2 Differences in Style

When Philo of Alexandria recognized the character of an artist from his works, he was probably alluding to a feature that nowadays is commonly referred to as personal style. During the Renaissance, the style or *maniera* of a painter became increasingly important and was understood as a reflection of his distinct personality. Whereas many painters of the 15th century were bound to imitate the style of one master, the art theorists of the Cinquecento invited painters to develop their own taste, interests, and style by choosing from multiple sources. The following chapter, by discussing the history of the increasing appreciation of personal style in the course of the Quattro- and Cinquecento, shows that Renaissance authors relied partly on concepts that were coined during antiquity.

For a thorough understanding for the meaning and transmission of style, it is thus necessary to understand the methods of training and education in Renaissance painters' workshops. The young apprentice, not older than twelve or thirteen, was introduced to the workshop of his master not only by learning about the preparation of cartoons, canvasses, and colours, but also by copying drawings.[1] These drawings, made by the teacher himself, often represented his condensed stylistic vocabulary, which had grown over the years and consisted of various, often schematic, representations of the human body and its single components. These drawings and designs often served as a fundamental framework for further explorations in the illustration of mankind and were often reutilized for the composition of new paintings or frescoes. In contrast to our modern understanding of artistic originality, this practice, at least in the 15th century, was not judged as a sign of repetition or creative weakness but understood as a manifestation of the artist's distinct nature.[2] Furthermore, these patterns and prototypes were indispensable for helping organize the working routines of the workshop, often consisting of numerous pupils. By frequently re-drawing the models of their master, the apprentices not only got used to the proportions of a human body but also developed a drawing technique that was similar to his master's. The result was a

1 See for instance the contracts and letters of painters published by Gilbert 1980.

2 For the Renaissance understanding of originality see Cole 1995.

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homogeneous style that was hardly distinguishable from the hand of their master. Considering the large and time-consuming commissions that certain workshops were expected to accomplish in a short amount of time, an almost identical style was necessary if a figure had to be painted by more than one person. A methodical division of labour allowed the execution of large-scale frescoes by assigning different figures or body parts to different pupils without risking inconsistencies.[3] At the same time, the close companionship of the pupils under the guidance of an experienced master was believed to contribute to their moral qualities and social habits. This was of paramount importance if we think of the familiar structure of apprenticeships, where a pupil was often made part of the artist's household.[4] By giving advice and establishing rules that were particularly important when working at the courts or in a sacral environment, the teacher also influenced his pupils ethically.[5]

Not surprisingly, the teaching methods in a painter's workshop coincided with the general ideas on the cultivation of the young that were fashionable during the Renaissance. The birth of a human being was seen as a gift of mother Nature, who equipped the single individual with particular physical attributes and mental inclinations, whereas the shaping and refinement of moral characteristics and technical skills resulted from the long process of socialisation and education. In the Renaissance with its penchant for abundant allegories, this process was frequently illustrated by personifications of the raw and fertile Nature and her counterpart, the refined mother who provided nourishment.[6] A rectangular engraving from a series of allegories by the Netherlandish printmaker Philips Galle, entitled, *Man is born naked* (1563), demonstrates the different features that were associated with these opposing forces of human nature (Fig. 1). On the left, it depicts Nature as a primordial force. Modelled upon the ancient, many-breasted goddess Diana Ephesia and accompanied by wild animals, she emerges from a forest and holds a naked newborn in her hands. On the right side of the engraving we can see a clothed female figure, the mother, who receives the newborn, and her attendant, probably a wetnurse. Their civilized appearance is not only characterized by their elaborate garments but also by the surrounding landscape that contrasts with the

3 For the practice of copying drawings and styles see Wackernagel 1938, pp. 308–337, Cole 1983, pp. 30–34, Thomas 1995, pp. 213–255, and Bambach 1999.

4 The painter Francesco Squarcione, for instance, adopted several of his pupils, and Jacopo Tatti took the surname *Sansovino* in veneration of his master Andrea Sansovino; cfr. Gilbert 1980, p. 33.

5 The master is therefore some sort of *scienziato* who is able to reproduce and perpetuate his art by teaching it. Cfr. Summers 1987, p. 280 and Jacobs 1994, p. 84.

6 For the iconography of allegories of Nature in Renaissance Italy see Kemp 1973 and Modersohn 1994.

Figure 1 Philips Galle, Man is born Naked, 1563, London, British Museum

forest. Other sheets from this series of engravings show how this process of civilization continues and differentiates humans from the rest of the natural world, as the human species learns to walk and eventually starts to understand and use the different arts.[7]

Allegories like this marked the pedagogic impetus during the entire Renaissance and were repeatedly used in various writings on the education of children.[8] Although their main contributors were gendered as female, the importance of paternal inheritance was not undermined by these biological metaphors. It was frequently the male peasant who worked the fertile but fallow soil of mother Nature and assured the harvesting of plentiful crops. One of the most influential treatises on the refinement of habits and manners of the 16th century, Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del cortegiano,* exploits this figure of the caring farmer by com-

7 For the Renaissance understanding of nature and its representations see also Park 2004, esp. pp. 64 ff.

8 For the education in Renaissance Italy see Garin 1958.

paring his work to the impact of a good education. Just as an agrarian was held responsible for the prosperity and growth of his plants, a good teacher had to take care of his pupils by imparting his knowledge and virtues, thus creating "frutti felici".[9] According to Castiglione, this was a development that requested the participation of the apprentice as well. Only through the continuous process of cultivation and the rejection of evil might the pupil become as distinguished as his instructor.[10] It was therefore necessary that he resembled his master in all essential regards and showed himself eager to imitate: "Chi adunque vorrà esser bon discipulo, oltre al far le cose bene, sempre ha da metter ogni diligenzia per assimigliarsi al maestro e, se possibil fosse, transformarsi in lui."[11] If we turn to the art literature of the 16th century, we notice that the same metaphor of fortunate fruit was employed by the Venetian painter Paolo Pino. When he discusses the formation of the apprentice in the last chapter of his *Dialogo di pittura* (1548), he advises the master to lovingly care for his students. Just as Nature makes sure that there are plenty of new plants by generating offshoots that are similar to itself and thus contributes to the preservation of the species, the painter should impart his art and virtues to others ("insegnare ad altrui l'arte e virtù sua").[12]

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9 Castiglione 1528 (1998), p. 369: "Però, come nell'altre arti, così ancora nelle virtú è necessario aver maestro, il qual con dottrina e boni ricordi susciti e risvegli in noi quelle virtú morali, delle quai avemo il seme incluso e sepilto nell'anima, e come bono agricultore le coltivi e loro apra la via, levandoci d'intorno le spine e 'l loglio degli appetiti, i quali spesso tanto adombrano e suffocan gli animi nostri, che fiorir non gli lassano, né produr quei felici frutti, che soli si dovriano desiderar che nascessero nei cori umani."

10 Castiglione 1528 (1998), p. 38 "[…] la natura in ogni cosa ha insito quello occulto seme, che porge una certa forza e proprietà del suo principio a tutto quello che da esso deriva ed a sé lo fa simile; come non solamente vedemo nelle razze de' cavalli e d'altri animali, ma ancor negli alberi, i rampolli dei quali quasi sempre s'assimigliano al tronco; e se qualche volta degenerano, procede dal mal agricultore. E cosí intervien degli omini, i quali, se di bona crianza sono cultivati, quasi sempre son simili a quelli d'onde procedono e spesso migliorano; ma se manca loro chi gli curi bene, divengono come selvatichi, né mai si maturano."

11 Castiglione 1528 (1998), p. 58.

12 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 138: "Sia questo nostro pittore tanto circospetto et integro in ciascuna parte necessaria all'arte nostra, che merti esser nomato maestro, come pien di magistero e come quello che può perfettamente insegnare ad altrui l'arte e virtù sua. E s'avvenisse che ne fusse richiesto come maestro, se conoscerà il discepolo ben disposto e ch'abbi dell' ingenioso, lo debbi accettare e con amore istruirlo ne l'arte, imitando la natura, la quale non solo pone cura in conservare la già perfetta pianta, ma anco le fa produrre e nodrire delli rampolli, acciò, educati dalla virtù della pianta, quelli conservino la specie e rendi[no] il medemo frutto."

2.1 The Painter's Workshop in Humanist Writing

Although professionally more interested in texts, humanists were aware of these habits of the painters as well. They referred to the workshop of painters occasionally when they needed to illustrate their own methods of instruction, comparing the act of copying drawings to the act of imitating literary models. For instance, when discussing how a boy should be taught to write in a good style, the humanist Gasparino Barzizza reminds his readers of the workshop of a painter where the pupils are compelled to imitate the sketches of their master.[13] The same comparison is made by Leonardo Bruni, who wants the translator of a literary text to be immersed in the original author in exactly the way an artist copies a painting of another painter.[14] Both authors derived their ideas about the dissemination of ethical virtues and skills from ancient rhetoric where the education of the intellectual progeny was considered one of the important tasks of an orator. By imitating various styles and modes of writing from famous authors, the pupil had to acquire a certain set of qualifications that allowed him to become a good rhetor. It was the duty of the instructor to ensure the wellbeing of his students by having them consort with him and choose works that corresponded to his individual nature and predispositions.[15] As a result, it was seldom the case that an apprentice developed a style that was completely independent from the manners of his master. Quite the contrary: it was not only fashionable to imitate the habits of famous rhetors but also common to stick to the style of one's teacher. The close relationship between master and apprentice established a sort of rhetorical school that assured the longevity of characteristic verbal patterns.

When Marsilio Ficino referred to the painter's workshop to illustrate the ideals of humanist teaching, he did so by using similar tropes. In a letter to his friend Pierfilippo Della Corgna, an erudite humanist and doctor of the laws who taught at the universities of Perugia and Ferrara, he compared Della Corgna's

13 As cited in Baxandall 1971, p. 65: "For myself, I would have done what good painters practise towards those who are learning from them; when the apprentices are to be instructed by their masters before having achieved a thorough grasp of the method of painting, the painters follow the practice of giving them a number of fine drawings and pictures as models of the art, and through these they can be brought to make a certain amount of progress even by themselves."

14 As cited in Baxandall 1971, p. 25: "As those who are painting after the model of one picture a second picture take over from their model the figure, posture, movement, and and form of the whole body, and study not what they themselves might do but but rather what the other painter did: so too in translation the good translator will with all his reason, sensibility, and purpose change and in a measure transform himself into the original author of the text."

15 For the teaching of rhetorics in antiquity see Leeman 1963.

teaching methods with the practice of painters. Just as a master paints himself in his apprentices, Pierfilippo would paint himself in his pupil Francesco Soderini.[16] The letter, probably written in march 1474 and circulating in various copies at the court of the Medici before being published in 1495,[17] starts off with an abstract description of a perfect solicitor whose virtues are symbolized by the different members and organs of the body. His *anima* (soul) represents the worship of God, his *spiritus* (spirit) is a sign of his preoccupation with the country, and his *oculi linguaque* (eyes and tongue) stand for scholarliness. It is Ficino's explicit aim to paint his idea of the best solicitor possible; he wants his reader to see the true effigy of the perfect man of law. In the second part of his letter, Ficino illustrates this idea by referring to Della Corgna's pupil Francesco Soderini. According to Ficino, Della Corgna had realized the perfect idea of a solicitor in his pupil by following the custom of painters to paint themselves in their pupils: "Petrusphillipus dum pictorum more se ipsam in Francisco Soderino eius discipulo pinget, idea ipsius reipsa veram similitudinem assequetur." (Pierfilippo will paint himself in his pupil Francesco Soderini in the manner of painters, and thus will execute a faithful image of the idea of himself in reality.)[18]

In his letter Ficino is mainly interested in praising his friend Pierfilippo della Corgna by complimenting him on his pupil Francesco Soderini, the future arch-

16 Ficino 1495, fol. 26v.

17 Ficinos's collection of letters to important philosophers and humanists from the years 1457–1476 was well known at the court of the Medici. After the *editio princeps* of 1495 in Latin, Felice Figliucci published a *volgare* translation in Venice in 1546 where we find the same letter in vol. 1 on fol. 80r.: "Voi desiderate, com' io penso, veder un'effigie e una Idea d'un legittimo legista. O che bello et che nobile spettacolo è egli? L'anima di questa effigie è il culto di Iddio; lo spirito è la cura de le leggi de la prima; il cerebro, è un giudicio vero e acuto, gli occhi e la lingua, la dottrina; il petto una tenace memoria; il cuore, una retta e giusta volontà; le mani, gli effetti de la retta volontà; li piedi, la perseveranza. Il corpo tutto è la equità e la gravità. Ma a che cerco io con parole formare l'Idea d'un perfetto legista? M. Pierfilippo mentre che a usanza di pittore se stesso dipinge in Francesco Soderino suo discepolo, conseguisce la vera similianza di questa Idea." We also dispose of a manuscript in *volgare* by Ficino himself (Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, Casanat. 1297). For the important tradition of writing letters in Renaissance Italy see Clough 1976 and Najemy 1993, pp. 18 ff. Cfr. also Ficino (1975 ff.), vol. 1, pp. 19–24.

18 Ficino 1495, fol 26v.: "Desideras arbitror legitimi iurisconsulti effigiem & indolem intueri, o quam pulchrum spectaculum, quam mirabile, huius anima est Dei cultus, spiritus patriae legis cura, cerebrum, iudicium perspicax, oculi linguaque doctrina. Pectus memoria tenax. Cor recta voluntas. Manus recte voluntatis effectus. Pedes perseverantia. Totum aequitas atque gravitas. Sed quod ego verbis iurisconsulti ideam effingo Petrusphillipus dum pictorum more se ipsam in Francisco Soderino eius discipulo pinget, idea ipsius reipsa veram similitudinem assequetur."

bishop of Volterra and ambassador of Pope Sixtus IV. But the way in which he illustrates the abstract transmission of ethical virtues from one person to another with an example from the art of painting also tells us something about the perception of artworks in 15th century Florence. It is interesting to note that Ficino speaks of the *mos pictorum*; rather than referring to a single artist, he describes a custom that is common to all painters when he uses the plural form of *pictor.* This custom is said to arise from the fact that all painters tend to paint themselves, *se ipsam pingere,* in their pupils. That Ficino draws heavily on concepts that were important for the artists of the Renaissance is also shown by the second half of the sentence. When he speaks of an *idea* that becomes manifest in something alien to itself, he not only evokes Plato's theory of forms but seems to allude to the process of artistic creation as well. The mental image, conceived in the mind of the sculptor or painter, was the prerequisite for every work of art, which could transform into matter only subsequently. This notion was well known since the times of Dante[19] and later found its most prominent articulation in Vasari's definition of *disegno.*[20] In his *Teologia platonica* (1482), Ficino himself put it this way: "A form firstly exists in the artist's mind, secondly in the tools that he wields, and thirdly in the material thus formed."[21] And in another paragraph of the same work, he explicitly draws on the similarities between the character of an artist and the character of his works:

> "A painter too uses his brush as an instrument to trace some form on the wall: the form resembles not the brush but rather his soul, which first conceived it within itself and afterwards brought it forth. Both in nature and in art, therefore, the form of the work refers to the form of the agent."[22]

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19 Dante (1988), p. 505 ff.: "poi chi pinge figura, / se non può esser lei, non la può porre. (…) nullo dipintore potrebbe porre alcuna figura, se intenzionalmente non si facesse prima tale, quale la figura esser dee." (*Convivio,* IV, III, 52–53 and IV, X, 11)

20 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 1, pp. 168 f.: "Perché il disegno, padre delle tre arti nostre architettura, scultura e pittura, procedendo dall'intelletto cava di molte cose un giudizio universale simile a una forma overo idea di tutte le cose della natura […], e perché da questa cognizione nasce un certo concetto e giudizio, che si forma nella mente quella tal cosa che poi espressa con le mani si chiama disegno, si può conchiudere che esso disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell'animo, e di quello che altri si è nella mente imaginato e fabricato nell'idea." For a discussion of the term *disegno* see also Kemp 1974.

21 Ficino 1482 (2001–2006), vol. 3, pp. 145 f. (*Teologia platonica,* X, IV).

22 Ficino 1482 (2001–2006), vol. 3, pp. 145 f. (*Teologia platonica,* X, IV). Cfr. also Ficino, *Opera Omnia,* 1576, p. 229 as cited in Gombrich 1945, p. 59: "In paintings and buildings the wisdom and skill of the artist shines forth. Moreover, we can see in them the attitude and the image, as it were, of his mind; for in these works the mind ex-

Of course, Ficino's letter is full of references to classical antiquity, too. His conception of the human body is determined by physiognomic theory, and his text is probably modelled upon Seneca, who wrote a very similar epistle in which he imagines contemplating the soul of a just man.[23] More importantly, he seems to be paraphrasing Plotinus's *Enneads,* who (citing Plato) discussed the intellectual relationship between a distinguished man and a promising youth in very similar terms: "A worthy man, perceiving in a youth the character of virtue, is agreeably impressed, because he observes that the youth harmonizes with the true type of virtue which he bears within himself."[24] But aside from his classical allusions, Ficino inserts contemporary observations on the art of painting, an art that had only recently begun to interest the circles of humanists and scholars who dominated the intellectual climate of Florence.[25]

2.2 The Discovery of the Individual *maniera*

The great attention which was paid to the copying practices of the young artists indicates an awareness of different stylistic modes and patterns. Only against a cultural background interested in the diversity of human expression was it necessary to ensure the conformity of a pupil's technique to the prevailing stylistic vocabulary of his teacher. Although the Middle Ages discerned occasionally between epochs and schools of painting as well, in the 15th century this awareness increased exponentially and emphasized the achievements of the individual artist.[26]

One indicator of the changing attention paid to the individual differences between painters can be found in the complaints that were made by the widow of Augusto Beccaria to the Duke of Milan in 1476. Disappointed by stylistic inconsistencies in a *Life of Christ* that were made by the painters Bonifazio da Cremona, Vincenzo Foppa and Jacopino Zainario, she asked the artists to revise their work: "We say to you and desire that you take care of it according to your obligation, by arranging that the painting is not done by so many hands as it would seem to

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presses and reflects itself not otherwise than a mirror reflects the face of a man who looks into it. To the greatest degree the mind reveals itself in speeches, songs and skilful harmonies. In these the whole disposition and will of the mind becomes manifest."

23 Seneca (1917–1925), vol. 3, p. 306 (*Epistulae morales,* CXV, 3–4).

24 As cited in Norton 1995, p. 136 (*Enneads,* I, 6, 3).

25 Cfr. Baxandall 1971, pp. 51 ff.

26 See Pfisterer 2002, pp. 40–79 for detailed analysis of this paradigmatic shift.

be done, so as to make the work unharmonious [disforma]."[27] That the beholder of the 15th century was increasingly good at distinguishing the hands of painters is documented in a similar court case in Padua in 1456. When asked if he could tell which parts of a fresco were painted by Andrea Mantegna, the painter Pietro da Milano was able to indicate the corresponding sections without difficulty. Although the judges were skeptical in the beginning, they seem to have been persuaded by Pietro's assertion that an experienced painter is able to recognize the hand of a good master.[28]

Indeed, the first treatise of the early modern age on painting confirms that painters stood in the forefront when it came to discriminating the ways in which a work was done. They used a specific language to indicate these stylistic differences, too. Cennino Cennini's *Libro dell'arte,* probably composed around the year 1390, gives us one of the most intriguing examples of how artists understood the adoption of a certain style or manner. When discussing the education of the apprentice, he recommends that the young artist follow one master, preferably the best in town, as a model for style. By doing so he would be embraced by that master's stylistic manner:

> "Ma per consiglio io ti do: guarda di pigliare sempre il migliore, e quello che ha maggior fama; e, seguitando di dì in dì, contra natura sarà che a te non venga preso di suo' maniera e di suo' aria; perocché se ti muovi a ritrarre oggi di questo maestro, doman di quello, né maniera dell'uno né maniera dell'altro non n'arai, e verrai per forza fantastichetto, per amor che ciascuna maniera ti straccerà la mente."[29]

The terms that are used by Cennini to indicate individual style are *maniera* and *aria.* As has been shown by Marco Treves, the most common meaning of the word *maniera* in Renaissance Italy is the manner, custom, or fashion in which a work is done, a person behaves, or a problem is solved. Etymologically, it derives from the Latin *mos* or *modus.* Thus, in the context of the workshop, *maniera* came in handy to denote the individual style of an artist or the manner of working of an entire nation or of an age.[30] *Aria,* on the other hand, was a term that was specifically related to the facial features of a painted figure. Linguistically, it has strong ties with the ancient *pneuma* or *spiritus* and roughly translates as *air* or *breath.* However, it also had a broad spectrum of meanings that were connected to the ephemeral ex-

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27 Kemp 1987, p. 6.

28 Warnke 1982, p. 56: "Et quia inter pictores semper cognoscitur manu cuius sit aliqua pictura, maxime quando est manu alicuius sollemnis magister."

29 Cennini (1859), pp. 16 f.

30 Treves 1941, p. 69.

pressions of the soul which were believed to manifest themselves primarily in a person's physiognomy.[31] A good example of the term's use in the 14th century can be found in a letter from Petrarch to Boccaccio. When writing about the imitation of literary models in 1366, Petrarch recommends that an adaptation should resemble its model as a son resembles his father. Between father and son – although very dissimilar in person – exists a certain shadow of similarity that is most visible in the face and in the eyes, which the painters nowadays would call an *aer* ("pictores nostri aerem vocant").[32] According to Petrarch this *aer* constitutes the difference between an exact, identical copy of a model and a work of art that reflects the inner qualities of the painter or poet. Moreover, as David Summers has argued, *aria* had strong ethical connotations and was correlated with the character and moral virtues of a painter.[33]

Although *aria* had a more than slightly different meaning from *maniera,* both were used to indicate the same phenomenon. When an anonymous agent reported to the Duke of Milan in 1490 on the painters Botticelli, Filippino, Perugino, and Ghirlandaio, he could easily differentiate their styles by naming them *aria virile, aria dolce* or *aria angelica.*[34] Similarly, Lorenzo Ghiberti uses *maniera* to discern the ancient style of the Greeks, the *maniera greca,* from the modern *maniera* that was represented by Giotto.[35] Furthermore, as is shown by Francisco de Hollanda's *Dialogos,* composed around 1538, both terms could be used simultaneously as well.[36] But because of its philological perspicuity and its deeper roots in the everyday language of the 15th century, *maniera* became the term that was most widely used to indicate stylistic differences during the following centuries. In Vasari's *Vite* from 1568 it is employed well over 1,300 times, outnumbering the use of *aria* by far even if we ignore the semantic ambiguity of the latter.[37]

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31 Summers 1987, p. 120.

32 As cited in Summers 1987, p. 121: "While there is often a great difference in particular features in them, there is a certain shadow, what our painters call an 'air', which is the most visible in the face and in the eyes, which makes the similarity. The moment the son is seen, he reminds us of the father, although if the matter is reduced to measurement, everything would be different; but there is something mysterious, i know not what, that has this power." (*Familiaria,* XXIII) For a discussion of Petrach's letter and its implications for the early modern beliefs on similarity and dissimilarity see Endres 2012, pp. 55–58.

33 Summers 1989, p. 26.

34 See Gilbert 1980, p. 139.

35 Ghiberti (1998), p. 83.

36 De Hollanda 1538 (1899), p. 123.

37 Sohm 1999, p. 104.

Surprisingly, its close relation to the world of the mechanical arts did not prevent the term *maniera* from denoting individual inventiveness and imagination. Traditionally understood as a handicraft, painting was believed to be manually concerned with the simple reproduction of patterns or the representation of a limited set of subjects. It was an art that was mainly associated with the use of the hand, not with the of use the mind. However, *maniera* came to be strongly related to the intellectual capacities of a painter as well. One of the first examples that deals with the reciprocal connection of the personal style of a painter and his inventions can be found in a treatise on architecture. Around 1458, the architect and art theorist Antonio Averlino (better known under the name Filarete), when discussing the different styles of writing, painting, and building, argues that every individual is equipped with a personal *maniera*. Just as God is able to build a great variety of different objects, so too the products of man are dissimilar from each other and distinguishable by their style:

> "[…] come colui che scrive o uno che dipigne, fa che le sue lettere si conoscono, e così colui che dipigne, la sua maniera delle figure si cognosce, e così d'ogni facultà si cognosce lo stile di ciascheduno."[38]

What interests Filarete here is the individual capacity of each painter or writer, not their dependance on the preexistent models of divine creation. In other passages of his treatise he relates this capacity to the so-called *fantasia,* a part of the human mind that was concerned with imagination. Belonging to the first of the three ventricles of the human brain, *fantasia* was responsible for creating new images by referring to the sensory organs or by re-organizing information

38 Filarete (1972), vol. 1, pp. 27 f.: "Sì che credo che Idio, come che mostrò nella generazione umana e anche nelli animali brutti questa varietà e dissimiglianza per dimostrare la sua grande potenza e sapienzia, e anche, com'io ho detto, per più bellezza, e così ha concesso allo ingegno umano, messo che l'uomo non sa da che si venga, che non sia fatto ancora uno edificio che totalmente sia fatto propio uno come un altro. Volse adunque Idio che l'uomo, come che in forma la immagine sua fece a sua similitudine, così partecipasse in fare qualche cosa a sua similitudine mediante lo intelletto che gli concesse […] come colui che scrive o uno che dipigne, fa che le sue lettere si conoscono, e così colui che dipigne, la sua maniera delle figure si cognosce, e così d'ogni facultà si cognosce lo stile di ciascheduno; ma questa è altra pratica, nonostante che ognuno pure divaria o tanto o quanto, benché si conosca essere fatta per una mano. Ho veduto io dipintore e intagliatore ritrarre teste, e massime dell'antidetto illustrissimo Signore duca Francesco Sforza, del quale varie teste furono ritratte, perché era degna e formosa; più d'una da ciascheduno bene l'apropriarono alla sua e asomigliarono, e niente di meno c'era differenza." For a discussion of this passage see Tigler 1963, pp. 82–85 and Pfisterer 2002, pp. 75 f.

that was stored in the *memoria,* the last of the cerebral ventricles. But as an all-pervasive factor, embracing every facet of the conception of a work, *fantasia* was closely correlated with the manual expression of the painter as well.[39]

In the 15th century, discussions of how the hand of a painter related to the different faculties of his mind were usually influenced by the Latin nouns *ars* and *ingenium.* Derived from the Roman rhetors, the first term indicated the technical skills that had to be learnt, whereas the latter signified the individual, innate talents of a pupil. Only a well-balanced combination of both assured the young orator a promising career in the civic administration. The same was believed to be true for the Renaissance artist. Besides his capacity to apply the rules of perspective and proportion, to engage in the preparation of pigments, or to practice in drawing the phenomena of nature, his talent constituted at least half of his artistic makeup. As an indispensable component of his mental and physical disposition, the *ingenium* was responsible for the individual character of an artist and the originality of his works. However, precisely because of its strong impact on the imaginative capabilities of an artist, it had to be controlled by the regulative and objective principles that were established by the *ars.*[40]

Cennino Cennini was well aware of the close connections between the mind and the manual dexterity of a painter. When discussing the different arts that were invented after the original sin of mankind, he defines the art of painting as being constituted by *hoperazione di mano* and *fantasia.* His worthy translation of the Italian terms *arte* and *ingenio* leads us directly to the painter's workshop, where the mental activities of the artist were closely connected with the exhausting physical activities of his body. Cennini could thus rely on a rich tradition of ancient and medieval authors who were concerned with the functions of the human hand. Be it Anaxagoras, Aristotle, or Vincent of Beauvais, the hand was often interpreted as an intellectual tool reflecting the cerebral capacities of an individual.[41] Furthermore, the mind was believed to possess a direct and privileged channel of communication with the hand. Summarizing the scholastic discussions in the 13th century, Albertus Magnus was therefore convinced of an inextricable link between the mental motions and the corresponding manual movements of a

39 Kemp 1977, pp. 369 f.

40 To prevent the artist from losing himself in his own mind, Leon Battista Alberti therefore strongly suggested that one study and learn from nature. Alberti (2002), p. 156: "Ma per non perdere studio e fatica si vuole fuggire quella consuetudine d'alcuni sciocchi, i quali presuntuosi di suo ingegno, senza avere essemplo alcuno dalla natura quale con occhi o mente seguano, studiano da sé a sé acquistare lode di dipignere. Questi non imparano dipignere bene, ma assuefanno sé a' suoi errori."

41 See Löhr 2008, p. 154.

person.[42] The distinction between the style or *maniera* of a painter and the products of his mind, his *fantasie* or *invenzioni,* is therefore unlikely to have been the main interest of the Renaissance beholder. The more the painters were engaged in inventing new compositions and iconographies instead of copying established visual traditions, the more their style was associated with the minds of the painters themselves. Michelangelo, whose style and works represented the peak of artistic excellence in the 16th century, gives us a good example of this doctrine when he underscores the primacy of the intellect in the process of artistic creation in one of his famous sonnets: "solo a quello arriva la man che ubbidisce all'intelletto."[43] However, the attempt to hide the physically laborious part of the painter's practice by emphasizing the use of his mind is also a result of his pursuit of social emancipation. By this means the artist could veer away from the *artes mechanicae,* traditionally concerned with manual activities, and strive for the *artes liberales,* the socially elevated disciplines that were more related to the expressions of the mind.[44]

2.3 *Ogni pittore dipinge sé*

By the end of the 15th century the hitherto discussed examples of artistic distinctiveness, mostly verbalized in a humanistic or artistic context, had transformed into the widely-accepted notion that "every painter paints himself".[45] In a similar form, already used in a letter by Marsilio Ficino (see Chapter 2.1), the dictum

42 As cited in Löhr 2008, p. 172: "Dicendum, quod manus appropriantur homini, quia manus est tamquam organum intellectus, quo homo maxime exsequitur, quod intellectu capit, quia sicut homo per intellectum potest in omnia intelligibilia, sic per manus potest in omnia operabilia. Et sicut per intellectum habet quasi potentiam infinitam homo, quia non potest tot intelligere, quin plura adhuc possit intelligere, sic et per manus non potest tot operari, quin adhuc plura possit, si ratio adveniat. Et licet omnia membra oboediant intelectui et rationi, nullum tamen ita sicut manus. Unde cum aliquis intendit exprimere, quod intime intelligit, vis potest manus retinere, quia ita multum oboedit manus intellectui, quod naturaliter intendit opere manifestare, quod interius concipitur in animo." (*De animalibus,* XIV). A similar view is expressed in Alberti (2002), pp. 160 f.: "E l'ingegno mosso e riscaldato per essercitazione molto si rende pronto ed espedito al lavoro; e quella mano seguita velocissimo, quale sia da certa ragione d'ingegno ben guidata."

43 Michelangelo (1967), p. 161.

44 For this shift see for instance Sohm 1999 and Boschloo 2008.

45 For the vast literature on this proverb see at least Kemp 1976, Chastel 1959, p. 102–105, D'Angelo 1991, Zöllner 1992, Pfisterer 1996, p. 137–138, Plackinger 2016, p. 167–176.

soon turned into a proverb which appeared in various contexts. As a popularized synthesis of the complex interaction between the artist's *ars* and *ingenium,* it described the simple fact that a painter was believed to manifest himself in his works. But the way in which this manifestation occurred, i.e., the exact meaning of the expression, was often subject to change.

One of the reasons for the ambiguity of the dictum lies in its semantic flexibility. The reflexive pronoun *sé* allowed its commentators to associate various aspects of the individuality of an artist with his work, whereas the noun *pittore* and the verb *dipingere* had a narrower spectrum of denotations.[46] As a semiotic placeholder, the pronoun could thus be used to indicate the artist's character and soul, his style or manner of working, or even his physical features. In short: The saying *Ogni pittore dipinge sé* assumed different forms and meanings: it figured as a proverb, was used as a metaphor, or appeared in the form of an aphorism. Eventually it turned into a topos, a literary commonplace, that was used in a stereotypical yet telling way when treating the life and work of artists in early modern biographies.

The success and longevity of the notion derived partly from its deep roots in ancient philosophy, since one of its most enduring beliefs was that there is a close resemblance between a cause and its effect. Plato and Aristotle had already discussed the matter, with the latter repeatedly referring to it in both his *Generation of animals* and his *Metaphysics.* Although he thought the same principles were valid for artificial production as well (the world of the so-called *techne*), his most telling example is the act of procreation by which the father generates offspring that are similar to himself; a principle that future commentators of Aristotle's works often summarized in the formula *Homo hominem generat.*[47] This law of similarity, later also discussed by Avicenna,[48] was particularly interesting to medieval authors who were concerned with the physical manifestations of God. If it was true that every agent acts according to its own likeness, the earth and all of

46 See Battaglia 1960–2004, vol. 5, 512, No. 20.

47 See Rosemann 1994.

48 Avicenna (2007), p. 512: "La ragione per cui si ritiene che il figlio rimanga dopo il padre, l'edificio dopo il costruttore ed il calore dopo il fuoco è una confusione derivante dall'ignoraza della vera causa. Il costruttore, il padre ed il fuoco, infatti, non sono le vere cause della sussistenza di questi causati. Il costruttore che vi lavora, infatti, non è la causa della sussistenza dell'edificio, e nemmeno della sua esistenza. Per quanto riguarda il costruttore, il suo movimento è la causa di un certo movimento nella materia dell'edificio. Il suo stare fermo ed il suo cessare di muoversi, poi, sono la causa della fine di questo movimento. […] È opinione comune che l'agente che produce un'esitenza simile alla propria sia più degno di avere la natura che esso conferisce e la possieda in maggior grado rispetto alle altre cose."

its creatures must bear some resemblance to its creator. As God himself had already declared in the *Book of Genesis,* he "created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him." Boethius was one of the first authors who founded his theology on this principle. By assuming a resemblance between product and producer he could read the world as being an image of God himself.[49] The writings of Nicholas of Cusa show us that this interpretation remained fashionable until far into the 15th century. Radicalizing the ideas of his predecessors, he imagines God the Father as an *artifex divinus* who paints himself in the vest of the phenomena of nature just because he likes seeing a true image of himself. It is through the admiration of these divine reflections that man is able to grasp the meaning of God's various revelations about himself.[50]

Thomas Aquinas, the key figure of scholasticism often addressed as *doctor universalis,* was similarly interested in the generative powers of nature. Closely following Aristotle's observations in the matter, he developed a universal theory of causation that was likewise founded on analogies. According to this theory, every cause necessarily produces an effect that – in a certain way – is similar to its cause. This simple principle finds its expression in the formula *Omne agens agit sibi simile* which frequently appears in his writings.[51] Sometimes he applies this principle in an inductive way: Observing the effects of a cause, he tries to establish a general rule for the law of similarity between cause and effect. As has been shown by Battista Mondin, however, his main argument evolves from a deductive perspective, starting with the cause of an effect. His conclusion is that a cause cannot produce effects of all kinds arbitrarily, but that it only and necessarily

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49 Boethius (1918), p. 263–265: "O Thou, that dost the world in lasting order guide, / Father of heaven and earth, Who makest time swiftly slide, / And, standing still Thyself, yet fram'st all moving laws, / Who to Thy work wert moved by no external cause: / But by a sweet desire, where envy hath no place, / Thy goodness moving Thee to give each thing his grace, / Thou dost all creatures' forms from highest patterns take, / From Thy fair mind the world fair like Thyself doth make. / Thus Thou perfect the whole perfect each part dost frame." (*De consolatione philosophiae,* III, IX, 8). For a reference to this passage during the exequie of Michelangelo cfr. Saviello 2012, pp. 231 f.

50 Nicholas of Cusa (1985), p. 735: "You created as if you were a painter who mixes different colors in order, at length, to be able to paint himself – to the end that he may have an image of himself wherein he himself may take delight and his artistry may find rest. Although the divine painter is one and is not multipliable, he can nevertheless be multiplied in the way in which this is possible: viz., in a very close likeness. However, he makes many figures, because the likeness of his infinite power can be unfolded in the most perfect way only in many figures" (*De visione dei,* XXV, 111). For the concept of the *deus artifex* see Kris/Kurz 1934, pp. 60 ff. For the idea of the world as a self-portrait of God in Ficino's works see Beierwaltes 1980.

51 Mondin 1960.

produces effects according to its own nature: i.e., the nature of the effect is pre-contained in the nature of the cause.[52] Furthermore the cause is not only a simple external condition of the effect, but it vitally partakes in the process of the genesis of the effect by transmitting something of itself.[53] But it is also clear from Aquinas' argumentation that no effect can ever be the totally adequate image of its cause. Just as a father and his son share a resemblance without being entirely alike, the relationship between cause and effect consists of similarity, not identity.[54] In addition to this example, Aquinas gives many others, including one addressing an artist, and one addressing God. Both causes imprint their likenesses in matter: the artist when realizing a drawing on paper, God when creating the earth and its various creatures. Especially in the case of God, this likeness is merely a rough approximation: His own being infinite, the limited number of objects in the world would only give us a very vague idea of his likeness.[55]

That the scholastic dictum *Omne agens agit sibi simile* was eventually transformed into the popular saying *Ogni pittore dipinge sé* was probably due to the friar Girolamo Savonarola.[56] As a Dominican he was not only acquainted with the work of Thomas Aquinas, but bound to preach in the vernacular language as well. His numerous sermons, often delivered in Santa Maria del Fiore, the main church of Florence, repeatedly referred to the fathers of ancient wisdom and transformed their writings into popular content.[57] Because of his great popularity, Savonarola's erudite and often agressive lectures were very well attended and

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52 For the principle of analogy in Aquinas cfr. Mondin 2002, pp. 250–256.

53 Thomas Aquinas (1984), p. 157: "For fire heats not inasmuch as it is actually bright, but inasmuch as it is actually hot. It is for this reason that every agent produces an effect similar to itself."

54 Mondin 2002, p. 254.

55 See Thomas Aquinas (1975), p. 45: "Since every agent intends to introduce its likeness into its effect, in the measure that its effect can receive it, the agent does this the more perfectly as it is the more perfect itself; obviously, the hotter a thing is, the hotter its effect, and the better the craftsman, the more perfectly does he put into matter the form of his art. Now, God is the most perfect agent. It was His prerogative, therefore, to induce His likeness into created things most perfectly, to a degree consonant with the nature of created being. But created things cannot attain to a perfect likeness to God according to only one species of creature. For, since the cause transcends the effect, that which is in the cause, simply and unitedly, exists in the effect in composite and multiple fashion – unless the effect attain to the species of the cause; which cannot be said in this case, because no creature can be equal to God. The presence of multiplicity and variety among created things was therefore necessary that a perfect likeness to God be found in them according to their manner of being."

56 For the similarity of *Omne agens agit sibi simile* and *Ogni pittore dipinge sé* see also Pfisterer 2001, p. 327.

57 Cfr. Lesnick 1989.

even maintained in written records before being published in comprehensive volumes. In one of these preachings, given in the Lenten season of 1495, he explains the creation of man in God's image by referring to the hitherto discussed principles of causation:

> "Poi dicevano questi filosofi [i.e., the ancient philosophers] che omne agens facit sibi simile, idest che ogni agente fa lo effecto simile a se secondo quella forma mediante la quale opera, verbigratia, il fuoco scalda questo legno, et fallo ad se simile, perche è caldo lui, lo edificatore edifica la casa et falla simile a se, non simile a se che lui sia casa, ma simile a la idea che se haveva prima facta nelo intellecto, et perho dissi secondo la forma con la quale opera. Dio ha facto l'huomo simile a se, non che Dio habi corpo, ma secondo la idea che hebe nela mente, cosi s'intende."[58]

Both examples, that of the fire that extends its virtues by producing more fire and that of the architect who builds the house according to his mental design, are very conventional; they had been in use since the time of Aristotle. Even in the following year Savonarola had contented himself with the traditional forms of explanation by giving the examples of a human who begets another human or of a horse that begets another horse.[59] However, in a later sermon that he delivered in Santa Maria del Fiore, his approach to the scholastic formula displays a somewhat more open attitude. In February of 1497, when criticizing Plato's and Aristotle's conception of God as being more concerned with the world of ideas than with terrestrial problems, he gives the formula a particular twist by using an entirely new example:

> "Omne agens agit in quantum est in actu: & inquanto uno e piu formale e piu activo & lo acto dice perfectione & la materia imperfectione. Essendo Dio adunque acto puro e tutto perfectione: ergo è la prima cosa bonta. […] E si dice che ogni pittore dipinge se medesimo. Non dipinge gia se inquanto huomo: perche fa delle imagini di leoni cavalli huomini & donne che non sono se: ma dipinge se inquanto dipintore: idest secondo il suo concepto. Et benche siano diverse phantasie: & figure de dipintori che dipingono:

58 Savonarola 1513, p. 50.

59 Savonarola (1962), vol. 1, p. 193–194: "Nelle cose naturali l'omo genera l'altro omo, el cavallo l'altro cavallo, la vite l'altra vite, e ogni cosa genera e fa simile a sé, e nessuna cosa estende la sua virtù fori della sua specie, se non in quelle cose che Dio vuole monstrare miracolo. Nelle cose dove Dio monstra miracolo, Lui estende la sua virtù dentro a quelle; nel foco dello Inferno Lui vi estende dentro la sua virtù, onde opera miracolosamente nelli spiriti. Nella virga di Aron, quando la fiorì, Dio estese la sua virtù là dentro. El simile adunque, nelle cose naturali, produce e genera uno altro simile. Così nelle cose spirituali serva Dio questo medesimo ordine."

> tamen sono tutte secondo il concepto suo: cosi li philosophi perche erono superbi: descripsono idio per modi altieri & gonfiati: & cosi come loro non si degnavano di abbassarsi per la excellentia che gli pareva essere sapienti: dissono anche che Dio non si abbasava alle cose humane: perché se si fussi mescolato in queste cose humane, pareva loro vile."[60]

Probably inspired by the flourishing workshops of the Florentine painters, he no longer refers to the builder who builds a house to demonstrate the validity of the principle *Omne agens agit sibi simile.* Instead, he uses the example of the painter who realizes a design according to his own ideas to show that the ancient philosophers were similarly painting themselves when imagining an indifferent God. His example is not only a harsh criticism of the philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle, but also gives us an explicit definition of what was meant when painters were said to paint themselves. Rather than a reproduction of their physical likeness in the form of a self-portrait, Savonarola thought of the incorporeal conceptions and ideas of their minds. Just as God is manifest in terrestrial matters without being identical to them, the artist also expresses himself when painting figures other than the human body. The term *concepto,* by which Savonarola addresses this capacity of the painter, was frequently used in artistic contexts and can be understood as a close relative of the more philosophical term *idea.* As an innate quality of the painter's personal disposition, the *concepto* or *concetto* describes the individual preferences of his mind that manifest themselves in the great variety of things produced by the painter who had become a godlike *artifex divinus.*[61] In painting various *phantasie* and *figure* the artists could rely on the authority of one of the most prolific authors in 15th century Italy. Only a few years before Savonarola delivered his sermon, Angelo Poliziano had claimed the right to express himself independently of the restrictive patterns of literary expression, represented by the writings of Cicero.[62] By gradually assuming a social status similar to the writers of the Renaissance, the painters of Florence demanded the same rights. This fact was known to Savonarola, infamous for his concerns about the increasing amount of licentious and self-indulgent paintings.[63]

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60 Savonarola 1517, fol. 71v.

61 Cfr. Zöllner 1992, p. 143.

62 As cited in Godman 1998, p. 46: "'Non exprimis (inquit aliquis) Ciceronem'. Quid tum? Non enim sum Cicero, me tamen (ut opinor) exprimo." ("'You do not write like Cicero,' someone says. So what? I am not Cicero. Yet i do manage to express myself, I think.") Poliziano's urge for an individual style was expressed in a letter to Paolo Cortesi, datable in the years 1480–1490 and discussing the following of literary models.

63 Cfr. Steinberg 1977, esp. pp. 58 ff.

Leonardo da Vinci and Paolo Pino on Automimesis

At approximately the same time that Savonarola observed a similarity between the painter and the concepts of his mind, Leonardo was equally interested in the relationship between a painter and his paintings.[64] In various passages of his vast corpus of manuscripts, he articulates his conviction that painters tend to paint figures which resemble themselves; like Savonarola, he relies partly on Aristotelian and Thomistic principles of causation to explain this phenomenon. His observations about the so-called automimesis, covering a period of time that ranges from the early 1490s up to the 1510s, were later published in the *Trattato della pittura,* a treatise on painting which influenced the entire field of European art theory.

Leonardo labeled the tendency of painters to produce unwitting self-portraits as their greatest defect.[65] In contrast to Savonarola, he understood this inclination of the artists not as an expression of their ideas or *concetti* but in a literal sense as a reflection of their own physical features. As he states in his writings, a painter with clumsy hands will paint similar hands in his works and any part of his body will resonate in the features of his figures.[66] According to Leonardo, this is especially apparent in the *aria* of a painting: The physiognomy of the painter reveals itself in the facial expressions of his figures, resulting in a great number of identical faces.[67] In short, every facet of a painting reflects the shortcomings or virtues of the external appearance of its painter. Furthermore, Leonardo extended his theory to include personality traits of the painter as well: the whole attitude and character of the painter are echoed in the gestures and movements of his pictorial compositions. If the painter were quick-witted, his figures would be of a similar

64 Leonardo's thoughts on automimesis have been thoroughly examined by Gombrich 1954, Kemp 1976, Zöllner 1992, Laurenza 2001, pp. 111–126, Zöllner 2005, and Zöllner 2009.

65 Leonardo (1995), p. 75.

66 Leonardo (1995), p. 74: "Dell'inganno che si riceve nel giudizio delle membra. Quel pittore che avrà goffe mani, le farà simili nelle sue opere, e così gl'interverrà in qualunque membro, se il lungo studio non glielo vieta. Adunque tu, pittore, guarda bene quella parte che hai piú brutta nella tua persona, ed a quella col tuo studio fa buon riparo; imperocché se sarai bestiale, le tue figure parranno il simile, e senza ingegno, e similmente ogni parte di buono e di tristo che hai in te si dimostrerà in parte nelle tue figure."

67 Leonardo (1995), p. 109: "Del diversificare le arie de' volti nelle istorie. Comune difetto è ne' dipintori italici il riconoscersi l'aria e figura dell'operatore, mediante le molte figure da lui dipinte; onde, per fuggire tale errore, non sieno fatte, né replicate mai, né tutto, né parte delle figure, che un volto si veda nell'altro nell'istoria."

demeanour; if the painter were pious, his figures, with their short necks, would have a similar shape; and if he were maniacal, his paintings with their disoriented figures, would demonstrate a comparable quality.[68]

But Leonardo did not limit his studies of the matter to empirical observations alone. On the contrary, his scientific approach to the phenomenon resulted in a highly consistent theory which described involuntary self-portraiture as a complex interaction between the painter's soul, judgement, and body. The main points of his tripartite theory may be summarized briefly.

1) The soul is the governor of the body. As stated by Leonardo, the soul forms the human body by determining its growth and development according to its own likeness.[69] The external appearance of every single individual – its proportions, posture, and physiognomy – is therefore a mere manifestation of the incorporeal qualities of the soul. Far from being original, this theory was common knowledge during the Renaissance and had primarily been developed by Aristotle. In both his *De anima*[70] and his *Physiognomonica*[71], he relies on the idea of the generative powers of the soul, in the latter work by interpreting physical features as a sign of certain ethical predispositions of the soul. In the Middle Ages, Albertus Magnus confirmed these assumptions in his influential *De animalibus.* When discussing the question whether a man's members are created successively or all at once, he links the diversity of the human body to the qualities of its individual soul: "Each member of an organic and animate body has an essential sharing with the soul,

68 Leonardo (1995), p. 75: "Del massimo difetto de' pittori. Sommo difetto è de' pittori replicare i medesimi moti e medesimi volti e maniere di panni di una medesima istoria, e fare la maggior parte de' volti che somigliano al loro maestro, la qual cosa mi ha molte volte dato ammirazione perché ne ho conosciuto alcuni che in tutte le loro figure pareva si fossero ritratti al naturale; ed in quelle si vede gli atti e i modi del loro fattore, e s'egli è pronto nel parlare e ne' moti, le sue figure sono il simile in prontitudine; e se il maestro è divoto, il simile paiono le figure co' loro colli torti; e se il maestro è da poco, le sue figure paiono la pigrizia ritratta al naturale; e se il maestro è sproporzionato, le figure sue son simili; e s'egli è pazzo, nelle sue istorie si dimostra largamente, le quali sono nemiche di conclusione, e non stanno attente alle loro operazioni, anzi, chi guarda in qua, chi in là come se sognassero: e così segue ciascun accidente in pittura il proprio accidente del pittore."

69 Leonardo (1995), p. 76.

70 Aristotle (1908–1952), vol. 3, p. 69 (*De anima,* 412a21). For a discussion of the impact of *De anima* on the Cinquecento cfr. Salatowsky 2006, p. 157 and pp. 185–195.

71 The authorship of the *Physiognomonica* was not questioned until the 17th century, and even today the discussion about whether Aristotle is to be identified as its author is not yet concluded, see Vogt 1999.

since one of the powers of the soul is its substantial form."[72] Similar notions can be found in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, who condensed the scholastic presumptions in the long-lasting formula *Anima forma corporis.*[73]

Although familiar with Latin sources, Leonardo probably derived his ideas from Hieronymo Manfredi's seminal *Liber de homine,* also known as *Libro del perché.*[74] Written in the vernacular and printed in 1474, it represents a simplified collection of Aristotelian and neoplatonic beliefs regarding the mysteries of the human body and was frequently republished in the 15th and 16th century. When Manfredi discusses the power of the soul under the title "Perche le passion del'animo son casione de indure diversi accidenti et infirmità nei corpi", he confirms its importance as a governor of the body:

> "La maiestà divina ha posto l'anima, che è cosa inmateriale, nei corpi a governare una cosa materiale. Halli dato uno instrumento obediente et ordinato a quella, mediante il quale lei habbia a regnere e governare il corpo e produca le operatione debite in esso. […] Ne obsta che l'anima immateriale e questi spiriti siano corpi materiali, perché egli hanno una certa proprietà e qualità occulta e convenentia con l'anima, per comandamento de Dio ad obedirla e di moverse in ciascun verso o luoco dove a lei piace. Unde noi vedemo che l'anima move un brazzo in suxo mediante il spirito che è in esso brazo e move l'altro in zoso mediante il spirito che è in quello."[75]

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72 Albertus Magnus (1999), vol. 2, pp. 1179, 1408 (*De Animalibus,* XVI, 8). In his treatise *De anima* (see for instance II, I, 3 and II, IV, 12) Albertus is similarly interested in the question.

73 Thomas Aquinas (1984), p. 63: "And thus it follows that when the body is separated from the soul, the latter loses its individuation. In that case the soul could not subsist of itself nor be a particular thing. On the other hand, if the soul is individuated by itself, it is either a form in its entirety (simplex) or is something composed of matter and form. If it is a form in its entirety, it follows that one individuated soul could differ from another only according to form. But difference in form causes difference in species. Hence it would follow that the souls of different men are specifically diverse; and if the soul is the form of the body, men differ specifically among themselves, because each and every thing derives its species from its proper form. On the other hand, if the soul is composed of matter and form, it would be impossible for the soul as a whole to be the form of the body, for the matter of a thing never has the nature of a form." For a summary of the medieval discussion of body and soul cfr. Miteva 2012 and specifically in connection to Leonardo Baader 2006, p. 118.

74 For a further discussion of Manfredi and authors such as Avicenna and Galen in relation to Leonardo see Laurenza 2001, pp. 103–110.

75 Manfredi 1474 (1988), pp. 170–171 (*De homine,* I, VII, 1).

As we shall see in the following sections, this power of the soul to move the different members of the human body was of utmost significance to Leonardo's theory of automimesis.

2) Judgement is a part of the soul. Leonardo believed the faculty of judgement, the *giudizio,* to be a part of the individual soul, residing in the central ventricle of the human brain. Data received through the sensory organs are first analysed in the *imprensiva* and then passed to the *senso comune,* the second ventricle, where it is valued and classified according to the individual's judgement. Depending on the given importance, the data are eventually stored in the last ventricle, the *memoria.* Because Leonardo considered judgement to be the central unit of artistic invention, this was of no small consequence for him. According to his theory, a painter is tempted to admire figures that resemble himself precisely because of his innate predilection for forms that correspond to his own soul,[76] a principle that Renaissance humanists described as *convenientia* or *aedequatio.*[77]

3) Judgement determines the movements of the hand. Leonardo thought the soul to be connected to the body by means of the *spirito,* an ethereal substance believed to consist of the most refined parts of the blood and to pervade the entire human body. Because nerves, muscles, and bones underly its powers, the soul is in full possession of the mental and physical properties of a person. Further, just as described by Manfredi in his *Liber de homine,* the spiritual movements of the soul are able to reposition the members of its body, moving the painter's hand here

76 Leonardo (1995), p. 77: "[…] perché l'anima, maestra del tuo corpo, è quella che è il tuo proprio giudizio, e volentieri si diletta nelle opere simili a quella che essa operò nel comporre del suo corpo: e di qui nasce che non è sí brutta figura di femmina, che non trovi qualche amante, se già non fosse mostruosa." Cfr. Kemp 1976, p. 315.

77 This principle, also apparent in the proverb *Ogni simile appetisce il suo simile,* is already described in the *Rhetoric* by Aristotle, which was published in *volgare* in Florence in 1549. Aristotle (1549), p. 63: "Et perche egli è piacevole tutto quello, che è naturale, essendo le cose dei parenti naturali inverso l'un dell'altro, però tutte le parentele, & tutte le similitudini ci dan' piacere il piu delle volte, sicome fa l'huomo all'altro huomo, & il cavallo al cavallo, & il giovane al giovane; La onde è il Proverbio Che il simile appetisce il simile. Et che al simile il simile sempre è amico. Et che la fiera conosce la fiera. Et che la cornacchia sta con la cornacchia, & altre cose simiglianti. Ma perche tutto quello, che ci è simile, & che ci è congiunto per parentado, ci arreca piacere, essendo queste due conditioni in ciaschedun' huomo, massimamente inverso di se medesimo, per necessità si conchiude, che tutti gli huomini sieno di loro stessi amatori ò piu, ò meno, perche le cose dette disopra sono massimamente in se stesso. Et perche chiascheduno ama se medesimo, però tutte le cose, che da noi stessi dependono, di necessità ci arrecan' piacere, come sono l'attioni, & i ragionamenti."

and there. By doing so, the soul reproduces the patterns and forms that are most convenient, i.e., most identical, to itself, and patterns that are in accordance with its judgement will be stored in the easily accessible *memoria.*[78]

Having thoroughly analysed the causes of its coming into being, Leonardo was also able to propose a remedy for automimesis. His advice to the painters, articulated in his *Trattato della pittura,* aimed at manipulating or training the painter's faculty of judgement. Through the continuous examination of figures that were commonly believed to be beautiful, it was possible to overwrite the preexistent, individual preferences.[79]

Obviously, this practice was only necessary for those painters who did not conform to the contemporary ideals of beauty. According to Leonardo's theory of the soul, a painter with disproportionate members would only paint misfigured paintings, whereas a beautiful artist would produce beautiful and harmonious works of art. The first step of his therapy against involuntary self-portraiture consisted therefore of the advice to refer to certain prototypes with good proportions when composing paintings. Used as exemplary models, they help the painter overcome his habit of reproducing figures similar to himself. In a second step, the painter can compare his own body to the proportions of the exemplary model. By noting differences and gaining a more conscious perception of his own corporeal shortcomings, the artist becomes more attentive when imitating his own features involuntarily in his works.[80] According to Leonardo, the same method should be applied to guarantee a great variety of physiognomies. By choosing *arie* from

78 Leonardo (1995), p. 76: "[…] mi pare che sia da giudicare che quell'anima che regge e governa ciascun corpo si è quella che fa il nostro giudizio innanzi sia il proprio giudizio nostro. Adunque essa ha condotto tutta la figura dell'uomo, come essa ha giudicato quello star bene, o col naso lungo, o corto, o camuso, e così gli affermò la sua altezza e figura. Ed è di tanta potenza questo tal giudizio, ch'egli muove le braccia al pittore e gli fa replicare se medesimo, parendo ad essa anima che quello sia il suo modo di figurare l'uomo, e chi non fa come lei faccia errore." For Leonardo's use of *memoria* see Kwakkelstein 2012, p. 175.

79 Cfr. Zöllner 1992, pp. 144 f. and Zöllner 2009, p. 54.

80 Leonardo (1995), pp. 76 f.: "Precetto, che il pittore non s'inganni nell'elezione della figura in che esso fa l'abito. Deve il pittore fare la sua figura sopra la regola d'un corpo naturale, il quale comunemente sia di proporzione laudabile; oltre di questo far misurare se medesimo e vedere in che parte la sua persona varia assai o poco da quella antedetta laudabile; e, avuta questa notizia, deve riparare con tutto il suo studio di non incorrere ne' medesimi mancamenti nelle figure da lui operate, che nella persona sua si trovano."

beautiful faces, the artist could avoid painting faces that are similar to his own physiognomy.[81]

As has been noted by Frank Zöllner, Leonardo's fight against automimesis is closely connected with his conception of painting as a scientific tool. The exact representation of natural objects demonstrates his will to establish an art that is free from individual preferences. By using mathematical methods of measuring and applying a universal canon of proportions, he abandoned subjective ideals in favor of rational criteria and objective principles. Although he was later somewhat more critical towards this mathematical approach when discussing the *ingegno* of the artist,[82] some of his drawings confirm his obsession with ultimately valid formulae. The most famous of these drawings is the so-called *Homo vitruvianus* (Fig. 2), a pictorial interpretation of a famous passage written by Vitruvius in his *De architectura,* the only surviving treatise on architecture from antiquity. According to the Roman architect, the proportions of a human body are most perfect if fit to both a square and a sphere.[83] Drawn in the years around 1490, Leonardo's study thus coincides with his theoretical consideration of unwitting self-portraiture and may well have been seen as a practical solution to the problem of automimesis. The *Homo vitruvianus* serves as an *exemplum proportionis,* allowing the painter to overcome his habit of reproducing his own corporeal faults in his paintings by constantly referring to ideal measures.[84]

Leonardo's ideas became important to other artists as well. As has been stated earlier, his *Trattato della pittura,* mainly compiled by Francesco Melzi, Leonardo's heir and one of his students, had a huge influence on early modern art

81 Leonardo (1995), p. 88: "Della elezione de' bei visi. Parmi non piccola grazia quella di quel pittore, il quale fa buone arie alle sue figure. La qual grazia chi non l'ha per natura la può pigliare per accidentale studio in questa forma. Guarda a tôrre le parti buone di molti visi belli, le quali belle parti sieno conformi piú per pubblica fama che per tuo giudizio; perché ti potresti ingannare togliendo visi che avessero conformità col tuo; perché spesso pare che simili conformità ci piacciano, e se tu fossi brutto eleggeresti visi non belli, e faresti brutti visi, come molti pittori, ché spesso le figure somigliano al maestro; sicché piglia le bellezze, come ti dico, e quelle metti in mente."

82 Leonardo (1995), pp. 197 f.: "Delle prime quattro parti che si richiedono alla figura. L'attitudine è la prima parte piú nobile della figura; non che la buona figura dipinta in trista attitudine abbia disgrazia, ma la viva in somma bontà di bellezza perde di riputazione, quando gli atti suoi non sono accomodati all'ufficio ch'essi hanno a fare. Senza alcun dubbio essa attitudine è di maggiore speculazione che non è la bontà in sé della figura dipinta; conciossiaché tale bontà di figura si possa fare per imitazione della viva, ma il movimento di tal figura bisogna che nasca da grande discrezione d'ingegno; la seconda parte nobile è l'avere rilievo; la terza è il buon disegno; la quarta il bel colorito."

83 Vitruvius (1964), pp. 136–143 (*De architectura,* III, I, 1–7).

84 Zöllner 2009, pp. 54–57.

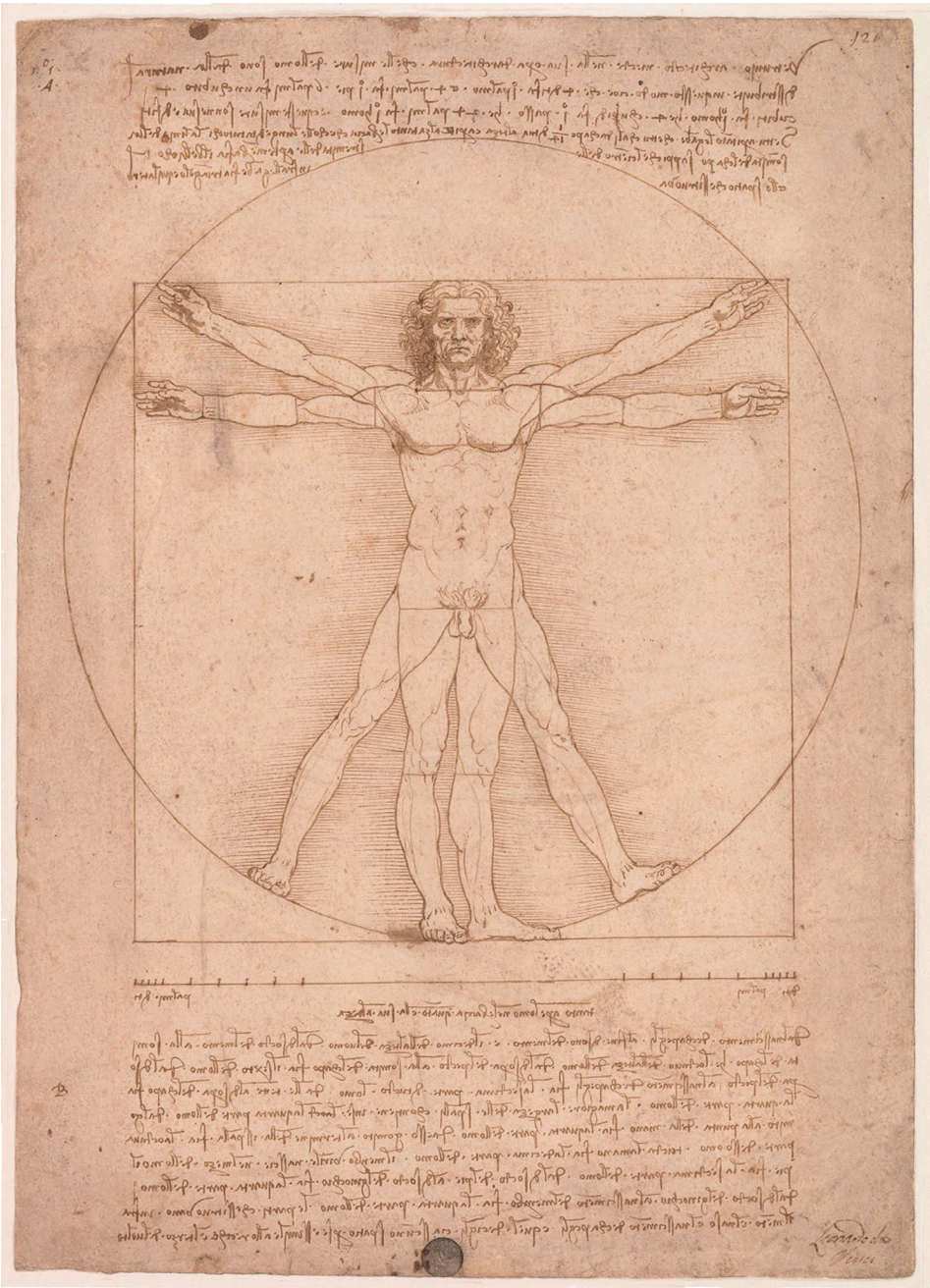

Figure 2 Leonardo da Vinci, Homo vitruvianus, ca. 1490, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia

theory. This is not only true for the time after the first edition of his treatise was printed in 1651, but also for the preceding years. Especially in the decades following Leonardo's death in 1519, his writings were paid close attention. Abridged versions of his manuscripts, as well as copies of his unfinished *Trattato della pittura,* were circulating, allowing art theorists like Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo and Raffaele Borghini to incorporate his material into their own books. And because our modern ideas of authorship only vaguely applied to the standards of the 16th century, the source of their inspiration was seldomly declared.[85]

Paolo Pino's *Dialogo di pittura* confirms these observations about original authorship. His treatise, printed in 1548, draws heavily on ideas that bear a strong resemblance to the work of Leonardo.[86] Not only does the Venetian painter and art theorist despise the recurrent use of identical figures according to the widely-accepted principles of *varietà* (see Chapter 3.2),[87] but he also suggests a method of selective imitation to achieve a generally accepted form of beauty.[88] Moreover, he confirms Leonardo's singular observation that painters tend to reproduce their own physical features in their figures. Just as Leonardo did, he relies on the principle of *aedequatio* or *convenientia* to explain this phenomenon.[89] Because every creature will be attracted by forms similar to itself, small painters or painters with a malformed stature will repeat their own corporeal shortcomings in their paintings.[90] And when discussing the precepts for being a good artist in the last part of his *Dialogo,* Pino similarly addresses the *Homo vitruvianus.* As a remedy against unwitting self-portraiture it is best if the painter has Vitruvian proportions, which would allow him to paint perfect figures by simply taking himself as an example. However, as noted by Paola Barocchi,[91] Pino's passage on automimesis also

85 Farago 2009, pp. 1, 31.

86 Cfr. for other borrowings Dubus 2011, pp. 17–24.

87 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 115.

88 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), pp. 98–99.

89 Pino evokes these principles by referring to the proverb *Ogni simile appetisce il suo simile,* already cited by Aristotle (*Rhetoric,* I, XI, 26) and i.a. used by Bocaccio in his *Corbaccio.* It is also included in Orlando Pescetti's *Proverbi italiani,* published in Verona 1598. An overview of its different usages and other examples can be found in *Thesaurus proverbiorum medii aevi,* edited by Ricarda Liver, Berlin 1997 ff., vol. 5, pp. 39 ff.

90 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 133: "E perché si vede espresso che tutte le creature appetiscono il loro simile, non fa al preposito ch'il pittore sia di statura picciola o difforme, che potrebbe di facile incorrer nelli propii errori, dipignendo le figure nane e mostruose; et anco, molti di loro sono inconsiderati e troppo veementi. Non sia grande in estremo, assai delli quali sono sgraziati, pigri et inscipidi; ma sia il pittore nella porzione che già v'ho descritta secondo Vitruvio, ch'averà più facile adito di formare le figure perfette, traendo l'essemplo di sé stesso."

91 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 426.

shows a strong dissimilarity to Leonardo's theory: Whereas the latter develops a method to overcome this vice through continuous studies, Pino is convinced of an unchangeable relationship between the painter and his figures, a belief confirmed by other paragraphs in his treatise.[92] Although it is difficult to determine the source of Paolo Pino's knowledge of Leonardo's thoughts, his treatise can nevertheless serve as evidence for the observation that Leonardo's written work and his anatomical drawings were perceived as a unity. By associating Leonardo's theory of automimesis with his Vitruvian studies, Pino underscored the idea that Leonardo's scientific activities reciprocally illuminated each other.

Nonetheless, Leonardo's own work was not free from frequently re-used prototypes that seem to contradict his own strategies against automimesis. Although the preparatory drawings for the *Burlington House Cartoon* and his grotesque heads demonstrate his will to escape repetitive patterns by frequently redrawing lines and thus changing the established forms of composition, many of his works do show a certain bias for a traditional artistic vocabulary.[93] Strong resemblances to pictorial compositions from artists such as Fra Angelico or Sandro Botticelli illustrate the fact that certain aesthetic formulae were stronger than his will to accurately imitate nature. Of course, this tendency was also due to the constant drawing practice when he was a young student in the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio. Like every other apprentice, Leonardo was not only compelled to copy famous works of art that were available to him in Florence, but also obliged to imitate the patterns and types used by his master. These studies, realized when he was of a tender age, occasionally influenced his work for the rest of his life.[94] This is the case, for instance, with the left hand of the archangel Gabriel in his Florentine *Annunciation,* datable to the years 1472–1473 (Fig. 3). Its elongated form, as well as the exceptional position of the little finger, closely corresponds to an ideal that was often used in compositions made by Verrocchio – for example in the so-called *Madonna di piazza,* preserved in Pistoia (Fig. 4). In addition to the use of patterns in his paintings, often recycled for economic reasons, his drawings show strong resemblances to his master's drawing technique as well. This is apparent, for example, in the studies of a child executed by Leonardo around 1506 (Fig. 5). Thirty years after he left Verrocchio's studio, his use of contours still bears strong connections to similar drawings made by his master (Fig. 6). Even if we ignore the similarity of the subject matter, the similar use of technique is espe-

92 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 132.

93 For a discussion of Leonardo's grotesque heads in relation to his fight against automimesis cfr. Gombrich 1954 and Zöllner 1992, pp. 145–149.

94 Various examples of Leonardo's employment of traditional aesthetic formulae and patterns have been discussed by Kwakkelstein 2012.

Figure 3 Leonardo da Vinci, Annunciation (detail), ca. 1472–1473, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

Figure 4 Andrea del Verrocchio and Lorenzo di Credi, Madonna di Piazza (detail), ca. 1474–1486, Pistoia, Cattedrale di San Zeno

Figure 5 Leonardo da Vinci, Studies of an Infant, ca. 1504–1508, Windsor, Royal Collection

Figure 6 Andrea del Verrocchio, Studies of an Infant, ca. 1470, Paris, Musée du Louvre

cially apparent in the charcoal sketch on the right of Leonardo's sheet: his use of outlines is prefigured in the concise movements of his master's pen.[95] Because Leonardo understands his studies to be an empirical instrument which allows him to capture all kinds of natural objects, Verrocchio's influence on his drawing pen must have been more than unsatisfactory to Leonardo. It is against the background of these inherited properties of his artistic ancestor that he consequently expressed concerns about artistic mimicry, believing that a painter should never imitate another's manner, because he will be called a grandson rather than a son of nature.[96]

Leonardo's re-use of patterns and ideals is not just restricted to the works of other painters; more often he turned to his own works. When composing new paintings, he frequently draws on formulae that he has developed and refined during the course of his artistic career. This practice is especially notable for the so-called nutcracker head, an idealized head of an old man with a shaved chin, strong eyebrows, and a sharp nose (Figs. 7–8).[97] A similar case is the head of a beautiful youth with female features, modelled upon the statue of the *David* by Verrocchio and later assuming the physiognomy of his preferred student Salai (Fig. 9). Both head types were used as basic models for his further explorations in the diversity of man, appearing in compositions such as the *Adoration of the Magi* or the *Virgin of the Rocks*. This habit of Leonardo's did not go unnoticed during his time, it was criticized by contemporaries. Gaspare Visconti, for example, a poet at the Milanese court, expressed his concerns about Leonardo's repetitive patterns in a sonnet for Bianca Maria Sforza written around 1498.[98]

Despite his own attentive study of nature and his theoretical remarks, Leonardo probably never intended to abandon his beloved patterns and ideals. As the condensed result of his scientific studies and drawings, they represented some

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95 For a discussion of Leonardo's drawing pratice in relation to Verrocchio cfr. Bambach 1999, pp. 82–83.

96 Leonardo (1995), p. 66: "Dell'imitare pittori. Dico ai pittori che mai nessuno deve imitare la maniera dell'altro, perché sarà detto nipote e non figliuolo della natura; perché, essendo le cose naturali in tanta larga abbondanza, piuttosto si deve ricorrere ad essa natura che ai maestri, che da quella hanno imparato. E questo dico non per quelli che desiderano mediante quella pervenire a ricchezze, ma per quelli che di tal arte desiderano fama e onore."

97 See also Clark 1939, p. 67 and Reißer 1997, pp. 286 ff.

98 As cited in Zöllner 1992, p. 147: "Un depentor fu già che non sapea desegnare altra cosa che un cupresso, per quel che Orazio nei suoi versi ha messo dove insegnar poetica intendea. Un n'hanno questi tempi che in la idea tien ferma sì la effiggie di se stesso, che'altrui pinger volendo, accade spesso che non colui ma se medesmo crea. E non solo il suo volto, ch'è pur bello secondo lui, ma in l'arte sua suprema gli acti e' suoi modi forma col penello."

Figure 7 Leonardo da Vinci, Profile Head of an Old Man (detail), ca. 1490, Windsor, Royal Collection

Figure 8 Leonardo da Vinci, Profile Head of an Old Man (detail), ca. 1493, Windsor, Royal Collection

Figure 9 Leonardo da Vinci, Profile Head of a Youth (detail), ca. 1511–1513, Windsor, Royal Collection

sort of an aesthetic ideal that was stored in the painter's *memoria.* It comes as no surprise, then, that he kept his drawings as vivid evidence and referred to them as his assistants and teachers ("adiutori e maestri").[99] Nevertheless, Leonardo's theory and practice can also be seen as an urge to emancipate himself from the tradition of the medieval pattern book and its stereotypical representations. It is precisely because of this unprecedented perfection in naturalism, beauty, and expression that Vasari deemed it proper to initiate the third and last section of his *Vite,* the part dealing with the modern artists, with Leonardo.[100]

The Proverb in Popular Culture

Leonardo's concerns and Savonarola's sermons were not the only reason that the scholastic principles of causation turned into the widely-used proverb *Ogni pittore dipinge sé.* In non-art-historical writing, the proverb was mainly used in a metaphorical sense. Antonio Francesco Doni,[101] Matteo Franco,[102] and Giovan Maria Cecchi[103] employed it to describe the unchangeable habits of a person, interpreting it in an ethically accentuated manner. As Piero Fanfani later wrote in his *Vocabolario dell'uso toscano,* it was meant to indicate the attitude of a person who criticizes a certain behaviour although it is manifest in the criticizing person it-

99 Leonardo (1995), p. 104.

100 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 4, p. 11: "Ma lo errore di costoro [the painters of the seconda età] dimostrarono poi chiaramente le opere di Lionardo da Vinci, il quale dando principio a quella terza maniera che noi vogliamo chiamare la moderna, oltra la gagliardezza e bravezza del disegno, et oltra il contraffare sottilissimamente tutte le minuzie della natura così apunto come elle sono, con buona regola, miglior ordine, retta misura, disegno perfetto e grazia divina, abbondantissimo di copie e profondissimo di arte, dette veramente alle sue figure il moto et il fiato."

101 Doni 1551, fol. 30v: "E si suol dire che ogni pittor dipinge sè, & che ogni simile apetisce il suo simile: ma se non ci solle che ogni regola patisce eccettione; si potrebbe dire che questo huomo galante [Basilio Berta Rossa] havesse trovato il suo Genio havendo tradotta La Maccheronea in ottava rima."

102 Franco (1933), p. 24: "Sa' tu di quel ch'io ghigno? Ch'ogni pittor sempre dipigne se: peto petuzzo, or su, dividiam te."

103 Cecchi (1855), p. 167: "Questi giovani / Si voglion contrapporre a questi vecchi / Per parer savii, ma i' credo lor poco; / Perché la medicina vuol scienza / E pratica; de l' una i' non m'intendo / se è n'hanno, o no; ma quanto della pratica, / La ragion vuol che ne sia più ne' vecchi. / Basta che per parer d'assai, egli ha, / Sentendo far alberazione al polso, / Battezatolo amore; or fa tuo conto, / Il dipintor suol dipigner sé stesso. / O guarda valent' uomo! Il mal che v' è / È non lo trova, e n'ha sognat' un altro, / Che v'è, ti so dir, presso a mille miglia. / O poveri ammalati!" A note by the editor says: "Proverbio, che parmi significhi: chi senza buon fondamento attribuisce agli altri passioni o vizii, mostra di avere egli stesso quei tali vizii o passioni."

self.[104] This pattern of behaviour is present in both Leonardo's and Savonarola's statements. Modern psychologists would call it projection: the accuser portrays others as he sees himself, thus giving a true image of himself just as a painter expresses himself in his works.[105] This popular meaning of the proverb most probably derived from a dictum that was circulating at the court of the Medici in the time of Cosimo the Elder. In fact, one of the earliest sources for the saying directly attributes it to Cosimo:

> "Diceva Cosmo che si dimenticano prima cento benefici, che una ingiuria. E chi ingiuria non perdona mai. E che ogni dipintore dipigne se."[106]

As Frank Zöllner has argued, Cosimo's observation "elucidates the general human inclination always to remember the bad and to forget the good." Like the offender who is unable to forgive, it is an inevitable weakness of the human character which is again illustrated by the proverb that every painter paints himself.[107] By matching scholastic principles with proverbs that were popular in Florence, Savonarola might well have contributed to the divulgation of Cosimo's saying. However, it is also possible to read Cosimo's thoughts as representing three distinct and autonomous observations. Although appearing under the same paragraph, they are only loosely connected and could have been used independently. Such a reading would conform to the meaning of the proverb as illustrating the unchangeable habit of painters to re-use a certain set of drawn formulae or to employ a stereotypical manner of working. Because the common denominator of all three sentences is the human capacity to remember, Cosimo might refer to the painter's *memoria,* which is employed to re-organize patterns of creation when making new pictures.

Cosimo's dictum is passed down to us as part of a compilation of *detti piacevoli,* droll Florentine stories and anecdotes, that were collected at the court of the Medici, presumably in the years between 1477 and 1482. Once attributed to Angelo Poliziano but now believed to be from the hand of various anonymous authors, this collection was edited and enlarged by the humanist and polymath Lodovico Domenichi, who published it in 1548 under the title *Facetie et motti arguti di alcuni eccellentissimi ingegni, et nobilissimi signori.*[108] Because the original manu-

104 Fanfani 1863, vol. 2, p. 729: "Ogni pittore dipinge sè. Dicesi quando uno ci tratta men che bene, o giudica mal di noi, significandogli che quel difetto che ci rimprovera è l'ha lui."

105 Sohm 2007, p. 41.

106 Domenichi 1548, fol. 20r.

107 Zöllner 1992, p. 139.

108 For a critical discussion of Poliziano's authorship see Bowen 1994.

script of this so-called *bel libretto* has been lost, Domenichi's edition is the only surviving source for the attribution of the proverb to Cosimo. Later editions from the years 1565, 1581, or 1588 not only reveal a stable interest in the genre of the joke book during the Renaissance[109], but sometimes provide us with a commentary on the single *detto piacevole* from the hand of Domenichi as well. In the 1564 edition, for example, he reprints Cosimo's remarks with a significant observation of his own in italics:

> "Diceva Cosmo; che si dimenticano prima cento benifici, che vna ingiuria; & chi ingiuria, non perdona mai: & che ogni dipintore dipinge se. *Intendeva per lo piu, ma non d' ogniuno.*"[110]

Domenichi's interesting comment shows us that he is rather more concerned with the activities of the painters than with the human capacity to recall or the ethical traits of those who insult others. By grammatically referring to the last part of the tripartite sentence, he not only underscores the increasing popularity of Cosimo's dictum but also gives us an idea of the variety of meanings associated with the proverb. Somewhere in the years between 1548 (the first edition of the *Facetie et motti*) and 1564 (the second edition cited above) Domenichi must thus have felt the urge to specify the meaning of the notion by reducing its semantic flexibility. He no longer thinks of an entirety of painters who paint themselves, but limits this habit to a smaller group of artists. This confinement gives him the opportunity to allocate an entirely new meaning to the proverb. Rather than thinking about the individual *maniera* of an artist or his personal reflection in a neoplatonic sense, which would include every painter, he seems to refer to painters who paint self-portraits. And indeed, if we look at artists who painted themselves around the 1550s, we cannot help but observe a certain relevance of this genre. Still a relatively new fashion at the beginning of the 16th century, the production of paintings that showed the artist's face and body had reached its first peak by the time Domenichi published the subsequent editions of his *Facetie et motti*. Compared to the few (and mainly non-autonomous) self-portraits that were painted in the time of Marsilio Ficino, this remarkable increase explains why Domenichi preferred a physiognomic interpretation of Cosimo's dictum. The habit of painters to represent themselves confidently in poses that were previously considered the privilege of an aristocratic and monetary elite must have left its mark on the perception of the proverb.[111]

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109 See for instance Barolsky 1978, p. 18.

110 Domenichi 1564, p. 143, italics by the original author.

111 For the history of the self-portrait in Renaissance Italy see Woods-Marsden 1998.

But self-portraiture was not the only cultural phenomenon that led to Domenichi's explanatory comment. Giorgio Vasari's seminal *Vite,* published two years after the first edition of the *Facetie et motti* in 1550, constitutes another source for the changing interpretation of the proverb. Apart from Vasari's continuous analogization of the artist's body, character, and work in his biographies (see Chapter 4), he also records the saying in a particularly humorous form when giving examples of Michelangelos quick-wittedness. When he was shown a painting in which a bull was most skillfully painted, the Florentine artist is supposed to have said that every painter portrays himself well:

> "Aveva non so che pittore [fatto] un'opera, dove era un bue che stava meglio delle altre cose; fu dimandato [Michelangelo] perché il pittore aveva fatto più vivo quello che l'altre cose; disse: 'Ogni pittore ritrae sé medesimo bene'."[112]

Michelangelo's play on words is a typical example for his well-known use of homonyms when formulating witty yet harsh criticisms. By replacing the traditional signifier of the reflexive pronoun with the now fashionable habit of painters to paint their physical likenesses, he interprets the proverb in a literal way as unwitting self-portraiture: The dumb bull reflects the qualities of its painter. This is also shown by Michelangelo's drawing on a technical term which was used exclusively in connection with the physical appearance of a person. Whereas the verb *protrahere* (lit. to pull out, to portray) was meant to indicate the pictorial representation of one's body *and* soul, *ritrarre* was merely understood as the production of a corporeal likeness without necessarily taking note of the ethical traits of a person.[113] It thus represented a less distinguished form of portraiture that was likely to be associated with the depiction of impotent animals.

Georg Satzinger has shown that Michelangelo's remark was indeed more than just a witty joke.[114] Probably inspired by Pliny's description of a foreshortened bull from the hand of the Greek painter Pausias,[115] Renaissance artists began to include elaborately contorted animals in their paintings as well. Intended as a

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112 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 6, p. 280.

113 Cfr. Weppelmann 2011, p. 64.

114 Satzinger 2003, p. 112.

115 Pliny (1938–1963), vol. 9, p. 353–355: "He [Pausias] first invented a method of painting which has afterwards been copied by many people but equalled by no one; the chief point was that although he wanted to show the long body of an ox he painted the animal facing the spectator and not standing sideways, and its great size is fully conveyed. Next, whereas all painters ordinarily execute in light colour the parts they wish to appear prominent and in dark those they wish to keep less obvious, this artist has made the whole ox of a black colour and has given substance to the shadow from the shadow

demonstration of their technical skills, these animals sometimes resembled distorted figures and were identified as a selfish form of ostentatiousness. By making fun of these accurate representations, Michelangelo underscores the principles of his own art. His representations of the human body were more concerned with the individual judgement of the artist than with the application of geometrical methods. In the eyes of the *divino artista,* imitating classical antiquity and blindly following the strict rules of perspective was thus considered to be nothing more than a laborious, hardly intelligent activity. Not surprisingly, as Vasari would have put it, the restricted capacity of the minds of artists who followed this fashion had to express themselves in the depiction of animals with the same characteristics.[116]

Furthermore, Vasari modelled Michelangelo's remark upon a famous aphorism by the Greek philosopher Xenophanes.[117] Concerned with the question of whether humans are able to imagine the true appearance of deities, he writes that every image of a god always bears a resemblance to its creator. Ethiopians, he says, picture their Gods as snub-nosed and black, Thracians as blue-eyed and blonde. But his most telling example is taken from the animal kingdom: if bulls or horses or lions were capable of building statues, they would make images of deities that look like bulls or horses or lions.[118] Later the painter Salvator Rosa would recycle this joke when criticising genre painters, whose work was traditionally held in low esteem, in his *Satire*: "Altri studiano a far sol animali e, senza rimirarsi entro a gli specchi, si ritraggono giusti e naturali."[119]

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itself, with quite remarkable skill that shows the shapes standing out on a level surface and a uniform solidity on a broken ground." (*Historia naturalis,* XXXV, 126).

116 See, for example, his characterisation of the artists of the middle-ages, Vasari 1550 (1966–1997), vol. 3, p. 201: "Gli scultori che noi abbiamo chiamati vecchi ma non antichi, sbigottiti dalle molte difficultà della arte, conducevano le figure loro sì mal composte di artifizio e di bellezza, che, o di metallo o di marmo che elle si fussino, altro non erano però che tonde, sì come avevano essi ancora tondi gli spiriti e gli ingegni stupidi e grossi: e nasceva tutto da questo, che ritraendosi esprimevano se medesimi, e se medesimi assomigliavano."

117 Zöllner 2005, p. 145.

118 Xenophanes as cited in Diels 1903, p. 54: "But if bulls and horses and lions had hands and could paint, and thus create pictures such as men do, then the horses in drawing their Gods would draw horses; and bulls would give us pictures and statues of bulls; and therefore each would make their bodies of such a sort as the form they themselves have." This famous observation by Xenophanes is cited by Clement of Alexandria, who discussed it in his *Stromata.* They were first printed by P. Victorius in Florence in 1550, who used a manuscript from the 11th century that had survived in the Bibliotheca Laurenziana. Xenophanes' aphorism also features prominently in Vincenzo Cartaris' *Imagini dei Dei degli antichi,* widely read in the 16th century.

119 Rosa 1664 (1995), p. 103.

2.4 The Appreciation of Personal Style

As has been frequently noted, the birth of the proverb *Ogni pittore dipinge sé* in the 15th century coincides with the rise of appreciation of individual expression in art.[120] Before turning to the art theory of the Cinquecento, it might thus prove useful to remember the long and winding road that painters had to travel until they were finally granted the right to develop individual forms of expression. This historical reconstruction of the process of artistic emancipation can be done by taking a look at the naive idea of authorship without an author, as articulated by Angelo Decembrio in his *De politia litteraria* through the words of his mouthpiece Leonello d'Este. Two divergent models of pictorial representation become apparent if one analyses Decembrio's acquaintance with mathematical models of imitation: On one hand, the exact reproduction of natural objects (and the exclusion of individuality); on the other, the artistic improvement of natural objects (and consequentially the appreciation of individuality).

Art without Personal Expression

An early example of the problematic relationship between individual expression and the imitation of nature can be found in a text by the humanist Angelo Decembrio. Written shortly after 1450 at the Ferrarese court, his *De politia litteraria* shows that personal style was not always conceived as a positive facet of painting. Leonello d'Este, duke of Ferrara, is the main character in Decembrio's short discussion of artistic issues in his otherwise political treatise. Disappointed by differences between two of his portraits, made by Pisanello and Jacopo Bellini, the duke accuses the painters of having insufficient artistic skill.[121] In contrast to the artists of antiquity who helped each other by correcting each others' works, Pisanello and Bellini would have been motivated by rivalry, which resulted in the different renderings of his physiognomy. The one represented it as more slender, while the other captured it as paler.[122]

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120 Gutkind 1938, p. 234; Chastel 1959, pp. 102–105; Klein 1961, p. 105, Arasse 1997, pp. 7–9.

121 For the competition between Pisanello and Bellini at the court of Leonello d'Este see Gramaccini 1982.

122 As cited in Baxandall 1963, p. 315: "Erat autem optima priscorum tempestate de pictoribus poetisque eadem fere laus et munificentia. Ipsi uicissim artifices opera sua demonstrantes emendabant. quos nunc mutua nouimus aemulatione lacessiri. Meministis nuper pisanum. Venetumque optimus aeui nostri pictores in mei uultus descriptione uarie dissensisse. cum alter macilentiam candori meo uehementiorem adiecerit. alter pallidiorem tamenlicet non graciliorem uultum effingeret."

Leonello's remarks on his effigies are embedded in a general discussion of the arts, in which he compares the artistic narrowness of painting to the superior mimetic powers of poetry. Whereas poets are able to generate an unlimited amount of ideas because of their individual *ingenium,* painters would be limited by the pre-existent objects of nature.[123] To illustrate his view that painters are bound to represent physical objects as exactly as possible, he repeatedly cites examples from classical literature. For instance, he refers to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and mentions the subtlety of the net of Vulcan: A painter would never be able to represent Vulcan's net as it had been described by Ovid with words.[124] The distinction between the superior *ingenium* of poets on the one hand, and the inferior *ars* of artists on the other hand, constitutes the basis for Leonello's criticism of the painters working at his court. To him, the different traits of his portraits are not a demonstration of artistic inventiveness but of a lack of manual dexterity. If both artists were to imitate the same identical model, the result of their efforts must have been two identical portraits. According to Leonello this did not happen because Pisanello and Bellini were not following the example of ancient artists, who improved and corrected their works reciprocally.

It is uncertain which ancient artists Leonello meant when discussing his portraits. Michael Baxandall suggests Pliny's account of Apelles and the cobbler is a source for Angelo Decembrio's discussion of artistic improvement.[125] Although Pliny's anecdote does contain the theme of correction, it lacks the important theme of stylistical similarity. Another account of two artists, described in the *Bibliotheca historica* by Diodorus Siculus, seems more fitting. This work, written in the first century BCE, relates the story of two sculptors, Theodorus and Telekles. When given the task to build a statue of the God Apollo, they decided to divide their work for economic reasons. While Theodorus executed his part of the statue in Ephesos, his brother Telekles executed the other half of the statue on the island Samos. When the parts were finished and assembled, the statue of Apollo appeared perfect: Both parts fitted together so perfectly that they were thought to have been made by a single sculptor.[126] According to Diodorus, this was only possible because each brother applied the same system of proportions to his part.

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123 Baxandall 1963, pp. 304–309, and Witten 2002, pp. 107–109.

124 Baxandall 1963, p. 323. The representation of Vulcan's net became one of the iconographic themes that artists of the Cinquecento used when wanting to demonstrate their equality with the *ingenium* of the poets.

125 Baxandall 1963, p. 315, referring to *Historia naturalis,* XXXV, 79–88.

126 Diodorus Siculus (1476), fol. 33: "Sculptores antiqui maxime in honore fuerunt. Teledeus ac theodorus rhici filii, a quibus samus pithii apollinis simulacrum inest sculptum. Huius statuae medietas fertur Teledei opus fuisse, reliqua pars a theodoro in epheso perfecta. His simul positis ita conveniebat totum corpus, ut ab uno artifice sculptum vi-

Rather than relying upon their sense of sight as the ancient Greeks did, they made use of measuring instruments.[127]

Diodorus' *Bibliotheca historica* was only in fragmentary condition when it was first translated into Latin by Poggio Bracciolini in 1449 and also shortly thereafter by Pier Candido Decembrio. The *editio princeps,* composed of the work of both authors, was published in 1472.[128] Angelo Decembrio probably knew of the episode of Theodorus and Telekles because of the work of his elder brother Pier Candido, but he would also have been acquainted with it through the work of Leon Battista Alberti. In Alberti's seminal *De re aedificatoria,* written at the request of Leonello d'Este between 1443 and 1453, Alberti praises the "arte et ingenio" of those sculptors who are able to create works of art that appear to have been made by one pair of hands. As an example, he referred to Diodorus and the statue of Apollo made by Theodorus and Telekles.[129] The same example stayed with Alberti when he wrote his *De statua* around 1450.[130] Without mentioning Diodorus' artists explicitly, he alludes to the brothers when illustrating the benefits of one of his inventions, the *Finitorium* (Fig. 10). This tool was employed to determine the spatial coordinates of any given object. Once a statue was measured with this instrument, its coordinates could be easily transferred to an undressed block of marble. This method came in handy when the size of a work of art had to be changed. By simply dividing or multiplying the determined coordinates, the size of a statue could be changed. Furthermore, as Alberti emphasizes, the *Finitorium* allowed artists to divide their work. Because of the statue's numerically

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deretur." (*Bibliotheca historica,* I, 98, 5–9) The 1476 edition is based on the translations of Bracciolini and Decembrio.

127 Diodorus Siculus (1476), fol. 33: "Genus artis graecis ignotis: sed apud aegyptios erat usu cognitum. Nam soli aegyptii non oculis totius statuae compositionem metiebantur: sed dimensione ut ex variis multisque lapidibus in unum corpus ad certam mensuram redactis statua perficeretur. Res profecto miranda diversos artifices variis in locis ita in unam mensuram convenire: ut quandoque ex viginti quandoque ex quadraginta partibus unica statua componeretur. Quod in samo signum simile operi aegyptio a capite usque ad pudenda ita pari forma divisum constat ut unius opus appareat." (*Bibliotheca historica,* I, 98, 10–15).

128 Zaccaria 1956, p. 53.

129 Alberti (1966), vol. 1, p. 657: "Illud de statuis minime praetereundum censeo, quod apud Diodorum legimus: statuarios Aegyptios tantum valere solitos arte et ingenio, ut ex variis lapidibus diversis positis locis unum simulacri corpus conficerent, conventu partium adeo perfenito, ut uno loco eodem ab artifice esse perfecta videretur. Miroque hoc ex artificio celebre illud apud Samios Phitii Apollinis simulacrum extitisse praedicant, cuius media fuerit pars Thellesii opus, reliquam vero partem in Epheso Theodorus perfinierit."

130 For the dating of *De statua* cfr. Pfisterer 2003, p. 538.

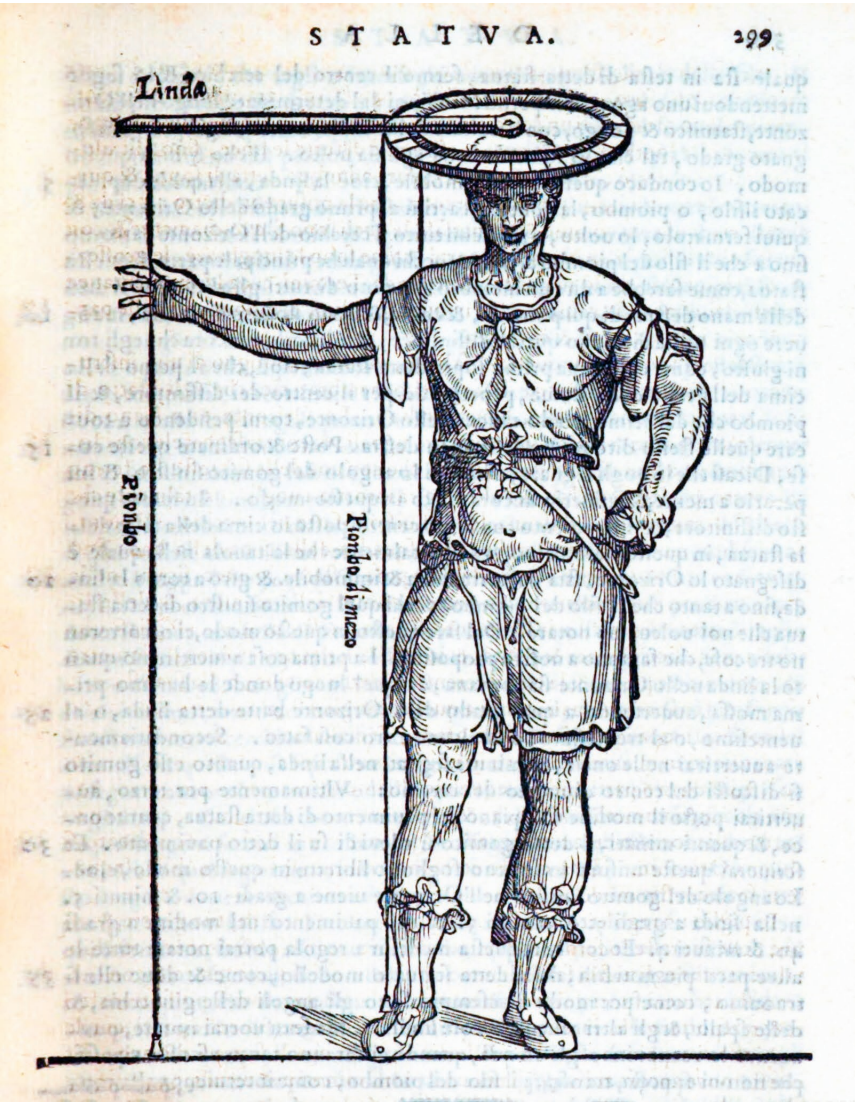

Figure 10 Illustration of the Finitorium in the 1568 Edition of Leon Battista Alberti's *Della statua*

determined proportions, one part could be executed by an artist on the Greek island Paros, whereas the other half might be finished later by another artist at Luni, a site close to Carrara:

> "Et quod magis mirere, huius dimidiam ad Paron insulam, si libuerit, dimidiam vero partem alteram in Lunensibus excides atque perficies ita ut iunctiones et cohaesiones partium omnium cum totius simulacri facie conveniant exemplaribus et correspondeant."[131]

By omitting Samos and Ephesos and instead referring to places that were famous for the extraction of marble in Renaissance Italy, Alberti is able to modernize the narrative used by Diodorus.[132] Just as the Greek historian accentuates the craftsmanship of Theodorus and Telekles by underlining their knowledge of a system of proportions, Alberti underlines the importance of measurement as a precept of artistic excellence. An artist might only be capable of producing accurate sculptures if he had taken the measures of each member. The method described by Alberti was intended to produce a perfect likeness, *similitudo,* between the model and its artificial reproduction.[133] His *Finitorium* can thus be seen as an example for a mechanical model of imitation. The desired likeness can only be achieved if individual differences in the perception and representation of nature are excluded by means of mathematical methods. Alberti uses the example of Theodorus and Telekles mainly to demonstrate the accuracy of his transmission technique, rather than as evidence of his personal attitude towards individual expression in art. In fact, as is shown in other parts of his treatises, he emphatically underscores the importance of the individual *ingenium* of each artist.[134] But to Leonello d'Este, interested in the exact reproduction of his physiognomy, the example of the two brothers may well have constituted the basis for his criticism of Pisanello and Bellini. According to the words of Angelo Decembrio, Leonello was interested in the exact imitation and reproduction of human proportions, an art free

131 Alberti (1998), p. 8 and p. 17. See also the *volgare* edition by Cosimo Bartoli, 1568, p. 293: "Et quel che forse tu piu ti maraviglierai, sarà, che si potrà fare la metà di questa tua statua nella Isola di Paro, tornandoti bene, & l'altra metà potrai cavare, & finire ne monti di Carrara: Talmente che i congiugnimenti, & le commettiture di tutte le parti, con tutto il corpo, & faccia della immagine, si uniranno, & corrisponderanno al vivo, o al modello, secondo il quale ella sarà stata fatta."

132 For Diodorus in relation to Alberti see Panofsky 1921.

133 Alberti (1998), pp. 8 ff.

134 See for example the eclectic and thus individually determined method of composition illustrated by the painter Zeuxis in Alberti (1998), p. 18. Other examples for Alberti's appreciation of individual expression can be found in his *Della pittura.*

from individual influences, which was perfectly performed by the ancient artists Theodorus and Telekles.[135]

It is interesting to note that Filarete came to a completely different conclusion when discussing the differences between portraits of the same person. Only a couple of years after Decembrio had written his *De politia literaria,* Filarete mentions portraits of Duke Francesco Sforza in his *Trattato.* But in contrast to Leonello, he expressed admiration for their dissimilarities. He correlated the diverging representations of the physiognomy of the Duke of Milan with the individual *maniera* of their respective painters and expressed consent for the pluralism of personal styles.[136] Rather than being interested in their technical skills, he was interested in the inventive talent and individual *fantasia* of each painter.[137]

Unilateral and Multilateral Models of Imitation

In the course of the Cinquecento, it became increasingly important for a painter to demonstrate his artistic skills by acquiring a personal style. As a consequence, the 15th century system of education in the workshop, which aimed at a uniformity of style, was subject to change. Rather than promoting the imitation of one single

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135 The idea of an objective art without personal style appeared repeatedly in the history of art theory and was frequently discussed in connection to the likenesses of portraits. One of its most intriguing examples can be found in Abraham Bosse's *Sentiments sur la distinction des diverses manières de peinture.* According to the French theorist, identical portraits by the hands of different painters would be possible if only the painters were taught the right methods. Bosse 1649, pp. 39 f.: "Cecy soit dit pour expliquer en gros, que le Naturel estant ainsi bien Copié, il n'y auroit point tant de diverses manieres, car ainsi faisant plusieurs qui Copieroient d'apres Nature une mesme teste communement nommée Pourtrait, & d'une mesme position & distance, il arriveroit que tous ces divers Pourtraits seroient entierement semblables, & qu'on ne pourroit pas dire celuy-là est de la maniere d'un tel, ou d'un tel, & ainsi le mesme des autres Corps visibles de la Nature. Mais à cause que l'ignorance a regné en des temps parmy les Praticiens de cét Art, il est en suitte arrivé que plusieurs se sont sur les Ouvrages des uns & des autres ainsi faits ou formez des diverses manieres à leur fantaisie; & comme cela ces choses ont multiplié infiniment, du moins en tres-grand nombre, & tel que d'en vouloir deduire la vingtiéme partie, cela feroit un monstreux volume." For similar examples cfr. Sohm 2001, pp. 20, 131, 171.

136 Filarete (1972), vol. 1, p. 28: "Ho veduto io dipintore e intagliatore ritrarre teste, e massime dell'antidetto illustrissimo Signore duca Francesco Sforza, del quale varie teste furono ritratte, perché era degna e formosa; più d'una da ciascheduno bene l'apropriarono alla sua e asomigliarono, e niente di meno c'era diferenza. E così ho veduti scrittori nelle loro lettere essere qualche diferenza."

137 For the use of *fantasia* in Filarete's treatise on architecture see Kemp 1977, pp. 369–372.

model, the painter was invited to engage in the imitation of many models.[138] As is so often seen in the art theory of the Renaissance, the discussion of advantages and disadvantages of these divergent models of imitation had its predecessor in the literary world. The famous dispute between Pietro Bembo, who was in favour of a unilateral model, and Giovanfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, who was in favour of a multilateral model, provided the art theorists of the Cinquecento with a great variety of arguments for the latter.[139] Answering to a letter of the influential poet Bembo in 1512, Pico maintained that a writer of Latin prose or poetry should take the best parts from each good author. By selecting and combining their best features, the poet can create something entirely new. Pico's advice was guided by the idea of an imperfect nature in which virtues were distributed unequally. Because perfection cannot be found in one single author, the poet had to reunite the dispersed goods of nature by choosing from various authorities. This eclectic method required a poet who was able to discern the good from the bad and the beautiful from the ugly. In short, his own idea of beauty was an important coefficient when choosing from literary examples. According to Pico, this idea was either pre-existent in a neoplatonic sense or derived by the author through continuous study. In any case, it was dependent on the poet's soul, which contained the perfect image of beauty – which constituted the basis for the poet's judgement. Thus, contrary to Leonardo's theory of automimesis, Pico thought it useful to grant the poet the right to choose his examples according to his own personal preferences and temperament. By combining his individual inclinations with the imitation of good authors, some sort of spontaneous amalgamation happened. The resulting works were a combination of good features, harmonized by the single spirit of the poet and transformed into an individual work of art.[140]

In his reply from January 1513, Bembo did not hesitate to express his objections. According to the poet, the eclectic method of selection proposed by the phi-

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138 Various examples for the multilateral method in the art of the 16th century are discussed by Irle 1997.

139 For a discussion of the controversy between Bembo and Pico in relation to art theory cfr. Battisti 1956, Pigman 1980, pp. 20 ff., Williams 1997, pp. 76–85, and Irle 1997, pp. 176–179.

140 Pico as cited in Battisti 1956, p. 89: "Le cose di questa terra non sono completamente buone, poiché la natura genitrice elargisce i suoi doni non ad uno soltanto, ma a molti, e dà ad ogni cosa le sue peculiari virtù; se ne deduce che quel mirabile artificio oratorio, cui tu ambisci, va ricercato nella natura stessa, e specialmente nell'animo, donde direttamente discende nelle parole e nelle lettere; non in una pagina d'un qualche autore, ma in tutti, o in moltissimi autori, poiché in tutto il regno degli esseri animati, a noi visibile, sono varie e disperse le virtù delle cause efficienti, e non costrette entro uno stretto ambito: così la completa e perfetta norma dell'eloquenza non si trova in un unico autore, vertice quasi dell'umana repubblica."

losopher Pico must lead to works that lack unity. Following a critical observation made by Horace,[141] Bembo does not believe in innate ideas as a source of the individual author's judgement. Just as one single building cannot represent the great variety of possible designs, one single work cannot contain all kinds of literary forms. On the contrary, such works are likely to arouse derision and contempt. To avoid unappealing works, he suggests imitating Cicero, whom he believed to be the best author. If unable to create autonomous works on their own, the poets are invited to copy from the almost perfect ancient author. According to Bembo, they should immerse themselves completely in the example and try to incorporate its characteristics into their own works.[142]

Pico's method, in comparison to Bembo's, was less restrictive and became the preferred model of imitation in the art theory of the Cinquecento. Not only did it allow the painter to choose from a great variety of examples, but it also incited him to develop a personal style by emancipating himself from the authority of the workshop. The great success of the idea of copying from multiple sources was also due to its roots in ancient philosophy; the gathering of ideas or styles was paralleled with the behaviour of bees which selected nectar from various flowers.[143] In a similar form already present in Plato's *Ion* (533e–544b), this idea of selecting the best was used by Seneca in the context of literary theory in the 84th letter to Lucillus. Following the example of the industrious bees, an author too should sift whatever he has gathered from his course of reading. Then he should blend these several flavours into one delicious compound that "even though it betrays its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence it came."[144] In the following passages, Seneca also illustrated this process through the activity of man's digestive organs. Although consumed food was different from man himself, it nevertheless contributed to the generation of his tissue and blood. Similar notions can be found in the introduction of Macrobius' *Saturnalia* and Petrarch's *Familiaria* (XXIII, 19, 12).

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141 For Horace's critique of eclecticism at the beginning of his *Ars poetica* see Pizzani 1998.

142 Bembo as cited in Battisti 1956, pp. 95–96: "Infatti, che ci può essere di più assurdo che voler riprodurre e contenere in una sola forma e specie di scrittura, con tutte le loro parti e membra, le forme e speci, diverse e spesso assai differente fra loro, proprie a svariati scrittori? … Sarebbe come se tu pensassi possibile, nell'edificare un solo palazzo, riprodurre testualmente molti modelli di concezione e di esecuzione diverse. […] L'imitare di cui noi parliamo non è che il trasferire nei propri scritti qualcosa di simile allo stile altrui, ed il possedere nello scrivere quasi lo stesso temperamento di chi ci si propone di imitare."

143 For the metaphor of the bees in relation to the art theory of the Italian Renaissance see Quiviger 2003a.

144 Seneca (1917–1925), vol. 2, pp. 276–281 (*Epistulae morales*, LXXXIV, 5–6).

Cennino Cennini was the first painter who introduced the apian metaphor in an abridged form into art theory. His *Libro di pittura* gives us an example of the unilateral and multilateral models of imitation and thus represents an attitude that is typical of the period of transition at the end of the Trecento. When discussing the question of whether a painter should imitate a single model or many models, he advises the young apprentice to concentrate on one single painter, possibly the best one. Only after the pupil has become familiar with the maniera of his teacher shall he develop a style which is suitable for himself:

> "Ma per consiglio io ti do: guarda di pigliare sempre il migliore, e quello che ha maggior fama; e, seguitando di dì in dì, contra natura sarà che a te non venga preso di suo' maniera e di suo' aria; perocché se ti muovi a ritrarre oggi di questo maestro, doman di quello, né maniera dell'uno né maniera dell'altro non n'arai, e verrai per forza fantastichetto, per amor che ciascuna maniera ti straccerà la mente. Ora vuo' fare a modo di questo, doman di quello altro, e così nessuno n'arai perfetto. Se seguiti l'andar di uno per continovo uso, ben sarà lo intelletto grosso che non ne pigli qualche cibo. Poi a te interverrà che, se punto di fantasia la natura ti arà conceduto, verrai a pigliare una maniera propia per te, e non potrà essere altro che buona; perché la mano e lo intelletto tuo, essendo sempre uso di pigliare fiori, mal saprebbe torre spina."[145]

As has been noted by various authors, Cennini's concept of imitation was subject to the idea of the superiority of the *maniera* of Giotto.[146] For Cennini, the godfather of Renaissance painting represented the peak of artistic perfection, just as Cicero was second to none for Bembo. By copying the paintings of Giotto, his adherents acquired a similar taste and working method which made his style a benchmark for the following generations of artists. Cennini points to the importance of this genealogical relationship when he writes that he himself was a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, the son of Taddeo Gaddi, who was a pupil of Giotto's.[147] Rather than a supporter of individual style and artistic progress, Cennini seems to have been interested in the conservative preservation of an artistic tradition. It is no coincidence, then, that his discussion of imitation seems to echo an observation

145 Cennini (1859), pp. 16 f.

146 Cfr. Kemp 1987, p. 3, Bolland 1996, p. 471, Brückle 2004, p. 65.

147 Cennini (1859), pp. 2 f.: "Sì come piccolo membro essercitante nell'arte di dipintorìa, Cennino di Drea Cennini da Colle di Valdelsa, nato, fui informato nella detta arte dodici anni da Agnolo di Taddeo da Firenze mio maestro, il quale imparò la detta arte da Taddeo suo padre; il quale suo padre fu battezzato da Giotto, e fu suo discepolo anni ventiquattro. Il quale Giotto rimutò l'arte del dipignere di greco in latino, e ridusse al moderno; ed ebbe l'arte più compiuta che avessi mai più nessuno."

made by the Paduan humanist Pier Paolo Vergerio in 1396: "The more one follows an inferior model and departs from the best, the worse one becomes. So one should do what the painters of our own age do, who though they may look with attention at famous paintings by other artists, yet follow the models of Giotto alone."[148]

Metaphors of food and flowers that had to be picked up by the artist were used by many art theorists of the Renaissance. But whereas Cennini remained skeptical about the painters' capacity to synthesize these different flavours, the Cinquecento believed the artists were able to select and combine from various sources. Furthermore, the subject of eclectic imitation was extended to all kinds of artistic fields, including not only the style of a painter but also his *colore, simetria,* or *grazia.* Paolo Pino, for example, thought that the perfect form of painting was a combination of Michelangelo's *disegno* and Titian's use of colours.[149]

A similar topos was used when it came to the imitation of nature. Recorded by Cicero (*De inventione,* II,1–5) and Pliny (*Historia naturalis,* XXXV, 64), the famous story of Zeuxis and the Crotonian maidens was employed to illustrate the process of eclectic re-combination by selecting the best parts from nature. When given the task of painting an image of Helen of Troy, the painter chose the most beautiful maidens of Croton, identified their most beautiful features and recombined them in his painted figure of Helen. Although some art critics were cautious about applying this method to all kinds of artistic material,[150] the anecdote of Zeuxis became commonplace in the art literature of the Cinquecento.[151] The process of *electio* allowed artists to correct the imperfect manifestations of nature by relying on their own judgement. Guided by a superior understanding of the generative principles of nature, the resulting works of art were thought to surpass nature. In the same way in which Pico demanded an improvement in poetry through the process of literary *superatio,* the painter was invited to exceed nature through his mimetic activities. Michelangelo was understood to represent these

148 As cited in Baxandall 1971, p. 43.

149 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), pp. 126 f.: "Bronzino è un perito maestro, e mi piace molto il suo fare, e li son anco parzial per le virtù sue, ma a me più sodisfa Tiziano, e se Tiziano e Michiel Angelo fussero un corpo solo, over al disegno di Michiel Angelo aggiontovi il colore di Tiziano, se gli potrebbe dir lo dio della pittura, sì come parimenti sono anco dèi propri, e chi tiene altra openione è eretico fetidissimo."

150 See for instance Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, p. 249: "E guardandosi di non fare come certi pittori, che rubbano una mano del Mosè di Michel Angelo, un panno d'una stampa, un piede di Apolline, una testa di Venere, cose impossibili che convengano tutte insieme. Perché è regola certa non essere possibile che una figura fatta in un luoco ad un proposito mai più si possa fare in altro luoco per altro proposito."

151 Detailed analyses of the anecdote regarding the imitative theories of the Italian Renaissance are provided by Sabbatino 1997 and Mansfield 2007.

principles of selection in perfect combination. It is against this background that his biographer Ascanio Condivi illustrated his capacities by referring both to the metaphor of the bees and the parallel topos of the Crotonian virgins. According to Condivi, only the synthetic activity of combining the best parts from nature, guided by the artist's individual and outstanding *ingenium,* made it possible for Michelangelo to create the most beautiful works of art.[152]

In his *De veri precetti della pittura,* published in 1586, Giovanni Battista Armenini expressed a very similar understanding of eclectic imitation. Whether an artist would choose from one single model or from many models, in any case he should study and imitate only the most beautiful parts.[153] Only through the continuous examination of the most refined works from antiquity and from contemporary artists may he develop a beautiful style, a "bella maniera". Having acquired such a style, the painter is allowed to copy from various artists, harmoniously integrating their fashion into his own works.[154] But as Armenini states, this method had its disadvantages. Especially when concentrating on one single model, the artist had to be cautious that his example would conform to his own inclinations. Choosing a famous painter with an artistically dissimilar disposition, would lead to disappointing results. Instead the conformity should be comparable to the similarity between a father and his son or between brothers.[155] Writing his

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152 Condivi 1553, fol. 45v.: "Et che in lui non nascessin laidi pensiere, si può da questo ancho cognoscere, che egli non solamente ha amata la bellezza humana, ma universalmente ogni cosa bella, un bel cavallo, un bel cane, un bel paese, una bella pianta, una bella montagna, una bella selva, et ogni sito et cosa bella et rara nel suo genere, ammirandole con maraviglioso affetto, così il bello dalla natura scegliendo, come l'api raccolgano il mel da fiori, servendosene poi nelle sue opere. Il che sempre han fatto tutti quelli, che nella pittura hanno havuto qualche grido. Quel anticho Maestro per fare una venere, non si contentò di vedere una sola vergine, che ne volse contemplare molte, & prendendo da ciaschuna la più bella et più compiuta parte, servirsene nella sua Venere."

153 Armenini 1587 (1988), pp. 60 f.: "Due sono dunque le vie per le quali la predetta maniera [i.e., la bella maniera] apprender si può con molta fermezza: l'una è il frequente ritrarre l'opere di diversi artefici buoni; l'altra è il dare solamente opera a quelle di un solo eccellente. Ma della prima generalissima et universal regola sarà di sempre ritrar le cose che sono più belle, più dotte e più alle buone opere de gli antichi scultori prossimane […] Vi aggiungemo di poi tutte l'opere del divin Michelangelo Buonarotti, quelle di Baccio Bandinelli e quelle di frate Guglielmo milanese […]."

154 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 65: "Sì che si conchiude alla fine che, presa si ha la bella maniera, si può servire con facilità delle cose altrui e con poca fatica adoperarle come sue proprie, e farsi onore senza riportarne biasimo da niuno."

155 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 66: "Ma questi debbono essere tali nell'imitazione, che essi abbino similitudine con gli essempi non in una o due parti, ma in tutte, di modo che mentre cercano d'assomiglairsi in una, non discordino nell'altra, ma egualmente le considerano e l'imparino, sì che nel porle in atto poi le stiano di maniera che le sia-

chapter on beautiful style at a time when many artists were following the example of Michelangelo, Armenini's concerns were more than reasonable. The style of Michelangelo, with his use of contorted muscles and naked bodies, was frequently considered the most beautiful and difficult. As a result, his works were imitated by many, often inexperienced, artists. As Armenini observed, only a few of Michelangelo's adherents were able to capture all aspects of his work; one might concentrate on limbs, muscles, and bones, whereas another might be more concerned with his use of contours.[156] In short, their works were not guided by an internalized *giudizio* of nature and art, but by the admiration for the unsurpassed excellence of Michelangelo, regardless of their own individual predispositions. To overcome this deleterious habit, Armenini advised the readers of his treatise to thoroughly examine their own inclinations before choosing their style. By this means they may be able to excel, even if they are only mediocre painters.[157]

Following One's Own Inclinations

The increasing popularity of eclectic imitation came with the increasing perception and appreciation of individual differences in painting. Rather than believing in one perfect form of art as represented by the works of antiquity (as was the case with Leonello d'Este) or the paintings of Giotto (as was the case with Cennini), the painters' divergent styles were viewed as a multitude of artistic voices. Of course, this did not mean that all artists were considered equal. The existence of good artists and less good artists, as well as the possibility of mastering one art and failing in another was well-known long before the 16th century.[158]

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no simile come il padre al figliuolo, e l'un fratello all'altro, et in speciale a quelli che la strada tentano et imitano di Michelangelo Buonarotti."

156 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 67: "E per certo ch'io non so qual sia maggior pazzia che di questi tali, i quali si veggono essere così ciechi alle volte, che pongono per le loro opere delli ignudi che sono ridiculosi, a i quali li fanno i lor capi leggiadri, di poi le braccia morbide et il corpo e le rene ripiene di muscoli, et il rimanente poi si vede essere con dolcissimi contorni lasciati e con ombre leggieri."

157 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 69: "Ma io laudarò finalmente coloro che, prima essaminato bene il suo ingegno, si sapranno accomodare per una via tale che, salvo l'onor suo, li possa riuscire egualmente bene in ogni sua impresa, contentandosi di quello che mediante li loro sudori e fatiche si hanno acquistato, atteso che non patisce il cielo che da troppa copia siano toccate le cime di queste nobilissime e sopra ogni altre ingegnosissime professioni."

158 See for instance Cristoforo Landino's introduction to his commentary to Dante's *Divina commedia,* where he gives a short description of painters working in Florence at the end of the 15th century.

However, the positive perception of artistic distinctiveness, a relatively new acquisition for the Cinquecento, increased exceptionally. Baldassare Castiglione, who was well aware that his untrained courtier had to pick from various flowers to become a perfect *cortegiano*,[159] understood that each of the different styles of the best painters of his time represented an art *sui generis*. All the same, when discussing the styles of Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, and others, he still seems to be surprised by the fact that each of them could be excellent although their results varied.[160] His observation, modelled upon similar remarks made in antiquity,[161] marks an important turning point in the art literature of the Cinquecento. The idea of an absolute art, in which each artist had to strive for a certain ideal of representation regardless of his own inclinations, was soon to become a rarity.

As has been shown by Robert Klein, this process was closely related to a new understanding of the artist's judgement, the aforementioned *giudizio*. The judgement was considered a vital part of the individual soul, serving as an intermediate

159 Castiglione 1528 (1998), p. 58: "E quando già si sente aver fatto profitto, giova molto veder diversi omini di tal professione e governandosi con quel bon giudicio che sempre gli ha da esser guida, andar scegliendo or da un or da un altro varie cose. E come la pecchia ne' verdi prati sempre tra l'erbe va carpendo i fiori, così il nostro cortegiano averà da rubare questa grazia da que' che a lui parerà che la tenghino e da ciascun quella parte che più sarà laudevole."

160 Castiglione 1528 (1998), pp. 79 f.: "Eccovi che nella pittura sono eccellentissimi Leonardo Vincio, il Mantegna, Rafaello, Michel Angelo, Georgio da Castel Franco; nientedimeno, tutti son tra sé nel far dissimili, di modo che ad alcun di loro non par che manchi cosa alcuna in quella maniera, perché si conosce ciascun nel suo stile esser perfettissimo. Il medesimo è di molti poeti greci e latini, il quali diversi nello scrivere, sono pari nella laude. Gli oratori ancor hanno avuto sempre tanta diversità tra sé, che quasi ogni età ha produtto ed apprezzato una sorte d'oratori peculiar di quel tempo." The same statement can be found in De Hollanda 1538 (1899), p. 123, or – with regards to astral influences – in Sorte 1580 (1960–1962), pp. 299 f: "E questa naturale Idea o vogliamo dire più tosto celeste ammaestramento, in noi da superiori corpi a questo proposito infuso, non solamente ci aiuta ad operare, ma nelle magiori e più perfette eccellenze con imperio signoreggia; onde quella istessa libertà hanno i pittori, che si suole concedere per ordinario ai poeti, e come questi nelle invenzioni e nello stile differenti l'uno da l'altro si conoscano, così a quelli parimente aviene. E di qui è che le immagini o figure che fanno si dicono essere loro figliuoli, perciocché ritengono ordinariamente della loro Idea; e perciò nelle imagini di alcuni pittori si vede la melanconia, in alcuni altri la modestia, et in altri una certa vivacità di spiriti accompagnata da una graziosa e perfetta imitazione […]."

161 Cicero (1942–1948), vol. 1, p. 285: "Una fingendi est ars, in qua praestantes fuerunt Myro, Polyclitus, Lysippus; qui omnes inter se dissimiles fuerunt, sed ita tamen, ut neminem sui velis esse dissimilem. Una est ars ratioque picturae, dissimilimique tamen inter se Zeuxis, Aglaophon, Apelles; neque eorum quisquam est cui quicquam in arte sua deesse videatur." (*De oratore*, III, 26).

between the mind and the senses. It was used for the immediate perception and evaluation of objects, but also understood as a rational faculty subject to intellectual activity.[162] Although judgement was primarily understood as an innate ideal, it was not unalterable. As has been argued by Leonardo in his analysis of automimesis, the capacity to distinguish the good from the bad can be improved by constantly referring to beautiful works of art. This normative conception of judgement changed significantly in the course of the Cinquecento, however. The judgement was gradually interpreted as the artist's own personal taste, his *gusto,* rather than as the application of universally valid rules. Accordingly, the once appreciated systems of measurement were criticized as obstacles to painters' individual expression.[163] Painters were invited to follow their own canon of proportions and encouraged to discard the strict rules when possible. For example, Antonio da Sangallo expressed his disapproval of Vitruvian proportions when he realized that one of his architectural projects did not conform to the traditional system of proportions. "Vitruvio è goffo" is written on the top of one of his preparatory drawings for a chimney.[164] A similar view was expressed by Antonio Francesco Doni, who doubted that the use of geometrical principles leads to good representations of the human body.[165] *Giudizio,* used in an artistic context, was thus similar to other terms like *discrezione* or *licenzia* that were employed to indicate a certain aesthetic autonomy of the artist.[166]

One of the first art theorists to contemplate the impact of *giudizio* in this modern sense was the Venetian poet Pietro Aretino. When he discussed the paintings of Michelangelo, rather than admiring his use of perspective and proportion, he extolled his capacity to overcome established rules using instead his own judgement.[167] Vasari would later enhance this interpretation when he emphasized the

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162 Klein 1961, p. 107.

163 For the use of perspective and proportions as objective principles in the Quattrocento see Büttner 1998.

164 Aurenhammer 1994, p. 540.

165 Doni 1549, fol. 8r f.: "Percio che nelle figure humane nella quali consiste maggior dignità che in nessun altra figura, si vede certo che le contengono in loro inumerabili misure, che le non si possono con alcuno ordine geometrico ridurre; come si vede per ogni membro minimo che varia di punto in punto nelle sue grossezze, & larghezze: però è necessario acompagnare (per far simil corpi) la virtu del giudicio con quella gratia di che la natura ci ha fatto capaci; & questa ti credo sia una difficultà grandissima."

166 Klein 1961, p. 108. Further analysis of the artistic judgement in the Renaissance is provided by Summers 1981, pp. 368–379, and Summers 1987. For *licenzia* see Pinelli 1993, pp. 107 f., Boschloo 2008, pp. 82–110.

167 Aretino (1957–1960), vol. 1, p. 283: "Guardate dove ha posto la pittura Michelangelo con lo smisurato de le sue figure, dipinte con la maestà del giudizio, non col meschino dell'arte."

terribiltà of the divine artist, who did not need any geometrical tools when composing his paintings. Rather than relying on external instruments, Michelangelo is said to have used his own eyes as the only device for measuring beauty. His universal *giudizio* was accompanied by the more specific *giudizio dell'occhio*: "Bisogna avere le seste negli occhi e non in mano, perché le mani operano e l'occhio giudica."[168] Consequently, Vasari awarded Michelangelo with the quality of having judgement and taste in all things.[169] Another important letter by Aretino shows us that he understood judgement as a component of the artist's *ingegno* – as some sort of expression of the artist's personality, closely connected with his capacity to be aware of his own habits and inclinations.[170]

The increasing importance of personal judgement was a direct result of the early modern conception of individuality. Unlike in the Middle Ages, the diversity of man was no longer conceived as a deviation from an ideal, caused by the original sin of Adam and Eve,[171] but understood as a result of their varying temperaments based on the four humors.[172] The genesis of the individual was not only subject to a pre-existent soul, but was also believed to be guided by the power of astrological signs and constellations.[173] According to some (if not most) Renaissance humanists,[174] these astral influences determined not only the growth of the embryo and the disposition of its organs, but also provided the individual with a singular character.[175] Because of their unique dispositions, everybody was equipped with different talents and capabilities. Pierfrancesco Giambullari,

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168 As cited by Frey (1923–1940), vol. 2, pp. 520 f. (Vasari in a letter to Martino Bassi from August 1570). The same expression was used by Vasari in the second edition of the *Vite* in the life of Michelangelo.

169 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 7, p. 272: "Et invero Michelagnolo collocò sempre l'amor suo a persone nobili, meritevoli e degne, ché nel vero ebbe giudizio e gusto in tutte le cose."

170 Aretino (1957–1960), vol. 1, p. 88: "Giudicio, dico: ché l'altre cose son buone per vedere gli ingegni degli altri, onde il tuo si desta e si corregge […]. Chi non ha giudizio non conosce se stesso, e chi non conosce se medesimo non è conosciuto d'altri, et chi non è noto da altri anulla il suo essere."

171 Schreiner 1992.

172 For an overview of how the diversity of humans was perceived in the early modern age see Groebner 2004.

173 See Reißer 1997 and Klibansky/Panofsky/Saxl 1990 for a discussion of the influence of planets on the psychological constitution of artists.

174 A critical view regarding astral influences is expressed by Varchi in his *Generazione dei mostri,* held at the Florentine Academy in June 1543, see Varchi (1858–1859), vol. 2, pp. 284–310.

175 For a discussion of medieval ideas on the development of the embryo and its soul in relation to the planets see Burnett 1990.

whose thoughts were similar to those expressed by Giovanni Cavalcanti in the Quattrocento,[176] explained this astrological impact in a speech that he held in the Florentine Academy in the 1540s by referring to the proverb *Ogni pittore dipinge sé.* Just as each painter paints himself, the zodiacal signs would shape the human bodies according to their own likenesses. Signs that borrowed their names from animals were therefore less able to generate well-proportioned men than the signs with human names.[177] The visual blueprint for Giambullari's theory was provided by the so-called *Homo signorum,* an illustration of the human body whose members were assigned to the corresponding zodiacal signs which was frequently reprinted in books on natural philosophy, for example in Gregorius Reisch's *Margarita philosophica* from 1508 (Fig. 11).

Many art theorists followed the idea that the celestial spheres were responsible for the diversity of the artist's judgement and believed them to be accountable for the great variety of styles. The individual judgement and taste of each artist were one of the reasons why Paolo Pino thought it impossible to imagine one perfect form of art.[178] Of course, this did not mean that all kinds of art were understood as equally beautiful. As he explained in his treatise, he wished for the artist to be born under the best stars.[179] This would grant him a well-proportioned

176 As cited in Kemp 1987, p. 10: "Così sono differenti le volontà umane quanto sono differenti le influenzie nelle nature delle stelle. Perchè altra volontà fu in Pippo di ser Brunellesco [Brunelleschi], che non fu in Lorenzo di Bartoluccio [Ghiberti]; ed altra fantasia fu nel maestro Gentile [da Fabriano], che non fu in Giuliano d'Arigo [Pesello]."

177 Giambullari 1551 (1881), p. 98: "Questo [i.e., the starry sky] di tante immagini adorno e di tante stelle ingemmato, ci dà le membra e la forma del corpo nostro, secondo le figure o umane o bestiali che si trovano ne' luoghi forti, quando è l'ora del conferirla. E vedesi manifestamente che i segni chiamati umani con maggior proporzione e con più leggiadria compongono le membra, che non fanno tutti quelli altri che di bestie tengono il nome, tirando sempre ciascuno il soggetto alla parte sua e formando altri alla forma di sè medesimo, come anche volgarmente dice il proverbio che ogni pittore dipinge sè stesso."

178 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 132: "Sono varii li giudicii umani, diverse le complessioni, abbiamo medesmamente l'uno dall'altro estratto l'intelletto nel gusto, la qual differenzia causa che non a tutti aggradano equalmente le cose. E però chi s'applica alla grandezza delle littere, altri più sensitivi si commetton o all'onorato preggio dell'armi, alcuni più modesti si vestono di religione. È ben vero ch'a tal varietà concorre l'influsso delle stelle, le quali inseriscono in noi la propietà della lor natura (come vuoleno gli astronomi)."

179 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 133: "E questa [la buona disposizione naturale] vien infusa in noi da alcune congionzioni de' più begnigni pianeti, o nella nostra generazione over nella natività; e di questi sarà il nostro pittore, acciò che più facilmente divenghi nella perfezzion dell'arte."

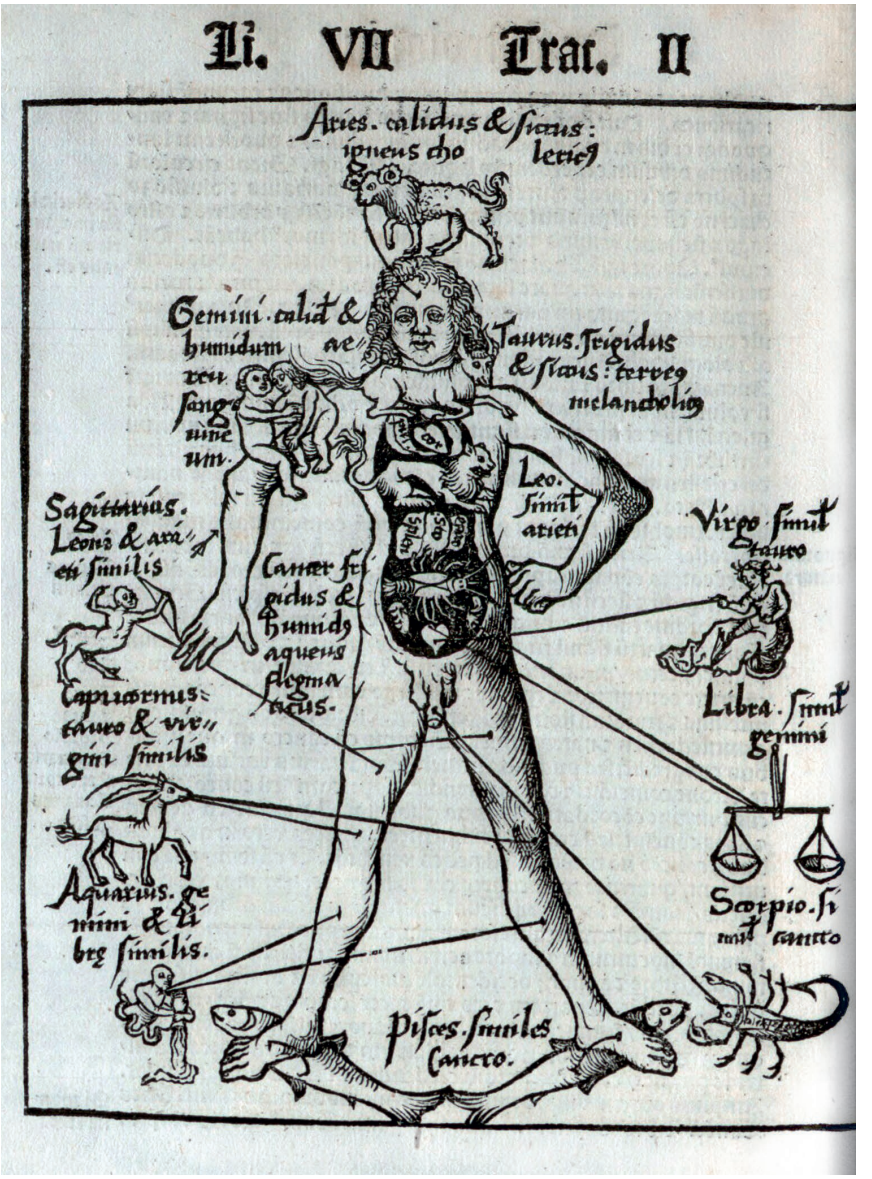

Figure 11 Illustration of the Human Body and its Relation to Zodiacal Signs in the 1508 Edition of Gregorius Reisch's *Margarita philosophica*

body as well as the possibility of painting perfect figures.[180] A similar view was expressed by another Venetian art theorist. Lodovico Dolce appreciated the fact that the complexions and temperaments of the painters, which were caused by the influence of the stars, were different, because as a result they produced a great variety of styles.[181] In contrast to the ideas held by many authors of the Quattrocento, these new ideas granted painters the right to follow their own innate inclinations. As the artist's judgement was increasingly associated with taste, and taste was a prerequisite for style, the paintings of a painter were progressively understood as a reflection of his character.[182] Rather than sticking to established rules and artistic prototypes, they were encouraged to examine their own predispositions and interests.

Much like Armenini, who was especially interested in the imitation of antique works,[183] Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo provides good examples for this paradigm shift in his treatises, the *Trattato dell'arte della pittura* (1584) and the *Idea del tempio della pittura* (1590). Written towards the end of the Cinquecento, they show that his thoughts on the education and training of the artist reflected the changed attitude towards individual expression in painting. He understood the individual style of an artist as a direct articulation of his temperament, a compound of the four elements that was fashioned by the planets according to the time and place of his birth. Since there were only seven planets, Lomazzo designated seven artists who represented the corresponding ideals in painting. Michelangelo, for example, whose art displays a natural preference for muscles and proportions, was associated with Saturn – whereas Raphael, probably because of his predilection for female features, was believed to be born under the influence of Venus. Other components, such as the impact of guardian animals or metals, served Lomazzo

180 Pino 1548 (1960–1962), p. 133: "Non sia grande in estremo, assai delli quali sono sgraziati, pigri et inscipidi; ma sia il pittore nella porzione che già v'ho descritta secondo Vitruvio, ch'averà più facile adito di formare le figure perfette, traendo l'essemplo di sé stesso."

181 Dolce 1557 (1960–1962), p. 186: "E benché il pervenire alla perfezzione della eccellenza della pittura, alla quale fa mestiere di tante cose, sia impresa malagevole e faticosa, e grazia dalla liberalità de' cieli conceduta a pochi (che nel vero bisogna che il pittore, così bene come il poeta, nasca e sia figliuolo della natura), non è da credere (come toccai da prima) che ci sia una sola forma del perfetto dipingere; anzi, perché le complessioni degli uomini e gli umori sono diversi, così ne nascono diverse maniere e ciascuno segue quella a cui è inchinato naturalmente. Di qui ne nacquero pittori diversi: alcuni piacevoli, altri terribili, altri vaghi et altri ripieni di grandezza e di maestà; come veggiamo medesimamente trovarsi negl'istorici, ne' poeti e negli oratori."

182 Klein 1961, p. 111.

183 For Lomazzo's model of eclecticism in comparison to Armenini see Blunt 1940, pp. 156–159.

as a means to explain the endless differences in style apparent in the use of composition, colour, or movement. In contrast to the explanatory models of the Quattrocento (mostly based on a God-given diversity of man), Lomazzo's theory of differences in style is thus a new approach towards individual expression. Or, as Martin Kemp puts it, his system is "a considerable achievement, in its own right as a functioning model for the causes and effects of individual genius."[184]

The new model of artistic expression had consequences for the education of the artist. Of course, the apprentice was not completely abandoned to himself and his inclinations; however, he had to follow one of the seven *governatori* of art (Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Gaudenzio Ferrari, Titian, Polidoro da Caravaggio, and Andrea Mantegna). In fact, the choice of a model that was suitable for the individual characteristics of the young painter was a task of utmost importance to Lomazzo.[185] He was particularly aware of the long-lasting consequences for misguided students who had chosen to follow an inappropriate master. Students who had chosen the wrong model would neither be able to develop a style of their own, nor excel in the style of their master. Only knowing one's own inclinations can the painter choose the right model and become a good painter.[186] Through the imitation of different but adequate styles, the young and mouldable painter can build up his own individual style.[187] Another method to excel was to

184 Kemp 1987, p. 24.

185 Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, pp. 33–35: "Essendo adunque di tanto momento che 'l pittore e qualunque altro artefice conosca il suo genio, e dove più l'inclini l'attitudine e disposizion sua d'operar più facilmente e felicemente per un modo che per un altro, ha da porre ognuno in ciò somma diligenza, e, conosciutolo, deve darsi ad imitar la maniera di quelli che se gli conformano, guardandosi con molta cautela di non inciampare nelle contrarie."

186 Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, p. 33: "Ma una cosa è degna d'essere avvertita, che tra quelli che et hanno saputo conoscere il natural suo talento e l'hanno poi con diligente et continuo studio coltivato, se ben con la sicura scorta dell'arte appresa sono pervenuti al colmo dell'eccellenza, nondimeo in alcuno non si scorge una medesima maniera, ma varie tutte e fra sé l'una dall'altre differenti. Il che non d'altronde nasce che dalla diversità delle maniere e delle disposizioni, le quali conoscendo ciascuno in se stesso, et a quelle accommodando l'instituzione, fanno sì che in una istessa arte si vedono uomini eccellentissimi tutti, ma fra sé però dissomiglianti, e quali in una quale in altra parte eccellente, sì come ognun può avvertire, massime nei sette lumi dell'arte. I quali nelle loro maniere sono tutti dissimil fra sé, ma tali che in quella parte, cui da natura sono stati inclinati et a cui hanno drizzato l'arte et industria loro, non è chi possa maggior eccelenza desiderare. Anzi sono eglino a così alto segno poggiati, che hano tolto ogni speranza ad altri di poter mai in quel genere aggiungerli."

187 Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, p. 27: "Ma quelli che […] si sono dati solo all'imitazione degli altri, diversi dal genio loro, operando solamente per forza d'arte, dove prima face-

follow masters that had very similar or identical dispositions (Lomazzo's examples are Daniele da Volterra and Sebastiano del Piombo). Because their own inclinations correlated closely with the style of Michelangelo, they were able to produce excellent works of art although they followed only one model.[188]

2.5 Metaphors of Artistic Progress

Although Lomazzo's system was still based on a limited number of normative types of art, his treatment of artistic distinctiveness mirrored the idea of a vast amount of styles. Because he held the conviction that each painter had to develop his own style by matching personal inclinations with the expressive modes of his models, his treatise promotes the idea of abandoning epigonism. Similar ideas had been discussed in ancient rhetoric which viewed the repetitive imitation of one's master critically. Following only one model was considered bad practice that would lead to standstill or regression. Quintilian provided the *locus classicus* for this conception: if one only follows in the footsteps of his predecessor, one is never able to surpass him.[189] In a long passage in the tenth book of his *Institutio oratoria,* Quintilian discussed the negative consequences of merely imitating previous authorities, saying that nothing would ever have been discovered and "we should still be sailing on rafts, and the art of painting would be restricted to tracing a line round a shadow thrown in the sunlight."[190]

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vano cose degnissime di lode, perduta la prima maniera e datisi ad un'altra, sono iti di tempo in tempo facendo peggio. […] percioché essi stentano più mentre che, rivolti tutti ad imitar altri, niente intendono il genio proprio, onde nasce tutta la facilità e grazia de l'operare."

188 Lomazzo 1590 (1974), vol. 1, p. 31. Lomazzo's advice to choose an adequate master was probably modelled on similar remarks made by Quintilian who, when discussing the qualities of a good rhetor, also includes his capacity to instruct students. Rather than teaching each pupil identical things, a good rhetor should foster the particular characteristics of his pupils. Similarly, a pupil should consider his individual dispositions as well when choosing his master. (*Institutio oratoria,* II, VIII and X, II).

189 Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria,* X, II, 7–8. Quintilian refers here to the famous anecdote of the daughter of Butades, who is said to have invented painting by tracing the contours of her beloved one with charcoal. See also Pliny, *Historia naturalis,* XXXV, XLIII. The metaphor of the footsteps also in Horace, *Epistles,* I, XIX, 21; Seneca, *Epistulae morales,* 33.

190 Quintilian (1920–1922), vol. 4, p. 79 (*Institutio oratoria,* X, II, 10).

Quintilian's thoughts on progress had huge success in the art literature of the Renaissance where they were first introduced by Alberti's *Della pittura*.[191] The idea of continuous perfection of the arts was in fact a recurrent motive which served as a means of self-reassurance during the entire Renaissance. Humanists as well as artists were convinced that their accomplishments were of a superior quality when compared to those of the Middle Ages or even antiquity.[192] A good example is provided by Alamanno Rinuccini, who expressed admiration for the cultural achievements of his own age in a dedicatory letter of 1473. Contrary to some of his contemporaries who would rather stress the supremacy of the ancient Greeks, he thought himself happy to live amongst so many erudite and distinguished people and considered the Quattrocento an age of great sophistication in which rhetoric and arts flourished ("aetate nostra adeo excultus et expolitus est").[193] Frequent comparisons with the literary culture of the past led to a climate of competition and increased the longing for perfection. For example, Castiglione advised his *cortegiano* to constantly improve his capabilities in the arts of writing and speaking.[194] The intellectual awareness of living in a time of scientific inventions, artistic improvement, and literary progress was an all-embracing attribute of the 16th century that appealed not only to humanists, but to printmakers as well. As is shown by a preface by Francesco Marcolini da Forlì contained in a work by Francesco da Milano, he considered his system of musical notation a huge improvement over the work of his predecessor Ottaviano Petrucci, whom he deemed old-fashioned:

> "Il Mondo è tenuto di grande obligo al Fossombrone [i.e., Ottaviano Petrucci] inventore de lo stampare le intavolature ne la maniera, che si imprimino i libri. Ma nel farsi egli vecchissimo, e l'èta nostra più culta […] le cose sue son poste da parte come compo-

191 Alberti (2002), pp. 102 f.: "Diceva Quintiliano ch'e' pittori antichi soleano circonscrivere l'ombre al sole, e così indi poi si trovò questa arte cresciuta." For a discussion of this passage cfr. Spencer 1957, p. 33.

192 For the topos of progress in art literature cfr. Gombrich 1955, Grafton 2007, Hazan 1999, and Garrard 2010, pp. 54–88.

193 As cited in Gombrich 1955, p. 306. Just as Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria,* XII, X, 2–15) or later Lorenzo Valla in his *Elegantiarum latinae linguae libri sex,* Rinuccini observes a correlation between the flourishing of rhetorics and the flourishing of sculpture and painting. For this recurrent motif see Baxandall 1971, p. 118.

194 Castiglione 1528 (1998), pp. 79 ff: "E se Vergilio avesse in tutto imitato Esiodo, non gli sería passato inanzi; né Cicero a Crasso, né Ennio ai suoi antecessori […]. E veramente gran miseria saria metter fine e non passar più avanti di quello che si abbia fatto quasi il primo che ha scritto, e disperarsi che tanti e così nobili ingegni possano mai trovar più che una forma bella di dire in quella lingua, che ad essi è propria e naturale."

> sitioni lodate già. […] Ma io, che riposo quando mi afatico in servizio de i virtuosi hò miso il piede forse più oltre, che ne le strade le quali egli si secrete fece, che non penso fosser mai calpeste d'alcuno."[195]

The idea of going one step further was even more immanent in art historical writing. Early accounts of Giotto describe his work in terms of light, by which the works of his teacher Cimabue were enshadowed. While this literary topos is later mirrored in the countless anecdotes of pupils who surpass their masters by effortlessly correcting their works, the great visual power of Quintilian's footsteps metaphor proved to be even more appealing. Due to its origin in the ancient poietic arts, it was able to enhance the reputation of painting according to the often reiterated maxim *Ut pictura poiesis*.[196] Painters and art critics, relying on Quintilian's metaphor, could claim the same principles of progress for the visual arts, which, compared to the art of writing, were still held in low esteem. Its huge success was also due to an aphorism by Michelangelo reported in an account by Vasari. When he was shown the copy of an antique sculpture by an artist who claimed to have surpassed the ancient masters, the Florentine artist is supposed to have said that, "no one who follows others can ever get in front."[197] It is more than probable that Michelangelo addressed his criticism to one of his opponents in Florence,[198] Baccio Bandinelli, who was not only a competitor when it came to commissions, but also famous for his copy of the *Laocoön Group* (Fig. 12). It was made at the request of Pope Leo X and his cousin cardinal Giulio de' Medici in 1520, and Bandinelli used only three blocks of undressed marble to create the entire sculpture and thus actually surpassed the antique original, which consisted of seven pieces.[199] However, this example of artistic *difficoltà* was nothing compared to the achievements Michelangelo had reached. Not only was his monumental *David* a statue without any iconic precedence, but it was also made out of one block of marble, partly bungled by prior interventions. Furthermore it was done during the early stage of Michelangelo's career before the *Laocoön Group* was unearthed in the artist's presence in 1506. It was Michelangelo who was traditionally thought to be equal if not superior to the artists of antiquity.

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195 Milano 1536, fol. 1v.

196 For this dictum see Lee 1940.

197 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 7, p. 280: "Domandato da uno amico suo quel che gli paresse d'uno che aveva contrafatto di marmo figure antiche de le più celebrate, vantandosi lo imitatore che di gran lunga aveva superato gli antichi, rispose: 'Chi va dietro altrui, mai non gli passa inanzi'."

198 For a discussion of this question and the many examples of the use of Michelangelo's saying, see the extensive footnote in Vasari 1550–1568 (1962), vol. 4, pp. 2098–2111.

199 Cfr. Hegener 2008, p. 257.

Figure 12 Baccio Bandinelli, Laocoön and his Sons, 1520, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

This competitive background of the saying contributed to its divulgation. Whereas Michelangelo intended it as a criticism of blind imitation of the works of antiquity, his successors also understood the saying in terms of individual style. A good example is provided by Vasari, who, in the life of Mino da Fiesole, criticized artists who were only following the style of their master: A painter can only develop an individual style if he copies from nature.[200] Armenini mentions the dictum when discussing whether a painter had to follow only one master or many.[201] Furthermore, Lomazzo used it in a similar way when debating the process of growing a distinct and personal style.[202] The urge to understand the metaphor as an invitation to personal expression is even more apparent in the art literature of the Seicento. The development of a prospering art market, which contributed to a socially defined variety of tastes, facilitated the growth of new styles. Artists had to compete for commissioners and patrons, and thus adapted their own art to the demands of the market. But the reverse was also true: the need for social distinction led collectors to choose those artists who had a self-fashioned image.[203] Giovanni Battista Passeri, whose *Vite de pittori, scultori ed architetti* were written in the 1670s, reflects these changes when he underscores the importance of a personal style. Describing the life of Giovanni Miele (Jan Miel), a painter who was active in Rome from the 1630s until his death in 1656, Passeri attacks the artist

200 Vasari 1568 (1878–1885), vol. 3, p. 115: "Quando gli artefici nostri non cercano altro nell'opere ch'e' fanno che imitare la maniera del loro maestro o d'altro eccellente, del quale piaccia loro il modo dell'operare o nell'attitudini delle figure o nell'arie delle teste o nel piegheggiare de' panni, e studiano quelle solamente, se bene col tempo e con lo studio le fanno simili, non arrivano però mai con questo solo a la perfezzione dell'arte, avvengaché manifestissimamente si vede che rare volte passa inanzi chi camina sempre dietro; perché la imitazione della natura è ferma nella maniera di quello artefice che ha fatto la lunga pratica diventare maniera, con ciò sia che l'imitazione è una ferma arte di fare apunto quel che tu fai come sta il più bello delle cose della natura, pigliandola schietta senza la maniera del tuo maestro o d'altri, i quali ancora eglino ridussono in maniera le cose che tolsono da la natura." For this vitally important passage in Vasari see Pinelli 1993, pp. 101–103.

201 Armenini 1587 (1988), p. 82: "Ma è tempo che trattiamo sopra di quelli che la buona maniera pigliar vogliono da un solo, ritraendo et immitando di lui ogni cosa, come per scopo e singularissimo essempio loro. A questi solea dire Michelangelo che chi andava dietro a gli altri, mai gli passava inanzi. Ma questi debbono essere tali nell'imitazione, che essi abbino similitudine con gli essempi non in una o in due parti, ma in tutte […]."

202 Lomazzo 1584, p. 437: "Io non ho mai trovato che alcuno che abbia seguito l'orma o l'esempio di un altro, lo abbia potuto agguagliare, non che avanzare. Michelangelo ne fa fede, il quale non è mai potuto aggiungere alla bellezza del torso di Ercole di Apollonio Ateniese […] siccome Daniello Ricciarelli, Perino del Vaga, ed altri che hanno seguito la maniera di esso Michelangelo, non hanno mai potuto agguagliar lui."

203 For the art market in Seicento Rome see Cavazzini 2008, and Spear 1997, pp. 210–224.

for being a follower of Pieter van Laer and the circle of the so-called *bamboccianti*. Passeri considers the genre painting of these Dutch and Flemish painters a low and vulgar art, so he emphasizes the importance of copying the beauty of nature. Rather than following a customary fashion for economic reasons (Miele is said to have earned a lot of money by copying the style of the *bamboccianti*),[204] the artist is invited to develop his own style by referring to the works of nature.[205] Nature's unlimited variety provides a vast amount of forms and features, capable of satisfying the individual taste of the single artist.[206] If, on the contrary, the artist sticks to the habit of imitating his predecessors, he might never be able to be original: "è solito di chi siegue alcuno di non passar giammai avanti di quello."[207]

If Passeri was a dedicated persecutor of genre painting, Carlo Cesare Malvasia can be seen as a supporter of the style of the Carracci family. His *Felsina pittrice* (1678) is a history of the painters of Bologna and a good example of an art-related *campanilismo*. Although the art of Annibale Carracci, Lodovico Carracci, and Guido Reni represented the peak of artistic excellence to Malvasia, he was still able to accept different forms of expression because he identified the personal style of each painter as an articulation of his individual and distinct nature. In the case of Alessandro Tiarini, a Bolognese painter who died in 1668, the urge to develop an individual style is thus related to the need to surpass the pre-

204 Passeri 1772 (1934), p. 221: "Giovanni con quelle sue bambocciate fece qualche avanzo di moneta, e faceva vedere essere figlio di mercante, perche era molto accorto nel negoziare, includendo nelle sue vendite bazzarri, cambi et altre cabale profittevoli, et haveva gran seguito di questi negozianti delle Pitture."

205 Passeri 1772 (1934), p. 220: "Quelli sono mirabili che si fanno gl'autori della loro maniera; altri non così vivaci vedendosi illuminati da quello che si fa scorta d'un nuovo sentiero, s'adestrano di farsi seguaci di quell'orme di già segnate e sanno farsi rigorosi imitatori e pare conseguiscono il merito della lode al pari di quelli che gli sono percursori, e guida."

206 Passeri 1772 (1934), p. 220: "Nella pittura ciascheduno si fa imitatore della natura per esser ella l'unico esemplare degl'oggetti de quali si prende la norma; ma perche e tanto copiosa di forme, di materie, e d'accidenti che nella sua diversità costituisce varie l'idee di chi l'imita eleggendosi ciascheduno quella parte di lei che gli è più geniale, molti che non sanno bene specchiarsi in questa per non havere pupille così ben accorte si fanno specchio di quello che altri hanno estratto dalle sue belle sembianze e vogliono che quegli gli serva d'originale esempio alla loro imitatione. È vero che un ingegno è di gran sollievo all'altro, et insieme somministrano vaghe forme per rendersi più perfetti nell'imitare, e solo Raffaello s'è reso unico perche il suo ingegno che quasi partecipava del Divino non hebbe mai tra gl'huomini chi lo pareggiasse perche non seppero mai trovare nella Natura quelle belle Idee delle quali era pieno il suo intelletto che lo partoriva così felicemente con tanta vivacità."

207 Passeri 1772 (1934), p. 220.

ceding masters, since artistic personality and progress are closely interrelated.[208] The intimate connection between the personal characteristics of an artist and his work are therefore likewise important to Malvasia. When he describes Tiarini as being melancholic and sad, he can adopt the same descriptive principles for the evaluation of Tiarini's paintings. Because every artist is accustomed to portraying himself, Tiarini loves to paint scenes of great grief and sorrow.[209] But the influences of the emotional status and affective behaviour of the painter were not limited to the works alone. Even the beholder, when looking at Tiarini's paintings, could feel his great sorrow. This process of affective transmission is illustrated by Malvasia with a telling example: When the Duke of Mantua was shown a painting by Tiarini with a representation of Mary at the feet of the Holy Cross, he suddenly burst into tears.[210] Just as Horace wanted his poet to feel grief when composing sad poems,[211] Malvasia invites the artist not only to identify with the subjects of his painting, but also to express his own emotions through his art. In doing so, he could rely on the work of authors of the 16th century, who had established a form of biography in which the description of the artist's character and the description of the his works' character were closely interwoven.

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208 Malvasia 1678 (1971), p. 480: "[Alessandro Tiarini] Si vantò d'esser singolare e di battere una maniera da ogn'altra affatto diversa, condannando talvolta tanti scolari de' Caracci, troppo di quella de' loro maestri religiosi seguaci, e lodando perciò Guido, da essi tanto discostatosi, e con lui perciò similmente sentendo che il seguir gli altri sia un farsi ad essi secondo; anzi che Qui alium sequitur, nihil sequatur; nihil inveniat, immo nihil querat; soggiongendo che ciascuno ha dalla natura la sua propria maniera, la quale basta seguire e raffinare con lo studio […]."

209 Malvasia 1678 (1971), p. 480: "Perché ogni pittore ritrae se stesso, essendo egli [Tiarini] di natura malinconico, ebbe un genio particolare alle cose meste; onde, al contrario del coreggio, che sempre ridenti, piangenti e addolorate ci fé vedere le sue figure il Tiarini, avendo in queste un particolar genio e una dote singolare."

210 Malvasia 1678 (1971), p. 480: "[…] mi raccontava che quando, prima di partire dal Duca di Mantova, gli volle offrire in dono quella Madonna lagrimante ai pié soli del supposto crocefisso Salvatore, prima che Sua Altezza la vedesse: 'E che sì', – gli disse – 'Signor Alessandro, ch'io indovino che cosa è in quel quadro? Qualche figura che piange; e forse forse una Beata Vergine addolorata'; soggiongendomi poi come ammutitosi e commosso nel rimirarla, presala con le sue mani, e portatala nella stanza contigua, vidde successivamente uscirne la Signora Duchessa e dirgli: 'Che avete fatto, Signor Tiarini? Voi avete fatto piangere il Signor Duca'."

211 Horace (1942), pp. 459–461: "If you would have me weep, you must first feel grief yourself"/"si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi." (*Ars poetica,* 102–105) For a discussion of the impact of this concept cfr. Rudd 1976, pp. 170–181.