

What is in the Mind of the Image-Maker ?

Some views on pictorial representation in antiquity

GORAN SORBOM

The theory of imitation is very often seen as a theory of pictorial representation in which the basic relation is the one between the image and things in the world. The image or imitation is described as a thing similar to things in the world or even as a kind of copy of them.

In this paper I will argue for the view that the main content of the theory of imitation, in antiquity at least, was not concerned with the relation of similarity between image and things in the world. The basic distinction is, on the contrary, the one between the inner and outer image, the mental image and the thing image. The imitation (mimema, image) as a thing is not always similar to things in the world as, for instance, a painted portrait in an obvious way is to the person portraited. But it is necessary that in the perception of the thing imitation a perception resembling a perception of things in the world appears in the mind of the beholder. In reading Homer an inner image of the actions of, for instance, Ulysses and his men in the cave of the cyclops must appear or we don't understand the text. This is a mental event of a particular kind distinguishable from other kinds of mental events as reasoning, day-dreaming, looking at things, understanding arguments, having emotions.

My argument will be in the form of readings of a number of ancient texts where the human ability to form mental images is

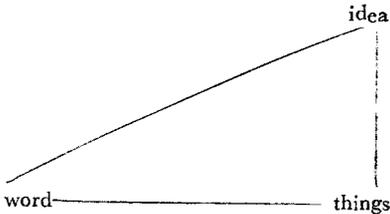
discussed in connection with views on the production and apprehension of images and imitations (*mimemata*).

Plato's challenge

In the tenth book of *Republic* Plato discusses the nature of *mimesis*. It is necessary, he says, to scrutinize mimetic poetry' in greater detail and Socrates puts the question: "Could you tell me in general what imitation [*mimesis*] is?" (595 C)² and he continues (596 A):

Shall we, then, start the inquiry at this point by our customary procedure? We are in the habit, I take it, of positing a single idea or form in the case of the various multiplicities to which we give the same name ...

Plato distinguishes between things of a given sort, the name and the idea of them. His famous example is that of couches and tables. There are couches in the world, these existing couches imply the idea couch and we use the word "couch" to denote them and to connote the idea of them. The result is a triad that can be represented in the following way:



To this Plato adds an ontological perspective. There are three ontological levels, or three 'worlds', which Plato ranks to each other with regard to their amount of reality: the world of ideas which is unchangeable and eternal, the world of multiplicities where there is constant change and finally the world of appearances which is the world brought to our minds or our consciousness by the senses, a world that is even more floating and uncertain than the other two worlds.

The idea is most real or the only thing that really is. The idea couch is the real and eternally existing couch whereas couches made

by human hands are "... only a dim adumbration in comparison with reality." (597 B) A couch in the world is temporary, it is made, it exists and it vanishes. It is a contingent thing equipped with many accidental properties whereas the idea is eternal and unchanging. The idea or form is the nature and essence of something, the couchness of couches, for instance. This couchness can also be seen as the couch-function and such a function does not change over time. Wherever or whenever something is used as a couch it participates in the couch-function.

Appearances as mental events constitute the third ontological level. They are even less real than ideas and things. Plato writes (598 A-B):

... Does a couch differ from itself according as you view it from the side or the front or in any other way? Or does it differ not at all in fact though it appears different, and so of other things?

That is the way of it, he said. It appears other but differs not at all.

Plato uses the word "fantasma" (appearance, phantasm) to denote what appears to us; it is the mental content when we sense and perceive things. When you walk around a couch, for instance, the appearance of it will change continuously as you pass around it but the couch is the same, it does not change because you walk around it and look at it. In this way you could say that the appearance of something as a mental event is less real than the thing itself.

Thus the three ontological levels are, according to Plato: the world of ideas - the world of things - the world of sensation/perception (aisthesis) of things.

On the production of man-made things, couches and tables for instance, Plato has the following to say (596 B):

And are we not also in the habit of saying that the craftsman who produces either of them fixes his eyes on the idea or form, and so makes in the one case the couches and in the other the tables that we use, and similarly of other things? For surely no craftsman makes the idea itself. How could he?

The metaphor "fixes his eyes on the idea or form" visualizes the fact that the craftsman knows the essence and function of the thing in question. If a carpenter is asked, to make a couch it is necessary that he is skilled in his craft and knows what a couch is and how we use couches. Suppose he is a very good carpenter but never heard of or saw a couch, then he cannot, in spite of his craftsmanship, make one.

Later on in the dialogue Plato continues the discussion by distinguishing between the user, the maker and the imitator of a thing (601 D - E):

... there are some three arts concerned with everything, the user's art, the maker's, and the imitator's.

Yes.

Now, do not the excellence, the beauty, the rightness of every implement, living thing, and action refer solely to the use for which each is made or by nature adapted ?

That is so.

It quite necessarily follows, then, that the user of anything is the one who knows most of it by experience, and that he reports to the maker the good and bad effects in use of the thing he uses. As, for example, the flute-player reports to the flute-maker which flutes respond and serve rightly in flute playing, and will order the kind that must be made, and the other will obey and serve him.

In this passage the idea or form of something can be understood as the function of that something which at the same time is its essential characteristics in contradistinction to its contingent properties. These essential characteristics the user and the maker has in mind in making and using the object. These characteristics are not sensuous in character; you cannot sense and perceive them directly. They are abstract and general; they are shared by many contingent things What you can perceive are individual examples of these functions and what you perceive are the contingent properties of the thing serving its function, i. e. its colours, shapes, smells etc. You can see how a couch is used on a given occasion but not the function itself which is abstract and universal in character.

After stating that the craftsman fixes his eyes on the idea of the thing he is going to produce Plato says that there is another craftsman who can make everything and that very quickly. Anyone can do it with the help of a mirror (596 D). But what is produced in this way is "... the appearance of them, but not the reality and the truth." (596 E) Painters belong to this kind of craftsman (596 E) and later on it is argued that the poet is of basically the same sort as the painter (597 E), i. e. both painter and poet is a mimetes (imitator). The models of painters and poets are things in the world of multiplicities as they appear to us in sensation and perception (598 B):

Consider, then, this very point. To which is painting directed in every case, to the imitation of reality as it is or of appearance as it appears? Is it an imitation of a phantasm or of the truth?

Since mimeta (imitations) are man-made things, this argument seems to imply that the mimetes (imitator) fixes his eyes on ideas in making his mimeta. But Plato emphatically denies this (598 A). However, it must be maintained that the mimetes (imitator) fixes his eyes on the idea of mimema (the concept and function of imitation) but not on the idea of, for instance, couches when he makes a representation of a couch. As any craftsman the mimetes must be skilled in his trade and know about the uses of mimemata but this does not imply that he knows i. e. 'fixes his eyes on the idea' of) the things he is representing. It is this latter claim Plato denies. The mimetes fixes his eyes on the contingent properties of things even if he has no model outside himself but conceives of it in his mind. The 'inner eye' of the mimetes is different from the 'inner eye' of the craftsman which beholds the idea of the thing that the craftsman is producing.

Thus Plato maintains that there are three kinds of couches: the idea couch, the couches in the world and pictorial representations of couches and there are three kinds of producers: "The painter, then, the cabinet-maker, and God, there are these three presiding over three kinds of couches." (597 B) Perceptual appearances are not trustworthy, according to Plato; they can deceive us. Plato continues (602 D - E):

And have not measuring and numbering and weighing proved to be most gracious aids to prevent the domination in our soul of the apparently greater or less or more or heavier, and to give the control to that which has reckoned and numbered or even weighed. Certainly.

But this surely would be the function of the part of the soul that reasons and calculates.

Mimemata address the lower part of the mind, not the part that "reasons and calculates". They are confined to the realm of sensation and perception. Thus only the contingent properties of things are possible to present in the mimema. Since the mimesis (imitation) is concerned with perceptual qualities and appearances the mimetes (imitator) fixes his eyes on the contingent properties of things in this world when he makes his mimemata. The painter "is the imitator of the thing which those others produce" and he is thus the "... producer of the product three removes from nature..." (597 E) The couch made by the painter is thus even less real than temporary couches.

With regard to this outlook it is natural to the mimema below the ontological level of real things. Of course it can be argued that a painting or a theatre performance is as real as any other existing object or event and thus has to be put on the same ontological level as words and things. But in Plato's work it is obvious that mimemata are regarded as less real than ordinary things and that they have to be ranked below ordinary things.

This objection can be met with a distinction between the mimema as a thing and the mimema as perceived by someone i. e. as it appears to a beholder. The mimema as a thing in the world must be put on the same ontological level as words and things. But the appearance of them when we look at them or listen to them belongs to the third level. When we perceive things they appear to us and the mimema is a thing the sole function of which is to make appearances rise in the beholders. In the *Sophist* Plato comments on the difference between images and real objects: "... Shall we not say that we make a house by the art of building, and by the art of painting make another house, a sort of man-made dream produced for those who are awake?" ³(266 C)

With this interpretation a second triad appears. The first one is the result of the "customary procedure" with idea, things and word. The second one is then fantasmata (perceptual appearances of things and mimemata), things and mimemata as a particular kind of thing in the following manner still with the couch example:

the world
of ideas

the idea
couch

the world of
multiplicities

the word "couch" — couches — mimemata
representing
a couch

the world of
appearances

aisthesis of
couches and
representations
of couches

This is Plato's challenge: a mimema is a man-made thing that creates appearances of a special sort in the minds of its beholders, appearances that are similar to appearances of real things of the kind represented in the mimema (imitation, image). A painting of a couch creates couch-appearances in the minds of its spectators.

Very often the spectators know that it is just a couch-appearance, not a perception of a real couch. Generally, this knowledge is in most cases necessary for the proper use of the image. Plato maintains that sometimes the mimema or more correctly the image created in the mind of the beholder when apprehending the mimema can deceive him to believe that it is a real thing he has in front of him (598 B-C)

Then mimetic art is far removed from truth, and this, it seems, is the reason why it can produce everything, because it touches or lays hold of only a small part of the object and that a phantom; as, for example, a painter, we say, will paint us a cobbler, a carpenter, and other craftsman, though he himself has no expertness in any of these arts, but nevertheless if he were a good painter, by exhibiting at a distance his picture of a carpenter he would deceive children and foolish men, and make them believe it to be a real carpenter.

This idea of deception as a goal for mimetic arts has echoed through history. But if we look at the arts it is seldom the case that paintings, sculptures, theatre performances etc. are made with the intention of deceiving their beholders into the belief that they look at an object and not a representation of it. In almost all cases the beholders know the difference and this knowledge is a part of the use and experience of them. It is, for instance, a necessary condition for an aesthetic experience of them or to learn from them. Suppose you look at a painting representing a ferocious lion close at hand and without ties. If you thought it to be a real lion you would need strong nerves to also appreciate muscular rhythm and beauty of its colours; but if you know that you are looking at a picture you are safe to study and appreciate it.

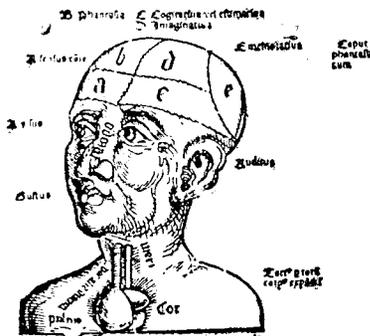
It is not necessary, which is very often believed, that the thing mimema be similar to (i.e. has properties in common with) other things in the class of objects it represents. The narrative parts of Homer's poetry, whether read or listened to, do not have such relationships. But it is necessary that the appearance created in the minds of the beholders are similar to appearances of the things represented in the mimema. When you read Homer you should be able to visualize in your mind (or 'inner eye') the things Homer tells about.

In some forms of mimema there is a similarity between the thing mimema and things in the world. For instance, paintings and sculptures but also dance and theatre performances representing human actions are similar to (have some contingent properties in common with) human beings. This similarity 'leads' the beholder, in his sensation/perception of the thing image, to create an inner image (fantasia) of the thing represented. But you can also create such inner images in other ways, by reading or listening to texts for instance. It is possible to use language in such a manner than inner images perceptual character appear in the mind of the reader or listener. Music is a difficult

case. Both Plato and Aristotle claim that music is mimetic in character but in which way? Is the piece of music similar to things in the world as paintings and sculptures are or does music create their inner images (of human character) in another way like language does?

Psychological assumptions

Over a very long period human mind was believed to consist of a few faculties: Sensation and perception (aisthesis), imagination (fantasia, common sense (sensus eommunis), reason (cogitativa), memory (memorativa) and the faculty of making judgments (aestimativa).⁵ Aristotle's *On the Soul* was a solid foundation for this common outlook. It is often illustrated in treatises on the soul. The following example is from Aristotle's *Parvula philosophiae naturalis cum comment*, edited by Matthias Qualle and published in Hagenaw in 1513:



Aisthesis (sensation/perception) was seen as the mental ability to receive images of the outside world. Aristotle describes it as a change of quality in which the consciousness is made similar to the outward object.⁶ Thus sensation/perception is regarded as an image receiving faculty. The mental content of sensation/perception is similar to the thing sensed and perceived, sensation/perception is isomorphic in character. The mental image has properties in common with the object sensed and perceived. Sometimes this faculty is called *imaginatio* because it brings images of the outside world to the mind.⁷

Aristotle regards the mind as passive in the process of aisthesis because it receives an image of outward thing without any activity of its own. But the same faculty can also be active. Then it is

called *fantasia*. The fantasia freely produces 'perception' without there being outward objects answering to them. "...To imagine, then, is to form an opinion exactly corresponding to a direct perception" (*On the Soul* 428 b 2 — 3)⁸. Aristotle writes and in another place he comments on the relationship between dreaming and smaginingp (*On Dreams* 495 a 15 - 23) in the following way:

.. Since we have discussed imagination in the treatise *On the Soul*, and the imaginative is the same as the sensitive faculty, although the imaginative and sensitive are different in essence; and since activity, and a dream appears to be some sort of mental image for an image which appears in sleep, whether simply or in a special sense, we call a dream); it is clear that dreaming belongs to the sensitive faculty, but belongs to it *qua* imaginative.⁹

Thus there is a 'family' of mental events: the perceptual image (rightly or wrongly representing the perceptual object), the illusion-hallucination, the dream and fantasia. All of them are related to the faculty of aisthesis but distinct in character. Sometimes, however, the borderlines between them are difficult to see. Sometimes one can use this difficulty to play tricks upon appreciators as is the case, for example, with *trompe l'oeil*. The fantasia is, then, the faculty of producing mental images of perceptual character without there being perceptual objects. The same word is used to denote the mental image thus produced. Quintilian writes (*Institutio oratoria* VI. 2. 29): " There are certain experiences which the Greeks call 'fantasiai, and the Romans visions, whereby things absent are presented to our imagination with such extreme vividness that they seem actually to be before our very eyes."¹⁰ Here Quintilian stresses the perceptual character of the fantasia. This inner image is either perceived a memory of something perceived earlier or a compound of elements earlier making up something new. The fantasia is different from the illusion-hallucination in that, among other things, the subject knows that there are no perceptual objects answering to the fantasia.

Now, it is possible to reproduce this mental image in an outward form. Either you 'see something with your inner eye' and try to realize it in the outside world as a real thing or event or you produce it as an image, i. e. a thing the sole purpose of which is to recreate the mental image of the image-maker in the mind of its beholders.

The making of an image (mimema) can be described as the activity to realize the inner image created by the fantasia in an outward form with the end that other persons can, through looking or listening to it, get the same mental image as the creator had. The central thesis of the theory of imitation is not, then, that the production of an image consists of making an outward object to have properties in common with some other things in the world but to make it answer to a mental image in such a way that all beholders of it will share the same mental image.

The crucial role of the faculty of fantasia in making an image is obvious in many ancient texts. Cicero, for instance, comments on Phidias' work in the following way (*Orator* II, 9):

...Surely that great sculptor, while making the image of Jupiter or Minerva, did not look at any person whom he was using as a model, but in his own mind there dwelt a surpassing vision of beauty, at this he gazed and all intent on this he guided his artist's hand to produce the likeness of the god.¹¹

In Latin the word "exprimere" literally means "to squeeze out" and metaphorically "to represent", "to portray", "to form", "to model", "to describe". Most likely it is just the conception of the process of squeezing out the inner image in an outward form that is the conceptual foundation of the secondary, metaphorical use of the word.

To apprehend an image (mimema) on the other hand is to read, look at or listen to it in such a way that the fantasia of the maker appears in the mind of the beholder. Thus there is a chain of communication from the maker of the image to the beholders where the thing communicated is a mental image seen by the 'inner eye' or by the *Oculus Imaginationis*.

Flavius Philostratus claims that man has a mental faculty to see and an ability to make images. The former belongs to human nature and the latter which is a subdivision of the former and founded on it, is an acquired ability "... man owes his mimetic faculty to nature, but his power of painting to art"¹².

Philostratus also points out that knowledge, earlier experiences and memory play a necessary role in the creation and apprehension of pictures:

...And for this reason I should say that those who look at works of painting and drawing require a mimetic faculty; for no one

could appreciate or admire a picture of a horse or of a bull, unless he had formed an idea of the creature represented, Nor again could one admire a picture of Ajax, by the painter Timomachus, which represents him in a state of madness, unless one had conceived in one's mind first an idea or notion of Ajax, and had entertained the probability that after killing the flocks in Troy he would sit down exhausted and even meditate suicide....¹³

A basic pattern of thought describing the production and perception of mimemata emerges. The pattern is triadic in character basically similar to the 'second triad' in the interpretation of Plato's view on mimesis in the tenth book of the *Republic*: it is an interplay between things in the world, mimemata (as a special kind of things in the world) and sensations/perceptions of things and mimemata.

It is further possible, within this way of thought, to distinguish between the situations of production and reception of mimemata. But the difference between these two kinds of situation was seen from a perspective other than the one we adopt today. A basic difference between the ancient outlook and the modern one is that aisthesis (the mental reception of things and events in the world) was regarded as a passive process whereas the production of *fantasiae* (inner images) was seen as an active process; in both cases the same faculty was believed to be involved. Thus production and reception of inner images were regarded as closely related; the difference is that they occur in reverse order as forms of activity and passivity in the same faculty. The situation of production is also distinguished from the situation of reception in that it involves the skill and craftsmanship of the maker without which it is impossible for him to create the thing mimema.

The assumption that sensation/perception is isomorphic in character, i. e. that the mental content is similar to the thing perceived, was universally accepted. This may explain why these two kinds of situation (the production and the reception situation) are not, in ancient texts, are kept apart according to modern expectations. This does not mean that ancient authors did not see or understand that making a mimema is a different kind of situation from beholding one. For one thing, craftsmanship was required in the production of the outward image and the maker was often a craftsman of low social rank whereas the beholder and user often belonged to the higher levels of society. But in speculations over the nature of mimetic communication the distinction was not very necessary. Under normal and successful circumstances

the fantasia of the producer is communicated without any changes to the receiver, it was assumed.

This outlook on the nature of images and on the production, reception and communication of them which is pointed at in this paper I would like to call "the ancient system of the arts", "system" in the sense of "way of thinking". It is a common sense outlook that sometimes was philosophically articulated and elaborated but that always had a solid foundation in a generally accepted view on the functions of the human mind. It did survive over a very long period. As far as we know it existed in the 5th century B. C. as I believe, exerted a strong influence on aesthetic thought till our own century. It was certainly the foundation from which 'the modern system of the arts' was built.¹⁴ Diderot's "The Paradox of Acting" can, for instance, be seen as an elegant variation of it. When Viktor Shklovsky introduces the Russian formalism in his famous paper "Art as device" he starts out with an attack on the idea that art is a kind of thinking in images; modernism had to get rid of the burden of older conceptions of the nature of art in order to establish art in its absolute autonomy.

Agent and intention in image making

So far I have traced a basic pattern of thought concerning image production and reception that, according to my view, prevailed over a very long period. Plato's challenge made it into a philosophical issue that had to be tackled by everyone interested in the nature of images.¹⁵ Fundamental to this outlook was that the important relation was the one between inner and outer image. But not only fantasmata and fantasiae were believed to participate in the image production and reception; also other factors were involved.

In a letter Seneca discusses the first cause and the causes behind the existence of man-made things (65, 8-9):

Accordingly, there are five causes, as Plato says: the material, the agent, the make-up, the model, and the end in view. Last comes the result of all these. Just as in the case of the statue, - to go back to the figure with which we began, - the material is the bronze, the agent is the artist, the make-up is the form which is adapted to the material, the model is the pattern imitated by the agent, the end in view is the purpose in the maker's mind, and, finally, the result of all these is the statue itself.¹⁶

When a sculptor works on a sculpture he necessarily has some material to work on, a material with its own particular possibilities

and limitations. He has his own personality so far as this is involved in the production of the sculpture and he has his craftsmanship. The result of this work is that the material has left the state of 'raw material' and acquired a distinct form. In doing this the sculptor has used a model that lends its form to the material and the sculptor has had some end or ends in view in making the sculpture. If you want to map all the causes involved in the existence of, for instance, a sculpture, these are too few, Seneca writes. You have also to include time, place, motion and may be also others.

Of these causes the personality and craftsmanship of the agent, the model in the form of a fantasia and the intention (the end in view) are, at least partly, in the mind of the sculptor and the mimeses when they make their sculptures and mimemata and these groups of causes affect the final result, the sculpture and the mimema. Characteristically, Seneca only mentions craftsmanship as a factor depending on the artist (65.5): "The 'second cause' is the artist; for without the skilled hands of a workman that bronze could not have been shaped to the outlines of the statue." That the personality of the artist can influence the image is not often stressed in antiquity. The romantic view that the work of art is an effluence of a great personality is alien to ancient thought even if the anonymous writer sometimes called "Longinus", maintains that "(s)ublimity is the true ring of a noble mind"¹ (*On the Sublime* 9. 2). It is not, however, the individual personality you meet in reading, listening to or looking at the work of art but what you apprehend is great and sublime fantasiae. The ability to create great and sublime fantasiae is innate, you have it or you don't. But the point is that it is a fantasia, a perceptual visualization of something, an inner image. "Longinus" gives a number of examples of such fantasiae or perceptual-like visualizations. Here is one of them (9. 9):

So, too, the lawgiver of the Jews, no ordinary man, having formed a worthy conception of divine power, gave expression to it at the very threshold of his *Laws* where he says: "God said" - what? "Let there be light," and there was light. "Let there be earth, and there was earth."¹⁸

It is the concrete visualization of something non-concrete, the divine power, which he praises as worthy and sublime. This inner image (fantasia), that the power of god is so immense that his mere saying "Let there be light" created light in the whole universe, is a

concrete example of the power of god visualized as an inner perceptual image in the mind of the reader of the texts. It is a visualization of the abstract idea (divine power) which we can 'see' directly and to which we can react emotionally, in this case with a feeling of sublimity. It is a thing brought to our immediate knowledge by 'seeing' (even if it is a text we read) not by arguments and reasons.

The traditional view that the poet/musician, dancer and sometimes the actor and sculptor were seized by divine power in their creations stresses the fact that it is not their individual personalities that are involved in the creative act. What they do are not effluences of their individual personalities but has a source outside of their individual personalities; this source may be Apollo and the Muses or the Christian God spelling out the Evangelists to the evangelists. Or this traditional view can be used just to point out that the creative act is mysterious and does not originate in the normal personality of the poet/musician etc. as is the case when he practises his craft (*techne*, *ars*) which is an acquired ability and completely 'human' in character.¹⁹

In an obscure passage in the *Thesmophoriazousai* by Aristophanes the jokes directed against Agathon may be founded on a view that there is some kind of relationship between individual personality and writing which Aristophanes mocks (164 - 170):

And Phrynicus, perhaps you have seen him, sir,
How fair he was, and beautifully dressed;
Therefore his plays were beautifully fair.
For as the Worker, so the Work will be.
Then that is why harsh Philocles writes harshly,
And that is why vile Xenocles writes vilely,
And cold Theognis writes such trivial plays.²⁰

But what these ideas were we don't know.

So much for the relation between personality and image making. It is not enough, as was pointed out by for instance Horace²¹. "Longinus"²² and Philostratus the Elder²³, to be able to create a fantasia in your mind even if it is splendid and sublime. The image maker must have a craft (*techne*, *ars*) to be able to realize the inner image in an outward form. A craft is not innate; maybe you are born with some disposition for acquisition of a craft, but it is something you learn by practising it and by looking at and listening to people who are masters of their trades and by reading handbooks. This knowledge

of the craft affects; of course the final result. The craft is partly in the mind and partly in the habits and performing skills of the craftsman.

The intention, the end in view, is described in the following way by Seneca:

The "fourth cause" is the purpose of the work. For if this purpose had not existed, the statue would not have been made. Now what is this purpose? It is that which attracted the artist, which he followed when he made the statue. It may have been money, if he has made it for sale; or renown, if he has worked for reputation; or religion, if he has wrought it as a gift for a temple. Therefore this also is a cause contributing towards the making of the statue....²⁴

The intention or end in view is not just the will of an agent to do something but is a whole net of conceptions, values, practices etc, that are the necessary elements of the situation in which the sculptor works. Suppose the sculptor is a professional craftsman who has got the commission to make a sculpture of a young, male, nude person to be put on the tomb of a deceased warrior. In this situation religious beliefs, economic and social stratification etc, are important. Such things, too, are in the mind of the image maker during his work with the image and they affect the final result and the understanding of it.

Models outside the image maker

a. Platonic ideas.

The model, on the other hand, is the thing that is responsible for the form of the sculpture in the sense that it 'lends' its form to the sculpture. It does not matter, Seneca says, whether the sculptor has this model within or without (65. 7):

To these four Plato adds a fifth cause, - the pattern which he himself calls the "idea"; for it is this that the artist gazed upon when he created the work which he had decided to carry out. Now it makes no difference whether he has this pattern outside himself, that he may direct his glance to it, or within himself, conceived and placed there by himself.²⁵

When Seneca maintains that the artist in creating his sculpture 'looks' at a Platonic idea, this is a misunderstanding of Plato's position

in the tenth book of the *Republic* according to the interpretation given above. The craftsman 'looks' at the Platonic idea when he makes his product and so does the mimetes (imitator): he has to have a knowledge of the nature and functions of mimemata or he does not know how to proceed. But Plato denies that the mimetes 'looks' at the idea of the thing he represents in his mimema. He 'makes' an inner image with the help of the faculty of fantasia and eventually he realizes this in an outward form, thus 'lending' the form of the inner image to the outward object. A fantasia is not a vision of a Platonic idea.

Seneca is not alone in his interpretation of Plato's theory of ideas in this way. Before him Cicero held a similar view (*Orator* 11.8-10):

...I am firmly of the opinion that nothing of any kind is so beautiful as not to be excelled in beauty by that of which it is a copy, as a mask is a copy of a face. This ideal cannot be perceived by the eye or ear, nor by any of the senses, but we can nevertheless grasp it by the mind and the imagination... Accordingly, as there is something perfect and surpassing in the case of sculpture and painting - an intellectual ideal by reference to which the artist represents those objects which do not themselves appear to the eye, so with our minds we conceive the ideal of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy. These patterns of things are called 'ideai' or ideas by Plato, that eminent master and teacher both of style and thought...²⁶

Here, too, you get the impression that the sculptor 'looks' at a Platonic idea and uses it as a model in his work. It is said that the painter and sculptor represent things "which do not themselves appear to the eye" which probably means that Platonic ideas are non-perceptual in character. But painters and sculptors manage anyhow to represent them in their works. How is this done? How is it possible to connect the perceptual world with the non-perceptual world of Platonic ideas in such a way that we can apprehend Platonic ideas when looking at the paintings and sculptures? Cicero has no answers to these questions, a version of Plato's challenge.

The view that artists can represent Platonic ideas, which I take to be a misreading of Plato's *Republic*²⁷, has recurred several times in history and sometimes proved to be a fruitful misunderstanding. Plotin writes that "... the arts do not simply imitate what they see, but they run back up to the forming principles from which nature derives..."²⁸ but at the same time he is careful to stress that the only

side of non-perceptual things that can be pictorially represented is their appearance in or influence on the perceptual world. The mimema is bound to what we can perceive and imagine with our senses.

b. Rules and measurements.

Plato mentions that one way of making an image is to put up a mirror and in this way 'produce' many kinds of thing, i.e. appearances of many kinds of thing (*Republic* 596 D-E). What the image maker has in mind in this situation is, most likely, an idea to make an image and thoughts about the means to produce it and why he makes it. In modern times you could claim that the camera is a kind of powerful and sophisticated mirror working within basically the same kind of process. You intend to take a photo and use the camera with the result that a picture is taken. The making of the picture is dependent on the technique or apparatus you use, your skill in handling the camera and the intention you have in mind.

In these examples the outer image, and consequently the inner one (because of the isomorphic character of sensation/perception), is dependent for its form and other perceptual qualities on things and persons in the world that 'lend' their forms and other perceptual qualities to the image. But it is also possible to dispose of even this kind of model. It is enough to have a number of rules and measures that tell the maker how to proceed in his production. Given, for instance, the intention of making a sculpture representing a young, male, nude person to be put on the tomb of a deceased warrior it is enough if the sculptor has the craftsmanship of his trade and rules and measures in order to proceed. The rules prescribe to the sculptor what are the representational elements of man, their measures and composition, what they mean and tell etc. This idea can be seen in the following text by Diodorus Siculus (1.98. 5-9):

Also of the ancient sculptors the most renowned sojourned among them, namely, Telecles and Theodorus, the sons of Rhoecus, who executed for the people of Samos the wooden statue of the Pythian Apollo. For one half of the statue, as the account is given, was worked by Telecles in Samos, and the other half was finished by his brother Theodorus at Ephesus; and when the two parts were brought together they fitted so perfectly that the whole work had the appearance of having been done by one man. This method of

working is practised nowhere among the Greeks, but is followed generally among the Egyptians. For with them the symmetrical proportions of the statues are not fixed in accordance with the appearance they present to the artist's eye, as is done among the Greeks, but as soon as they lay out the stones and after apportioning them, are ready to work on them, at that stage they take the proportions, from the smallest parts to the largest; for dividing the structure of the entire body into twenty-one parts and one-fourth in addition, they express in this way the complete figure in its symmetrical proportions. Consequently, so soon as the artisans agree as to the size of the statue, they separate and proceed to turn out various sizes assigned to them, in such a way that they correspond, and they do it so accurately that the peculiarity of their system excites amazement - 29

What you need is craftsmanship to cut stone, an intention to make an image of a certain kind and the appropriate rules and measures to make it. The result is (if we speculate in the manner of the 'ancient system') an object that gives the informed spectator a man-like inner image to which meaning is attached by rules; a knit hand indicates a female person, straight fingers a male person, one foot forward means motion, dots in the face (tears) mean sorrow etc. What exactly these rules were we don't know but some of them we can figure and state in the form of recommendations how to make the image and how to read and understand it.

What you apprehend is a man-like thing but it is not an individual man in the sense that an existing person has participated in the production process 'lending' his outward forms to the sculpture. It is of course, possible to combine the method of rules and measures with the technique of lending some traits from a model. It is believed, for instance, that some pharaoh sculptures from the Middle kingdom are extraordinarily lifelike but still keeping within the rules and measures of the sculpture technique established early during the Old kingdom.³⁰

Diodorus says that this method is not used among the Greeks at least any longer; in the archaic period the 'Egyptian' way of making sculpture was common in Greece. The Greek way is, Diodorus says, to use the appearance (fantasia) of things as guiding principle in making the picture. The appearance is something mental that the maker has in his mind. He does not deny that the sculptures are 'calculated'

according to principles of a ratio or module but it is the appearance that is decisive. It means only that in creating the fantasia as model for the outward image the sculptor pays due attention to measures which are possible to check up on the outward image. But it is basically the inner image, which is perceptual in character, that 'lends' its form to the outward image and in this way transforms the block of stone into a sculpture,

According to the Egyptian way of pictorial composition the image needs not conform to an appearance of any individual man or some more general, concrete appearance of the notion 'living man'. It is easy to see that Egyptian, Oriental and archaic Greek sculpture deviates from appearances of living men as the Greeks developed the concrete notion in painting and sculpture in the latter part of the sixth and the beginning of the fifth centuries. The composition of the elements, according to the Egyptian way, follows other rules (that can be stated and thus communicated from one individual to another and from one generation to another) than the rules of classical Greek sculpture where the mental image, perceptual in character, of a living creature is the model. In fact, the Greeks also sometimes represented dead persons and animals but then it was just the perceptual quality of being dead that were dominant in these cases. As Xenophon expresses it, the quality of life was the most important characteristic of Greek sculpture.³¹ He also points out the road to reach that goal: to study the appearance of living bodies in given situations: running, sitting, making a speech etc. A basic assumption is that every outward trait of the body is influenced by the particular situation in which the body is involved. And the other way round: when you see these traits represented you can conclude to the particular situation represented, running, feeling joy, making a speech etc. That was an important part of the Greek innovation: the situation and the mental state was made visible directly, not through symbolization.

c. Copies and portraits.

There are also other devices and techniques of image making in which it is not necessary to concentrate on the inner image in the production of the picture. You can, for instance, use persons or things as models and make casts from them. Pliny writes (N.H. XXXV, 153):

The first of all artists to mould an image of a man in plaster taken from the surface [of the body] itself and to institute the

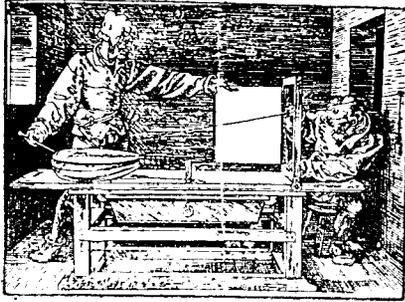
method of making corrections on that work after pouring wax into the resulting mould was Lysistratos of Sikyon, the brother of Lysippos, of whom we have spoken. It was this man who introduced the method of making realistic likenesses; before him they sought to make statues as beautiful as possible. He also invented the technique of taking casts from statues, and this practice increased to such an extent that no figures or statues were made without clay [that is, a clay model].³²

In this case the image maker needs nothing but the intention of making a cast in his mind supplied with the craftsmanship he has in making casts. But, of course, he needs an existing individual model from which he can cast the mould. Thus, in this case the individual existing model lends its form to the final result which is a copy of something made in a chosen material. It is a copy as far as the difference in material permits. This kind of copy can also be called portrait.

It is not a copy in the sense that you make another example of some original. You can take a chair and make another one exactly similar to the one chosen as model. Then you have a copy of the original. Pliny hints at this possibility in the quoted text. He writes that almost all sculptors use clay models when they make their sculptures, i. e. they make a sketch in clay and then transform this clay model with the help of mechanical devices into the finished work in bronze, marble etc. This technique was also used to copy Greek originals for the Roman art market.

Again, in making copies and portraits in this way you need not depend upon an inner image created by the fantasia. It is possible to make them mechanically. What you need is the craftsmanship of the moulding and copying technique. Of course you can combine these methods with the Egyptian or the Greek (i. e. to make the sculpture with help of an inner image) ways of making images but this does not blur the distinction between the differences between the methods of making images. In fact, Pliny also hints at this possibility when he claims that Lysistratos made corrections on the cast evidently in order to make the sculpture more beautiful and thus transgress its individuality and individual beauty.

Another example of this copy or portrait type image making is demonstrated in some woodcuts by Albrecht Durer in his *Unterweisung der Messung* from 1525:



Durer also illustrates other kinds of mechanical device of image making but all of them are based on the theory of central perspective as described by Alberti and others later on in the 15th century. Anyone can learn and use the technique in a purely mechanical way and the result will be a portrait of an individual thing or person. It is a portrait because the image has traits in common with a thing or a person that exists or has existed. The traits in common are such that they can be shared because of the medium chosen and how it has been actually applied in the individual cases. As an ultimate fulfillment of this technique you can see the case in which the perception thus made by the outward image cannot be distinguished from the perception of the model by purely visual means. If you just look at the image you cannot tell whether you are in front of an object or person or in front of a painting of an object or person. This is the trompe l'oeil.

This method is not only a device to mechanically help the production of images. It resulted in new demands on the images and the things represented in them. It gave a new form and unit to the space in which the creations of the fantasia could appear. This also affected the things and persons represented in such a way that the new space around them related them to each other in new ways and also incorporated time as a necessary and unavoidable content of the image. For instance, when you define space in this way time will necessarily crop up in a new way.

Models inside the image maker

In mirror images and photographs the model is obviously outside the maker as well as in the case of casts and portraits. But you can

also, as Seneca says, have the model inside yourself. This situation can be exemplified by a sculptor cutting away stone in order to 'reach' the finished sculpture as the final result. Dio Chrysostom expresses this idea in the following way (XII. 71): "...the sculptor must keep the very same image in his mind continuously until he finishes his work, which often takes many years ..."33 and Alcinous like this (*Isagoga* IX)

The model must come before [the work of art]; even though it may not be embodied externally for everyone, it is undoubtedly true that every artist carries the model in himself and conveys its form into matter.³⁴

It is natural to describe the process in such a way that the sculptor has his intended result as an inner image and works towards the realization of it in concrete form. This inner image is produced by the faculty of fantasia and is crucial to the production process which can be seen as the creation of an outward perceptual object to become isomorphic to the inner image. The inner, perceptual image 'lends' its form to the outward image. This outlook on image production is what I have called the 'Greek way' following Diodorus Siculus in his distinction between Egyptian and Greek ways of making sculpture. In the Greek way, he writes, you calculate the "symmetria of statues ... according to the appearances (fantasia) which are presented to the eyes".

Not only sculptors and painters have an inner image of perceptual character in their minds when making their images. The poets, too, have to 'think' in this concrete and perceptual manner when they create their works. Philostratus the Younger writes in the Prooemium of his *Eikones* that

the art of painting has a certain kinship with poetry, and that an element of imagination [fantasia] is common to both. For instance, the poets introduce the gods upon their stage as actually present, and with them all the accessories that make for dignity and grandeur and power to charm the mind; and so in like manner does the art of painting, indicating in the lines of the figures what the poets are able to describe in words.³⁵

In chapter 17 of the *Poetics* Aristotle writes:

In constructing the plot and working it out with the proper diction, the poet should place the scene, as far as possible, before his

eyes. In this way, seeing everything with the utmost vividness, as if he were a spectator of the action, he will discover what is in keeping with it, and be most unlikely to overlook inconsistencies.³⁶

This advice will be common in the poetic and rhetorical traditions. The anonymous author of "On the sublime" has a similar advice and he also comments on the use of terms (15. 1):

Weight, grandeur, and energy in writing are very largely produced, dear pupil, by the use of "images". (That at least is what some people call the actual mental pictures.) For the term Imagination is applied in general to an idea which enters the mind from any source and engenders speech, but the word has now come to be used predominantly of passages where, inspired by strong emotion, you seem to see what you describe and bring it vividly before the eyes of your audience.³⁷

Again, it is the concrete and perceptual conception, the inner image, which is the important thing for the making of the mimema. The mimetes conceives in his mind something and then he has to realize this in a sensuous medium. If it is accepted that the mental faculty of fantasia is the origin of these inner images they must, as Aristotle says (and he is not contradicted for a very long period), be perceptual in character. They either are memories of things seen or heard which fantasia brings up in the consciousness or something new, something created by the fantasia out of things perceived earlier. What we 'perceive with the inner eye' are persons and things and we 'see' them with their contingent, perceptual qualities. They are not abstractions or other non-perceptual entities. They appear to the beholders as individual things and persons with individual, perceptual qualities but at the same time they can be seen and understood as related to abstractions and non-perceptual entities. This is a part of Plato's challenge: what relations do images have to things not heard or seen?

a. The concrete universal: a pictorial composite of perceptual qualities

Lysistratos worked in the middle of the 4th century B.C. Thus, during the classical period neither the 'Egyptian' method nor the technique of making casts from individuals were used. Instead, as Pliny says, the Greeks tried to make the sculptures as beautiful as possible.

One way to reach this goal is to use not one individual as model but several as Xenophon lets Socrates remark in a discussion with a

sculptor (*Memorabilia* III. 10. 2); "... when you assimilate your beautiful figures you collect from many individuals what is most beautiful in each of them, because it is not easy to hit upon a person that has everything without blame, and make in this way the bodies appear to be beautiful all over."³⁸ Both Cicero (*De inventione* II. 1. 1-3) and Pliny (*N.H.* XXXV,64) tell an anecdote about the painter Zeuxis how he chose five beautiful girls out of all the young and beautiful girls of Croton to use as models for a painting of Helen which the Crotonians had hired him to make. Cicero comments on Zeuxis' way of handling the case (II. 1. 3):

.. For he did not believe that it was possible to find in one body all the things he looked for in beauty, since nature has not refined to perfection any single object in all its parts

Maximus of Tyre expresses a similar view (*Or.* XVII. 3):

Painters gather beauty from every detail of every human body; they collect them artistically from different bodies into one representation and in this manner they create one beauty which is healthy, fitting and internally harmonized. In reality you would never find a body precisely like a statue, since the arts aim at the greatest beauty.⁴⁰

Even if you take individual traits from a number of models there must be some guiding principle in the selection. You cannot just add one detail to another without some organizing principle or vision of the final result. If you do, you will have the ridiculous thing Horace scornfully describes in the beginning of his *Ars poetica*. You have to have a vision of a whole and good taste in your choice and construction of that whole.

The faculty of fantasia was regarded as the mental agent that could provide the image maker with such a guiding principle or vision, an inner model which is perceptual in character. It is characteristic of fantasia that it can produce images of things and persons that do not and even cannot exist. The fantasia is free to combine elements in a way that leaves the existing world behind. In the *Republic* (472 CD) Plato writes about the possibility to inquire about the nature of the ideal justice and of the perfectly just man. "Our purpose was not to demonstrate the possibility of the realization of these ideals" but of their nature:

Do you think, then, that he would be any the less a good painter, who, after portraying a pattern of the ideally beautiful man and omitting no touch required for the perfection of the picture, should not be able to prove that it is actually possible for such a man to exist? 41

If we adhere to the interpretation given above of the nature of Platonic ideas, this "pattern of the ideally beautiful man" is not a Platonic idea, because Platonic ideas are not visible; they do not belong to the world of things and cannot appear to the senses as things and actions do. They are non-perceptual entities. Even if you agreed to the view that we 'see' Platonic ideas with the 'inner eye' this 'inner eye' is different from the *oculus imaginationis* because the latter works within the range of perceptual qualities and limitations and Platonic ideas themselves do not appear in the worlds of things and appearances. Furthermore, the qualities that are accessible to our senses, which is the realm of images, are contingent qualities that does not say anything about the essential qualities which constitute the Platonic ideas.

Thus the "pattern of the ideally beautiful man", whether it is an inner or outer image, is a kind of concrete and perceptual image of something non-individual. It is not a copy or a portrait of some individual. It demonstrates to the spectator a conception, within the boundaries of perceptual qualities, of something general, for instance, youthful, male, bodily beauty. This image is universal in the sense that it is not a copy or a portrait of an individual young, male, beautiful person but transgresses the limitations of individuality and operates on another level, on an abstracted level in some sense; the elements are abstracted from this perceptual world and compounded into a new unit that does not have counterparts in individual things or persons. Individuals may resemble or share some of the characteristics of the 'concrete universal' but they have also their own particular qualities that make them into individuals.

When the image transgresses the individuality of this world it may become general, typical or ideal. It is of course possible to let the faculty of fantasia put together an inner image and let your craft make an outer image that looks like a portrait without there being a model answering to it. The point is, however, that we in most cases see the difference when we have a portrait in front of us and when we have a 'concrete universal'. The beholder sees and knows

that he has something general, typical or ideal before his senses. That the spectator knows this can partly be described as a practice developed in the social handling of images.

The concrete universal can, then, be an ideal of a given class or a type of a given class of things showing their perceptually characteristic traits. It is the kind of universal the faculty of fantasia can produce. It is a compound of perceptual qualities conceived in the mind and eventually rendered in some material in order to make it accessible to others. It is the work of the image maker to conceive of what is perceptually most characteristic, typical or ideal of a given class, youthful, male nude for instance, and then by his craft exhibit this inner image to the rest of mankind.

To make images in the form of concrete universals is not something unique for the Greek way of making images. You will find it in many pictorial traditions, the Egyptian for instance. What distinguishes the Greek way is, again, their attempt to render the very essential quality 'being alive' which they did by calculating their images from the appearances of persons and animals.

A common technique of making 'portraits' in another sense than used here is to 'individualize' a concrete universal by putting names to it. You make an image representing the concrete type 'philosopher' and put the name Plato to it and you have a portrait of Plato. Or you can use attributes: a body with a cock in his arms means Ganymed and a person with writing tools means 'this man is a scribe'. These are non-perceptual properties attached to the concrete universal by means of outward signs and symbols. When you see the sign or symbol you 'see' the non-perceptual property provided you are familiar with the symbolic conventions.

The concrete universal is not necessarily connected with what is better or more beautiful but with what is typical. A basic distinction in Aristotle's *Poetics* says that it is possible to conceive of persons that are better or worse or equal to ordinary people (chapter 2). Further Aristotle maintains that poetry is more philosophic than history because it deals with what is typical and general and is not tied to how 'things really are' as history is (chapter 9). Thus poetry, too, can show 'concrete universals' to the audience, types of characters and actions. Poetry is not 'portraiture' as history is. The model is not outside the image maker 'lending its form to image'. The poet follows an inner image or vision. (Chapter 17)

This means, for instance, that the audience did not look at *Oedipus Tyrannus* by Sophocles, Aristotle's favourite example, as an image of what actually happened to Oedipus but as typical or ideal of something. Probably there was an established social practice that when you go to the theatre you expect to see something general or typical as you do in front of sculptures and paintings. And the poets and actors made poems and plays in such ways that it helped the audience to see something general and typical in the poem and in the play. There was an expectation and a 'habit' to look for something universal and that universal something was the essential lesson you could learn from dramatic poetry: some general or universal insights in the conditions of human existence.

How do you know that the 'concrete universal' you have in front of you is the best one possible or the right one (not to use the word true) ? Galen, for instance, has the following answer (*De Temperamentis* I. 9):

Modellers and sculptors and painters, and in fact image-makers in general, paint or model beautiful figures by observing an ideal form in each case, that is whatever form is most beautiful in man or in the horse in the cow or in the lion, always looking for the mean within each genus. And a certain statue might perhaps also be commended, the one called "Cannon" of Polykleitos; it got such a name from having precise commensurability of all the parts to one another.⁴²

This passage is obscure because it seems to point in different directions, a statistical and a mathematical-religious. The 'mean within each genus' can be reached either by measuring a sample of individuals and thus in a statistical manner calculate the numbers that are typical of a given class of things or you define the relationships between the measures in other ways. Pythagoras, for instance, founded his view on beauty on mathematical and religious grounds making it depend on proportionality as certain relations between holy numbers. Or you refer to taste and decorum, as Horace does, or to consensus. Polykleitos "Canon" was probably not made according to statistical principles. A Pythagorean background is possible but we can see that it was calculated in the 'Greek way' according to a fantasia and measures and we know that there was a Greek consensus that Polykleitos had visualized the concrete universal 'youthful, male, bodily beauty' better than any other sculptor.

b. Phidias and the transgression of the boundaries of the existing world.

Another consensus concerned Phidias. He had better than anyone else visualized the nature of the gods, it was believed. He is also often used as an example to show that the (good) mimema is not just a copy or a cast of something individual but made according to some inner image or vision. The gods belong to another world which is not accessible to human beings directly through their senses; the gods 'live' in a world outside our sensible one. Then, how is it possible to represent them at all when images are tied to the world of appearances? Proclus writes (*Comm. in Tim* 81 C):

He who creates in accordance with reality, assuming he is really looking at it, does not of course create beauty, for reality is full of disharmonies and is not the prime beauty. Therefore, that which arises modelled upon reality is the more removed from beauty. Phidias, too, executed the statue of Zeus not by observing reality but by contemplating Homer's Zeus, and if he could have reached to the god himself apprehended with the mind, he would of course have made his work the more beautiful.⁴³

Strabo tells a similar story about Phidias and from where he got his inspiration when he created his sculpture of Zeus in Olympia (VIII. 354):

... And they recount this tradition about Phidias: when Panainos asked him what model he intended to employ in making the image of Zeus, he replied that it was the model provided by Homer in the following lines:

Thus spoke the son of Kronos and nodded his dark brow and the ambrosial locks flowed down from the lord's immortal head, and he made great Olympos quake. /Iliad I. 527-530/44

Thus Phidias' 'model' is a few lines from Homer but it is Homer's visualization of the power of Zeus. When Homer wrote these lines he had to visualize with his inner eye the power of Zeus, which is something abstract, and he did so in a perceptual form since fantasia works within the boundaries of sensation/perception. In his turn Phidias had to visualize within his own medium the same thing as Homer did. It is the conception of the divine power which he tries to visualize in his sculpture. Basically, Homer and Phidias were in the

same situation as the 'lawgiver of the Jews'; all of them tried to visualize the conception of divine power within their respective mimetic medium.

When Dio Chrysostom speaks in Olympia 97 A. D. on the threshold of the temple of Zeus his subject is our conception of the nature of the gods and he refers to Phidias as a source (XII. 44):

Now that we have set before us three sources of man's conception of the divine being, to wit, that innate, that derived from the poets, and that derived from the law-givers, let us name the fourth that derived from the plastic art and the work of skilled craftsmen who make statues and likenesses of the gods - I mean painters and sculptors and masons who work in stone, in a word, everyone who has held himself worthy to come forward as a portrayer of the divine nature through the use of art...⁴⁵.

What kind of model did Phidias use in his visualization of the power of Zeus? Did he climb the Olymp or did he meet and 'see' the gods in a concrete way? Or expressed in another way: what are the limitations of the trades of poets, sculptors and other kinds of mimetes? What is possible to visualize and what is not in poetry, sculpture, music and other forms of mimema?

Maximus of Tyre (Or. II) writes that god needs no statues and symbols but that "men, in their boundless weakness... have invented these signs in order to deposit within them the names of, and their knowledge of, the gods." and he continues:

There is a god; above time, eternity and the whole mutable nature, not susceptible to being named by a law-giver, expressed in language or beheld with the eye. Unable to grasp his essence, we seek support in words, names, animals, likenesses in gold, ivory and silver, in plants, rivers, mountain peaks and sources of rivers. We wish to embrace him in thought, but all our weakness allows us to do is to describe his nature in terms of what appears beautiful to us...⁴⁶

And he comments on the Greek way of solving this problem: "The Greeks have recognized that the gods ought to be praised with whatever is most beautiful on earth; pure material, human shape and perfect art."⁴⁷ This is exactly what Phidias did. He used the most beautiful and expensive material possible for sculpture; gold and ivory. He envisaged Zeus in the most beautiful and dignified human

forms ever seen and he was in full command of his art so that the material and his inner vision could be completely rendered justice; and his perfect craftsmanship was a wonder in itself. But his sculpture is not a copy or portrait of Zeus. He is pictorially represented through some kind of similarity. Zeus, being the highest god, must be conceived of in the best and most beautiful terms possible whenever you try to visualize him. Again, this is what Phidias did and Maximus of Tyre pointed out. The most beautiful things in this world is, then, to the Greek mind, pure material, human shape and perfect art. If you want to represent Zeus by means of perceptual qualities you have to follow in Phidias' footsteps and use the most beautiful sensuous things to represent the most beautiful in the non-sensuous world. The relation between the sensuous world of the gods is, then, based on a similarity in quality: in both realms the best possible quality is necessary. Thus the mimema is a kind of simile or metaphor combining the two worlds through a similarity in quality.

Dio Chrysotom (Or. XII. 59) discusses, the same question but answers it somewhat differently:

...For mind intelligence in and of themselves no statuary or painter will ever be able to represent; for all men are utterly incapable of observing such attributes with their eyes or of learning of them by inquiry. But as for that in which this intelligence manifests itself, men, having no mere inkling thereof but actual knowledge, fly to it for refuge, attributing to God a human body as a vessel to contain intelligence and rationality, in their lack of a better illustration, and in their perplexity seeking to indicate that which is invisible and unportrayable by means of something portrayable and visible, using the function of a symbol...⁴⁸

Dio maintains that the relation between the world of gods and the human world of appearances is symbolic. Suppose this relation is different from the metaphorical one pointed out by Maximus of Tyre and is of the form discussed by Plato in the *Cratylus* (433 E); the relation is conventional i. e. it rests on a convention or a habit to connect two different things, the one as a sign or symbol of the other. If so, anything can serve as a symbol of the gods provided that the relation between god and symbol is established. In the case of the pictorial simile or metaphor this is not possible; there must exist a similarity between sign and signified and not just an established practice to connect them. Even if you could maintain that Phidias' Zeus represents Zeus because of a convention or established practice (among

other things, Phidias was hired to make an image of Zeus in a social process) the sign function is not solely based on convention or practice but also on something you can see: 'pure material, human shape and perfect art' as metaphorical properties of the gods.

An important text in this context is Philostratus' *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*. During a visit to Egypt Apollonius had a discussion with Egyptian priests on the nature of the gods and the possibility of representing them in sculpture. He rebukes the Egyptians for their practice of representing the gods in animal forms and says that " in other lands statuary has scrupulously observed decency and fitness, you rather make ridicule of the gods than really believe in them."⁴⁹ (VI.19) The decent way of representing Zeus, for instance, is according to Apollonius to " envisage him along with heaven and seasons and and stars, as Phidias in his day endeavoured to do, and if you would fashion an image of Athene you most image in your mind armies and cunning, and handicrafts, and how she leapt out of Zeus himself "It is an offence to let gods appear in the forms of animals. The Egyptian priest answers that Apollonius has misunderstood their practice and maintains "... that they fashion their forms as symbols of a profound inner meaning, so as to enhance their solemnity and august character." Apollonius does not understand this possibility which is representation through symbolization. He rejects it with a lough. It is against his Greek conception of pictorial representation and how the human mind can conceive of the nature of gods; the gods have to be conceived as beautiful and powerful as possible and then to be represented in this way. When you conceive of the gods you do it with the faculty of fantasia. The Egyptian priest asks:

"Your artists, then, like Phidias," said the other, "and like Praxiteles, went up, I suppose, to heaven and took a copy of the forms of the gods, and then reproduced these by their art, or was there any other influence wich presided over and guided their moulding ?"

"There was," said Apollonius, "and an influence pregnate with wisdom and genius."

"What was that ?" said the other, "for I do not think you can adduce any except imitation."

"Imagination," said Apollonius, "wrought these works, a wisher and subtler artist by far than imitation, for imitation can only

create as its handiwork what it has seen, but imagination equally what it has not seen; for it will conceive of its ideal with reference to the reality, and imitation is often baffled by terror, but imagination by nothing; for it marches undismayed to the goal which it has itself laid down..."⁵⁰

Since the fantasia is perceptual in character the conception of the gods has to be within the range of perception and the image of the gods must be as good as possible within perceptual terms. Beauty and mightness you can see with your eyes and this is attributed to the gods by the representation. Apollonius seems to have a view which is close to the one Maximus of Tyre offers: there is a similarity between the two worlds which makes the representation into a pictorial simile or metaphor. The Egyptian priest has another point of view. Maybe it is not merely symbolization in the sense of the word used here: rules, habits and conventions as the foundation of the sign function. In such cases anything can serve as symbol. But the Egyptian priest does not think it is without importance how the sculptures are formed, one thing serving as well as any other thing as symbol. The sculptors "... fashion their forms as symbols of profound inner meaning, so as to enhance their solemnity and august character" he says. He may have a contrast in mind. The solemn and august character of the gods are enhanced by the contrast of the baseness of the images of them and their loftiness. It may work as some kind of inversed simile or metaphor. In pictorial representations the foundation is a recognized similarity, in the inverse simile it is dissimilarity or contrast. The text does not tell how to read it and the important thing in this context is the Greek outlook as it is represented by Apollonius.

Plotin, too, uses Phidias and his sculpture of Zeus as an example (V.8.1). Again it is obvious that the sculptor can make portraits of individuals but that the important sculptures are those where the sculptor has used a mental image as model. Now, what is this mental image according to Plotin? It is often believed that it is a Platonic idea because Plotin writes that mimemata "... run back up to the forming principles from which nature derives..."⁵¹ But on the other hand he maintains that the sculpture must represent Zeus in a visual form, the "...form Zeus must take if he chose to become manifest to sight..." The inner image, the fantasia, is not of an individual thing, but something compounded out of perceptual qualities. Platonic ideas, on the other hand, are not apprehendable to our senses even if the

sensuous world is related to the world of ideas, emanating from it or going back to it. Most likely, Plotin adheres to the Greek outlook on images and mimemata as hinted at in this paper. Zeus must be conceived of within the boundaries of sight when you make paintings and sculptures representing him.

Zeus did not appear to sight, if you den't count his mythological appearances as a bull, a swan or a golden rair. Those appearances were disapproved of for theological reasons; a god should not use a disguise which is below his status. A bull and a swan, even if they are magnificent and beautiful animals, are nevertheless infinitely lower in rank than Zeus as the ruler of the Olymp and the world.

But the Christian God showed himself to this world in the shape of an ordinary human being of low social rank. Christ is both God an human being; he has a double nature. He did not appear in the most splendid form possible, as emperor of Rome, for instance. The double nature of Christ transgresses the frontier between the visible and the invisible worlds. This opens up new avenues for the discussion of the representation of the invisible; the invisible is in the visible.

c. The pictorial representation of the invisible.

The two worlds of gods and Platonic ideas are not accessible to human perception and it is thus impossible to represent them directly in images. But there are other things, too, that are non-perceptual in character and the problem of pictorial representation of non-perceptual things was a major challenge to the image-maker and an important topic in the theory of imitation how is it possible to transgress the border between perceptual worlds and establish connections between them ?

So far we have seen texts demonstrating possible ways of pictorial representation of non-perceptual entities. In the representations we have called 'concrete universals' types or ideals are directly perceivable and gods can be represented symbolically or metaphorically in images.

There are also two other ways discussed in antiquity: you can represent symptoms of non-perceptual entities and you can show concrete examples of abstract things in images. Emotions, for instance, we cannot perceive. Xenophon puts the question in his *Memorabilia* (III, 10, 3-5);

Well then, Socrates said, do you also represent the most winning, pleasing, friendly; welcome and desirable disposition of the soul; or is it impossible to represent this ?

Certainly, Socrates, he answered, for how could such a thing be represented that has neither proportion nor colour nor anything of that which you mentioned just now and that which it is not even possible to see at all ?

But, Socrates replied, does it not happen that a man sometimes looks at some other man in a friendly manner and sometimes in a hostile manner ?

Well, I think so, Parrhasius answered.

Then, is it not possible to represent this, at least, in the faces [of your paintings] ?

Certainly, he replied.

Do you think that they have the same [expression in their] faces to the well-faring and to the ill-faring of their friends whether they care for it or do not care for it ?

Good Lord ! Of course not, he answered, they show a cheerful countenance at their well-faring but a sad countenance at their ill-faring.

Well, then, Socrates said, is it possible to make images representing that too ?

Obviously.

Further, nobility and high-mindedness, baseness and narrow-mindedness, moderation and prudence, insolence and vulgarity, are visible in the persons' faces and in the positions [of their bodies] both when they are still and in motion.

You are quite right, he said.

Thus, these too can be represented ?

Certainly.⁵²

Even if it is not possible to represent abstract things or things known but not perceived it is possible, it is argued, at least to represent the symptoms of abstract things so far they have symptoms that are open to our senses. We cannot see anger but we can see anger in the face of a person. Thus we conclude from outward signs to inner states that are not perceptible in themselves. We don't just see the

signs but conclude and 'see' also what they are signs of by means of our knowledge of the relation between the symptom and its cause. This is particularly the case in concrete universals because they are conceived and made to demonstrate the typical in persons and situations. It is possible to concentrate on the symptoms of anger, happiness etc. without the distracting individual characteristics in given, historical situations. The typical symptoms can be gathered and presented to the beholder.

The Pseudo-Aristotelian text *Physiognomica* puts the basic question of the relation between inner and outer state. is it possible to know the inner states by looking at the outward states? The question is answered in the affirmative: certain outward characteristics are symptoms of inner states: " a specific body involves a specific mental character ... " (805 a 15) Most of the text consists of enumerations of such relations between inner and outer states, for instance (808 b 3-6):

Gluttony is indicated when the distance from navel to chest is grewter than that from chest to neck

Lasciviousness is indicated by a pale complexion, heavy growth of straight, thick, black hair over the body, a heavy growth of straight hair on the temples, and small, lustrous, lewd eyes.⁵³

Maybe also the Characters by Theophrastus can be seen as descriptions of the characteristics of human types. When we se a person's look and behaviour we conclude about his inner state and character.

Aristotle claims in the ninth chapter of the *Poetics* that poetry is more philosophical than history because "poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts." And he continues: "By a 'general truth' I mean the sort of thing that a certain type of man will do or say either probably or necessarily."⁵⁴ 'General truths' are not visible or audible and cannot thus be pictorially represented directly. But they can be represented through exemplification. For instance, the thought and moral insight that 'human happiness is fickle' is something abstract and not open directly to our senses. But it is possible to show an example and even a typical example of such a human fate that demonstrates the truth of this moral conviction. The chorus in *Oedipus Tyrannus* ends the tragedy by the following lines.

And of no mortal say
"That man is happy", till
Vexed by no grievous ill
He pass Life's goal.⁵⁵

In the drama Sophocles has exemplified this 'general truth'. What can be more evident from the tragedy than that human happiness is fickle? In the beginning of the tragedy Oedipus boasts over his happiness and a few hours later he recognizes that he has committed the most horrible crimes a human being can commit. The picture we see at the theatre shows and exemplifies the general truth and the audience learns this general truth not through arguments but through an emotional identification (pity and fear at work) with Oedipus. The audience 'sees' and feels the general truth 'human happiness is fickle'. Possibly the katharsis can be seen as this emotional non-conceptual process of learning through apprehending an image showing an example of a general truth.

We can 'see' things not visible through their symptoms but we also conclude from an example to something general or universal. Thus the human mind is capable of not just perceiving things but also to draw conclusions from the things perceived as symptoms or examples of something invisible. These conclusions are not arrived at through arguments but through an immediate beholding and understanding of the thing or image. 'Concrete universals' as described above show types to the beholder in the sense that they invite the beholder to see not only the several perceptual details but also the 'whole', the type or the 'general truth' or universal as Aristotle calls it. We see youthful, male beauty, greediness or the fickleness of human happiness.

When we say that something is typical we refer to some kind of universal, an idea or thought which is one and that can appear in many forms. Greediness is one but we can find many greedy people or people showing characteristics we think are the signs of greediness as demonstrated by Theophrastos.

The connection between perceptual and non-perceptual things is established by our knowledge about the world (we know about the relations between something and its outward signs) or our recognition of something as an example of something general or universal which is also based on our knowledge of the world.

Thus things outside of our immediate perception (wherever this boarder is to be located) can be represented, according to ancient views, either by symbolization or by metaphors or we can see them directly in representations called 'concrete universals' in this paper or we can conclude from what we see or hear to something non-perceptual by seeing it as a symptom or an example of something general or universal.

These several examples all show that the mimema (imitation) and the image were not discussed and thought of in antiquity primarily as things in the world made in the likeness of other things in the world or as incomplete copies of them. It is the relation between inner and outer image that is important, a relation based on a typically human ability to create inner images and to 'squeeze' them out in a material form in order to share them with other human beings.

Notes and References

1. In the third book of the *Republic* Plato has distinguished between such poetry that is dramatic impersonation, which he called mimetic, and such that is descriptive. When he brings up the discussion again he does so on another level: it is not just dramatic impersonation that is in focus but poetry in general. Cf. my book *Mimesis and Art*. Studies in the Origin and Early Development of an Aesthetic Vocabulary. Upsala 1966, p. 129-131.
2. The translation used here is by Paul Shorey, *Plato: The Republic*. in Loeb Classical Library, London & Cambridge, Mass. 1956,
3. Transl. by Harold North Fowler, *Plato: Theaetetus and Sophist*. Loeb Classical Library, London & Cambridge, Mass. 1961.
4. In antiquity no distinction between sensation and perception was made. Cf. P. W. Hamlyn, *Sensation and Perception. A History of the Philosophy of Perception*. London: Reutledge & Kegan Paul 1961.
5. Cf. Edwin Clarke & Kenneth Dewhurst, *An Illustrated History of Brain Function*. Oxford; Sandford Publications 1972.
6. *On the Soul* 417 a 20-21: "for the unlike is effected, and when it has been affected it is like." and 418 a 3-6: "As we have said, what has the power of sensation is potentially like what the perceived object is actually, that is, while at the beginning of the process of its being acted upon the two interacting factors are dissimilar, at the end the one acted upon is assimilated to the other and is identical in quality with it," Transl. by J.A. Smith in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation. Ed. by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton University Press 1984.

7. The view that aisthesis is isomorphic in nature may to some extent explain why it is less important to ancient authors to distinguish between the outward thing and the appearance of it. They were basically similar to each other and particularly in the respects that concern mīmēmata: the contingent and sensuous qualities of things.
8. Transl. by W. S. Hett in *Aristotle: On the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*. Loeb Classical Library. London, Cambridge, Mass., 1964.
9. Ibid.
10. Transl. by H. E. Butler, *The Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*. Loeb Classical Library, London Cambridge, Mass., 1966.
11. Transl. by H. M. Hubbell in *Cicero: Brutus, Orator*. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.
12. *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, ii, 22. Transl. by F. C. Conybeare. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.
13. Ibid.
14. Cf. Paul Oscar Kristeller, "The modern system of the arts". *Renaissance Thought II. Papers on Humanism and the Arts*. New York, Evanston and London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965.
15. A difficulty in the understanding of the theory of imitation is the lack of a generally accepted terminology. My hypothesis is that there was a rather unitary outlook on the nature of imitation (mimesis) as a human activity but that there was a large number of terms used to describe and discuss this human activity. It is necessary, I believe, to go beyond terminology and to look at the system of thought they refer to. The terms "mimesis" and "eikon", for instance, are not so interesting as the way of thought they represent.
16. Transl. by R. M. Gummere, *Seneca: Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1967.
17. Transl. by W. Hamilton Fyfe in *Aristotle The Poetics; "Longinus": On the Sublime and Demetris: On Style*. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1965.
18. Ibid.
19. These two activities do not exclude each other. The imitator can be both inspired and in command of his trade. Plato hints at this in the *Ion* (535 E) and mentions it explicitly in the *Laws* (719 C).
20. Transl. by Benjamin Bickley Rogers in *Aristophanes*. Vol. 3, Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge Mass., 1955.
21. *Ars poetica*, 408-411.

22. *On the Sublime*, for instance chapter 2 and 36. 4.
23. *Lif of Apollonius of Tyana*, 2. 22.
24. Epistle 65. 5-6, Transl. cf. note 16.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Transl. cf. note 11.
27. Cf. also my book *Mimesis and Art...* pp. 133 - 138.
28. V.8.1. Transl. by A.H. Armstrong, *Plotinus*. Vol. V. Loeb Classical Library. London, Cambridge, Mass. 1984.
29. Transl. by C. H. Oldfather, *Diodorus of Sicily*. Vol. I. Loeb Classical Library, London; Cambridge, Mass., 1960.
30. Cf. for instance Cyril Aldred, *Middle Kingdom Art in Ancient Egypt*. 2300 - B. C. London: Alec Tiranti Ltd., 1950, pp 23-24.
31. *Memorabilia* III. 10.6. Cf. my book *Mimesis and Art* pp. 93-94.
32. Transl. by H. Rackham, Pliny. *Natural History*. Vol. IX. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass, 1961
33. Transl. by J. W. Cohoon in *Dio Chrysostom*. Vol. II. Loeb Classical Library, London Cambridge, Mass., 1961
34. Transl. in Wladyslaw Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics. Vol. I. Ancient Aesthetics*. The Hague, Paris: Mouton 1970, p. 298.
35. Transl. by Arthur Fairbanks, *Philostratus: Imagines; Callistratus: Descriptions*. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.
36. Transl. by S. H. Butcher. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* with Critical Text and Translation of the Poetics. 4th ed. New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 1951.
37. Transl. see note 17.
38. Transl. by Goran Sorbom in op. cit. pp. 83-84.
39. Transl. by H. M. Hubbell, Cicero: *De Inventione, De Optimo Genere Oratorum*, Topica. Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge Mass., 1950.
40. Transl. in Tatarkiewicz op. cit. p. 302.
41. Transl. see note 2.
42. Transl. by J. J. Pollitt in *The Art of Greece* 1400 - 31 B. C. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1965, p. 89.
43. Transl. in Tatarkiewicz op. cit. p. 297.
44. Transl. in Pollitt op. cit. p. 73. Cf. also Dio Chrysostom XII. 25-26, Valerius 3. 7. 4. and Plutarch *Life of Amilius Paulus* 28.2
45. Transl. see note 33.
46. Transl. in Tatarkiewicz op. cit. p. 306.
47. *Ibid.* p. 305.
48. Transl. see note 33.
49. Transl. see note 12,

50. This passage shows a contrariety between imitation and imagination. It is an example of the fact that there is no established terminology in antiquity. In II. 22 Philostratus mentions to kinds of mimesis, the faculty to create inner images and the craft to make the outward ones. It is possible to combine these two passages in such a way that there is no clash between them: man has a faculty to create inner images and can acquire the skill of realizing them in outward form. If you only rely on the latter, you have to follow what you have seen. But imagination can transgress these limitations and create new units. In this way imitation and imagination harmonize within the same model of thought, a model that got its

basic shape by Plato and Aristotle as far as we know. Maybe imagination was more stressed in late antiquity on the cost of imitation, but there is no contrariety between them as some authors want to see in this passage.

51. Transl. cf. note 28.
52. Transl. by Goran Sorbom, op. cit. pp. 84-85.
53. Transl. by T. Loveday & E. S. Forster, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation. Ed. by Jonathan Barnes. Princeton University Press 1984.
54. Transl. cf. note 17.
55. Transl. by George Young, *Sophocles' Dramas*. Everyman's Library no. 114, London, New York 1957.

Geijersgatan 42
75226 UPPASALA
Tel. 018-136154
Sweden