

5. Paul Oskar Kisteller, "The Modern System of the Arts," pp. 7-33.

## Notes

1. For the most thorough discussion of various kinds of definition, see Richard Robinson, *Definition*, Oxford, 1950.

2. Consider the following three sentences: (1) "a hexapod is an animal having six feet"; (2) "'hexapod' means an animal having six feet"; (3) "'a hexapod' means the same as 'an animal having six feet.'" Statement 1 gives us the necessary and sufficient conditions of something's being a hexapod. Statement 2 defines the word "hexapod" and gives us the necessary and sufficient conditions of its correct application to something. Statement 3 tells us that two phrases, "a hexapod" and "an animal having six feet," are synonymous and may therefore be substituted for one another in a sentence without altering the sense of the sentence. All three are commonly called "definitions." But 1 is sometimes said to express an *analytic* proposition, according to Kant's use of the term, or to be an analysis of the *concept* of a hexapod; or the proposition it expresses is said to be true *by definition*. For if 2 or 3 expresses a true statement about what the word "hexapod" means, then 1, by substitution, reduces either to "a hexapod is a hexapod" or "an animal having six feet is an animal having six feet"—which is clearly a tautology. Similarly, if 1 expresses an analytic proposition, one that is indeed true by definition, then there must be some such sentence as 2 or 3 that expresses a true proposition about the meaning of the word "hexapod" and relative to which the proposition expressed by 1 is analytic or true by definition. In this way 1, 2, and 3 may be said to be equivalent.

Although "a hexapod is an animal having six feet" tells us what all, and only, hexapods have in common, it does not rule out the possibility that all, and only, hexapods may have *other* features in common; if they do, however, the statement that they do is not a definition of a hexapod.

3. For Bell's views on literature, see his "The 'Difference' of Literature," *New Republic*, 33 (1922), 18-19.

PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER

## The Modern System of the Arts

## I

THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE of the eighteenth century in the history of aesthetics and of art criticism is generally recognized. To be sure, there has been a great variety of theories and currents within the last two hundred years that cannot be easily brought under one common denominator. Yet all the changes and controversies of the more recent past presuppose certain fundamental notions which go back to that classical century of modern aesthetics. It is known that the very term "Aesthetics" was coined at that time, and, at least in the opinion of some historians, the subject matter itself, the "philosophy of art," was invented in that comparatively recent period and can be applied to earlier phases of Western thought only with reservations. It is also generally agreed that such dominating concepts of modern aesthetics as taste and sentiment, genius, originality and creative imagination did not assume their definite modern meaning before the eighteenth century. Some scholars have rightly noticed that only the eighteenth century produced a type of literature in which the various arts were compared with each other and discussed on the basis of common principles, whereas up to that period treatises on poetics and rhetoric, on painting and architecture, and on music had represented quite distinct branches of writing and were primarily concerned with technical precepts rather than with general ideas. Finally, at least a few scholars have noticed that the term "Art," with a capital A and in its modern sense, and the related term "Fine Arts" (Beaux Arts) originated in all probability in the eighteenth century.

In this paper, I shall take all these facts for granted, and shall concentrate instead on a much simpler and in a sense more fundamental point that is closely related to the problems so far mentioned, but does

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not seem to have received sufficient attention in its own right. Although the terms "Art," "Fine Arts" or "Beaux Arts" are often identified with the visual arts alone, they are also quite commonly understood in a broader sense. In this broader meaning, the term "Art" comprises above all the five major arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, music and poetry. These five constitute the irreducible nucleus of the modern system of the arts, on which all writers and thinkers seem to agree. On the other hand, certain other arts are sometimes added to the scheme, but with less regularity, depending on the different views and interests of the authors concerned: gardening, engraving and the decorative arts, the dance and the theatre, sometimes the opera, and finally eloquence and prose literature.

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

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

## II

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

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

The other central concept of modern aesthetics also, beauty, does not appear in ancient thought or literature with its specific modern connotations. The Greek term *καλόν* and its Latin equivalent (*pulchrum*) were never neatly or consistently distinguished from the moral good. When Plato discusses beauty in the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus*, he is speaking not merely of the physical beauty of human persons, but also of beautiful habits of the soul and of beautiful cognitions, whereas he fails completely to mention works of art in this connection. An incidental remark made in the *Phaedrus* and elaborated by Proclus was certainly not meant to express the modern triad of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. When the Stoics in one of their famous statements connected Beauty and Goodness, the context as well as Cicero's Latin rendering suggest that they meant by "Beauty" nothing but moral goodness, and in turn understood by "good" nothing but the useful. Only in later thinkers does the speculation about "beauty" assume an increasingly "aesthetic" significance, but without ever leading to a separate system of aesthetics in the modern sense. Panaetius identifies moral beauty with decorum, a term he borrows from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and consequently likes to compare the various arts with each other and with the moral life. His doctrine is known chiefly through Cicero, but it may also have influenced Horace. Plotinus in his famous treatises on beauty is concerned primarily with metaphysical and ethical problems, but he does include in his treatment of sensuous beauty the visible beauty of works of sculpture and architecture, and the audible beauty of music. Likewise, in the speculations on beauty scattered through the works of Augustine there are references to the various arts, yet the doctrine was not primarily designed for an interpretation of the "fine arts." Whether we can speak of aesthetics in the case of Plato, Plotinus or Augustine will depend on our definition of that term, but we should certainly realize that in the theory of beauty a consideration of the arts is quite absent in Plato and secondary in Plotinus and Augustine.

Let us now turn to the individual arts and to the manner in which

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

Among all the "fine arts" it was certainly poetry about which Plato had most to say, especially in the *Republic*, but the treatment given to it is neither systematic nor friendly, but suspiciously similar to the one he gives to rhetoric in some of his other writings. Aristotle, on the other hand, dedicated a whole treatise to the theory of poetry and deals with it in a thoroughly systematic and constructive fashion. The *Poetics* not only contains a great number of specific ideas which exercised a lasting influence upon later criticism; it also established a permanent place for the theory of poetry in the philosophical encyclopaedia of knowledge. The mutual influence of poetry and eloquence had been a permanent feature of ancient literature ever since the time of the Sophists, and the close relationship between these two branches of literature received a theoretical foundation through the proximity of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* in the corpus of Aristotle's works. Moreover, since the order of the writings in the Aristotelian Corpus was interpreted as early as the commentators of late antiquity as a scheme of classification for the philosophical disciplines, the place of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics* after the logical writings of the *Organon* established a link between logic, rhetoric and poetics that was emphasized by some of the Arabic commentators, the effects of which were felt down to the Renaissance.

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

sequently musical theory entered into an alliance with the mathematical sciences which is already apparent in Plato's *Republic*, and was to last far down into early modern times.

When we consider the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, it appears that their social and intellectual prestige in antiquity was much lower than one might expect from their actual achievements or from occasional enthusiastic remarks which date for the most part from the later centuries. It is true that painting was compared to poetry by Simonides and Plato, by Aristotle and Horace, as it was compared to rhetoric by Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and other writers. It is also true that architecture was included among the liberal arts by Varro and Vitruvius, and painting by Pliny and Galen, that Dio Chrysostom compared the art of the sculptor with that of the poet, and that Philostratus and Callistratus wrote enthusiastically about painting and sculpture. Yet the place of painting among the liberal arts was explicitly denied by Seneca and ignored by most other writers, and the statement of Lucian that everybody admires the works of the great sculptors but would not want to be a sculptor oneself, seems to reflect the prevalent view among writers and thinkers. The term *δημιουργός*, commonly applied to painters and sculptors, reflects their low social standing, which was related to the ancient contempt for manual work. When Plato compares the description of his ideal state to a painting and even calls his world-shaping god a demiurge, he no more enhances the importance of the artist than does Aristotle when he uses the statue as the standard example for a product of human art. When Cicero, probably reflecting Panaetius, speaks of the ideal notions in the mind of the sculptor, and when the Middle Platonists and Plotinus compare the ideas in the mind of God with the concepts of the visual artist they go one step further. Yet no ancient philosopher, as far as I know, wrote a separate systematic treatise on the visual arts or assigned to them a prominent place in his scheme of knowledge.

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

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

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

The same picture is gained from the distribution of the arts among the nine Muses. It should be noted that the number of the Muses was not fixed before a comparatively late period, and that the attempt to assign particular arts to individual Muses is still later and not at all

uniform. However, the arts listed in these late schemes are the various branches of poetry and of music, with eloquence, history, the dance, grammar, geometry, and astronomy. In other words, just as in the schemes of the liberal arts, so in the schemes for the Muses poetry and music are grouped with some of the sciences, whereas the visual arts are omitted. Antiquity knew no Muse of painting or of sculpture; they had to be invented by the allegorists of the early modern centuries. And the five fine arts which constitute the modern system were not grouped together in antiquity, but kept quite different company: poetry stays usually with grammar and rhetoric; music is as close to mathematics and astronomy as it is to the dance, and poetry; and the visual arts, excluded from the realm of the Muses and of the liberal arts by most authors, must be satisfied with the modest company of the other manual crafts.

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

### III

The early Middle Ages inherited from late antiquity the scheme of the seven liberal arts that served not only for a comprehensive classification of human knowledge but also for the curriculum of the monastic and cathedral schools down to the twelfth century. The subdivision of the seven arts into the Trivium (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) seems to have been emphasized since Carolingian times. This classification became inadequate after the growth of learning in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The classification schemes of the twelfth century reflect different attempts to combine the traditional system of the liberal arts with the threefold division of philosophy (logic, ethics and physics) known through Isidore, and with the divisions of knowledge made by Aristotle or based on the order of his writings, which then began to become known through Latin translations from the Greek and Arabic. The rise of the universities also

established philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence and theology as new and distinct subjects outside the liberal arts, and the latter were again reduced from the status of an encyclopaedia of secular knowledge they had held in the earlier Middle Ages to that of preliminary disciplines they had held originally in late antiquity. On the other hand, Hugo of St. Victor was probably the first to formulate a scheme of seven mechanical arts corresponding to the seven liberal arts, and this scheme influenced many important authors of the subsequent period, such as Vincent of Beauvais and Thomas Aquinas. The seven mechanical arts, like the seven liberal arts earlier, also appeared in artistic representations, and they are worth listing: *lanificium, armatura, navigatio, agricultura, venatio, medicina, theatrica* [fabric making, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatrics]. Architecture as well as various branches of sculpture and of painting are listed, along with several other crafts, as subdivisions of *armatura*, and thus occupy a quite subordinate place even among the mechanical arts. Music appears in all these schemes in the company of the mathematical disciplines, whereas poetry, when mentioned, is closely linked to grammar, rhetoric and logic. The fine arts are not grouped together or singled out in any of these schemes, but scattered among various sciences, crafts, and other human activities of a quite disparate nature. Different as are these schemes from each other in detail, they show a persistent general pattern and continued to influence later thought.

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

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

On the other hand, the concept of beauty that is occasionally discussed by Aquinas and somewhat more emphatically by a few other medieval philosophers is not linked with the arts, fine or otherwise, but treated

primarily as a metaphysical attribute of God and of his creation, starting from Augustine and from Dionysius the Areopagite. Among the transcendentals or most general attributes of being, *pulchrum* does not appear in thirteenth-century philosophy, although it is considered as a general concept and treated in close connection with *bonum*. The question whether Beauty is one of the transcendentals has become a subject of controversy among Neo-Thomists. This is an interesting sign of their varying attitude toward modern aesthetics, which some of them would like to incorporate in a philosophical system based on Thomist principles. For Aquinas himself, or for other medieval philosophers, the question is meaningless, for even if they had posited *pulchrum* as a transcendental concept, which they did not, its meaning would have been different from the modern notion of artistic beauty in which the Neo-Thomists are interested. Thus it is obvious that there was artistic production as well as artistic appreciation in the Middle Ages, and this could not fail to find occasional expression in literature and philosophy. Yet there is no medieval concept or system of the Fine Arts, and if we want to keep speaking of medieval aesthetics, we must admit that its concept and subject matter are, for better or for worse, quite different from the modern philosophical discipline.

#### IV

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

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

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

Still more characteristic of the Renaissance is the steady rise of painting and of the other visual arts that began in Italy with Cimabue and Giotto and reached its climax in the sixteenth century. An early expression of the increasing prestige of the visual arts is found on the Campanile of Florence, where painting, sculpture, and architecture appear as a separate group between the liberal and the mechanical arts. What characterizes the period is not only the quality of the works of art but also the close links that were established between the visual arts, the sciences and literature. The appearance of a distinguished artist who also was a humanist and writer of merit, such as Alberti, was no coincidence in a period in which literary and classical learning began, in addition to religion, to provide the subject matter for painters and sculptors. When a knowledge of perspective, anatomy, and geometrical proportions was considered necessary for the painter and sculptor, it was no wonder that several artists should have made important contributions to the various sciences. On the other hand, ever since Filippo Villani, the humanists, and their journalist successors in the sixteenth century, looked with favor upon the work of contemporary artists and would lend their pen to its praise. From the end of the fourteenth century through the sixteenth the writings of the artists and of authors sympathetic to the visual arts repeat the claim that painting should be considered as one of the liberal, not of the mechanical arts. It has been rightly noted that the classical testimonies in favor of painting, mainly from Pliny, Galen and Philostratus, were not as authoritative and strong as the Renaissance authors who quoted them in support of their claim believed or pretended to believe. Yet the claim of Renaissance writers on painting to have their art recognized as liberal, however weakly supported by classical authority, was significant as an attempt to enhance the social and cultural position of painting and of the other visual arts, and to obtain for them the same prestige that music, rhetoric, and poetry had long enjoyed. And since it was still apparent that the liberal arts were primarily sciences or teachable knowledge, we may well understand why Leonardo tried to define painting as a science and to emphasize its close relationship with mathematics.

The rising social and cultural claims of the visual arts led in the sixteenth century in Italy to an important new development that occurred in the other European countries somewhat later: the three visual arts,

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

The ambition of painting to share in the traditional prestige of literature also accounts for the popularity of a notion that appears prominently for the first time in the treatises on painting of the sixteenth century and was to retain its appeal down to the eighteenth: the parallel between painting and poetry. Its basis was the *Ut pictura poesis* of Horace, as well as the saying of Simonides reported by Plutarch, along with some other passages in Plato, Aristotle and Horace. The history of this notion from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century has been carefully studied, and it has been justly pointed out that the use then made of the comparison exceeded anything done or intended by the ancients. Actually, the meaning of the comparison was reversed, since the ancients had compared poetry with painting when they were writing about poetry, whereas the modern authors more often compared painting with poetry while writing about painting. How seriously the comparison was taken we can see from the fact that Horace's *Ars poetica* was taken as a literary model for some treatises on painting and that many poetical theories and concepts were applied to painting by these authors in a more or less artificial manner. The persistent comparison between poetry and painting went a long way, as did the emancipation of the three visual arts from the crafts, to prepare the ground for the later system of the five fine arts, but it obviously does not yet presuppose or constitute such a system. Even the few treatises written in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that dealt with both poetry and painting do not seem to have gone beyond more or less external comparisons into an analysis of common principles.

The sixteenth century formulated still other ideas that pointed in the direction of later developments in the field of aesthetics. Just as the period attached great importance to questions of "precedence" at courts and in public ceremonies, so the Academies and educated circles inherited from the medieval schools and universities the fancy for arguing the relative merits and superiority of the various sciences, arts, or other

human activities. This type of debate was by no means limited to the arts, as appears from the old rivalry between medicine and jurisprudence, or from the new contest between "arms and letters." Yet this kind of discussion was also applied to the arts and thus helped to strengthen the sense of their affinity. The parallel between painting and poetry, in so far as it often leads to a plea for the superiority of painting over poetry, shows the same general pattern. No less popular was the contest between painting and sculpture, on which Benedetto Varchi in 1546 held a regular inquiry among contemporary artists, whose answers are extant and constitute interesting documents for the artistic theories of the time. The question was still of interest to Galileo. The most important text of this type is Leonardo's *Paragone*, which argues for the superiority of painting over poetry, music, and sculpture. In a sense, this tract contains the most complete system of the fine arts that has come down to us from the Renaissance period. However, the text was not composed by Leonardo in its present form, but put together from his scattered notes by one of his pupils, and again rearranged by most of the modern editors. In any case, architecture is omitted, the separation between poetry and music is not consistently maintained, and the comparison seems to be extended to the mathematical disciplines with which painting, as a science, is closely linked for Leonardo. . . .

Renaissance speculation on beauty was still unrelated to the arts and apparently influenced by ancient models. Nifo's treatise *De pulchro*, still quoted in the eighteenth century, dealt exclusively with personal beauty. Francesco da Diacceto's main philosophical work, which carries the same title, continues the metaphysical speculations of Plotinus and of his teacher Ficino and does not seem to have exercised any lasting influence.

That the Renaissance, in spite of these notable changes, was still far from establishing the modern system of the fine arts appears most clearly from the classifications of the arts and sciences that were proposed during that period. These schemes continued in part the traditions of the Middle Ages, as is clear in the case of such Thomists as S. Antonino or Savonarola. On the whole, however, there is a greater variety of ideas than in the preceding period, and some of the thinkers concerned were neither backward nor unrepresentative. Vives, Ramus, and Gesner largely follow the old scheme of the liberal arts and the university curriculum of their time. Neither Agrippa of Nettesheim nor Scaliger, nor in the seventeenth century Alsted or Vossius, makes any attempt to separate the fine arts from the sciences; they list them scattered among all kinds of sciences and professions, and the same is still true of the eighteenth-century *Cyclopaedia* of E. Chambers. Francis Bacon connects poetry with the faculty of imagination, but does not mention the other arts, and the same is true of Vico, whom Croce considers the founder of modern aesthetics. Bonifacio stresses the link between poetry and painting, but otherwise does

not separate the fine arts from the sciences, and the same is true of Tassoni. Even Muratori, who again stresses imagination in poetry and at times compares poetry and painting, when he speaks of the *arti* connected with poetry means eloquence and history, in other words, the *studia humanitatis*. The modern system of the fine arts does not appear in Italy before the second half of the eighteenth century, when such writers as Bettinelli began to follow the lead of contemporary French, English and German authors.

## V

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

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

This rise of the various arts was accompanied by an institutional development which followed in many respects the earlier Italian model, but was guided by a conscious governmental policy and hence more centralized and consistent than had been the case in Italy. The Académie Française was organized in 1635 by Richelieu for the cultivation of the French language, poetry, and literature after the model of the Accademia della Crusca. Several years later, in 1648, the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture was founded under Mazarin after the model of the Accademia di S. Luca in Rome, and tended to detach French artists from the artisans' guilds to which they had previously belonged. Many more Academies were founded by Colbert between 1660 and 1680. They included provincial academies of painting and sculpture, the French Academy in Rome, dedicated to the three visual arts, as well as Academies of Architecture, of Music, and of the Dance. However, the system of the arts that would seem to underlie these foundations is more apparent than real. The Academies were founded at different times, and even if we limit ourselves only to the period of Colbert, we should note that there were also the Académie des Sciences and the Académie des Inscriptions et Médailles, which have no relation to the "Fine Arts"; that there was at



least a project for an Académie de Spectacles to be devoted to circus performances and other public shows; and that the Académie de Musique and the Académie de Danse, like this projected Académie de Spectacles, were not organizations of distinguished professional artists or scientists, like the other Academies, but merely licensed establishments for the regular preparation of public performances. Moreover, an extant paper from the time of Colbert that proposed to consolidate all Academies in a single institution makes no clear distinction between the arts and the sciences and lends additional though indirect support to the view that Colbert's Academies reflect a comprehensive system of cultural disciplines and professions, but not a clear conception of the Fine Arts in particular.

Along with the founding of the Academies, and partly in close connection with their activities, there developed an important and extensive theoretical and critical literature on the visual arts. The Conférences held at the Académie de Peinture et Sculpture are full of interesting critical views, and separate treatises were composed by Du Fresnoy, De Piles, Féart de Chambray, and Félibien. Du Fresnoy's Latin poem *De arte graphica*, which was translated into French and English and made the subject of notes and commentaries, was in its form a conscious imitation of Horace's *Ars poetica*, and it begins characteristically by quoting Horace's *Ut pictura poesis* and then reversing the comparison. The parallel between painting and poetry, as well as the contest between the two arts, were important to these authors, as to their predecessors in Renaissance Italy, because they were anxious to acquire for painting a standing equal to that of poetry and literature. This notion, which has been fully studied, remained alive until the early eighteenth century, and it is significant that the honor painting derives from its similarity to poetry is sometimes extended, as occasionally in the Italian Renaissance, to sculpture, architecture and even engraving as related arts. Even the term *Beaux Arts*, which seems to have been intended at first for the visual arts alone, corresponding to *Arti del Disegno*, seems sometimes for these authors to include also music or poetry. The comparison between painting and music is also made a few times, and Poussin himself, who lived in Italy, tried to transfer the theory of the Greek musical modes to poetry and especially to painting.

One of the great changes that occurred during the seventeenth century was the rise and emancipation of the natural sciences. By the second half of the century, after the work of Galileo and Descartes had been completed and the Académie des Sciences and the Royal Society had begun their activities, this development could not fail to impress the literati and the general public. It has been rightly observed that the famous *Querelle des Anciens et Modernes*, which stirred many scholars in France and also in England during the last quarter of the century, was due largely to the recent discoveries in the natural sciences. The Moderns, conscious of these achievements, definitely shook off the authority of classical antiquity

that had weighed on the Renaissance no less than on the Middle Ages, and went a long way toward formulating the concept of human progress. Yet this is only one side of the *Querelle*.

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

Thus the ground is prepared for the first time for a clear distinction between the arts and the sciences, a distinction absent from ancient, medieval or Renaissance discussions of such subjects even though the same words were used. In other words, the separation between the arts and the sciences in the modern sense presupposes not only the actual progress of the sciences in the seventeenth century but also the reflection upon the reasons why some other human intellectual activities which we now call the Fine Arts did not or could not participate in the same kind of progress. To be sure, the writings of the *Querelle* do not yet attain a complete clarity on these points, and this fact in itself definitely confirms our contention that the separation between the arts and the sciences and the modern system of the fine arts were just in the making at that time. Fontenelle, as some scholars have noticed, indicates in an occasional statement of his *Digression* that he was aware of the distinction between the arts and the sciences.

Much more important and explicit is the work of Charles Perrault. His famous *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* discusses the various fields in separate sections which reflect a system: the second dialogue is dedicated to the three visual arts, the third to eloquence, the fourth to poetry, and the fifth to the sciences. The separation of the fine arts from the sciences is almost complete, though not yet entirely, since music is treated in the last book among the sciences, whereas in his poem, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand*, which gave rise to the whole controversy, Perrault seems to connect music with the other arts. Moreover, in his prefaces Perrault states explicitly that at least in the case of poetry and eloquence, where everything depends on talent and taste, progress cannot be asserted with the same confidence as in the case of the sciences which depend on measurement. Equally interesting, though unrelated to the *Querelle*, is

another writing of Perrault, *Le Cabinet des Beaux Arts* (1690). This is a description and explanation of eight allegorical paintings found in the studio of a French gentleman to whom the work is dedicated. In the preface, Perrault opposes the concept *Beaux Arts* to the traditional *Arts Libéraux*, which he rejects, and then lists and describes the eight "Fine Arts" which the gentleman had represented to suit his taste and interests: Eloquence, Poésie, Musique, Architecture, Peinture, Sculpture, Optique, Mécanique. Thus on the threshold of the eighteenth century we are very close to the modern system of the Fine Arts, but we have not yet quite reached it, as the inclusion of Optics and Mechanics clearly shows. The fluctuations of the scheme show how slowly the notion emerged which to us seems so thoroughly obvious.

## VI

During the first half of the eighteenth century the interest of amateurs, writers and philosophers in the visual arts and in music increased. The age produced not only critical writings on these arts composed by and for laymen, but also treatises in which the arts were compared with each other and with poetry, and thus finally arrived at the fixation of the modern system of the fine arts. Since this system seems to emerge gradually and after many fluctuations in the writings of authors who were in part of but secondary importance, though influential, it would appear that the notion and system of the fine arts may have grown and crystallized in the conversations and discussions of cultured circles in Paris and in London, and that the formal writings and treatises merely reflect a climate of opinion resulting from such conversations. A further study of letters, diaries and articles in elegant journals may indeed supplement our brief survey, which we must limit to the better known sources.

The treatise on Beauty by J. P. de Crousaz, which first appeared in 1714 and exercised a good deal of influence, is usually considered as the earliest French treatise on aesthetics. It has indeed something to say on the visual arts and on poetry, and devotes a whole section to music. Moreover, it is an important attempt to give a philosophical analysis of beauty as distinct from goodness, thus restating and developing the notions of ancient and Renaissance Platonists. Yet the author has no system of the arts, and applies his notion of beauty without any marked distinction to the mathematical sciences and to the moral virtues and actions as well as to the arts, and the fluidity of his "aesthetic" thought is shown by the fact that in his second edition he substituted a chapter on the beauty of religion for the one dealing with music.

During the following years, the problem of the arts seems to have dominated the discussions of the Académie des Inscriptions, and several of its lectures which were printed somewhat later and exercised a good

deal of influence stress the affinity between poetry, the visual arts and music. These discussions no doubt influenced the important work of the Abbé Dubos that appeared first in 1719 and was reprinted many times in the original and in translations far into the second half of the century. Dubos' merits in the history of aesthetic or artistic thought are generally recognized. It is apparent that he discusses not only the analogies between poetry and painting but also their differences, and that he is not interested in the superiority of one art over the others, as so many previous authors had been. His work is also significant as an early, though not the first, treatment of painting by an amateur writer, and his claim that the educated public rather than the professional artist is the best judge in matters of painting as well as of poetry is quite characteristic. He did not invent the term *beaux-arts*, nor was he the first to apply it to other than the visual arts, but he certainly popularized the notion that poetry was one of the *beaux-arts*. He also has a fairly clear notion of the difference between the arts that depend on "genius" or talent and the sciences based on accumulated knowledge, and it has been rightly observed that in this he continues the work of the "Moderns" in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, especially of Perrault. . . .

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

when he wanted to group the fine arts together with even an appearance of ancient authority. For the "imitative" arts were the only authentic ancient precedent for the "fine arts," and the principle of imitation could be replaced only after the system of the latter had been so firmly established as no longer to need the ancient principle of imitation to link them together. Diderot's criticism of Batteux has been emphasized too much, for it concerned only the manner in which Batteux defined and applied his principle, but neither the principle itself, nor the system of the arts for which it had been designed.

As a matter of fact, Diderot and the other authors of the *Encyclopédie* not only followed Batteux's system of the fine arts, but also furnished the final touch and thus helped to give it a general currency not only in France but also in the other European countries. Montesquieu in his essay on taste written for the *Encyclopédie* takes the fine arts for granted. Diderot, whose interests included music and the visual arts . . . , criticizes Batteux in his *Lettre sur les Sourds et Muets* (1751), in which he demands a better and more detailed comparison between poetry, painting and music that would take into account the different modes of expression of those arts as they would affect their treatment of even the same subject matter. In the article on the Arts for the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot does not discuss the fine arts, but uses the old distinction between the liberal and mechanical arts and stresses the importance of the latter. Yet in his article on beauty, he does discuss the fine arts. . . .

Still more interesting is D'Alembert's famous *Discours préliminaire*. In his division of knowledge, purportedly based on Francis Bacon, D'Alembert makes a clear distinction between philosophy, which comprises both the natural sciences and such fields as grammar, eloquence, and history, and "those cognitions which consist of imitation," listing among the latter painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and music. He criticizes the old distinction between the liberal and mechanical arts, and then subdivides the liberal arts into the fine arts which have pleasure for their end, and the more necessary or useful liberal arts such as grammar, logic and morals. He concludes with a main division of knowledge into philosophy, history and the fine arts. This treatment shows still a few signs of fluctuation and of older notions, but it sets forth the modern system of the fine arts in its final form, and at the same time reflects its genesis. The threefold division of knowledge follows Francis Bacon, but significantly d'Alembert speaks of the five fine arts where Bacon had mentioned only poetry. D'Alembert is aware that the new concept of the fine arts is taking the place of the older concept of the liberal arts which he criticizes, and he tries to compromise by treating the fine arts as a subdivision of the liberal arts, thus leaving a last trace of the liberal arts that was soon to disappear. Finally, he reveals his dependence on Batteux in certain phrases and in the principle of imitation, but against Batteux and the classical tradition he now includes architecture among the

imitative arts, thus removing the last irregularity which had separated Batteux's system from the modern scheme of the fine arts. Thus we may conclude that the *Encyclopédie*, and especially its famous introduction, codified the system of the fine arts after and beyond Batteux and through its prestige and authority gave it the widest possible currency all over Europe.

After the middle of the century and after the publication of the *Encyclopédie*, speculation on the fine arts in France does not seem to have undergone any basic changes for some time. The notion was popularized and stabilized through such works as Lacombe's portable dictionary of the Fine Arts, which covered architecture, sculpture, painting, engraving, poetry, and music, and through other similar works. The term *Beaux Arts*, and "Art," in the new sense, found its way into the dictionaries of the French language that had ignored it before. And the Revolution gave the novel term a new institutional expression when it merged several of the older Academies into the Académie des Beaux Arts. Gradually, the further developments of aesthetics in Germany began to affect French philosophy and literature. The second edition of the *Encyclopédie*, published in Switzerland in 1781, has additions by Sulzer, including an article on aesthetics and a section on Fine Arts appended to the article on Art that had not appeared in the first edition. Early in the nineteenth century, the philosopher Victor Cousin, following Kant and the Scottish thinkers of the eighteenth century, as well as what he believed he found in Plato, Proclus and other classical sources, centered his philosophical system on the three concepts of the Good, the True and the Beautiful, understanding by the latter the realm of art and aesthetics. Cousin's wide influence in the later nineteenth century went a long way toward establishing this triad in modern value theory and toward fortifying the place of aesthetics in the system of philosophical disciplines. It also induced many thinkers and historians to interpret in terms of this scheme a number of ancient and medieval notions that resembled it superficially but had in reality a very different meaning and context. . . .

## VII

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

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

The philosophical implications of Shaftesbury's doctrine were further developed by a group of Scottish thinkers. Francis Hutcheson, who considered himself Shaftesbury's pupil, modified his doctrine by distinguishing between the moral sense and the sense of beauty. This distinction, which was adopted by Hume and quoted by Diderot, went a long way to prepare the separation of ethics and aesthetics, although Hutcheson still assigned the taste of poetry to the moral sense. A later philosopher of the Scottish school, Thomas Reid, introduced common sense as a direct criterion of truth, and although he was no doubt influenced by Aristotle's notion of common sense and the Stoic and modern views on "common notions," it has been suggested that his common sense was conceived as a counterpart of Hutcheson's two senses. Thus the psychology of the Scottish school led the way for the doctrine of the three faculties of the soul, which found its final development in Kant and its application in Cousin. . . .

## VIII

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

These critical discussions among poets and literati constitute the general background for the important work of the philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and of his pupil Georg Friedrich Meier. Baumgarten is famous for having coined the term aesthetics, but opinions

differ as to whether he must be considered the founder of that discipline or what place he occupies in its history and development. The original meaning of the term aesthetics as coined by Baumgarten, which has been well nigh forgotten by now, is the theory of sensuous knowledge, as a counterpart to logic as a theory of intellectual knowledge. The definitions Baumgarten gives of aesthetics show that he is concerned with the arts and with beauty as one of their main attributes, but he still uses the old term liberal arts, and he considers them as forms of knowledge. The question whether Baumgarten really gave a theory of all the fine arts, or merely a poetics and rhetoric with a new name, has been debated but can be answered easily. In his earlier work, in which he first coined the term aesthetic, Baumgarten was exclusively concerned with poetics and rhetoric. In his later, unfinished work, to which he gave the title *Aesthetica*, Baumgarten states in his introduction that he intends to give a theory of all the arts, and actually makes occasional references to the visual arts and to music. This impression is confirmed by the text of Baumgarten's lectures published only recently, and by the writings of his pupil Meier. On the other hand, it is quite obvious, and was noted by contemporary critics, that Baumgarten and Meier develop their actual theories only in terms of poetry and eloquence and take nearly all their examples from literature. Baumgarten is the founder of aesthetics in so far as he first conceived a general theory of the arts as a separate philosophical discipline with a distinctive and well-defined place in the system of philosophy. He failed to develop his doctrine with reference to the arts other than poetry and eloquence, or even to propose a systematic list and division of these other arts. In this latter respect, he was preceded and surpassed by the French writers, especially by Batteux and the Encyclopaedists, whereas the latter failed to develop a theory of the arts as part of a philosophical system. It was the result of German thought and criticism during the second half of the eighteenth century that the more concrete French conception of the fine arts was utilized in a philosophical theory of aesthetics for which Baumgarten had formulated the general scope and program. . . .

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

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

The greatest contributions to the history of our problem in the interval between Baumgarten and Kant came from Mendelssohn, Sulzer, and Herder. Mendelssohn, who was well acquainted with French and English writings on the subject, demanded in a famous article that the fine arts (painting, sculpture, music, the dance, and architecture) and belles lettres (poetry and eloquence) should be reduced to some common principle better than imitation, and thus was the first among the Germans to formulate a system of the fine arts. Shortly afterwards, in a book review, he criticized Baumgarten and Meier for not having carried out the program of their new science, aesthetics. They wrote as if they had been thinking exclusively in terms of poetry and literature, whereas aesthetic principles should be formulated in such a way as to apply to the visual arts and to music as well. In his annotations to Lessing's *Laokoon*, published long after his death, Mendelssohn persistently criticizes Lessing for not giving any consideration to music and to the system of the arts as a whole; we have seen how Lessing, in the fragmentary notes for a continuation of the *Laokoon*, tried to meet this criticism. Mendelssohn also formulated a doctrine of the three faculties of the soul corresponding to the three basic realms of goodness, truth and beauty, thus continuing the work of the Scottish philosophers. He did not work out an explicit theory of aesthetics, but under the impact of French and English authors he indicated the direction in which German aesthetics was to develop from Baumgarten to Kant.

What Mendelssohn had merely set forth in a general outline and program, the Swiss thinker Sulzer, who was well versed in French literature but spent the greater part of his life in Northern Germany, was able to

develop in a more systematic and elaborate fashion. Sulzer began his literary activity with a few short philosophical articles in which his interest for aesthetics was already apparent, and in which he also leaned toward the conception of an aesthetic faculty of the soul separate from the intellectual and moral faculties, a conception in whose development Mendelssohn and the philosopher Tetens also took their part. Some years later, Sulzer was prompted by the example of Lacombe's little dictionary of the fine arts to compile a similar dictionary in German on a much larger scale. This *General Theory of the Fine Arts*, which appeared in several editions, has been disparaged on account of its pedantic arrangement, but it is clear, comprehensive and learned, and had a considerable importance in its time. The work covers all the fine arts, not only poetry and eloquence, but also music and the visual arts, and thus represents the first attempt to carry out on a large scale the program formulated by Baumgarten and Mendelssohn. Thanks to its wide diffusion, Sulzer's work went a long way to acquaint the German public with the idea that all the fine arts are related and connected with each other. Sulzer's influence extended also to France, for when the great *Encyclopédie* was published in Switzerland in a second edition, many additions were based on his *General Theory*, including the article on aesthetics and the section on the Fine Arts.

In the decades after 1760, the interest in the new field of aesthetics spread rapidly in Germany. Courses on aesthetics were offered at a number of universities after the example set by Baumgarten and Meier, and new tracts and textbooks, partly based on these courses, appeared almost every year. . . .

It is interesting to note the reaction to this aesthetic literature of the leaders of the younger generation, especially of Goethe and of Herder. Goethe in his early years published a review of Sulzer which was quite unfavorable. Noticing the French background of Sulzer's conception, Goethe ridicules the grouping together of all the arts which are so different from each other in their aims and means of expression, a system which reminds him of the old-fashioned system of the seven liberal arts, and adds that this system may be useful to the amateur but certainly not to the artist. This reaction shows that the system of the fine arts was something novel and not yet firmly established, and that Goethe, just like Lessing, did not take an active part in developing the notion that was to become generally accepted. Toward the very end of his life, in the *Wanderjahre*, Goethe shows that he had by then accepted the system of the fine arts, for he assigns a place to each of them in his pedagogical province. Yet his awareness of the older meaning of art is apparent when in a group of aphorisms originally appended to the same work he defines art as knowledge and concludes that poetry, being based on genius, should not be called an art.

Herder, on the other hand, took an active part in the development of

the system of the fine arts and used the weight of his literary authority to have it generally accepted. In an early but important critical work (*Kritische Waelder*, 1769), he dedicates the entire first section to a critique of Lessing's *Laokoon*. Lessing shows merely, he argues, what poetry is not, by comparing it with painting. In order to see what its essence is, we should compare it with all its sister arts, such as music, the dance, and eloquence. . . .

I should like to conclude this survey with Kant, since he was the first major philosopher who included aesthetics and the philosophical theory of the arts as an integral part of his system. Kant's interest in aesthetic problems appears already in his early writing on the beautiful and sublime, which was influenced in its general conception by Burke. He also had occasion to discuss aesthetic problems in several of his courses. Notes based on these courses extant in manuscript have not been published, but have been utilized by a student of Kant's aesthetics. It appears that Kant cited in these lectures many authors he does not mention in his published works, and that he was thoroughly familiar with most of the French, English and German writers on aesthetics. At the time when he published the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he still used the term aesthetics in a sense different from the common one, and explains in an interesting footnote, that he does not follow Baumgarten's terminology since he does not believe in the possibility of a philosophical theory of the arts. In the following years, however, he changed his view, and in his *Critique of Judgment*, which constitutes the third and concluding part of his philosophical system, the larger of its two major divisions is dedicated to aesthetics, whereas the other section deals with teleology. The system of the three *Critiques* as presented in this last volume is based on a threefold division of the faculties of the mind, which adds the faculty of judgment, aesthetic and teleological, to pure and practical reason. Aesthetics, as the philosophical theory of beauty and the arts, acquires equal standing with the theory of truth (metaphysics or epistemology) and the theory of goodness (ethics).

In the tradition of systematic philosophy this was an important innovation, for neither Descartes nor Spinoza nor Leibniz nor any of their ancient or mediæval predecessors had found a separate or independent place in their system for the theory of the arts and of beauty, though they had expressed occasional opinions on these subjects. If Kant took this decisive step after some hesitation, he was obviously influenced by the example of Baumgarten and by the rich French, English, and German literature on the arts his century had produced, with which he was well acquainted. In his critique of aesthetic judgment, Kant discusses also the concepts of the sublime and of natural beauty, but his major emphasis is on beauty in the arts, and he discusses many concepts and principles common to all the arts. In section 51 he also gives a division of the fine arts: speaking arts (poetry, eloquence); plastic arts (sculpture, architec-

ture, painting, and gardening); arts of the beautiful play of sentiments (music, and the art of color). This scheme contains a few ephemeral details that were not retained by Kant's successors. However, since Kant aesthetics has occupied a permanent place among the major philosophical disciplines, and the core of the system of the fine arts fixed in the eighteenth century has been generally accepted as a matter of course by most later writers on the subject, except for variations of detail or of explanation.

## IX

We shall not attempt to discuss the later history of our problem after Kant, but shall rather draw a few general conclusions from the development so far as we have been able to follow it. The grouping together of the visual arts with poetry and music into the system of the fine arts with which we are familiar did not exist in classical antiquity, in the Middle Ages or in the Renaissance. However, the ancients contributed to the modern system the comparison between poetry and painting and the theory of imitation that established a kind of link between painting and sculpture, poetry and music. The Renaissance brought about the emancipation of the three major visual arts from the crafts, it multiplied the comparisons between the various arts, especially between painting and poetry, and it laid the ground for an amateur interest in the different arts that tended to bring them together from the point of view of the reader, spectator and listener rather than of the artist. The seventeenth century witnessed the emancipation of the natural sciences and thus prepared the way for a clearer separation between the arts and the sciences. Only the early eighteenth century, especially in England and France, produced elaborate treatises written by and for amateurs in which the various fine arts were grouped together, compared with each other and combined in a systematic scheme based on common principles. The second half of the century, especially in Germany, took the additional step of incorporating the comparative and theoretical treatment of the fine arts as a separate discipline into the system of philosophy. The modern system of the fine arts is thus pre-romantic in its origin, although all romantic as well as later aesthetics takes this system as its necessary basis.

It is not easy to indicate the causes for the genesis of the system in the eighteenth century. The rise of painting and of music since the Renaissance, not so much in their actual achievements as in their prestige and appeal, the rise of literary and art criticism, and above all the rise of an amateur public to which art collections and exhibitions, concerts as well as opera and theatre performances were addressed, must be considered as important factors. The fact that the affinity between the various fine arts is more plausible to the amateur, who feels a comparable kind of enjoy-

ment, than to the artist himself, who is concerned with the peculiar aims and techniques of his art, is obvious in itself and is confirmed by Goethe's reaction. The origin of modern aesthetics in amateur criticism would go a long way to explain why works of art have until recently been analyzed by aestheticians from the point of view of the spectator, reader and listener rather than of the producing artist.

The development we have been trying to understand also provides an interesting object lesson for the historian of philosophy and of ideas in general. We are accustomed to the process by which notions first formulated by great and influential thinkers are gradually diffused among secondary writers and finally become the common property of the general public. Such seems to have been the development of aesthetics from Kant to the present. Its history before Kant is of a very different kind. The basic questions and conceptions underlying modern aesthetics seem to have originated quite apart from the traditions of systematic philosophy or from the writings of important original authors. They had their inconspicuous beginnings in secondary authors, now almost forgotten though influential in their own time, and perhaps in the discussions and conversations of educated laymen reflected in their writings. These notions had a tendency to fluctuate and to grow slowly, but only after they had crystallized into a pattern that seemed generally plausible did they find acceptance among the greater authors and the systematic philosophers. Baumgarten's aesthetics was but a program, and Kant's aesthetics the philosophical elaboration of a body of ideas that had had almost a century of informal and non-philosophical growth. If the absence of the scheme of the fine arts before the eighteenth century and its fluctuations in that century have escaped the attention of most historians, this merely proves how thoroughly and irresistibly plausible the scheme has become to modern thinkers and writers.

Another observation seems to impose itself as a result of our study. The various arts are certainly as old as human civilization, but the manner in which we are accustomed to group them and to assign them a place in our scheme of life and of culture is comparatively recent. This fact is not as strange as may appear on the surface. In the course of history, the various arts change not only their content and style, but also their relations to each other, and their place in the general system of culture, as do religion, philosophy or science. Our familiar system of the five fine arts did not merely originate in the eighteenth century, but it also reflects the particular cultural and social conditions of that time. If we consider other times and places, the status of the various arts, their associations and their subdivisions appear very different. There were important periods in cultural history when the novel, instrumental music, or canvas painting did not exist or have any importance. On the other hand, the sonnet and the epic poem, stained glass and mosaic, fresco painting and book illumination, vase painting and tapestry, bas relief

and pottery have all been "major" arts at various times and in a way they no longer are now. Gardening has lost its standing as a fine art since the eighteenth century. On the other hand, the moving picture is a good example of how new techniques may lead to modes of artistic expression for which the aestheticians of the eighteenth and nineteenth century had no place in their systems. The branches of the arts all have their rise and decline, and even their birth and death, and the distinction between "major" arts and their subdivisions is arbitrary and subject to change. There is hardly any ground but critical tradition or philosophical preference for deciding whether engraving is a separate art (as most of the eighteenth-century authors believed) or a subdivision of painting, or whether poetry and prose, dramatic and epic poetry, instrumental and vocal music are separate arts or subdivisions of one major art.

As a result of such changes, both in modern artistic production and in the study of other phases of cultural history, the traditional system of the fine arts begins to show signs of disintegration. Since the latter part of the nineteenth century, painting has moved further away from literature than at any previous time, whereas music has at times moved closer to it, and the crafts have taken great strides to recover their earlier standing as decorative arts. A greater awareness of the different techniques of the various arts has produced dissatisfaction among artists and critics with the conventions of an aesthetic system based on a situation no longer existing, an aesthetics that is trying in vain to hide the fact that its underlying system of the fine arts is hardly more than a postulate and that most of its theories are abstracted from particular arts, usually poetry, and more or less inapplicable to the others. The excesses of aestheticism have led to a healthy reaction which is yet far from universal. The tendency among some contemporary philosophers to consider Art and the aesthetic realm as a pervasive aspect of human experience rather than as the specific domain of the conventional fine arts also goes a long way to weaken the latter notion in its traditional form. All these ideas are still fluid and ill defined, and it is difficult to see how far they will go in modifying or undermining the traditional status of the fine arts and of aesthetics. In any case, these contemporary changes may help to open our eyes to an understanding of the historical origins and limitations of the modern system of the fine arts. Conversely, such historical understanding might help to free us from certain conventional preconceptions and to clarify our ideas on the present status and future prospects of the arts and of aesthetics.