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## Imitation and its Discontents

With only a few qualifications, classical scholars now generally accept the view that the word *mimesis* derives ultimately from a theatrical, dramaturgical or musical context.<sup>1</sup> In the *Rhesus*, Dolon says he will put on a wolfskin and imitate the fourfooted gait of a wolf: »tetrapoun mimesomai lukou keleuthon« (207-208); while the Edôni in Aeschylus' lost play of that name speak in voices like bullroarers, imitating the sound of bulls: »taurophthonggoi (...) mimoi«. »The instrument itself is not seen, it is only heard ›pothen ek aphanous«, from some unseen place or another.<sup>2</sup> One cannot actually see what is imitated, nor even, in this case, the instrument of imitation. The *mimos* is an actor, or a theatrical performance; pantomime, as we know, is frivolous. From the beginning imitation is false. Instead of conveying reality directly, it is predicated on the interposition of a screen between reality and the effects of representation. Since reality is hidden, we can never tell what is true about imitation. We can never discover the truth in painting: nor, for that matter, in any other imitative form, whether in poetry, rhetoric, or music.

In the case of the bullroarer, as Gerald Else pointed out, »its puny appearance is out of all proportion to its dreadful sound«. <sup>3</sup> This is why whenever it is used for a ritual purpose, »the irrefragable law is that *it must not be seen*«<sup>4</sup> – as in Australia and in the early Dionysiac rites. In ethnology just as in the history of art, the power of imitation is in direct proportion to the degree of its success in suppressing its own means.

But yet another aspect of imitation arises from its theatrical origins. The word *mimos* was hardly ever used by the 5th-century tragedians because it was the name of a Sicilian dramatic genre, and of one which gave an unvarnished picture of life, usually low life.<sup>5</sup> This, at least, is one of the prime reasons for the infrequency of the word in classical tragic literature, but it is this context that provides us with a clue to one of the sources of the recurrent view that imitation, reality, and vulgar and low forms go together. The tragedians avoided the word because they, like other Athenians, must have felt it to be both foreign and vulgar.

Instances of the connection between imitation and vulgarity are abundant in the history of art; and not infrequently they occur in a dramaturgical context. One of the most famous classicist critiques of Rembrandt appears in a prescriptive book about the use and misuse of the theatre, namely Andries Pels' *Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels* of 1681. The

closer Rembrandt came to reality (as we would call it) and low-life (as it was then understood), the worse, the more heretical, he was:

»Whenever he painted a naked woman, as sometimes happened,  
He chose no Greek Venus as his model;  
But rather a washerwoman, or peat-treader from a barn,  
Calling his deviance the imitation of nature,  
And everything else idle ornament. Flabby breasts,  
Gnarled hands, even the imprint of laces,  
Of corsets on the stomach, of garters on the legs  
All had to be imitated, if nature was to receive her due.«<sup>6</sup>

Rembrandt painted beggars and pissing women, and did not follow the rules of art.<sup>7</sup> Pels' passage also happens to recall the fact that one of the great shibboleths of imitation, throughout the history of Western Art, has been the female nude.

But what are the other sources of this view of the connection between imitation and reality? Despite the immense literature that now exists on the subject of mimesis, I do not think that the early history of the theoretical connection between imitation and reality, at least in the way it is thought about in the West, has yet been fully described.

To cite the tenth book of Plato's *Republic* here would be too obvious. Instead, a longish passage in the *Sophist* may be used in order to illuminate the three other terms on which the rest of this discussion will be based: *eidolon*, *eikon*, and *phantasia*. In *Sophist* 235b-236c Plato distinguishes between the two forms of what he sometimes calls the art of imitation, *mimetike*, and sometimes image-making, *eidolopoiike*. The identification of mimesis with the making of idols is crucial. Within this art of imitation or the making of *eidola* one has to distinguish between *phantastike*, which sacrifices the real proportions of things to the interests of optical realism, and *eikastike*, the making not of idols but of icons, which, as Plato says, conforms exactly to the proportions and colours of the original in every respect.<sup>8</sup> The imitative artist »leaves the truth to take care of itself, and puts into the images (*eidolois* [!]) he makes, not the real proportions of things, but those that will appear beautiful.«<sup>9</sup> In other words, the artist uses *phantasia* to make *eidola*, images that are beautiful but not true. The true copies of things are the *eikones* produced by the higher activity of *eikastike*.

In a fundamental article that should be required reading for all art historians, Suzanne Said has carefully analyzed the importance of this distinction between »icons« and »idols« in Greek writing.<sup>10</sup> Idols, *eidola*, only represent the outward, visible appearance of things, whereas icons represent their essence. *Eidola* address themselves to sight alone; icons address the intelligence. And so – in later imperial and Byzantine views, for example – the icon of the emperor represents the essential characteristics of the emperor.<sup>11</sup> In this sense the icon is something paradigmatic, or symbolic, or even rhetorical. It conveys the true essentiality of things, unlike the idol, which has nothing to do with true essence, and which is what the representational arts make. Man is an icon of God not because he reproduces the physical appearance of God, but because he possesses a moral or physical quality which God has in the highest degree. This view is to be found in Homer as much as in Plotinus.<sup>12</sup>

It is no great step from these positions to the more overtly Neoplatonic one that the icon pertains to the abstract and to the purely intellectual. Human intelligence itself, *nous*, is an icon of the divine image. It is, as Philo and Clement of Alexandria would put it, an *eikon eikonos*.<sup>13</sup> The idol, on the other hand, shows outward appearances, *phantasmata*,<sup>14</sup> or as we would now popularly say, *simulacra*. It is fleeting and deceptive, precisely because it can never capture the solid truth of things.<sup>15</sup> In all these cases, then, fantasy is again engaged in the service of art in order to create *eidola*, not icons. However much fantasy may play a role in the mimetic aspects of poetry and the visual arts,<sup>16</sup> we habitually try to wrest this fantasy onto a higher plane. We make art pertain to something that is purely intellectual, that does not pertain to the sensual and to the deceptive and distracting outward appearances of things. Even representation is taken as something *a priori*, in a Kantian way, there is still a fundamental tension at the core of the notion of mimesis. On the one hand it is supposed to copy reality; on the other hand, it can never succeed in doing so, since reality is essence, and all that we can do is to make copies of copies. Art can never produce true icons, only idols; and it is these, of course, not icons, that provoke the rejection of mimesis in book X of Plato's *Republic*.

I have rehearsed these Platonic views because I do not believe that modern writers on art and art history have taken sufficient account of the implications of the way in which imitation, through and through, is invested with cultural condescension and high snobbishness. It has become almost impossible to acknowledge the fundamental denigration of the imitative aspects of art in Western culture because it lies too close to the bone. Imitation is suspect, and so, too, is fantasy, even though fantasy, especially in the Renaissance, comes to be associated with the positive term of *invenzione*. The idea is that good art is necessarily based on good *invenzione*.<sup>17</sup> While for Plato all mimesis is predicated on a systematic engagement of *phantasmata*, for Apollonios of Tyana (at least as recorded by Philostratus), fantasy is the precise opposite of mimesis. Mimesis, he said in the account handed down by Philostratus, shows what can be seen, while fantasy (which is «wiser») shows what cannot be seen.<sup>18</sup> Here may be discerned one of the roots of the recurrent desire to wrest art to the higher plane of the intellect. It is the opposite of Calvin's view that artists should only show what the eyes are capable of seeing, «quorum sunt capaces oculi».<sup>19</sup> No wonder the churches are bare of pictures in 17th-century Holland! It is as if Calvin realized the full consequence of admitting that the eyes are the channel to the senses, and not to the intellect. One can destroy the idols that are art, but one cannot be an iconoclast, because icons represent the essence of things: the *divine* essence of things, the original that lies at the source of every copy.

If the roots of this fundamental Western attitude are articulated in Plato, their fullest formulation is to be found in the Neoplatonists. But it will perhaps have been noticed that despite the abundance of terms which we still use, the fourth chief Western term of derogation, «reality», seems to be absent, especially from the Platonic views. There is no real equivalent for it in Plato's work. The *to on* of the *Republic* and the *ta onta* of the *Sophist*, the *Cratylus*, and the *Euthydemus*, mean something rather different from what we generally understand by the reality copied by artists. The source of the modern conception, not surprisingly, is specifically Neoplatonic.

In the second *Ennead*, to cite a basic passage, Plotinus argues that there are two types of spectators of a picture (that is, *of the same picture*).<sup>20</sup> At last theory attempts – though

it does not wholly succeed – to make the crucial turn from the ontological and the metaphysical to the psychological. One type of spectator looks only with the eyes and sees nothing in the representation but an *eidolon*; the other type recognizes in representation the sensual presentation of that which is situated in the world of the intellect.<sup>21</sup> In other words, in not seeing with the eyes of the body, we see the representation as an *icon*.

In our view of art, we are all Neoplatonists now – as Panofsky would have been happy to agree.<sup>22</sup> We are all Neoplatonists because we seem incapable of allowing art to pertain solely to the world of sensual appearance, to be solely imitative of external reality. It must somehow pertain, we feel, to the higher world of *nous*, of intelligence.<sup>23</sup> And if it cannot do that, then it must be the first and necessary stage of ascent. We, being flawed bodies, need corporeal images to hold on to, in order to ascend to the divine essence, the origin of all copies, the beauty that transcends body. *At best* imitation and outward reality are merely preliminary stages in this ascent. Imitation can only be redeemed if art is taken to pertain to be more than just the forms of things; and if the forms of things are all that art consists of, then *they* must in turn partake of some kind of higher reality, to a world of beauty that is not corporeal but intellectual.<sup>24</sup> Hegel's *Aesthetics* puts the degradation of imitation even more clearly, when it implies that painting cannot be altogether mimetic if it is to work as art. »But painting does not afford (as sculpture does) the fully accomplished coalescence of spirit and body as its fundamental type, but instead only the outward appearance of the self-concentrated inner life.«<sup>25</sup> This is followed shortly afterward by the explicit statement that »natural objects as such in their purely objective form should not be the real subject-matter of painting, because if they were, painting would become mere imitation.«<sup>26</sup> So much for mimesis, so much for resemblance. In such ways mimesis becomes not the handmaiden of art, but its enemy. The category of art owes its institution and its survival not to imitation but to the suspicion of imitation.

It is not surprising that Panofsky's longest treatment of the subject of *mimesis* should have occurred in the fundamental early work of his entitled *Idea. Eine Begriffsgeschichte der älteren Kunsttheorie* (1924), or that in its original forward he should have acknowledged the closeness of its connection with Ernst Cassirer's work entitled *Eidos und Eidolon. Das Problem des Schönen und der Kunst in Platons Dialogen* (1922-23) (as if for anyone of these Neoplatonic Kantians the beautiful could have been anything else but *idea*).<sup>27</sup> Repeatedly in the notes of *Idea*, Panofsky returns to a formulation of Plotinus that is directly opposed to the notion of intelligence as the *eikon eikonos*. This is Plotinus' own statement, as reported by Porphyry, of his resistance to having a portrait made of himself on the grounds that it could be nothing more than an *eidolon eidolou*.<sup>28</sup> One needs to seek no further for the roots of the recurrent denigration of the status of the portrait painter. All such a painter can do is to represent the outward appearances of what is, after all, itself only the flawed copy of something which exists only as *idea*.

Panofsky chose a passage in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* as a condensed summary of the whole of Neoplatonic aesthetics. In it is to be found a clear articulation of the problematic relationship between mimesis and reality discussed in this article. Either artistic representation is mimetic and chooses for its object a *gegonos*, a created thing (i. e. something empirically real), in which case it cannot be beautiful because the model is already marred by countless faults; or art is heurctic, and chooses a *noeton*, something per-

taining to the world of the intellect, something in fact *nonexistent*, as its model.<sup>29</sup> The distinction is preserved in Apollonius of Tyana's opposition between *mimesis*, which reproduces that which is seen, and *phantasia*, which reproduces that which is not.<sup>30</sup> Only in this case can art be beautiful, or even art at all (since art, as we know, aspires to the ideal beautiful, or the *beau idéal*, as it was later to be put in a somewhat different sense). Plotinus rejected portraiture because it proceeded on the basis of reproducing a *gegonos*, and was therefore, as Panofsky noted, purely mimetic by definition.<sup>31</sup>

But it would be wrong to think of all this as simply Neoplatonic. It is not. It is the way we think about the category of art. J. J. Pollitt, the first-rate anthologizer and judge of ancient aesthetic criticism, was both right and wrong when he attacked Butcher, the editor of Aristotle's *Poetics*, for finding in ancient thought what a modern critic wanted to find there, rather than what was actually there.<sup>32</sup> In suggesting that in the *Poetics* Aristotle felt that the arts should strive to represent *to beltion*, even when what is represented did not really exist, Butcher maintained that the essence of the theory was that the goal of one who practices a «fine art» is to «produce not a copy of reality, but a *beltion*, a higher reality».<sup>33</sup> Pollitt was right because this is indeed the modern view; but he was wrong because it is also the ancient view, perhaps not Aristotelian, perhaps not even directly Platonic, but certainly Neoplatonic. We are all irredeemably Neoplatonist in our commitment to the view not only that art is more than imitation, but that the two categories are in fact incompatible.

We have come, in short, to see mimesis as the enemy of art. Even at our most catholic, we cannot quite bring ourselves to see realism as art. And realism in painting, as everyone knows, is the consequence of good mimesis. For us, painting as an art (my use of the phrase is pointed) must pertain to the world of mind and spirit, not to the outward forms of things. Painting is deceitful even at its most realistic. «Verum et pictura fallax est», said Pliny in his chapter on the naturalistic representation of plants.<sup>34</sup> No wonder that the vast body of natural historical painting and drawing – the most mimetic and the most accurate of all possible forms of visual representation – has been systematically excluded from what we call the history of art, and hardly ever features in it (except lately, in those cases where the independent still-life has been accorded something of the status of other forms of easel painting). It is on the basis of images such as the extraordinary botanical and zoological drawings of the late 16th and early 17th centuries (and all the careful works of figures like Maria Sybilla Merian and the host of female flower draughtsmen of the 18th and 19th centuries) that Pliny would have said that painting is fundamentally deceitful. The point for Pliny and everyone else is that painting cannot convey the essence and the reality of plants, only their transient qualities. It is incapable, for example, of reproducing the essential mutability of their colours. Not surprisingly, in discussing this passage from Pliny, Ernst Gombrich once felt obliged to invoke Linnaeus. A secure taxonomy, Gombrich maintained, could only be achieved on the basis of the selection of criteria that could be unambiguously described.<sup>35</sup> I am not certain that modern botanists would unequivocally accept this; but the persistence of the Neoplatonic view is clear. However naturalistic the representation, however successfully mimetic, it can never elicit certainty. Certainty can be derived from outward form only as a result of penetrating to the essence of things; and this must be established by a purely intellectual act. If art is ever to be solely heurctic, then it has to be based on the *noeton* alone. But it cannot, and so it is doomed to rely, to a greater or lesser extent,

on the deceptions of *mimesis*, mitigated, where possible by *phantasia*.<sup>36</sup> No wonder that Leonardo insisted on locating *fantasia* and its semantic cognate *immaginazione* in the second ventricle of the brain, where it could operate in close conjunction with *invenzione* and the rational intellect.<sup>37</sup> The only other solution, the only one open to those of us less sure about physiological processes, is to forget the categorial assumptions entailed by art. But the problem that stands in the way of doing so is not simply that entailed by the weight of tradition. It is also – and fully – psychological.

As When Narcissus looked at himself in the pool, in that glassy surface which so perfectly reflected himself, he believed he was looking at someone else.<sup>38</sup> His own reflection he thought to be a reflection of the most beautiful other. The pool of Narcissus, like any mirror, offers the perfect example of the mimetic image. That image deceives us for a complicated reason: it is not of anyone else – it is of ourselves. Although every conventionalist, from Ernst Gombrich to Nelson Goodman, has reminded us, all imitation is at some level symbolic; but they have all stopped short of analyzing another impulse at work here, namely the drive to make the image imitative. It is we beholders who compel the image in the direction of resemblance. And even as we want it to resemble something else, the closer it appears to resemble ourselves the better. We fall in love not with the other, but with ourselves. The more other, the more we desire to make it like ourselves. Almost any picture, as Nelson Goodman once said, may represent almost anything,<sup>39</sup> but he could as well have said that any image can be an image of something else. He was making a point about convention and inculcation; I am making one about projection. We project ourselves not just onto the image, but into it. The image is of someone else; we even *think* it to be of someone else; but what we see in it is ourselves. We think it real; it is only reflection. This is the way with all realism: to accept it as essence is to suffer the loss of identity that is tantamount to death. As with Narcissus, the image could not be more faithful; but in its very faithfulness it fundamentally deceives us. The point of the myth of Narcissus is not just that he makes the mistake of confusing the image with the real, and of wishing to possess that which is nothing but a shade, a reflection, and an illusion. It is that he makes the even more fundamental error of not recognizing that what he sees is himself. Until it is too late. The case of Narcissus is the prime illustration of the fact that we put into images what we want from them; we make them real when they are only shades and illusions, imitations of nature, not nature herself.

And so we have to protect ourselves, by insisting on the deceits of *mimesis*, and by appealing to the intellect. Thus – and accordingly – we invent the idea of art. When we do *this*, we think we have removed the dangers of projection by attenuating the possibility of identification: all images are copies, and no copy can be essence. The trouble with art is prefigured by the myth of Narcissus. In it all the strands of imitation, reality, and fantasy come together. The portrait, after all, is but a fleeting *eidolon*, itself only capable of representing the outward forms of things. As in its most primitive sense, the idol is a trap into which we cannot help falling, a lure that leads us astray. We need fantasy to redeem *mimesis* from its status as pure reflection; but it can never succeed in doing so entirely. It may start off as redemptive, but as we come to know, it soon produces those *phantasmata* that are just as misleading, in the end, as the idols themselves, just as insecure, and at least as

illusory. This is the ultimate double-bind of the Narcissus myth: imagination can never quit imitation. Both are equally perilous, because projection never ceases to force imagination in the direction of mimesis. The only way out of *this* trap is by liberating ourselves of the demands of the category of art: or at least by depriving it of its drive to pure intellect. Only thus can mimesis be allowed its due, both as play and as adequately heuristic, in such a way that it may indeed choose as its model something wholly in the mind.

Much of all this, I am aware, will seem an unmitigatedly pre-Kantian view of things. To a large extent it is. But to cling to the category of art is to make more trouble for mimesis than is strictly necessary. The Kantian revision of the old views of representation, and the post-Nietzschean disintegration of the possibility of models for representation at all (and of representational accuracy as a criterion for truth), poses less of threat to imitation than has generally been taken to be the case. It will perhaps have been noticed that nothing has been said about truth at all. Nor would I have wished, in a discussion of mimesis, to do so. James' notion that truth has to do with what is better for us to believe, rather than in the accurate representation of reality, may seem to be consistent with the view of projection espoused here; but the first requirement of any analysis of mimesis must be to go further yet, and to sever it as firmly as possible from the idea of truth. The second is to forgo any thought of the possibility of an epistemology of imitation.

## Notes

Since the literature on the subject of mimesis – and related concepts such as *fantasia* is now so vast (especially on texts such as the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*), I have kept the following notes to a minimum. They are intended as no more than summary guide to some of the key texts and to a few of the secondary sources I have found useful. In the literature on the subject, a number of classical texts are often referred to but hardly ever given; in these cases I have thought it useful to provide them.

- 1 Cf., for example, Herman Koller, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* (Ph. D. thesis, ser. 1., fasc. 5), Bern 1954; Gerald F. Else, *Imitation in the Fifth Century*, in: *Classical Philology*, vol. 53, no. 2, 1958, pp. 73-90; G. Sörbom, *Mimesis and Art. Studies in the Origin and Early Development of an Aesthetic Vocabulary*, Uppsala 1966; and the very useful pages in J. J. Pollitt, *The Ancient View of Greek Art. Criticism, History and Terminology*, New Haven/London 1974, pp. 37-40 and pp. 97-99.
- 2 August Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, 2nd ed., Leipzig 1889, *Aeschylus*, Frag. 57.
- 3 G. F. Else, op. cit. [note 1], p. 75.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid., p. 76.
- 6 Andries Pels, *Gebruik en misbruik des tooneels*, Amsterdam 1681, pp. 35-36.
- 7 Cf. in particular Jan Emmens, *Rembrandt en de Regels van der Kunst* (Verzameld Werk II), Amsterdam 1979; but also Seymour Slive, *Rembrandt and His Critics*, The Hague 1953.
- 8 «Μίαν μὲν τὴν εἰκαστικὴν ὄρων ἐν αὐτῇ [i. e. μιμητικῇ] τέχνῃ, ἔστι δ' αὐτῇ μάλιστα, ὁπόταν κατὰ τὰς τοῦ παραδείγματος συμμετρίας τις ἐν μήκει καὶ πλάτει καὶ βάθει, καὶ πρὸς τοῦτοις ἐπι χρώματα ἀποδιδούς τὰ προσήκοντα ἐκάστοις, τῆς τοῦ μιμήματος γενεσιν ἀπεργάζεται (...) Τὴν δὴ φάντασμα ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰκόνα ἀπεργαζομένην τέχνην ἄρ' οὐ φανταστικὴν ὀρθότατ' ἂν προσαγορεύοιμεν» (*Sophist*, 235d-e and 236c).
- 9 «Ἄρ' οὖν χαίρειν τὸ ἀληθὲς εἶσαντες οἱ δημιουργοὶ νῦν οὐ τὰς οὐσας συμμετρίας, ἀλλὰ τὰς δοξούσας εἶναι καλὰς τοῖς εἰδύλοισι ἐναπεργάζονται» (*Sophist*, 236a).
- 10 Suzanne Said, *Deux noms de l'image en grec ancien: idole et icône*, in: *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 1987,



- April-June, pp. 309-330. Said's article must now be taken as a crucial supplement to Ernst Cassirer, *Eidos und Eidolon: Das Problem des Schönen und der Kunst in Platons Dialogen*, in: *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1922-1923, pp. 1-27.
- 11 The bibliography is now immense; but a crucial passage is Athanasius of Alexandria, *Oratio contra Arianos*, iii, 5, in: *PG* 26, col. 332, predictably quoted by John of Damascus in the *De imaginibus*, *Oratio III*, in: *PG* 94, col. 1405. For a basic interpretation, with more sources, cf. above all Gerhard B. Ladner, *The Concept of the Image in the Greek Fathers and the Byzantine Iconoclastic Controversy*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 7, 1953, p. 8; and Ernst Kitzinger, *The Cult of Images before Iconoclasm*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 8, 1954, pp. 122-123.
- 12 For the Homeric position, cf. S. Said, op. cit. [note 10], p. 322, and note 106. For Plotinus, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 318-319; and (*inter multos*) Erwin Panofsky, *Idea. A Concept in Art Theory*, New York 1968, pp. 25-32 and the excellent notes on pp. 186-191 (translated from *Idea. Eine Begriffsgeschichte der älteren Kunsttheorie*, in: *Studien der Bibliothek Warburg* 5, 1924).
- 13 Cf., for example, Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, 69, and *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit*, 230-233; and Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus* IV, 59, 2, and X, 98, 4, and *Stromateis* II, 102, 6 and V, 94, 4-5; as well as the collection of texts in H. Willms, *Eikon*, Münster 1935, pp. 56-74.
- 14 Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 81d; *Republic* X, 596a-598d; and Plotinus, *Enneads* III, 7.
- 15 As in *Republic* X, 598c, and *Critias*, 107d, amongst many possible instances.
- 16 Cf. Daniel Babut, *Sur la notion d'imitation dans les doctrines esthétiques de la Grèce classique*, in: *Revue des études grecques*, vol. 98, 1985, pp. 73-92.
- 17 For a good summary of this position, cf. Martin Kemp, *From Mimesis to Fantasia: The Quattrocento Vocabulary of Creation, Inspiration and Genius in the Visual Arts*, in: *Viator*, vol. 8, 1977, pp. 347-398.
- 18 *Life of Apollonios of Tyana*, 6, 19, simply: «μιμησις μὲν γὰρ δημιουργησι. ὁ εἶδεν, φαντασία δὲ καὶ ὁ μὴ εἶδεν», preceded by the clear statement that *phantasia* is a «σοφωτέρα μιμησεως δημιουργός»!
- 19 Cf. the excellent few pages in J. A. Emmens, *Apelles en Apollo. Nederlandse Gedichten op Schilderijen in de 17de Eeuw*, in: *Kunsthistorische Opstellen I* (Verzameld Werk III), especially pp. 23-29.
- 20 *Enneads* II, 9, 16.
- 21 «Εἴπερ οὐχ ὁμοίως τὰ αὐτὰ βλέπουσιν οὐδὲ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς οἱ δι' ὀμμάτων τὰ τῆς τεχνῆς βλέποντες, ἀλλ' ἐπιγιγνώσκοντες μιμημα ἐν τῷ αἰσθητῷ του ἐν νοήσει κειμένου οἷον θορυθοῦνται καὶ εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἐρχονται τοῦ ἀληθοῦς» (*Enneads* II, 9, 16).
- 22 Cf. especially E. Panofsky, *Idea*, op. cit. [note 12].
- 23 Cf. also Andre Grabar, *Plotin et les origines de l'esthétique médiévale*, in: *Cahiers archeologiques*, vol. 1, 1945, pp. 15-34.
- 24 J. J. Pollitt, op. cit. [note 1], pp. 55-58 and notes, has some useful remarks on the Plotinian and general Neoplatonist position, with further bibliographic references.
- 25 G. W. F. Hegel, *Aesthetics*, trans. by T. M. Knox, 2 vols., Oxford 1975, vol. 2, p. 796.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 832; see also the important pages on the matter of imitation in Hegel's Introduction to the *Aesthetics*, *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 41-46.
- 27 For Panofsky and Cassirer cf. notes 12 and 10 respectively.
- 28 «οὐ γὰρ ἀρκεῖ φέρειν, ὃ ἡ φύσις εἰδῶλον ἡμῖν περιτεθεικεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰδῶλου εἰδῶλον συγχαρεῖν αὐτὸν ἀξιῶν πολυχρονιώτερον καταλιπεῖν ὡς δὴ τι τῶν ἀξιοθεάτων ἔργων», is how Plotinus is supposed to have responded to the painter Amelios' request to be allowed to paint his portrait (Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus* I; cf. Karl Borinski, *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie*, Leipzig 1914, p. 272, note to p. 92).
- 29 Proclus, *Comm. in Tim.* II, 81c; E. Panofsky, op. cit. [note 12], p. 190.
- 30 As in note 18 above.
- 31 E. Panofsky, op. cit. [note 12], p. 190.
- 32 J. J. Pollitt, op. cit. [note 1], pp. 97-98.
- 33 S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts*, 4th ed., London 1907 (reprint, New York 1954), p. 152.

- 34 Pliny, *Natural History*, book 25, ch. 2.
- 35 E. H. Gombrich, review of W. H. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communciation* (1953), in: *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 5, 1954, pp. 168-169.
- 36 Cf. my discussion above, as well as B. Schweitzer, *Mimesis and Phantasia*, in: *Philologus*, vol. 89, 1934, pp. 286-300, for the classical period; M. Kemp, op. cit. [note 17] for the Renaissance, esp. pp. 366-376; and J. J. Pollitt, op. cit. [note 1], pp. 53-55 and pp. 293-297, for a good discussion of the key sources.
- 37 Martin Kemp, *Il concetto del anima in Leonardo's Early Skull Studies*, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 34, 1971, pp. 132-134; and id., op. cit. [note 17], pp. 379 and 396.
- 38 The myth has also been seen in the context of Neoplatonic thought by Pierre Hadot, *Le mythe de narcisse et son interpretation par Plotin*, in: *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, vol. 13 (devoted to Narcissus and Narcissism), 1976, pp. 81-108. Here too (pp. 109-146) cf. Hubert Damisch, *D'un Narcisse l'Autre*, especially pp. 113-116 on Alberti's view (in book II of the *Della Pittura*) of Narcissus as the inventor of painting. Cf. also the suggestive pages by Stephen Bann on the subject in *The True Vine: On Visual Representation and the Western Tradition*, Cambridge 1989.
- 39 Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*, Indianapolis 1976, p. 38.