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# *"Musica Depicta": The Silent Sound of Painting*

The following reflections focus on two questions, the first concerning the specific kind of articulation found in images – what one might call their linguistic or tonal expressiveness – and the second, regarding the paradox of articulating and expressing sound in the non-verbal, silent medium of the image. The questions draw on a long-standing debate about the status, function, and meaning of visual expressions of affect in relation to specific media and discursive conditions. Recently, questions about the representation of affects and about configurations of expression in the arts have received systematic treatment mainly within literary studies. In art history and visual studies, by contrast, the same project has not yet been undertaken despite the prevalent discussions of visual acts and visual anthropology.

The question regarding the medial and discursive construction of affects and emotions in the non-linguistic expressive form of the image is pressing not only from a disciplinary perspective. It also draws attention to a constellation of two interrelated and complementary paradigms that have always been relevant to understanding the concepts of "emotional expression" and "emotional experience." On the one hand, there is what Sigrid Weigel has called the "predominance of the linguistic paradigm within the discourse of the emotions and about the emotions,"[1] a predominance regarded as problematic both by her and by other recent scholars. On the other hand, there is the emphatic assumption that emotions are "language-independent." This latter assumption is manifested, for example, throughout 18th and 19th century aesthetics in the idea of an unmediated articulation of the affects, to be found not least in the "non-conceptual" and

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* For the translation into English I am much indebted to Felix Koch.

[1] Weigel, S. "Pathos – Passion – Gefühl. Schauplätze affekttheoretischer Verhandlungen in Kultur- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte." Weigel, S. *Literatur als Voraussetzung der Kulturgeschichte. Schauplätze von Shakespeare bis Benjamin*. Munich, 2004, 147–72, quot. 167.

"purely acoustic" art of music, but also in the attempt on the part of modern neuroscience to capture a pre-linguistic or non-verbal immediacy in the relation between organism and emotion. Attending to the case of images allows us to critically assess the validity of these paradigms and to ask in more detail about the situatedness of emotions and about the configuration of their expression as determined by the complex interplay of bodily conditions, linguistic access, and culturally formed meanings.

So far, the relevant scholarship in art history and image studies has largely focused on analyzing the "expressive language" of the visual arts by recourse to past theories of art such as those found in Alberti, Leonardo, Lomazzo, and Le Brun, whose views are informed by a conception of the affects that derives from the moralists' tradition. The decisive parameters of this expressive language are legibility and semantic univocity; i.e. the rhetorical category of *perspicuitas*, the "transparency" of the image and of its expressive configuration that discloses a view onto an emotional or affective substrate lying "behind" the image.[2] This is in effect a codified rhetoric of the image, which limits the expressive content of an image to the rhetorical expression of certain passions and thereby regulates and determines the image's representational content as well as the passions' legibility in accordance with a *"méthode à dessiner les passions"* (Le Brun).[3] This conception draws

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[2] The relevant literature is extensive and cannot be presented here. See among others: Lee, R. W. *Ut pictura poesis. The Humanistic Theory of Painting*. 1940. Reprint. New York, 1967. Barasch, M. "Der Ausdruck in der italienischen Kunsttheorie der Renaissance." *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*. 12 (1967): 33–65. Mühlmann, H. *Ästhetische Theorie der Renaissance. Leon Battista Alberti*. Bonn, 1981. Patz, K. "Zum Begriff der 'Historia' in L. B. Albertis 'De Pictura'." *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*. 49 (1986): 269–87. Chastel, A. "L'art du geste à la Renaissance." *Revue de l'art*. 75 (1987). Goldstein, C. "Rhetoric and Art History in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque." *The Art Bulletin*. 73 (1991): 641–52. Kirchner, T. *L' expression des passions. Ausdruck als Darstellungsproblem in der französischen Kunst und Kunsttheorie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*. Mainz, 1991. Fumaroli, M. *L'école du silence. Le sentiment des images au XVIIe siècle*. Paria, 1994. Zöllner, F. "Leon Battista Albertis 'De pictura'." *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars der Universität Zürich*. 4 (1997): 23–39. Rehm, U. *Stumme Sprache der Bilder. Gestik als Mittel neuzeitlicher Bilderzählung*. Munich, 2002. Brassat, W. *Das Historienbild im Zeitalter der Eloquenz. Von Raffael bis Le Brun*. Berlin, 2003. Rehm, U. "Die beredte Hand im neuzeitlichen Kunstdiskurs." *Beredte Hände. Die Bedeutung von Gesten in der Kunst des 16. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart*. Ed. Groschner, G. Salzburg, 2004, 25–51. La Porta, V. *Il gesto nel arte. L'eloquenza silenziosa delle immagini*. Rome, 2006.

[3] Le Brun, C. *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions, proposée dans une conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*. Paris, 1698.

on the familiar idea, deriving from ancient theories of the soul and of rhetoric and handed down to the early moderns, according to which affects are depicted in the medium of the image primarily through their embodiment in gestures and facial expressions, and that these embodied forms of expression "externalize" the multi-dimensionality of "inner" emotions and movements such that "invisible" psychological forces are made "visible" and tangible. On this conception, the body is given the role of an expressive medium (as expressing emotions), and at the same time the image is given the status of an introspective form of representation or depiction (as representing emotions). This interrelation is exemplified, for instance, in the numerous depictions of Saint Mary Magdalene, who during the counter-reformation became nothing less than a prototype of the visible drama of inner penance (Fig. 1). In many different variations, all the depictions show the Saint as she imploringly raises her hands, shaken by remorse, agitated by religious passion, and physically moved by her love of God. In many cases, she passionately clasps her hands to her heart as the seat of the soul and of the emotions, and is depicted with a tearful, longing upward gaze directed towards the heavens.[4] The aim is a visual rhetoric of transparency: of translucency, legibility, and clarity, yet founded on a body-centered, concrete, and figural sense of the picture. The viewer looks "through" the painting at a body that makes visible an inner, hidden affect which in itself cannot be represented but which can be communicated through the "language" of gestures and facial expressions.

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[4] Mâle, E. *L'Art Religieux après le Concile de Trente. Étude sur l'iconographie de la fin du XVIe siècle, du XVIIe, du XVIIIe siècle*. Paris, 1932, 67ff. Knipping, J. B. *Iconography of the Counter Reformation in the Netherlands*. Nieuwkoop-Leiden, 1974, vol. 2, 315ff. Bardon, F. "Le thème de la Madeleine pénitente au XVIIeme siècle en France." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*. 31 (1968): 274–306. Müller-Hofstede, J. "'O felix Poenitentia' – Die Büßerin Maria Magdalena als Motiv der Gegenreformation bei Peter Paul Rubens." *Imagination und Imago. Festschrift Kurt Rossacher*. Salzburg, 1983, 203–27. *La Maddalena tra Sacro e Profano. Da Giotto a De Chrico*. Exh. cat. ed. Mosco, M. Milan, 1986. *Marie Madeleine. Figure inspiratrice dans la Mystique, les Arts et les Lettres*. Exh. cat. ed. Duperray, E. Fontaine-de-Vaucluse, 1988. Delenda, O. "Sainte Marie Madeleine et l'application du décret Tridentin (1563) sur les saintes images." *Marie Madeleine dans la mystique, les arts et les lettres*. Actes du colloque intern. Avignon 20–22/7/1988. Ed. Duperray, E. Paris, 1989, 191–210. Haskins, S. *Mary Magdalen. Myth and Metaphor*. London, 1993, esp. 229ff. Spear, R. E. *The 'Divine' Guido. Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni*. New Haven, 1997, 163ff. Mormando, F. "Teaching the Faithful to Fly: Mary Magdalene and Peter in Baroque Italy." *Saints and Sinners. Caravaggio and the Baroque Image*. Ed. Mormando, F. Chestnut Hill, 1999, 107–35.

1. Luca Giordano, *Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1690, oil on canvas, 127 x 106,5 cm, Dunkerque, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

This idea of a pictorially visible expression gives rise to several complexities and difficulties, even a certain aporia. Consider the following three aspects. One concerns the model of a bodily expression of emotion and thus the relation between "inner" constitution and "outer" expression, which relies on a polarity of "body" versus "soul" or "spirit." This polarity is codified and institutionalized from manifold religious, political, and social perspectives and is in various ways discursively consolidated or destabilized. Images of the body and of its expressive modes thus always also appear as visual dispositives in which specific identities are constructed and codified (be

they individual or collective, cultural or gender-related, religious or social). The images are therefore first and foremost representations of expressions or of encodings, such that the "emotions" they depict or to which they point are accessible both as mental phenomena and as social or cultural constructions. In the paintings of Saint Magdalene, the codes are conventional motifs and habitualized expressions familiar since the Renaissance: a saint's upward gaze, outstretched arms, clasping of the hands to the heart, and the despondent, downcast *gestus melancholicus*. These motifs express the saint's inner, religiously motivated *conversio* as an outward *contorsio* that seizes the whole body. But they are also deeply rooted in broad discursive formations, belonging above all to the 16th and 17th century Catholic reformation. Consider the theological debate over how the personal, individual prayer (*oratio privata*) could be collectively habitualized as part and parcel of a shared liturgy (*officium publicum*) and thus could be integrated, as the subjective experience of the *opus privatum*, into the *opus Dei*, the objective, institutionally regulated service of the whole congregation.[5] To speak of the "expression of images," therefore, is to include questions regarding collectively practiced "role poses"; questions regarding the principles that govern a rhetoric of the affects, aiming at emotional involvement and affective transfer on the part of the viewer; and, finally, questions concerning a historical anthropology of the religious and more generally the emotional "nature" of human beings.[6]

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[5] See Lentes, T. "*Vita perfecta* zwischen *Vita Communis* und *Vita Privata*. Eine Skizze zur klösterlichen Einzelzelle." *Das Öffentliche und das Private in der Vormoderne*. Eds. Melville, G. and von Moos, P. Köln, 1998, 123–64.

[6] On the perspective taken by an anthropology of "naturalness," its systematic encodings in ancient and renaissance rhetoric, and the transformations undergone by the theory of affects since the 17th and 18th centuries, leading up to the "discrediting" of rhetoric, see Barner, W. *Barockrhetorik. Untersuchungen zu ihren geschichtlichen Grundlagen*. Tübingen, 1970. Behrens, R. *Problematische Rhetorik. Studien zur französischen Theoriebildung der Affektrhetorik zwischen Cartesianismus und Frühaufklärung*. Munich, 1982. Campe, R. *Affekt und Ausdruck. Zur Umwandlung der literarischen Rede im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen, 1990. Geitner, U. *Die Sprache der Verstellung. Studien zum rhetorischen und anthropologischen Wissen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen, 1992. James, S. *Passion and Action. The Emotions in Seventeenth Century Philosophy*. Oxford, 1997. Pompe, H. "Natürlichkeitsideal." *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik*. 6 (2003): 183–203. Dachselt, R. *Pathos. Tradition und Aktualität einer vergessenen Kategorie der Poetik*. Heidelberg, 2003. esp. 169ff. Till, D. *Transformationen der Rhetorik. Untersuchungen zum Wandel der Rhetoriktheorie im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen, 2004.

The second aspect turns on the problematic nature of "pictorially visible expression." It concerns a theoretical and at the same time normative conception of representation as essentially mimetic, as demanding the faithful rendering of reality. Representation is here conceived in accord with the notion of an *imitatio naturae*, a depiction of the person or the human body in its "natural" state, a notion that is then expanded into the idea of the pictorial "naturalization" of affects. In contrast to this idea, however, it should be pointed out that the expressions of the persons depicted in a painting are constituted not just through iconography and concrete motifs (i.e., through gestures and facial expressions), but also through the painting's formal structure, its aesthetic morphology or what Louis Marin has described as "the two-dimensionality of its dispositive," an inevitable oscillation between transparency and opacity.[7] Consider again a depiction of Saint Magdalene, although one that significantly departs from the iconographic standard: Caravaggio's depiction from around 1595 (Fig. 2).[8] The figure refuses here to offer thematic orientation or to disclose her inner life, but instead establishes a structure of reticence and utter concealment of her emotions. Magdalene is presented as the protagonist of a drama that unfolds without any outward activity, without any movement or visible expression. The aesthetic principle is here not *perspicuitas* but rather the opacity and inexhaustibility of meaning, indeed its obscurity (*obscuritas*). This *obscuritas*, the painting's enigmatic character, is crystallized in the motif of the Saint's inner reticence, testifying to the inaccessibility of her inner world. Here, there is a significant shift away from the standard depictions of Magdalene since the inner, spiritual secret of the depicted figure is now fused with the aesthetic secret of the depiction itself. The painting's expressiveness is owed more to its opacity than its transparency.

I cannot pursue here the potential and the validity of this aesthetic option, which paradoxically anchors the "expressiveness of the image"

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[7] Marin, L. "Annonciations toscanes." *Opacité de la peinture. Essais sur la représentation au Quattrocento*. Ed. Marin, L. Paris, 1989, 125–63. Relating to the same argument see also *Der stumme Diskurs der Bilder. Reflexionsformen des Ästhetischen in der Kunst der Frühen Neuzeit in Italien*. Eds. von Rosen, V. et al. Berlin, 2003. Krüger, K. "Bilder als Medien der Kommunikation. Zum Verhältnis von Sprache, Text und Visualität." *Medien der Kommunikation im Mittelalter*. Ed. Spieß, K. H. (Beiträge zur Kommunikationsgeschichte, Bd. 15), Stuttgart, 2003, 155–204.

[8] On this and on the following considerations see Krüger, K. "Innerer Blick und ästhetisches Geheimnis. Caravaggios 'Magdalena.'" *Barocke Inszenierung*. Eds. Imorde, J. et al. Emsdetten, 1999, 32–49.

2. Caravaggio, *Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1594–1595, oil on canvas, 122,5 x 98,5 cm, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphilj.

in the image's ostensibly expressionless opacity and intransparency. Nor will I do more than mention the aftermath, reaching all the way to modernity and well illustrated, for example, in Jan Vermeer's *A Girl Asleep* (ca. 1665, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), which

has prompted countless interpretive attempts to clarify its content and iconography by establishing exactly what is depicted.[9] Or consider Johan Heinrich Füssli's enigmatic painting entitled *Silence* (1801, Kunsthaus Zürich), which demonstrates almost programmatically the visual paradox of an inaudible and invisible expression.[10] Or Goya's *Sleeping Woman* from around 1790 (Fig. 3), a painting that invests the mystery of sleep with a heightened, indeed erotic, significance oscillating between presentation and withdrawal.[11] While the light falling so pointedly and overtly onto the half-exposed breasts stages the beautiful sleeper as a sensuous temptation, her dream that we imagine remains shrouded in the intangible dark of the night. The viewer is left no choice but to attend to the brushstroke itself – at once casual and delicate, forceful and gentle – and to the tonality of the subtle, rich, and intense colors, shining forth despite the surrounding darkness. The vivid general texture of the painting itself turns out to be the proper dimension of its expressiveness. There is no doubt that we are faced here with one of the paths leading to what one might want to call a "modern" aesthetic of opacity.

The third aspect, which turns on the interrelation between the depicted "body" (in its complex polarity between inner animation and outer movement) and the medium-constituted reality of the depiction itself, that is, between the body-turned-image and the image itself as a body, bears on the question regarding the pictorial representation of affects. To shed further light on this aspect, I will turn now to the pictorial representation of music, or to the painting of sound, which has enjoyed widespread currency especially since the Renaissance.[12] Here,

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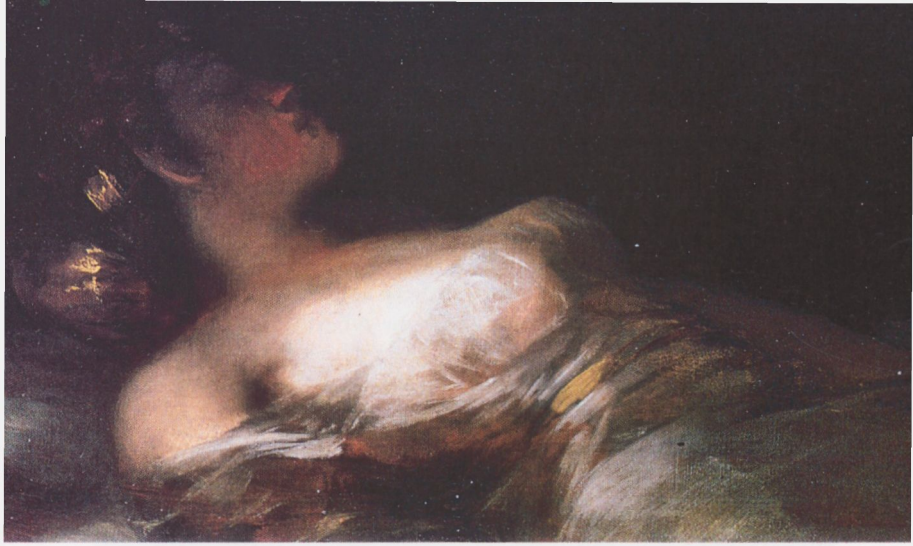
[9] See the penetrating analysis of this painting by Nash, J. *Vermeer*. Amsterdam, 1991, 54ff, and by Arasse, D. *L'Ambition de Vermeer*. Paris, 1993, 61ff., who emphasizes the "pluralité de sens possibles, intentionnellement offerte par Vermeer au spectateur," 62. Gaskell, I. "Vermeer and the Limits of Interpretation." *Vermeer Studies*. Eds. Gaskell, I and Jonker, M. Washington. Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts, Washington D.C. Studies in the Histoy of Art 55, Symposium Papers 33. 1998, 225–33. who appropriately speaks of a paradoxical "representation of the degree zero of representation" in Vermeer, 231.

[10] Klemm, C. in *Das Capriccio als Kunstprinzip. Zur Vorgeschichte der Moderne von Arcimboldo und Callot bis Tiepolo und Goya, Malerei – Zeichnung – Graphik*. Exh. cat. ed. Mai, E. Milan, 1996, 297. who attests to this figure an "evocative ambiguity" owing to the fact that its "expression consists in the refusal of any expression."

[11] Hofmann, W. in *Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolutionen, 1789–1830*. Exh. cat. Munich, 1980, 323f, cat. nr. 292. Schmid, G. in *Die Nacht*. Exh. cat. Wabern, 1998, 342, cat. nr. 141.

[12] These considerations offer a partial sketch of a thematic on which the author is



3. Francisco de Goya, *Sleeping Woman*, ca. 1790, oil on canvas, 44,5 x 77 cm, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland.

we encounter an intermedial constellation that is significant for two reasons: first, it allows us to compare two decidedly non-verbal media (image and painting on the one hand, sound and music on the other)

currently preparing a book. The references will therefore be limited to a minimum. The extensive literature on the topic includes, among many others: Winternitz, E. *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art*. New Haven, 1979. Würtenberger, F. *Malerei und Musik. Die Geschichte des Verhaltens zweier Künste zueinander – dargestellt nach den Quellen im Zeitraum von Leonardo da Vinci bis John Cage*. Frankfurt a.M. 1979. Bott, G. C. *Der Klang im Bild. Evaristo Baschenis und die Erfindung des Musikstillebens*. Berlin, 1997. Frings, G. *Giorgiones Ländliches Konzert. Darstellung der Musik als künstlerisches Programm in der venezianischen Malerei der Renaissance*. Berlin, 1999. Groos, U. *Ars Musica in Venedig im 16. Jahrhundert*. Hildesheim, 1996. *Colori della Musica. Dipinti, strumenti e concerti tra Cinquecento e Seicento*. Eds. Bini, A. et al. Milan, 2000. *Dipingere la musica. Musik in der Malerei des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts*. Ed. Seipel, W. Vienna, 2001. Slim, H. C. *Painting Music in the Sixteenth Century. Essays in Iconography*. Aldershot, 2002. *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period. Essays in Honor of Franca Trinchieri Camiz*. Ed. McIver, K. A. Aldershot, 2003. Gottdang, A. *Vorbild Musik. Die Geschichte einer Idee in der Malerei im deutschsprachigen Raum*. 1780–1915. Munich, 2004. Vergo, P. *That Divine Order. Music and the Visual Arts from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*. London, 2005. Schnetze, G. C. *Convergences in Music and Art. A Bibliographic Study*. Warren, 2005. Clouzot, M. *Images de musiciens (1350–1500). Typologie, figurations et pratiques sociales*. Turnhout, 2007. Erben, D. *Komponistenporträts von der Renaissance bis zur Gegenwart*. Stuttgart, 2008. Traeger, J. "Musik und bildende Kunst. Vom Mittelalter zur Moderne: Versuch einer Problemskizze." *Musica e Arti figurative. Rinascimento e Novecento*. Eds. Ruffini, M. and Wolf, G. Venice, 2008, 347–79.

with respect to their medium-specific expressive capacities and imaginative effects; second, it brings into play past discursive articulations of the difference between these media, revealing both their premises at the level of affect theory and rhetoric, and their consequences for the poetological conceptualization of genre (say, in the context of the *paragone* debate). The theories about the rhetorical expression of affects in painting that were developed by Alberti, Le Brun, and others were complemented long before the 18th century, and thus long before the aesthetics of sensibility, by various conceptions of music and song as ostensibly genuine articulations of emotion, as a universal "language" of sentiments, and what is more: as non-verbal and thus uniquely natural, unmediated expressions of the inner affects of the soul.[13] So-called "painted music" attends to the difference between the media of voice and image, music and painting, by confronting us with the a priori inability of images to represent sound and music or by revealing the paradox of an inaudibly visualized music or voice. The *paragone* between painting and music then adds a meta-reflexive dimension to such depictions insofar as it reflects on the theoretical parameters of this complex configuration.

Unrepresentable music has a double aspect: first, as an expression of the affects (for example, the love) of a depicted singer or musician; and second, as the cause of affects in the soul of the viewer who does not hear but only sees the sounding music in the image. In Annibale Carracci's *Lute Player* (ca. 1594), for example (Fig. 4),[14] the depicted musician catches the viewer's attention by fixing his earnest and intense gaze on him or her; the viewer in turn tries to determine and feel the melody of which the picture only offers a few hints, by showing the musician's fingering and a fragment of the sheet from which he is reading. At the same time, the picture establishes a subtle polarity between the body of the musician, whose searching gaze contrasts with his decidedly mute posture and his sealed lips, and the body of the musical instrument, the lute, which, though soulless, is visibly sonorous, and offers is presented as though a second protagonist in this image of staged sound.

Another example from a non-artistic context helps illuminate the categorial alterity of music and painting, an alterity that works between the invisibility of sound and the visibility of shapes and colors, between abstraction and bodily concreteness, and between the intan-

[13] For a survey see Krones, H. "Musik und Rhetorik." *Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. 6 (1997): 814–52. which provides further bibliographical references.

[14] Seipel 2001 (see note 12): 158, nr. I. 38.

4. Annibale Carracci, *Lute player*, 1593–94, oil on canvas, 77 x 64 cm, Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister.

gibility and palpability of affects and emotions. In the 1650s *Musurgia Universalis* by the Jesuit Athanasius Kircher, the author resumed the long tradition of speculative musical theorizing but with a new and comprehensive systematization of the expressiveness of music, conceived as a *musica pathetica* founded entirely on affects.[15] His under-

[15] See among others Zarpellon, R. "La musica degli Affetti." *Athansaius Kircher. Il museo del mondo*. Ed. Lo Sardo, V. E. Rome, 2001, 261–73. Wald, M. *Welterkenntnis aus Musik. Athanasius Kirchers 'Musurgia universalis' und die Universalwissenschaft*

5. Athanasius Kircher, *Diversarum volucrium voces notis musicis expressa*, from: *Musurgia Universalis*, Rome 1650.

lying idea was that both the human and animal voices are means by which God's creatures communicate their inner affects to the world around them. Language apart, nothing is better suited than music to *express* and thereby at the same time to *stir* the affects, since music is based on the same God-given universal harmony that governs the orbits of the planets. The *harmonia mundana*, the music of the heavenly spheres, is reflected in the *harmonia humana* of the human microcosm, that is to say, in the harmonious relation between body and soul and between the parts of the body and the parts of the soul, which in turn serves as the template of *harmonia instrumentalis*: the art of music.

Given this conceptual background it is quite consistent that in an illustration accompanying his discussion of animal voices, especially those of birds, Kircher should have translated various birdcalls into musical notation as though they conformed exactly to the established pitches and rhythms of musical practice (Fig. 5).[16] This goes back to the idea that animal voices, including the 'songs' of the birds, are entirely analogous to the harmonic and rhythmic structure of composed music in being subject to the same principle of universal harmony inherent in God's creation. Kircher's image thus testified to the fundamental paradox that results when voice, sound, and music are visualized and materialized in the inaudible system of writing. It is also apparent that there are semantic and performative differences between audibility and visibility as well as between visibility

*im 17. Jahrhundert*. Kassel, 2006. Leinkauf, T. "Kirchers Musikverständnis im Kontext der barocken Universalwissenschaft." *Ars Magna Musices – Athanasius Kircher und die Universalität der Musik*. Eds. Engelhardt, M. and Heinemann, M. Laaber, 2007, 1–21. Schaal-Gotthardt, S. "Musica pathetica: Kirchers Affektenlehre." *Ars Magna Musices – Athanasius Kircher und die Universalität der Musik*. Eds. Engelhardt, M. and Heinemann, M. Laaber, 2007, 141–54.

[16] Kircher, A. *Musurgia Universalis*. Rome, 1650, vol. 1, 30. For the long lasting tradition of the concept of birdsong and its highly complex notion as an origin for human music see Leach, E. E. *Sung Birds. Music, Nature, and Poetry in the Later Middle Ages*. Ithaca, 2007.

and legibility, and that these differences were further articulated in multi-layered variations between sound, instrument, and musical notation. The birds depicted by Kircher are, as it were, the physical instruments whose voices express natural affects in the medium of sound. The universal musicality of these affects, conceived primarily on the model of harmony, becomes manifest only in the transition to the medium of musical notation, which is a transition towards abstraction, towards the disembodied surface of sound. The depictions both of the birds' bodies and of the abstract musical notation function, therefore, as compensations for the impossibility of depicting sound and the range of affects contained in it. Hence these depictions show the intractability and the paradoxical nature not only of the pictorial representation of music but also of the visualization of affects.

It is remarkable that the textualization of music is here accompanied by its verbalization, such that the phonetic material is transcribed not only into musical notation but also into alphabetic writing with onomatopoetic intent. In contrast with Latin, the predominant language and the scientific meta-language of the time *(diversarum volucrium voces notis musicis expressa*: the voices of the different birds expressed in musical notation; *vox cuculi*: the voice of the cuckoo, etc.), this onomatopoetic script is as it were "pre-linguistic" *(gucu gucu gucu*, *bikebik bikebik bikebik*, etc.), or at least indicative of the "naturalness" and "immediacy" characteristic of a universal language. Only the parrot in the lower right section is presented as vocalizing in a human manner, uttering, in Greek, *χαιρε* (greetings), where the choice of the Greek language with its historical and cultural priority over Latin and with its air of archaic pastness seems intended to signal a certain "primordiality." At the same time, the phonetic quality of the parrot's squawking (*χαιρε*) establishes a difference between this "unnatural" imitation of the human voice and the non-verbal, "natural" musicality of the other birds.

The paradoxical character of a painted representation of music, and generally of the depiction of the affects, also comes to the fore in representations of composers and musicians, representations that form a prominent genre in their own right. Annibale Carracci's painting of 1587 probably depicts the composer and organ player Claudio Merulo da Correggio (Fig. 6).[17] He is shown with a quill and sheets of

[17] Posner, D. *Annibale Carracci. A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting around 1590*. New York, 1971, II, cat. nr. 35,17. Edwards, R. "Portraying Claudio Merulo, That

6. Annibale Caracci, *Portrait of the Composer Claudio Merulo*, 1587, oil on canvas, 92,5 x 68,5 cm, Naples, Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte.

music as he is writing down a musical composition (an instrumental piece for four or five voices). That he is captured in the very act of composing is emphasized by the fresh ink on his quill and by the fact

Great Fountain whose Value Deserves no other Prize than Heaven Itself." *Art and Music in the Early Modern Period*. 2003, 101–33, esp. 126ff. (see note 12).

that whereas some pages of his notebook already contain notes written by him, others remain to be filled. The composer is presented as a *literatus*, a status underlined by the books stacked on the console on the upper left hand side. His music is thereby exhibited as a product and a result of an intellectual process. Its representation in writing transforms the music's reality, turning its concreteness into an abstraction, solidifying its immateriality, and replacing its evanescence by temporal persistence. Placed in the alien medium of painting and thereby in a visual dispositive, music and its affective power (encompassing the polar elements of *expressing* and *producing* affects) are given a "body" that is not at their own disposal. This happens in two ways: first, the notebook is identified through the gesture of page-turning as containing a unified whole, a musical composition with a determinate beginning and end and with an unchangeable, singular identity. In short, music features here as a musical "piece" or "work." Second, the composer's forceful and determined gaze presents him as the creator of this work, to whom it owes its shape and who in this sense embodies it. In these vicarious "bodies," the music exists before our eyes not as voice or sound, not as a concrete presence brought forth by a physical instrument, but rather as the manifestation of a certain rationality that both precedes and follows upon its audible form, shape, and realization.

These same complexities are brought to light from a different, even opposed angle by the portrait of an unknown musician painted by Filippino Lippi around 1480–1490 (Fig. 7).[18] With his bow tucked under his arm, he is shown in the process of tuning his *lira da braccio*. On the shelf behind him we see again books and a sheet of music, as well as a lute, another *lira*, and two wind instruments. Music is presented here with an emphasis on its instrumental production and on the variety of techniques on which the playing relies. It is not an accident that the *lira da braccio* is shown from behind, exposing its sheer materiality and the manually operated tuning pegs and thus revealing its properly speaking instrumental nature. Quite generally, what is at issue in this painting is not so much the inner, affective attunement but first and foremost the physical and technical preparations for the playing of music. Music is more than what is at any given time performed and thus concretely present. Nor is it

[18] *Music and Painting in the National Gallery of Ireland*. Ed. Boydell, B. Dublin, 1985, 28. Nelson, J. K. in *Botticelli e Filippino. L'inqietudine e la grazia nella pittura fiorentina del quattrocento*. Milan, 2004, 228–30.

7. Filippino Lippi, *Portrait of a Musician*, late 1480s, egg tempera and oil on wood, 51 x 36 cm, Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland.

embodied in the abstract ideal of a harmony founded on the affects. Rather music is the result not just of intellectual but equally of material conditions. It is a process rather than a work, and it is ineluctably performative.

Remarkably, the *lira* bears an inscription that exhorts readers not to begin too late: *"e 'l cominciar non fia per tempo omai"* (to begin will not be too early now). It was recently discovered[19] that this inscription is taken from a poem by Petrarch, the canzone 264, which introduces the second part of the *Canzoniere*, offering a resigned lament about the hopeless transitoriness of earthly things and the futility of fame, art, and love: *"il tempo passa"* – time flows by. This phrase could be taken to allude specifically to the situation of the musician, as reminding him to commence his performance without further delay. But the inscription expresses something more: a reflection on the nature of music itself, which is inescapably temporal and transient. Significantly, this essential characteristic of music is presented not through aesthetic means, in a pictorial, painted form, but merely by way of a supplement external to the medium of painting – a non-pictorial inscription and comment.

Similarly, a Venetian painting from around 1515 shows a musician with his *lira a braccio* (Fig. 8).[20] In contrast with Lippi's painting, however, the motif of tuning an instrument by carefully turning its tuning pegs is here turned into a suggestive gesture that directly addresses the viewer, who is enjoined by the musician's intense gaze to attune himself (respectively herself) and listen to what is inaudible for him (respectively for her). Regardless of whether this is intended to resonate with the idea of an amorous message from the depicted person to the viewer, we can say that the viewer is here exposed to a keen *paragone* between gaze and sound, seeing and hearing, music and painting, and that this subjects him or her to a paradoxical interplay between the excitation of the relevant affects and their interminable withdrawal.

Very briefly put one could say that the viewer encounters here an intricately staged pictorial imaginary whose purpose is evocation, and that this aesthetic potential serves not merely as a compensation for the shortcomings of the medium of painting – its inability to make music and song audible – but instead functions in a productive and complementary way as an "attunement" and a means of evocation, and as a self-consciously *other*, visual mode of possibility for the existence of music and of musical affects.

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[19] McGee, T. "Filippino Lippi and Music." *Renaissance and Reformation.* 30, 3 (2006–7): 5–28.

[20] Seipel 2001 (see note 12): 171. Lorenzetti, S. *Musica e identità nobiliare nell'Italia del rinascimento. Educazione, mentalità, immaginario.* Florence, 2003, 264–5.

8. Venetian Painter, *Lute player*, ca. 1515, oil on wood, 47,5 x 39,5 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

This activation and subtle involvement of the viewer – a pictorial procedure that "attunes" him so as to evocatively produce the inaudible music in his own imagination, to experience affects in the face of invisible affects, and to participate in the image through a process of synesthetic reception –, as well as methods similar to it, are also encountered elsewhere.

Venetian painting, in particular, has developed a great variety of aesthetic procedures for the visual evocation of music. Giorgione's famous image of ca. 1503, for example, is of three half-length fig-

ures who are about to begin a song (Fig. 9).[21] It depicts three men of different ages who embody different vocal ranges: the old man on the left is a bass, the middle-aged man to the right is a tenor, and the boy in the middle, a soprano. The viewer's gaze is subtly implicated in this ensemble of voices and sounds: through the left figure's glance over his shoulder, which addresses the viewer and is illuminated in such a way as to attract his gaze in turn; through the withdrawal of the middle figure's gaze, whose eyes lie under a shadow and for that very reason draw attention to themselves; and through the dispersal of this attention in the case of the figure on the right, whose illuminated face, shown in profile, directs the view back to the central figure, while the gesture of his hand, indicating the upbeat of the music and thereby setting the rhythm for the singers, draws attention to the sheet of music that the young soprano holds directly before the eyes of the viewer. Remarkably, this sheet – which contains the melody and thus, as it were, the key to the semantic reading of the painting – is painted only in a sketch-like fashion and is unreadable. It thereby functions as a semantic "gap" within the image, which prompts the viewer to imagine a song he cannot identify. What is thus evoked is not a specific melody or the identity of a concrete musical work, but rather the general, imaginary potentiality of singing, music, and affect. By conveying the indeterminate possibility of music, by depicting the unspecific "mood" and the emotionally colored "atmosphere" of music, the painting attains an aesthetic openness which involves the viewer all the more intensely and which promises an imaginary participation in the singing. It is therefore most significant that the three men themselves do not in fact sing but are silent. It could easily be shown how pointed an intention is embodied in this motif of the singers' silence, if one compared it to other depictions of the same theme, where the pure act of singing, mouths wide open, is given center stage.[22] The mute interiority of Giorgione's singers, their silent imagination of the song whose imminent performance is indicated by the right-side figure's marking of the beat, creates in the viewer an analogous affect, an

[21] *'Le tre età dell'uomo' della Galleria Palatina*. Florence, 1989. Anderson, J. *Giorgione. The painter of 'poetic brevity', including catalogue raisonné*. Paris, 1997, 298. Dal Pozzolo, E. A. in *Giorgione*. Exh. cat. eds. Dal Pozzolo, E. A. and Puppi, L. Milan, 2009. 42. 421–3.

[22] For one example among many, see Lorenzo Costa's *Concerto*, ca. 1490, in the National Gallery, London.

9. Giorgione, *Concert*, ca. 1502–03, oil on canvas, 62 x 77,5 cm, Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina.

internal attunement to the inaudible tune. This lends the painting its peculiar aesthetic effect and a self-reflexive dimension. For through its intrinsic muteness (*muta pictura*), the painting enacts the contest of the arts by inverting music into the paradoxical form of a mute song (*muta musica*).

One could point to a large variety of similar ways in which paintings create not a simple "representation" of music but instead fruitfully exploit the aesthetic otherness of the inaudible image as a specific means in which this medium can evoke and amplify the affects. The so-called *Concerto* in London (Hampton Court), probably painted by Vittore Bellini around 1505–1515,[23] is a case in point, as is Titian's

[23] Shearman, J.*The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*. Cambridge, 1983, cat. nr. 38, 43–6. Whitaker, L. and Clayton, M. *The Art of Italy in the Royal Collection. Renaissance & Baroque*. London, 2007, nr. 57, 182–4.

famous painting in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence from ca. 1512.[24] The latter presents the joint preparation for the musical performance as a focused consonance of gazes, where the depiction of the young man to the left irresistibly draws the viewer in. To the experience of hearing, the painting juxtaposes the experience of seeing or looking, as harboring the potential to intensify the affects in its own right.

These examples show that the question concerning the visual representation of affects points to phenomena relating both to the reception and perception of art and to its production. The painting's materiality and its aesthetic presence participate in manifold ways in "expressing" the depicted configurations of affect. This is the case, for example, in the Venetian *colorito* style that became widespread starting with Bellini and Giorgione ca. 1500. In these paintings, the highly refined opacity of the color structure purposefully adds emotional content to the image to the point of transgressing, re-coding, and irritating its figurative, representational content.

Titian's famous late work *The Flaying of Marsyas* (Fig. 10), dating from around 1570–76 suggests the subtle ways in which relations are established, at the level of motifs and of semantic content, between the reflexive conception of the 'expressiveness' of a painting's morphology, on the one hand, and the theme of music, on the other.[25] Titian intensifies the method of saturating the painting's surface with expressive meaning almost to the point of abstraction, so as to literally and very specifically "transform" the emotionally charged subject matter by creating the impression that the pictorial field itself is dismembered and furrowed. He thereby conveys a drama of metamorphosis unfolding entirely in the eye of the beholder, profoundly re-shaping the semantics of the image's expression of affects. For the viewer, then, the drama of the flaying of Marsyas becomes an experience, that he witnesses as unfolding on the colorful skin of the painting itself, as the latter's de-materialization and at the same time its re-composition into a complex structure of color and brushstrokes.[26]

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[24] Most recently, Villa, G. C. F. in *Tiziano*. Exh. cat. ed. Villa, G. C. F. Milan, 2013, cat. nr. 3, 74–5, which lists earlier literature.

[25] Villa 2013 (see note 24): cat. nr. 40, 266–71. which provides references to the earlier literature.

[26] See Wyss, E. *The Myth of Apollo and Marsyas in the Art of the Italian Renaissance. An Inquiry into the Meaning of Images*. Newark 1996,133–44. Puttfarken, T. *Titian and the Tragic in Painting. Aristotele's Poetics and the Rise of the Modern Artist*. New Haven, 2005, 193ff. Bohde, D. "Die Metaphorisierung eines

10. Titian, *The Flaying of Marsyas*, ca. 1575–76, oil on canvas, 212 x 207 cm, Kroměříž, National Museum.

In this way, we might say, the materialization of color in Titian's painting – the purely pictorial color tone – lends the flayed Marsyas a new skin: the skin of painting, in which he survives and will live on forever. Though visibly mute and enduring his martyrdom with inaudible calmness and without uttering any sound, he is precise-

Gewaltaktes. Tizians Schindung des Marsyas." *Häutung. Lesarten des Marsyas-Mythos*. Ed. Renner, U. and Schneider, M. Munich, 2006, 135–60. Cranston, J. "Theorizing Materiality: Titian's Flaying of Marsyas." *Titian: Materiality, Likness, 'Istoria'*. Ed. Woods-Marsden, J. Turnhout, 2007, 5–18. Rosand, D. "'Most Musical of Mourners, Weep Again!': Titian's Triumph of Marsyas." *Arion*. 17, 3 (2010): 19–43. Cranston, J. *The Muddied Mirror. Materiality and Figuration in Titian's Later Paintings*. University Park, 2010, 47ff.

ly through this mute expressiveness subtly elevated over the God Apollo, who dealt him a seemingly resounding defeat in the musical contest but who now appears degraded to a truly inhuman torturer, in fact degraded to the point of disfigurement. Apollos's lower body seems to dissolve into shadows, and not accidentally there is a panting dog in the painting's right section as if to reflect his animality, alongside a blood-licking little dog in the middle as an ironic comment. The *de*-materialization of Apollo is here juxtaposed to a *materialization* of a different kind and dimension, the materialization of painting as *muta poesia*, which restitutes the silenced voice of the doomed Marsyas and subtly marks this making whole again with christological references, not least through the structuration of the image space which recalls scenes of martyrdom and crucifixion. Titian's *musica pitturesca* is thus nothing less than a triumph of the excitingly mute expressiveness of his painting over an artfully Apollonian music that is yet barely able to conceal its true character as a merely natural, animal form of expression.

On the whole, the examples discussed here indicate that painting encounters the alterity of the musical expression of affects (its invisibility, it immateriality, its temporal transitoriness, its intangible variations in tone and modulations of sound, and so on) through strategies aimed at incorporating the alien medium, and assigns music a compensatory "body" (of the composer, the musician, the instrument, the written musical notation, and so on). If painting thus appropriates musical and acoustic expressions of affect into its own medium through procedures of embodiment, it thereby comes also to generate the pictorial, visual expression of affect proper to its own medium less and less through the representation and codification of bodily and facial gestures and instead increasingly – as though attempting to demonstrate its own expressive superiority – through the emphatic display of morphologies and phenomenal values unique to the medium of painting (color, brushstroke, composition, the relation between sharpness and blur, the contrast of light and dark, and so on). Hence, the progressive limitation of musical expressions of affect in painting to the depiction of "musical bodies" contrasts with a gradual emancipation and expansion of distinctively visual expressions of affect through the painting's own "pictorial body." The reality and the increasing refinement of the pictorial representation of affects are thus marked both by a multi-sensual expansion (sound *and* sight, seeing *and* hearing, music *and* painting) and a mono-medial self-privileging (of painting *over* music), which

11. Caravaggio, *The Lute Player*, ca. 1597–98, oil on canvas, 100 x 126.5 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

mutually reinforce one another. The central feature of these developments is a semiotic and aesthetic shift from representation to presence, from the depicted body to the body of the painting itself, and that this shift transforms the mere aesthetic presence of the medium into a genuine manifestation of the expression and articulation of affects.

The fact that paintings represent not merely the bodies of persons undergoing certain affects – or, sometimes, the bodies of music and the affects associated with them – but that they themselves, as paintings, are embodiments of affects – the affects of painting – has far-reaching consequences for their performativity. This is what gives such special significance to Caravaggio's early paintings, such as the *Lute Player* or the *Concerto* (painted around 1597–98) (Fig. 11).[27] Commissioned by Roman patricians, in a context where music was practiced as a staged performance, as a social practice of cul-

[27] Christiansen, K. *A Caravaggio Rediscovered. The Lute Player*. New York, 1990. Ebert-Schifferer, S. *Caravaggio. The Artist and His Work*. Los Angeles, 2012, cat. nr. 53–55, 90–101/287–8 with references to further literature.

tural self-representation and social distinction, the purpose of these paintings is not so much to enact a *paragone* between painting (in its double capacity of representing and producing affects) and music (with its own specific affects). Rather they aim to participate in the cultural practice by being themselves performative in a novel and specifically painterly way that emphasizes their own bodily presence. Their goal is no longer a subtle "tuning" of the affects, not an "evocation" of a music produced by the viewer's imagination. It is rather the decisive, undisguised, pure presentation of the various bodies of music that are presented so visibly and tangibly to the viewer in a suggestive trompe l'oeil fashion, on the outermost plane of the painting, draped out on a sumptuously carpeted table: the instruments, the opened music book, and not least the lute player in theatrical, quasi-antique garb, with a white shirt and a black sash, his hair in a wig-like arrangement held together by a headband, his cheeks, lips, and eyebrows emphasized by make-up. The real object here is not music but rather the *staging* of music through its material and tangible substitutes. Because of this unabashedly exhibitionary presentation and display of music as though in a showcase, the depiction instantiates a structure of inauthenticity. The performativity and momentariness of music, its acoustic realization and its concrete expressivity, are alienated, denaturalized, and offered to the eye as a thoroughly staged scenario placed in a spatio-temporally unlocatable and merely figurative reality: the reality of the image. Trenchantly put, the deliberately presentational mode of the image highlights the paradox of painted music, indeed the incommensurability of image and music, ultimately resulting in the viewer's realization that insofar as he is beholding an image, music itself is *not* a possible object of his aesthetic experience.

Translation: Felix Koch