

# Chapter 4

## Understanding the Interdisciplinary Meaning of Beauty to Neuroscience: Designing Beauty to Neuroscience

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### ABSTRACT

*The search for the source of beauty has exercised the speculation of philosophers and writers throughout the ages. The classical conception is that beauty consists of an arrangement of integral parts into a coherent whole, according to proportion, harmony, symmetry, and similar notions. The opposing view is that art is a fully subjective enterprise and our preferences are shaped by our values and experiences. To study beauty, neuroscience evokes the juxtaposition of concepts such as symmetry, geometry, proportion, judgment, affection, grotesque, erotic, sensitive with certain loci in the human brain. However, to explain and understand the aesthetic experiences at the network level, neuroscience have to incorporate the ambiguity in their research field. And with the continuous increasing of knowledge and comprehension of how beauty is perceived by the human brain, the world in its wholeness will be highly impacted, since we will start to live in pleasant societies.*

### INTRODUCTION

To deliberate about beauty, we first need to contemplate different types of considerations and approaches that, in history, were indorsed on this subject. Therefore, in an epistemic census, the key is to establish the possible heuristics endeavor and to elect the “epistemic figures”<sup>1</sup> of sense and possibilities for a new understanding.

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The theory of beauty with universal principles was attempted at the first time by Plato (Panofsky, 2000), whose established separation between art and beauty, in opposition rules. To Plato, the beauty, has a completely existence, independent and higher than the physical reality, however it also has a universal true value, what make it undeniable. In this way, beauty cannot be defined or held in any touchable manifestation. On the other hand, for Plato, art was *mimesis*, imitation and therefore unchangeable. It had, consequently, the same calling for misunderstanding and confusion that the sensations have on us. The true beauty could only be contemplated by the intellect. It is the Plato's theory of Ideas, a conception of the universe in its wholeness, which was mobilized to give logical basis to the concept of beauty.

Some reconciliation between beauty and art only came up from Cicero who was the first to allow the artist the ability to create superiors forms more than simple copying or *mimesis* the nature. The true artist's model is inside, by the contemplation of his own intellect. He can thus correct the "mistakes" of nature and create a perfect model of beauty. We need to keep in mind that such reconciliation takes place, however, through a distortion of the platonic concept of art and idea (Panofsky, 2000). In Cicero and over the antiquity, the transcendental Plato's doctrine of idea, as harmonic and changeless principle of the universe, and the art as a simple sensitive and objective figuration (in the sense that its reality come true in physical objects like paints or sculptures, so transients and mortal) gave raises to opposite paradigms which art releases itself from his eminently sensible externality to became the achievement of a mental interiority. In this way, the idea falls from its pedestal of transcendental essence to be a thought or internal concept in human immanent consciousness.

In Panofsky (2000), the Plato's concept of idea and its development over the time is the main topic to explain the split of the historiography of beauty into certain ages. But although we can see the history of art and beauty through this prism as like evolutionary, which could invoke an Apollonian ideal, harmonic or positivist - whether we would take a most appropriate term to some philosophy of science - we also can see the history of beauty in an opposite sense. This sense is expressed as Dionisiac, chaotic and open.

The categorizing effort, which historiography is a lessee, perhaps can be understood through the key of the critique of historical culture on which Nietzsche weaves fierce criticism.

In this sense the historiographical anachronism does not recognize the becoming<sup>2</sup> as a stream in which all meanings transit. In this sense, the historiography demand to find the same or the identity under the otherness. This goal in such classificatory approach which in the same time excludes and imprisons the hallmarks of a unique kind of art.

Thus,

*... the historiography is bogged down in the furrows that it knocks: the scholar is surprised when comes across the reference to "medieval's" authors in Renaissance texts; so the reviews Ghiberti, dealing with optics, brings authors such as Al-Hazen ... (Novaes,1994,p.10).*

Meanwhile, from this concept of genealogy of Nietzsche - which term he uses to conceptualize the authentic "historical spirit" – what happens is the reverse of historiography offers.

*(genealogy) will pretend, in first place, to determine the differences instead of to forge identities, it will be attentive to mutations of meanings and suspicious of concepts supposedly unambiguous. Thus, it will investigate the history with no claim to find there the realization of any eternal ideal, thus it will not put our present there at the origin, as if there was a predestination to be performed in a prior sense*

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