at first "Hellenic" and then "Hellenistic". Because of this we can divide ancient aesthetics into two periods, Hellenic and Hellenistic, with the division occurring in the third century B.C.

Hellenic aesthetics may in turn be subdivided into two consecutive phases: the archaic period and the classical period. The archaic period of Greek aesthetics covered the sixth and the beginning of the fifth century B.C., while the classical period lasted from the late fifth and throughout the fourth century. If we combine the two divisions we obtain three periods in ancient aesthetics: the archaic, the classical and the Hellenistic.

The archaic period was still far from possessing a full aesthetic theory. It only produced disconnected reflections and ideas which were mostly concerned with particulars and dealt only with poetry rather than with art and beauty in general. One can treat this period as the prehistory of ancient aesthetics, its history being covered by the two later periods. But, even thus reduced, this history spans eight centuries.

I. AESTHETICS OF THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

1. The Archaic Period

1. ETHNIC CONDITIONS. When the Greeks first began to reflect on aesthetics their culture was no longer young but already had a long and complex history. As long ago as 2000 B.C. culture and art (called Minoan after the legendary king Minos) were flourishing in Crete. Then between the years 1600 and 1260 B.C. a new and different culture was created by the "proto-Hellenes" who arrived in Greece from the North. Their new culture and art, which combined features of the southern Minoan culture with the characteristics of a northern culture, had its centre in Mycenae on the Peloponese and is therefore known as Mycenaean. Its most splendid period was around the year 1400 B.C., but already in the thirteenth and twelfth centuries it had begun to decline as a result of its inability to defend itself against tribes coming from the North. These were the Dorian tribes, which until then had occupied lands to the north of Greece, but which under pressure from the Illyrians, who were moving from the Danube basin, had begun to move south. They conquered and destroyed the rich city of Mycenae and established their own rule and culture.

The period of Greek history from the Dorian conquest in the twelfth century to the fifth is known as "archaic". It embraces two distinct phases. During the first life was still primitive, but in the second—from the seventh to the beginning of the fifth century B.C.—the foundations of Greek culture, including government, learning and art, were laid. In this second phase one can find the first traces of aesthetic thought.

After the Dorian conquest Greece was inhabited by various tribes who had lived there before the invasion and by the invaders themselves. The older tribes, particularly the Ionians, had partially removed themselves from the Greek peninsula and settled on the nearby islands and along the shores of Asia Minor. Thus Ionian and Dorian territories and states in Greece bordered on each other, but the characters and the destinies of the inhabitants were different. The differences between Dorians and Ionians were not only ethnic and geographical, but embraced economy, state organization and ideology. The Dorians maintained aristocratic governments while the Ionians established democratic rule. The former were led by soldiers, while among the latter merchants soon took the lead. The Dorians venerated tradition

while the Ionians were curious about novelties. Thus, at quite an early stage, the Greeks evolved two types of culture, the Dorian and the Ionian. The Ionians preserved more Mycenaean culture and also came under the influence of Cretan culture and the culture of the flourishing civilizations of the East in whose proximity they had settled. This duality between the Dorian and the Ionian culture dominated Greece for a considerable time and is discernible in her history, particularly in the history of her art and theory of art. The Greek search for constant norms in art and immutable laws governing beauty stemmed from the Dorian tradition, while their love of living reality and sensory perception stemmed from the Ionian tradition.

2. GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS. Greek culture evolved with astonishing speed and splendour. This evolution is at least partly explained by the favourable natural conditions of the territories which the Greeks inhabited. The geographical situation of the peninsula and the islands, which possessed a developed coastline with suitable harbours surrounded by calm seas, facilitated travel, commerce and the exploitations of the riches of other countries. The warm healthy climate and the fertile soil ensured that the energies of the people were not wholly used up in the struggle for existence and the satisfaction of elementary human needs, but could be devoted to learning, poetry and art. On the other hand, the fertility and the natural riches of the country being only just adequate for them, the Greeks could not allow themselves to indulge in luxury or to dissipate their energies. The successful development of the country was also due to the social and political organization, and in particular to its division into a multitude of small states with numerous cities, which evolved many competing centres of life, work and culture.

The regular and harmonious structure of the landscape of Greece may have exercised a special influence on Greek artistic culture. This may have contributed to the fact that the Greek eye became used to regularity and harmony which, perhaps for that reason, the Greeks systematically applied in their art.

3. SOCIAL CONDITIONS. Over the centuries the Greeks greatly expanded their territories. With colonies established from Asia to Gibraltar they dominated the Mediterranean. The Ionians founded the eastern colonies in Asia Minor, while the Dorians founded colonies in the West in Italy, or so-called Greater Greece. By acquiring control of the Mediterranean, the Greeks evolved from a maritime nation into a seafaring nation and this in turn had further consequences.

Until the seventh century Greece was mainly an agricultural country with only a limited amount of industry. There were many products which the Greeks did not manufacture because they were bought from the Phoenicians in the East. This situation changed when the Greeks acquired colonies. Their production rose with the demand of their produce in the colonies outside Greece. From the colonies their products found their way to other countries. The Greeks possessed iron and copper ore as well as clay, while their numerous herds ensured a supply of wool. All these materials were in demand and could be exported. The export of manufactured goods followed the export of raw materials. Favourable terms of trade

gave an impetus to industry, and industrial centres based on metallurgy, ceramics and weaving sprang up all over the country. Industry in turn stimulated trade and the Greeks themselves became middlemen and merchants. Trade centres were established in the Ionian colonies, particularly at Miletus, as well as in European Greece, particularly at Corinth, and later at Athens. Seafaring and trade not only increased the prosperity of the Greeks, but also their knowledge of the world and their aspirations to be no longer merely citizens of a small peninsula, but citizens of the world. Their great capacities, once they became linked with great aspirations, produced in a small nation artists and scientists of world stature.

The economic changes, most of which took place in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., gave rise to demographic, social and political changes. Once they became established as economic centres, the cities attracted not only townspeople, but (at the foot of the Acropolis) villagers as well. They were not large centres—even Corinth and Athens in the sixth century had only about 25,000 inhabitants each—but there were many of them and they were in rivalry with each other. When industry and trade led to the rise of a prosperous middle class, a struggle with the nobility followed. As a result, the patriarchal kingdoms supported by the nobility fell and were superseded first by timocracy and then democracy, which rested not only on the people and the middle class, but also on an enlightened and prosperous nobility capable of adapting itself to new conditions. In this way a whole nation could and did take part in the creation of Greek culture.

The system was democratic but based on slavery; there were numerous slaves in Greece. In certain centres there were in fact more slaves than free citizens. Slaves relieved the free population of physical toil, enabling it to pursue its interests, which were primarily political but also included science, literature and art.

4. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. Such, then, were the living conditions—moderately prosperous and affluent, partially industrialized, with a democratic system, though one based on slavery—which evolved in Greece during the seventh and sixth centuries. These conditions were responsible for the universally admired Greek culture. Centuries of travel and trade, of industrialization and evolution of democratic processes had to a great degree led Greece away from her early religious beliefs towards a mundane way of thinking in which the natural meant more than the supernatural. All the same, the Greeks had retained in their convictions and preferences, and, therefore, also in their arts and sciences, certain older elements—relics of other beliefs and relationships. In an enlightened, cosmopolitan community of industrialists and merchants there were regressive echoes of the dim past and an older way of thinking. This was particularly noticeable in religion and more so in the motherland of Greece than in the colonies removed from sacred sites and traditions.

Greek religion was not monolithic. The Olympian religion, which we know through Homer, Hesiod and the marble statues, was the product of new conditions and more enlightened times. It was a religion of lofty, happy, godlike supermen,

it was human and anthropomorphic, full of light and serenity, without magic or superstitions, daemonism or mysteries.

However, side by side with this religion, there survived in the beliefs of the people a gloomy religion of underground deities common to the primitive peoples of Greece, while from outside, mainly from the East, the mysterious, mystical and ecstatic religion of Orphians and the cult of Dionysius infiltrated. This was a barbarous and wild cult, finding its outlet in mysteries and bacchanalia and providing an escape from the world and a means of release. Thus, two streams appeared in Greek religion; one of them embodying a spirit of order, clarity and naturalness, the other a spirit of mystery. The former brought out particular characteristics of the Greeks which in succeeding centuries have been regarded as typically Greek.

The Olympian religion, humanist and adaptable, conquered Greek poetry and sculpture. For a long time Greek poets sang the praise of the Olympian gods and Greek sculptors carved figures of gods before turning to the portrayal of human beings. This religion permeated the art of the Greeks; and aesthetics permeated their religion.

Mystical religion is less noticeable in Greek art, at least as far as poetry and sculpture are concerned. Music, however, served that religion and was therefore interpreted in accordance with its spirit. But Greek mystical religion was chiefly revealed in philosophy, and through philosophy it influenced aesthetics. While one stream of early aesthetics was an expression of philosophical enlightenment, the other was an expression of mystico-religious philosophy. This was the first clash in the history of aesthetics.

Philosophy emerged in Greece in the sixth century B.C., but its range was at first limited. The early philosophers concerned themselves with theories of nature rather than with theories of beauty and art. The latter make their first appearance in the works of poets. Their observations and aesthetic generalizations were modest in scope, but are important in the history of aesthetics: they show how the Greeks reacted to beauty at a time when they had already produced splendid works of art, but had not yet laid down any scientific propositions concerning beauty and art.

2. The Origins of Poetry

(a) *CHOREIA*

1. THE TRIUNE *Choreia*. Information about the original character and organization of the arts in Greece is indirect and hypothetical, but it is certain that their character as well as the organization were different from those in later ages. In fact the Greeks began with only two arts: an expressive art and a constructive art,* but each had

* Nietzsche with great insight observed the duality in Greek art, but he saw this as two currents of art, which he named "Apollonian" and "Dionysian", while indeed primarily for the Greeks they were two different arts.

numerous constituents. The first consisted of an amalgam of poetry, music and dance, while the second included architecture, sculpture and painting.

Architecture was the basis of constructive art; sculpture and painting complemented architecture in the building of temples. The dance formed the core of expressive art; it was accompanied by words and musical sounds. The dance, combined with music and poetry into a whole, formed what the eminent philologist T. Zieliński has described as the "triune *choreia*". This art expressed man's feelings and impulses through words and gestures, melody and rhythm. The term *choreia* underlines the crucial role of the dance; it is derived from *choros*, a chorus, which originally signified a group dance.

2. KATHARSIS. A later writer Aristides Quintilian, who flourished at the turn of the second century A.D., says of the archaic Greek art that it was above all an expression of feelings: "Already in ancient times people realized that some cultivate song and music when they are happily disposed, when they experience pleasure and joy, others indulge in them while experiencing melancholy and anxiety, and yet others when in a divine rapture and ecstasy". In this art of *choreia* people expressed their feelings expecting that this would bring relief. Aristides says that at a lower cultural level only those who actually participated in the dancing and singing experienced relief and satisfaction, while afterwards, on a higher intellectual level, this was also achieved by the spectators and listeners.

At first dance fulfilled the role which was later to be taken over by the theatre and by music. Dance was then the most important of the arts and had the most powerful stimulus. The experiences which were to be later available to the spectators and listeners, on the lower level of evolution had been available only to the participants, i.e., the dancers and singers. Originally the purifying art was performed within a framework of mysteries and cults, and Aristides adds that "Dionysian and similar sacrifices were justified because the dances and singing which were there performed had a soothing effect".

Aristides' testimony is important for several reasons. It shows that the early Greek *choreia* had an expressive character, that it expressed feelings rather than shaped things, that it stood for action rather than contemplation. Aristides shows that this art consisted of dancing, singing and music, and also that it was linked with cults and rituals, particularly those associated with Dionysus. It strove to soothe and pacify feelings or, to use a contemporary expression, to purge souls. Such purification the Greeks called *katharsis*, a term they employed quite early in relation to art.

3. MIMESIS. Aristides called this early expressive art "imitation", *mimesis*. Like *katharsis*, this term and concept appeared early and had a long career in Greek aesthetics. But while later it signified the representation of reality through art (in drama, painting and sculpture in particular), at the dawn of Greek culture it was applied to the dance and signified something quite different; namely, the expression of feelings and the manifestation of experiences through movement, sound and

words.* This original meaning was later changed. In early Greece *mimesis* signified imitation, but in the sense in which this term is applied to acting and not to copying. It probably made its first appearance in connection with the Dionysian cult where it signified mimicry and the ritual dances of the priests. In the Delian hymns and in Pindar the word *mimesis* means a dance. The early dances, particularly the ritual ones, were expressive, not imitative. They expressed feelings rather than imitating them. Later *mimesis* came to mean the actor's art, later still it was applied to music and even later to poetry and sculpture, and it was at this point that its primary meaning shifted.

The expressive cult dances which aimed at inducing a release of feelings and at purification were not peculiar to Greek culture, but were known to many primitive peoples. The Greeks, however, retained them even when they had reached the zenith of their culture.† They continued to hold sway over the Greek people, not merely as ritual, but as spectacle for the masses. At first these dances formed the basic art of the Greeks, who at that time had still not developed music as a separate entity divorced from movement and gesture. Neither did they have separate poetry. "There never was any archaic Greek poetry", says a student‡ of the subject. By this he means that it did not exist as a distinct art expressed only through words without the accompaniment of movement and gestures. Only in time did independent poetry and independent music develop out of this "triune *choreia*", this single art composed of movement, gesture and expression.

The primitive theory of art was based upon this primitive expressive art. The early Greeks interpreted poetry and music expressively and emotionally. By being associated with cult and magic, *choreia* paved the way for the later acceptance of the theory that poetry is an enchantment. Furthermore, because of its expressiveness, *choreia* gave substance to the evolution of the first theory of the origins of art, which stated that it is a natural expression of man, that it is for him a necessity and a symptom of his nature. This expressive art also contributed to the evolution in the consciousness of the Greeks of a duality between poetry and music on the one hand and the plastic arts on the other. For a long time the Greeks failed to see any connection between poetry and such arts as sculpture, because poetry for them was an expression and it did not occur to them to interpret sculpture in terms of expressiveness.

(b) MUSIC

1. ASSOCIATION WITH CULTS. Music, on the other hand, assumed quite early a special place in the primitive triune Greek *choreia* and gradually took over the

* H. Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike*. Dissertationes Bernenses (Bern, 1954).

† A. Delatte, *Les conceptions de l'enthousiasme chez les philosophes présocratiques* (1934).

‡ T. Georgiades, *Der griechische Rhythmus* (1949): "Altgriechische Dichtung hat es nie gegeben".

function of the dominant expressive art, the voicing of feelings.* At the same time it retained its links with religious cults. Its various forms evolved from cults connected with several deities. The pean was sung in praise of Apollo, the dithyramb, sung by the choir during spring rites, praised Dionysius, and the prosodies were sung during processions. Music was a feature of the mysteries, the singer Orpheus being regarded as its originator, just as he was regarded as the originator of the mysteries themselves. Music maintained its association with religion, although it spread to secular ceremonies both public and private. It was regarded as a special gift of the gods. Special attributes, such as magic powers, were ascribed to it. It was believed that incantation (*aoide*) exercised a power over man, depriving him of the freedom to act. Orphic sects assumed that the frenzied music which they used did at least temporarily snatch the soul from the bounds of flesh.

2. ASSOCIATION WITH THE DANCE. Even after it had moved away from the triune *choreia*, Greek music retained its association with the dance. The singers of dithyrambs dressed as satyrs were also dancers. The Greek word *choreuein* had two meanings: group dancing and group singing. The "orchestra", that is, the place in the theatre reserved for the singers, took its name from *orchesis*, dance. The singer himself played the lyre, while the chorus combined accompaniment with dancing. Arm movements were no less significant than leg movements. As in the case of Greek music, its essential feature was rhythm. It was a dance that did not require technical mastery, that was without solo performances, without rapid turns, without embraces, without women, without eroticism. It was an expressive art just as much as music was.

3. ASSOCIATION WITH POETRY. Early Greek music was also closely associated with poetry. Just as there was no poetry which was not sung, so all music was vocal music, the instruments serving merely as an accompaniment. The dithyramb (sung by a chorus to the rhythm of a trochaic pentameter) was a poetic as well as a musical form. Archilochus and Simonides were both poets and musicians to an equal degree, and their poems were sung. In the tragedies of Aeschylus sung parts (*mele*) predominated over spoken parts (*metra*).

Originally songs were not even accompanied. According to Plutarch, it was Archilochus who in the seventh century introduced accompaniment. Music without song was a later development. Solo playing on the cithara was a novelty introduced at the Pythian contests in 588 B.C. and remained something of an exception. The Greeks did not develop instrumental music of the type we know today.

Greek instruments emitted soft sounds, not very resonant and not particularly effective. This is easily understood if we consider that for a long time the instruments were used only for accompaniment. They gave no scope for virtuosity and could not be used in more complex compositions. The Greek did not use metal or leather

* R. Westphal, *Geschichte der alten und mittelalterlichen Musik* (1864). F. A. Gevaërt, *Histoire de la musique de l'antiquité*, 2 vols. (1875-81). K. v. Jan, *Musici auctores Graeci* (1895). H. Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, Bd. I. J. Combarieu, *Histoire de la musique*, vol. I (1924).

instruments. Only the lyre and the cithara, an improved version of the lyre, were regarded by them as their own national instruments. They were so simple that anyone could play them.

From the East the Greeks borrowed wind instruments, particularly the *aulos*, which resembled the flute. Only this instrument was capable of replacing disconnected sounds with a continuous melody and, therefore, when it was first introduced it made a powerful impression on the ancient Greeks. It came to be regarded as an orgiastic stimulant and acquired a dominant position in the Dionysian cult comparable to that of the lyre in the cult of Apollo. It played the same role in drama and the dance as the lyre played in sacrifices, processions and general education. The Greeks regarded the two types of musical instruments as so different that they did not even include all instrumental music within one concept; Aristotle himself still treated "citharoetics" and "auletics" as quite distinct.

4. RHYTHM. Greek music, especially in early times, was simple. The accompaniment was always in unison and there was no question of having two parallel independent melodies. The Greeks did not know anything of polyphony. This simplicity was not, however, a symptom of primitivism and it arose not out of incompetence, but from certain theoretical assumptions, that is, from the theory of consonance (*symphonia*). The Greeks maintained that consonance between sounds is achieved when they intermingle to such an extent that they become indistinguishable, when, as they themselves put it, they fuse "like wine and honey". This, they thought, could only be achieved when the relationships between the sounds are the simplest possible.

In their music, rhythm took precedence over melody.* There was less melody in it than in modern music, but there was more rhythm. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus was later to write, "melodies please the ear, but it is rhythm which incites". This predominance of rhythm in Greek music is partly explained by the fact that music was linked with poetry and the dance.

5. NOMOS. The origins of Greek music go back to archaic times and were associated by the Greeks with Terpander, who lived in Sparta in the seventh century B.C. His achievement consisted of establishing musical norms. Thus the Greeks associated the origins of their music with the moment when its fixed norms were established. They used to describe Terpander's action as "the first fixing of norms", and the musical form which he fixed (on the basis of older liturgical chants) they called *nomos*, that is, law or order. Terpander's *nomos* was a monodic tune consisting of seven parts. Four times it achieved victory at Delphi and became in the end the obligatory form. It was an outline to which various texts were set. Certain modifications were later introduced by Thaletas the Cretan, who also flourished in Sparta and, according to Plutarch, was responsible for "the second fixing of norms". The norms changed, but neither then nor at any later time did Greek music cease to depend on them. They were most strictly observed during its golden age in the sixth

* H. Abert, "Die Stellung der Musik in der antiken Kultur", *Die Antike*, XII (1926), p. 136.

and fifth centuries B.C. The term *nomos* signified that in Greece the cultivation of music was regulated by compulsory norms. Even the late Greek musicologist Plutarch could write: "The highest and most proper characteristic in music is the maintenance of a suitable measure in all things".

Norms were the same for the composer and the performer. The modern distinction between the two was virtually unknown in antiquity. The composer merely supplied a skeleton of the work to be completed in detail by the performer. In a sense both were composers, but their freedom of composition was restricted by fixed norms.

(c) POETRY

1. EXCELLENCE. The great epic poetry of the Greeks probably dates from the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., the *Iliad* belonging to the eighth and the *Odyssey* to the seventh century. These were the first written poems in Europe, yet their excellence was unsurpassed. They had no antecedents since they were based on oral tradition, but in their final form were written down by poets of genius. Despite great resemblances, they were the work of two different men: the *Odyssey* embodied later attitudes and described a more southerly community. Just as in the following period Greece was to produce several tragedians of genius in succession, so now she produced two epic writers of genius of a calibre that was to remain unmatched for thousands of years to come. Thus at the time when Greece was taking the first steps in aesthetic thought, she already possessed great poetry.

This poetry soon became legendary. Its creators quickly lost their individuality and, as far as the Greeks were concerned, Homer became a synonym for a poet. He was revered as a demigod and his poetry came to be regarded as revelation. It was treated not only as art, but also as the highest wisdom, and this attitude left a mark on the Greeks' first thoughts about beauty and poetry.

The original aesthetic views of the Greeks derived from the character of Homeric poetry. Being full of myths and having divine as well as human heroes, this poetry not only consolidated but probably also to a large extent created Olympian religion. But in the divine and mythical world of Homeric poetry order reigned and everything happened in a rational and natural way. The gods were not miracle makers and their actions were subject to the forces of nature rather than of supernatural powers.

At the time when they began to think about beauty and art, the Greeks already possessed poetry of various kinds. Besides the Homeric poetry they had Hesiod's epic poetry, which praised not armed heroism, but the dignity of labour. They also had the lyric poetry of Archilochus and Anacreon, of Sappho and Pindar, and this lyric poetry was in its own way almost as perfect as Homer's epic. The excellence of this early poetry, which shows no trace of primitivism, naïveté or clumsiness, can only be explained by the fact that it had inherited a long tradition, that songs had lived and perfected themselves on the lips of the people before they were exploited by professional poets.

2. POETRY'S PUBLIC CHARACTER. This early and quite unexpected poetry of the Greeks preceded their prose. They then had no literary prose and even their philosophical treatises were in the form of poems. This poetry flourished in conjunction with music and had not completely broken away from the primitive *choreia*. Since it was associated with religion and cults, it was something more than art. Songs were a feature of processions, sacrifices and ritual. Even the great epinicia of Pindar, which praised achievements in sport, had a semi-religious atmosphere.

By being associated with ritual, Greek poetry possessed a public, social, communal and national character. Even the strict Spartans regarded it, together with music, singing and dancing, as an indispensable feature of ceremonies. They were much concerned with maintaining its artistic standard and invited the best artists to their country. Homer's epic, by its inclusion in the official programmes of state ceremonies in Sparta, Athens and other places, became the common property of the Greeks.

The cult and ceremonial poetry was intended for recitation and singing rather than individual reading. This applied to all poetry, and even the erotic lyric had more the character of a public banqueting song than a personal character. Anacreon's songs were performed at court while Sappho's songs were intended for banquets.

This communal and ritualistic poetry was an expression of public feelings and forces rather than of personal emotions. It was used as an instrument for social struggle, and some poets gave their talents to the service of democracy, while others chose to defend the past. The elegies of Solon were essentially political, Hesiod's poems were an expression of protest against social injustice, the lyrics of Alcaeus denounced tyrants, while those of Theognis voiced the complaints of nobles who had lost their status. Its ceremonious and public character, as well as its involvement in social problems, caused the poetry of the day to have a special appeal in the country.

Early Greek poetry was thus both committed to contemporary issues and had its links with the past. The links were there because of the inherited oral tradition, which had a long history. This inheritance of the past included myths, which became essential elements in poetry. These archaic, remote and mythical qualities were responsible for a gulf between the poetry and the people. This would transport the audience from mundane preoccupations into a realm of ideals. In so far as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were concerned, the distance was further emphasized by their language, which was artificial, or at least no longer in use in classical Greece. This distance further enhanced their sublimity and monumentality.

3. A DOCUMENT AND A MODEL. This poetry of the Greeks—archaic yet distinguished, based on folk literature, yet full of literary accomplishment, topical, yet endowed with a remote grandeur, lyrical yet public—provides historians of aesthetics with a document reflecting the artistic understanding of an age which had yet to formulate its ideas explicitly. It shows that the age was not given to pure poetry and art for art's sake. On the contrary, it regarded poetry as being associated with religion

and ritual, as a communal and social activity capable of serving social, political and daily needs, while, at the same time, withdrawn from the world and speaking to men from a remote vantage point.

The early Greek aestheticians took this early poetry as a model, which they steadfastly kept in view when they formulated the first ideas and definitions regarding beauty and art. Yet they drew on this model only in part, noting only its superficial characteristics and missing the fundamental ones. This was so even in the case of observations made by the practitioners of verse themselves, because they too were still incapable of stating explicitly all that they had expressed in their poetry. It seems as though it was easier in those ancient times to be a good poet than a good aesthetician.

4. THE COMMON MEANS OF EXPRESSION. "There was a time", says Plutarch, "when poems, songs, chants were the common means of expression". Tacitus and Varro thought likewise. This was how the ancients accounted for the origins of poetry, music and the dance: they regarded them as archetypal, natural forms in which men expressed their feelings. But there came a time when their function and status changed. Plutarch continues: "Later, when a change came over man's life, fate and nature, things that could be got rid of were abandoned. People removed gold ornaments from their hair, discarded soft purple raiment, cut off their long locks and took off their high-heeled shoes because they had rightly become accustomed to taking pride in simplicity and to discovering in simple things the greatest ornament, splendour and brilliance. Speech, too, had changed its character with prose distinguishing truth from myth".

Perhaps there was once a time when poetry, music and the dance had been "the common means of expression" and perhaps that was the time when the arts began. But with the rise of the *theory* of poetry, music and the dance and the beginnings of ancient aesthetics that period drew to an end.

3. The Origins of the Plastic Arts

In the Greek mind there was a close association between architecture, sculpture and painting but these were regarded as totally unconnected with poetry, music and the dance. Their function was different: the former produced objects for viewing while the latter expressed feelings, the former were contemplative, the latter expressive. They did, nevertheless, all belong to the same country and the same period; and despite the differences which separated them, the historian can see that they possessed common characteristics which Greek artists themselves failed to notice.

1. ARCHITECTURE. The period spanning the eighth to the sixth centuries B.C., during which the first great Greek poetry appeared, also produced great architecture, which, like the poetry of Homer, rapidly reached such excellence that 25 centuries later modern architects, by-passing all later forms, have returned to the

models of Greek architecture in its archaic period. Thus the Greeks who first began investigating art and beauty had before them both architecture and poetry of the first quality.

Greek architecture derived certain elements from other countries, especially from Egypt (for example, the column and the colonnade) and from the North (the ridged temple roof). Nevertheless, taken as a whole, it was an original and unified creation. At a certain point in time it broke away from foreign influence and continued to develop independently in accordance with its own logic and came to be regarded by the Greeks as their own achievement.

Thus the Greeks were easily convinced that their architecture was a free creation established by them unhampered even by technical limitations and the demands of the material they used, and that it was they who had guided the technical means rather than vice versa. They had evolved such techniques as were necessary for their aims. Above all they had mastered the technique of working stone. From wood and soft limestone which they had originally employed, they had advanced, as early as the sixth century B.C., to precious materials, such as marble. Quite early they were able to undertake projects of enormous size: the Temple of Hera on the island of Samos, dating from the end of the sixth century, was a colossal building with 135 columns.

Greek architecture was as associated with religion and cults as was poetry. The efforts of the early Greek architects were devoted entirely to the creation of temples. The living quarters of the period had a wholly utilitarian character without any artistic pretensions.

2. SCULPTURE. Although it already played a significant role in archaic Greece, sculpture had not yet attained the same excellence as architecture, and was neither as independent nor as definitive in its forms. Nevertheless, it revealed some characteristics of the Greek attitude toward art and beauty even more emphatically than architecture.

Sculpture, too, was associated with cults. It confined itself to statues of the gods and temple decorations such as pediments and metopes. Only later did the Greeks begin to sculpt human forms: at first only the dead but in time also the distinguished living, particularly the winners of wrestling contests and games. This association between sculpture and religion accounts for the fact that its character was more complex than might be expected of early art. The artist was representing the world not of men, but of the gods.

Greek worship was anthropomorphic, as was Greek sculpture. It served the gods but portrayed men, it did not portray nature and had no other forms beside the human; it was anthropocentric.

But although it portrayed men, it did not represent individuals. Early Greek statues appear to have had a general character, with no attempt made to represent personality, and there was as yet no portraiture. The early sculptors treated faces schematically and did not try to impart expression to them. Indeed, it was the limbs

rather than the faces which they endowed with expressiveness. In representing the human figure they were guided more by geometric invention than by observation of organic bodies and for this reason they altered, deformed and reduced the human figure to geometric patterns. They continued to arrange hair and draperies archaically in ornamental patterns with little regard for reality. In this they were not original: Greek artists were no more the inventors of geometric forms than of superhuman themes, for in both respects they were copying the East. Only when they came to repudiate these influences did the Greeks really find their own ground, but this did not occur until the classical period.

3. CONSCIOUS RESTRICTION. This early Greek art invariably relied on restricted themes and resorted to restricted forms. It laid no claim to variety, originality or novelty. It possessed a limited number of themes, types, iconographical motifs, patterns of composition, decorative forms and basic ideas and solutions. The only buildings were colonnaded temples with only minor variations allowed. Sculpture consisted of little more than the naked male figure and the draped female figure, always inflexibly symmetrical and presented frontally. Even such a simple motif as a head turned to one side or out of the perpendicular does not appear before the fifth century. But within these limits the artist had considerable freedom. Although they were subject to a set plan, temples could differ in the proportion of their parts, the number and height of columns and their disposition, the space between the columns and the weight of the entablature. Analogous variants were permissible in sculpture. But the stubborn rigidity of archaic art and its narrow limits also had positive results: by setting themselves the same task and employing the same scheme over and over again, artists were able to evolve the necessary techniques and mastery of form.

4. ARTISTIC CANONS. Greek artists treated their art as a matter of skill and obedience to general rules rather than of inspiration and imagination. They thus invested it with universal, impersonal and rational characteristics. Rationalism entered that concept of art which established itself in Greece and also became accepted by Greek philosophers. The rationality of art and its dependence on rules was the crucial point of the aesthetics implicit in archaic Greek art. These rules were absolute but were not based on *a priori* assumptions. They had been determined by structural needs, particularly in architecture. The forms of the columns and entablature of any temple, its triglyphs and metopes were dictated by statics and the nature of the building materials.

Despite its universality and rationality, Greek plastic art had a number of variants. It had two styles: the Doric and the Ionic. The Ionic displayed more freedom and imagination, while the Doric was more rigorous and subject to stricter rules. The two styles also differed in their proportions, those used in Ionic art being slimmer than those in Doric art. Both styles evolved simultaneously, but the Doric, which reached perfection earlier, became the characteristic form of the archaic period.

A famous nineteenth century architect said* that the sense of light gave the Greeks joys unknown to us. One may assume that they felt the harmony of shapes, as musically oriented people feel the harmony of sounds, that they had "perfect sight".

The Greeks saw isolated, specific objects rather than combinations of objects. Evidence of this may be observed in their art: the early group figures in the pediments of their temples are collections of separate statues.

At the close of the archaic period the Greeks already possessed a great art but had not produced any theories of art, or at least none that has come down to us in writing. The sciences of the period were concerned exclusively with nature, not with works of man, and therefore did not include aesthetics. Nevertheless, the Greeks possessed their own conception of beauty and art, which they did not record but which we can reconstruct from their artistic practice.

4. The Common Aesthetic Assumptions of the Greeks

The Greeks had to devise a language in which to think and talk about the art they created.† Some of their commonly employed concepts had been formed even before the philosophers came on the scene. They were adopted, at least in part, by the philosophers, who enlarged and transformed them. Yet they were very different from those which after centuries of learned discussion are in common use today. Even where the words employed were the same, their meaning was different.

1. THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY. First of all, the word *kalon*, which the Greeks used and which we translate as "beauty", had a different meaning from that which this word commonly has today. It signified everything that pleases, attracts and arouses admiration. In other words, its range was wider than it is now. While it included that which pleases the eye and the ear, that which pleases by virtue of its shape, it also embraced a multitude of other things which please in different ways and for different reasons. It meant sights and sounds but also a quality of human mind and character in which we today see a value of a different order and which we only call "beautiful" with the realization that the word is being used metaphorically. The famous pronouncement of the Delphic oracle, "The most just is the most beautiful", demonstrates how the Greeks understood beauty. Out of this wide and general concept of beauty commonly used by the Greeks there emerged, but only gradually, the narrower, more specific concept of aesthetic beauty.

The Greeks first gave this narrower concept other names. Poets wrote about "charm", which "gives joy to mortals", hymns spoke of the "harmony" (*harmonia*)

* E. E. Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire d'architecture*: "Nous pouvons bien croire que les Grecs étaient capables de tout en fait d'art, qu'ils éprouvaient par le sens de la vue des jouissances que nous sommes trop grossiers pour jamais connaître."

† W. Tatarkiewicz, "Art and Poetry", *Studia Philosophica*, II (Lwów, 1939).

of the cosmos, sculptors referred to "symmetry" (*symmetria*), i.e., commensurateness or appropriate measure (from *syn*—together, and *metron*—measure), orators talked about eurhythmy (*eurhythmia*) that is, proper rhythm (from *eu*—well, and *rhythmos*—rhythm) and good proportion. But these terms did not become general until a later, more mature epoch. The mark of the Pythagorean philosophers is visible in such terms as harmony, symmetry and eurhythmy.

2. THE CONCEPT OF ART. The Greeks also gave a wider significance to the term *technē*,* which we translate as "art". For them it meant all skilful production and included the labours of carpenters and weavers as well as architects. They applied the term to every craft created by man (as opposed to nature) so long as it was productive (and not cognitive), relied on skill (rather than inspiration), and was consciously guided by general rules (and not just routine). They were convinced that in art, skill mattered most and for that reason held art (including the art of the carpenter and the weaver) to be a mental activity. They laid stress on the knowledge which art entails and valued it primarily on account of that knowledge.

Such a concept of art included the characteristics common not only to architecture, painting and sculpture, but also to carpentry and weaving. The Greeks did not possess a term to cover exclusively the fine arts, that is, architecture, painting and sculpture. Their wide concept of art (which we today would perhaps term "skill") survived to the end of antiquity and had a long career in European languages (which, when stressing the special features of painting or architecture, could not call them simply arts, but had to qualify them as "fine" arts). It was not until the nineteenth century that attempts were made to drop the descriptive adjective and the term "art" came to be regarded as synonymous with "fine arts". The evolution of the concept of art was similar to the evolution of the concept of beauty: it was first wider and was only gradually narrowed down to a specifically aesthetic concept.

3. DIVISION OF THE ARTS. As far as the Greeks were concerned, the arts which came later to be called fine arts did not even constitute a distinct group†. They did not divide art into fine arts and crafts. They thought that all art could be regarded as fine arts. They took it for granted that a craftsman (*demiourgos*) in any art could achieve perfection and become a master (*architekton*). The Greek attitude toward those who engaged in the arts was complex. They were valued for the knowledge they possessed, but at the same time they were despised for the fact that their work was on the same level as that of a skilled labourer and also provided a means of livelihood. The fact that *knowledge* was required for them caused the Greeks to ascribe to skills and crafts more value than we would, while the *toil* involved caused them to underrate art. This attitude had already developed in prephilosophical times, but the philosophers accepted and maintained it.

* R. Schaerer, *Ἐπιστήμη τέχνη, étude sur les notions de connaissance et d'art d'Homère à Platon* (Mâcon, 1930).

† W. Tatarkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–16; P. O. Kristeller, *op. cit.*, pp. 498–506.

For the Greeks the most natural division of the arts was into those that were free and those that were servile, according to whether they demanded physical exertion or not. The free arts, which did not involve toil, were much more highly esteemed. What we term "fine" arts they categorized partly as free (as, for example, music) and partly as servile (as, for example, architecture and sculpture). Painting at first was considered servile; much later it was elevated to the higher category.

While the Greeks treated "art" in general very broadly, they had a very narrow conception of each particular art. As we have already remarked, they regarded "auletics" (the art of flute-playing) as separate from "citharoetics" (the art of playing the cithara) and only rarely did they combine the two under the concept of music. Nor did they place in the same class sculpture carved in stone and sculpture cast in bronze. Whenever different materials, tools and methods were used, or the work was executed by different types of people, two works of art were, as far as the Greeks were concerned, products of two different arts. In a similar way tragedy and comedy, epic and dithyramb were regarded as distinct types of creative activity and were only occasionally combined under the common concept of poetry. Such concepts as music or sculpture were used infrequently. More common was the much more general concept of art as a whole or such extremely specialized concepts as auletics, citharoetics, stone carving and bronze casting. Paradoxically, the Greeks created great sculpture and poetry, but in their conceptual vocabulary they did not possess generic terms covering these activities.

Greek vocabulary may lead us astray, because the same terms (such as poetry, music, architecture) were used then as now, but they meant something different to the Greeks centuries ago. *Poiesis* (deriving from *poiein*—to make) originally signified any type of production, and *poietes* meant any kind of producer, not only the producer of poems. The narrowing of the term came later. *Mousike* (derived from "Muses") signified every activity patronized by the Muses and not just the art of sound. The term *mousikos* was applied to every educated man. *Architekton* meant "senior foreman" and *architektonike* meant "major art" in a general sense. Only in time did these terms signifying "production", "education", and "major art" become narrowed down and begin to mean poetry, music and architecture respectively.

Greek ideas about art were formed in relation to the arts which the Greeks actually cultivated and these, particularly in the early stages, were different from ours. They had no poetry designed for reading; only verse for speaking, or rather for singing. They had vocal music but no purely instrumental music. Some of the arts which are today quite separate were practised by the Greeks in combination and, therefore, were treated as one art or at least as a group of related arts. It was thus with the theatre, music, and the dance. Because tragedy was staged together with songs and dances, it was, within the Greek system of ideas, closer to music and the dance than to (epic) poetry. The term "music", even when it was narrowed down to mean the art of sound, still included the dance. This gave rise to ideas which

strike us as strange, as for instance, that music is superior to poetry because it acts on two senses (sound and sight), while poetry acts on one only (sound).

4. THE CONCEPT OF POETRY. While the Greek conception of art was broader, on the whole, than it is today, it was narrower in one important respect, namely in the case of poetry. The Greeks did not class poetry as art, because it did not fit the concept of art as material production based on skill and rules. Poetry they regarded as the product not of skill but of inspiration. In the plastic arts skill blinded them to the presence of inspiration while in poetry inspiration blinded them to the presence of skill, and for that reason they could see nothing in common between sculpture and poetry.

Because they could not see a relationship between poetry and the arts, they attempted to find for it a relationship with soothsaying. They placed sculptors among craftsmen, and poets among soothsayers. In their opinion, a sculptor was able to fulfil his tasks thanks to a skill (inherited from his ancestors) while a poet could do so thanks to inspiration (granted by heavenly powers). Art signified for them a production which could be learnt, and poetry that which could not. Poetry, thanks to divine intervention, gives knowledge of the highest order; it leads the soul, it educates men, it is capable of making them better. Art, on the other hand, does something quite different: it produces useful and sometimes perfect objects. It took a long time for the Greeks to realize that everything which they attributed to poetry lies within the aims and possibilities of the arts, for they too are subject to inspiration, they too guide the soul and all this shows how much in common there is between poetry and the arts.

While the Greeks of the early period failed to notice characteristics common to poetry and the plastic arts and could not find a unifying higher principle, they not only perceived poetry's relation to music, but exaggerated it so much that they treated the two as one and the same creative sphere. The explanation of this lies in the fact that they apprehended poetry acoustically and performed it simultaneously with music. Their poetry was sung and their music was vocal. Moreover, they noted that both led to a state of exultation. This served to link the two and to contrast them with the plastic arts. Sometimes they even apprehended music not as a separate art, but as an element of poetry and vice versa.

The role of the Muses was to express mythologically the ideas of the period. There were nine of them. Thalia represented comedy, Melpomene tragedy, Erato elegy, Polyhymnia lyric (sacred song?), Calliope oratory and heroic poetry, Euterpe music, Terpsichore the dance, Clio history, and Urania astronomy. There are three characteristic features of this group of nine: 1. the absence of a Muse presiding over the whole range of poetry: lyric, elegy, comedy and tragedy are not covered by a single concept since each of these literary categories has its own Muse; 2. the literary genres are related to music and the dance since these likewise are presided over by the Muses; 3. they are not, however, related to the visual arts, which have no Muses of their own. The Greeks considered poetry above the visual arts. They