

# On Beauty

Gernot Böhme

**ABSTRACT** Beauty was once the main or even exclusive topic of aesthetics. Now, two hundred years after Karl Rosenkranz's *Aesthetics of Ugliness* and a formidable development of fine arts in which many atmospheres beyond the edge of beauty were produced, it may be time again to ask the fundamental question of what the beautiful is like. But putting this question we notice that since the 18th century our aesthetical experience has deeply changed, so that the concept of traditional beauty must be changed itself.

**KEYWORDS** Beauty, aesthetic experience

## I. The riddle of beauty

That we are touched by beauty is beyond doubt. Everyone has such experiences, and knows that they cover a wide spectrum. They extend from deep shock, through amazed perception of something wholly other, to a momentary lifting of our spirits. They extend from a feeling of painful longing, through fascination with the wholly other, to a sense of being enveloped and sheltered in delightful well-being. Yet if we are called upon to say what beauty is, we find ourselves at a loss. Indeed, we are afraid that by naming beauty we may turn it into something other than what we have experienced. "We cannot possibly be inclined to comprehend in the form of a definition something which must be understood in a fundamentally different way, something which we have ourselves experienced and loved quite differently; for such a definition can easily make it something alien and different."<sup>1</sup> With this assertion the philosopher and religious thinker Søren Kierkegaard introduces the concepts of "existence." These are concepts with which matters become *serious*, because the content of the concept is intimately bound up with the person who thinks it, or, conversely, because the subject is involved in the content of his or her thought. Perhaps we have already discovered here a first characteristic of beauty. Beauty cannot be completely objectified; beauty is not a property which a person, a thing or a scene simply *has*, because the involvement of the participating subject is always intrinsic to it. We cannot pin down the beauty of a scene just because our delight is an intrinsic part of that scene. One might leave the matter there and say: *One cannot speak of beauty, one has to experience it.*

But one does not leave the matter there. On the contrary, since the ancient Greeks there have constantly been attempts to determine what

beauty is,<sup>2</sup> and in philosophy a whole discipline has emerged which is primarily concerned with this question, namely aesthetics. Up to the mid-nineteenth century aesthetics was a theory of beauty. It might also have been called a theory of the fine arts, since up to about that time the essential demand placed on the work of art was that what it represented had to appear beautiful. A hint of this view still persists in our everyday notions, as when we say of a thing or a situation that it is *aesthetically pleasing*, by which we mean that it is beautiful; or when we speak of the *aestheticising of the real*, referring to attempts to beautify reality. It was only after Hegel that something like an *aesthetic of ugliness*<sup>3</sup> could emerge, and, as we know, since then art has moved very far from having to be beautiful as such. And yet it is precisely this aspect, this way of gaining access to the beautiful, by way of art, design or architecture, which is a further reason for attempting to determine what beauty is. For although the experience of beauty may be, for the recipient, so subjective, indeed so intimate that one cannot hope to elucidate it verbally in its ultimate nature, the matter looks quite different from another direction, when viewed from the standpoint of production aesthetics. It is, of course, the aim of the artist, the designer, the architect, to create by means of the object the conditions in which people are able to experience beauty – by establishing vistas, by shaping objects, by arranging scenes. This implies two things. Firstly, that the experience of beauty cannot be as subjective as it first appears to the person affected by it. If the productive effort to create beauty is to have any meaning at all, then it must be supposed that our experiences of beauty are, at least to a certain extent, shared. The paradigm here is once again – as in the aesthetics of atmospheres generally<sup>4</sup> – the art of the stage set. That art would be pointless if it could not be assumed that a given audience would experience in the same way an arrangement with which an atmosphere is created on the stage. It is the same with beauty: the artist, the designer, the architect will want to know what he or she has to do to ensure that a public will experience his or her objects or arrangements as beautiful. And to say what the artist has to do would be the task of aesthetics.

And yet, has it been said? Have we got a definition of beauty? Or must it constantly be defined anew, because people's *taste* changes, or perhaps – and this goes deeper – because people's manner of experiencing changes?

## 2. The classical answers

Just as the art and architecture of the ancient Greeks have been the dominant influences over the longest period of European cultural history, so too

have their views on beauty. At the beginning of any aesthetic theory stands Plato with this thesis that beauty was that which shines forth most strongly (το εκφανεστατον).<sup>5</sup> This definition has something in its favour even today. It seems to locate the beautiful in the sphere of the visible. It brings it together with the experience of light, and although it defines beauty very clearly as a characteristic of objects, it nevertheless, by using the term “shine” (φαινεσθαι), establishes a relationship to the subject: if something appears (φαινεθαι), it must do so for someone. Yet this first impression is deceptive; in it we read Plato’s definition too quickly, in terms of our own needs. First of all, it must be remembered that for Plato true being, which also means true beauty, lies in the Forms (or Ideas), that is, not in the things of the sensuous world but in the original models existing in eternity, which, as such, can only be *thought*. The things in the world are beautiful only in so far as the *Forms* are brought clearly to expression through them. This makes clear at the same time what the reference to “that which shines forth most strongly” actually means. Just as the eternal things, the *Forms*, are beautiful in being simply what they are, the transient things of our world are beautiful in making clearly visible the Form to which they correspond. A bed is beautiful by being a good bed, and as such recognisable. Something is beautiful if it is what it is really *well*, and as such is knowable. In this way, beauty becomes identified with a kind of radiant precision.

This view has a certain fascination, and one would like to follow it if one could. But it is clearly based on presuppositions which we no longer share. Plato’s conception of the beautiful places the beauty of something – of things, but also of people – in relationship to what they truly are. Beauty, therefore, is in no way something external, a veneer. It is not mere appearance, but is bound up with being-good. In the background of this idea is the conception, shared by all Greeks, of the unity of the beautiful and the good, of the *kalonkagaton*. Thus the good citizens are those held in esteem, and as esteemed citizens they are also beautiful. The beautiful are the aristocrats, who are distinguished by their proficiency, which sets them apart from the mass. Just as being beautiful is not something external to things or people, likewise being-good is not something which has its effect in seclusion. Inconspicuous goodness was a notion alien to the Greeks. What is good – such was their conviction – also reveals itself as such. It is radiant, it stands out. Socrates, in the Platonic dialogue *Hippias Major*, brings both ideas together very beautifully when the question is raised whether a household mixing implement, a “quirl,” made of gold is more beautiful than one made of olive wood. For Socrates the matter is clear. The quirl made of gold may be lustrous, but it is difficult to handle

and does not harmonise with the taste of the gruel it is supposed to stir. Therefore the olive wood quirl is more beautiful, and that is seen both in using it and in the taste of the gruel produced with it. Goodness stands out, and the better a quirl is, the more precise and radiant it is, and therefore the more beautiful.<sup>6</sup>

The linking of being-beautiful and being-good in Plato has far-reaching consequences. It is already clear in his own work that, according to his definition of beauty, mathematical objects and, more precisely, geometrical ones, are the most beautiful. For nothing is as good, as precisely what it is, as a mathematical object: a sphere, a tetrahedron, a cube, a square, an equilateral triangle. Beauty thus becomes regularity, harmony, proportionality. The consequence – disastrous from a present-day standpoint – is that attempts have been made on this basis to decipher the secret of beauty in other spheres: simple numerical relationships, the Golden Section, arithmetic and geometric means, the Fibonacci series, have been used to explain what could cause us to experience something as beautiful.<sup>7</sup> And there is indeed something satisfying in noting that the seed head of a sunflower or the convolutions of a snail's shell obey certain mathematical laws, and even in fractal formations such as the *Appelman (Mandelbrot-Set in chaos theory)* – which, though confusing, impress us as beautiful – structures of self-similarity can be found. The idea of *beauty through proportionality* has also proved itself in practice. The impression of measure and balance, the graceful beauty of classical buildings from Roman antiquity up to neoclassicism, is based on confidence in the theory of proportion of Vitruvius. This theory, however, apart from recommending that the dimensions and parts of a building be determined by a basic measure and the whole be thus made proportional, also has the peculiarity that the basic measure is the human being itself. It therefore contains the subjective moment which seems to us to be necessary for the experience of beauty: in a Vitruvian building human beings can set themselves in relation to the whole because their own bodies are the measure of that whole.

The aesthetic theory of Immanuel Kant marked a decisive turning-point in thinking about beauty. And yet even his thought was dominated by the basic idea that true beauty is located in forms, which was to play a leading role right up to the twentieth century. In Kant the debate on whether line or colour was more important, a debate which, of course, took place in relation to painting, was in reality decided in advance, since he only knew the paintings which were regarded as models in his time in the form of steel engravings. He intensified this antithesis by connecting it to the difference between the pleasing and the beautiful. Colours

are, at most, pleasing, whereas beauty depends on form, and therefore, in paintings, on line. Accordingly, he said of music that it is “enjoyment rather than cultivation,”<sup>8</sup> since the pleasure afforded by music is based on the associations it arouses. “But in the charm and mental movement produced by music, mathematics has certainly not the slightest share.”<sup>9</sup> With Plato music has been a paradigm of beauty precisely because of its mathematical character. Even before him, Pythagoras had represented the octave by the ratio 2:1, the fifth by the ratio 3:2 and the fourth by the ratio 4:3. But between Plato and Kant stands the astronomer Kepler, who had stated that everyone needed to have a mathematician deep in their soul in order to take pleasure in music.<sup>10</sup> Kant no longer wanted to believe in such a mathematician, who, in listening to music, perceived its harmonic proportions. For him, therefore, beauty was no longer a matter of cognition, of perfected form, but rather a matter of the arousal of human emotions in the search *for* form.

This difference does in fact constitute a decisive turning-point in thinking about beauty. It meant that emotional, affective participation in beauty was taken seriously. The beautiful, Kant rightly observes, sets the forces of feeling in motion. It is uplifting. For Kant, objects such as the Platonic bodies, cubes, tetrahedrons, octahedrons, spheres, etc., were not beautiful. They were perfect; they corresponded to their concept and for that reason could be thought, but the thought of them was not connected to a feeling. By contrast, forms that have a certain indefiniteness, of the kind which stimulates the human imagination, which causes us to ask what they might be, are to be called beautiful. The joy one feels in contemplating them in their presence is, according to Kant, the joy in one’s own emotional activity, in the agitation and play of the emotions in their search for form.

For modern people, this view may well have something to recommend it. It does justice to the subjective element in the experience of beauty. *It is not the – sober – noting of the perfection of a form which constitutes the experience of beauty, but rather the searching and tracing-out that a form induces.* Kant was a man of the rococo; what were aesthetically relevant for him in the everyday world were its playful forms, the resonances and suggestions in a decor. The basic form, for this aesthetic, was not the sphere or the tetrahedron, but the seashell profile or, as in the graphic work of Hogarth, the unbalanced S-shape. The latter’s book *The Analysis of Beauty*<sup>11</sup> contains a table of model drawings, including a line of beauty which corresponds approximately to the leg of a baroque chair or the corseted form of the upper part of a female body.

It might be said that Kant brought beauty down from heaven to earth. If for Plato beautiful things are the eternal Forms, for Kant they are the objects of everyday life. There has been much dispute over whether Kant's aesthetics is an aesthetics of art or of nature. But if one looks more closely one finds that the majority of his examples are taken from the field of design. He is interested in fashion, in tapestry; he speaks of front gardens and of table music.<sup>12</sup> Aesthetic judgement is the ability to choose the right things with which to embellish life. Beauty has a community-forming function. In the pleasure taken in certain things, people with the same taste feel united. Through the furnishing of one's surroundings one creates for oneself and others a stimulating, enlivening atmosphere. That Kant still saw the reason for this primarily in the forms of objects may be a limitation; nevertheless, he liberated thinking about beauty from the domination of mathematics. Even when he is concerned with form, it is not consummate form, it is not perfection and precision, which today have succumbed beyond recall to the triviality of industrial production; rather, it is the degree of indefiniteness in form, the suggestive, the vague, the playful, which occasion the experience of beauty. In this, Kant points far beyond his own work.

### 3. New experiences

It is a bold assertion to state that people in different historical periods perceive in a different way. And yet modes of perception mediated by technology – in the visual sphere, since the invention of the telescope and the microscope – are likely to represent at least an enlargement of the field of perception and perhaps even fundamental changes.<sup>13</sup> That will also have consequences for our conceptions of the beautiful. All the same, how one thinks about beauty is very fundamentally influenced by paradigmatic objects. No doubt we are far from asserting today that the human body is the paradigm *par excellence* of beauty, as Friedrich Schiller claimed and as was probably characteristic of German classicism as a whole. Still more categorical, it seems, is the rejection of simple forms as paradigms of the beautiful. It is not only that simple geometrical forms bore us – the glass pyramid in the courtyard of the Louvre was, after all, a mistake – but the simple yet sophisticated forms of a Brancusi or a Henry Moore, acclaimed half a century ago, now leave us cold. It seems that what was prefigured in Kant, the charm of the indefinite in form, has become autonomous as indeterminateness as such. One need only think of the fascination exerted by the seascapes of a photographer such as Hiroshi Sugimoto.

Consider water: within the Kantian aesthetic – as in the classical aesthetic generally up to and including that of Adorno – it would have been unthinkable to derive aesthetic charm from water as such. Water is simply the formless, and for that very reason was seen by Aristotle – as that capable of being formed – as the antithesis of all form. A stream, a waterfall, a pond – such a thing is nowhere to be found in the Kantian aesthetic. It is true that he does mention the sea, but not under the heading of *beauty* but of *sublimity*. The sea in its immeasurable vastness and its menacing violence is experienced, from a suitable distance, as sublime. Of course, water or, more precisely, stretches of water, have often been present in landscape painting since its beginnings, but only as an ingredient, a component for generating a landscape-like atmosphere. In this capacity water was then explicitly appreciated by C. C. Hirschfeld in his theory of landscape gardening.<sup>14</sup> He inquired into which type of body of water was suited to which natural scene, or more precisely, what a certain body of water contributed to the emotional character of a scene. From there it seems only a step to the paintings of Turner, who sought to paint atmospheres as products of the interplay of water, light and weather – in which interplay the world of objects receded entirely. Yet this was a large step, and it appears to have been taken by the wider public only a hundred years later.

All this was anticipated theoretically, of course, in Goethe's theory of colours, which had ascribed to colours *a sensuous and moral effect*. Today we would speak of an atmospheric effect. Colours communicate to space a certain mood. And because this mood is apprehended by a person present in terms of feeling, the interplay of colours in their vividness can be experienced as beauty. This effect, as far as it can be mediated by panel paintings, is experienced most clearly in the works of Mark Rothko.<sup>15</sup> However, one should not contemplate them with the intention of ascertaining what can be seen in them; rather one should allow their colour effects to unfold spatially. If one starts out from the old antithesis of colour versus line, the paintings of Mark Rothko might be regarded as the new paradigm of beauty.

But, in this context, that does not take us very far. When a new idea of beauty is at issue we are concerned, of course, with the experience of light, water, space and colour as such, and with the pleasure of indefiniteness, of which Kant said that it stimulates the imagination. But it must be said first that it was new basic examples of beauty, new paradigms of perception, which prepared the way for this concept of beauty. And these have been mediated largely by the development of technology.

This interconnection between technological development and the change in conceptions of beauty has two sides. On the one hand, the basic technical conditions of experience have made new perceptual pleasures available to people in the modern period. On the other, the technical mastery of light and sound, together with the technical shaping of material or, still more, of materiality,<sup>16</sup> have made possible the generation of practically unlimited aesthetic effects. The change in perceptual experience may have begun with the microscope – less for the scientist, who saw something specific through it, than for the lay person, who gazed through the microscope into unknown worlds. In this context Ernst Haeckel's radiolaria undoubtedly still belong to the old paradigms of beauty.<sup>17</sup> By contrast, flickering forms at an indeterminate depth are something really new, especially when they appear in the fascinating illumination of polarised light. Closest to these are the experiences one has when diving, or through the mediation of underwater photography. Here again we find the indeterminateness, above all the floating sensation and the lighting, but most especially, in this case, the perception of the medium as well. It gives a sense of being present in a way which would never be possible in an object-determined world. Then there are the experiences of flying, which by now can be assumed to be shared by almost everyone. Here, one finds oneself in a space of flickering forms which change their appearance, depending on illumination and position. The gaze stretches over infinite vistas with contours always unique, ephemeral. One encounters here not only a diffuse infinity but an almost surreal clarity of formations, with ungraspable contours. It is no wonder that clouds, which were always to be seen creating aerial perspectives in landscape paintings, should also, like water and light, have made themselves autonomous in art. It was no doubt Alfred Stieglitz who began this tendency about 1900, with pure cloud photography. This theme is ubiquitous today, and in Richter has been extended to panel painting.<sup>18</sup> Admittedly, in these object-fixing arts, much of the original aesthetic fascination of clouds is lost. In a photograph they are easily reduced to a thing; with their mutability they also lose the charm they had for the imagination.<sup>19</sup>

What is crucial here is that such experiences can be assumed to be part of the general stock of experience. They belong to the *normal* spectrum of perception. For many people, further experiences, those of explicitly artificial worlds, can be added to this spectrum. One thinks of drug experiences, in particular of LSD, an experience of weightlessness which is generated by this or other means, or experiences of computer games or



other virtual worlds. What matters here is whether a person is merely confronted with this world as an image, or experiences it as a space in which he or she is physically present. Only in the latter case can one speak of virtual worlds in the strict sense.<sup>20</sup> But whether or not technical devices mediate these experiences in a particular case, they have an inherent tendency to abolish the division between dream and reality, a division by which the modern age was once defined.<sup>21</sup> And precisely this appears to be the objective of postmodern pop aesthetics. It simulates worlds in which one is present in the form of an avatar: cave experiences in which one is present in simulated surroundings by means of data gloves and electronic spectacles. Or, inversely, it makes possible bodily presence in a simulated scene, like the one which can be experienced by a visitor to a casino in Las Vegas, who is catapulted by a lift into a scene from *Star Trek*.<sup>22</sup> This is the point where we have to speak not only of new experiences, but of new needs.

#### 4. New needs

It cannot be said that, in the light of these new experiences, the classical paradigms of beauty have been simply devalued. But we see them in a new way, we have new expectations of them; they practically have to prove themselves once again in experience. We would not be satisfied to know that they are perfect according to this or that criterion; we will ask what, or, better, whether we feel something in their presence. Experiences such as the *Venus of Milo* or Michelangelo's *David*, Cologne cathedral, the Sforza Castle in Milan and the Alhambra in Granada would certainly pass this test. It is just that the spectrum has widened considerably, and we will describe as beautiful quite different things and scenes than were possible according to the classical aesthetic theories – a spider's web glistening with raindrops, a sun-steeped avenue of trees, but also the design of the illumination in an underground station or the sales display in a high-class departmental store. Today, beauty can no longer be banished to the museum, it is no longer defined by the difference between serious and popular art. In principle, we look for beauty everywhere. We can find beauty not only in art but also in advertising, in design, in urban scenes, in nature, and in the artificial worlds of our media. The only thing that counts is the quality of the impression emanating from a person, a scene, an object, a piece of architecture. What is decisive for us today, when we use the word beauty, is whether a person or a thing, a scene or a place makes us feel that we are there, whether these things, people or scenes contribute to intensifying our existence.

This enables us to define once again, and in conclusion, the difference from classical notions of beauty. Plato, for good reasons, brought together beauty and Eros. Eros, love, he thought, was the desire to possess the beautiful, and then, still more trenchantly, the desire *always* to possess the beautiful.<sup>23</sup> Although we can still empathise with this idea, its weaknesses are undeniable: for if love is the desire to possess the beautiful, it will only remain alive for as long as one does not possess beauty, or for as long as its possession is at risk. What is more important, however, is the assumption contained in this relating of desire to the beautiful – that beauty as such is something lasting. And for Plato beauty is indeed ultimately an eternal *Form*, and is present in the sensuous world only in a highly fractured way. A corresponding assumption underlies the traditional striving of artists to create works, that is, something permanent. We, by contrast, have become more modest or, better, more sensuous. We are able to experience beauty in the ephemeral, the transient, in the light glinting on a pewter vessel<sup>24</sup> or in the play of shadow on a white wall. Because we ourselves are transient beings, we encounter beauty in the lighting-up of appearances which assure us of our existence. *Beauty is that which mediates to us the joy of being here.*<sup>25</sup>

### Notes

1. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Dread* [translated from *Der Begriff Angst*] (Reinbek, 1960), 133f.

2. Michael Hauskeller, *Was das Schöne sei: Klassische Texte von Platon bis Adorno* (Munich: DTV, 1994).

3. Karl Rosenkranz, *Ästhetik des Hässlichen: Mit einem Vorwort zum Neudruck von Wolfhart Henckmann* [reprographic reprint of the Königsberg edition of 1853] (Darmstadt, 1989).

4. Regarding my attempts to treat beauty itself as atmosphere, cf. the chapter “Schönheit und andere Atmosphären,” in Gernot Böhme, *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht: Darmstädter Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994), and the chapter “Die Gegenwart des Schönen und die Kultivierung des Lebens,” in Gernot Böhme, *Kants “Kritik der Urteilskraft” in neuer Sicht* (Frankfurt am Main 1999); English translation: “Kant’s Aesthetic: A New Perspective,” *Thesis Eleven* 43 (1995): 100–119.

5. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 250D.

6. Gernot Böhme, “Der Glanz des Materials: Zur Kritik der ästhetischen Ökonomie,” in *Atmosphäre: Essays zur Neuen Ästhetik*, 6th Edition (Frankfurt am Main, 2009).

7. Bernd-Olaf Küppers, "Die ästhetische Dimension natürlicher Komplexität," in *Die Aktualität des Ästhetischen*, Wolfgang Welsch (Munich, 1993), 247–277.

8. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (Hamburg, 1959), 185 [original edition of 1790, 218]; English translation: *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. H. Bernard (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1951), 172.

9. *Ibid.*, 186 [original edition, 220]; English translation, 173.

10. Gernot Böhme, "Von der Sphärenharmonie zum Soundscape," in *Macht Musik: Musik als Glück und Nutzen für das Leben* (Catalogue of the exhibition of DASA, Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin), ed. Gerhard Kilger (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2006), 30–37.

11. William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty: Written with a view of fixing the fluctuating ideas of taste* (London, 1753).

12. Cf. the list of examples relating to aesthetics in the *Critique of Judgment* in my book *Kants "Kritik der Urteilskraft" in neuer Sicht* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999). This list was first published in Danish language: Gernot Böhme, "Index over de aestetiske eksempler i Kants *Kritik der Urteilskraft*," *Kritik* 105 (Copenhagen, 1993): 79–80.

13. Gernot Böhme, "Technisierung der Wahrnehmung: Zur Technik- und Kulturgeschichte der Wahrnehmung," in *Technische Zivilisation: Zur Aktualität der Technikreflexion in der gesellschaftlichen Selbstbeschreibung*, ed. J. Halfmann (Opladen, 1998), 31–47.

14. Gernot Böhme, "Ästhetik der Gewässer," in *Die Elbe [in] between*, ed. Annet Laabs and Eckhart W. Peters (Symposium, Magdeburg, Kunstmuseum Unser Lieben Frauen 2007), 62–69.

15. In contrast, the works of his fellow abstract expressionist, Barnett Newman, stand for the opposite classical concept, the sublime.

16. On this distinction cf. my essay, already cited, *Der Glanz des Materials*, op. cit.

17. Ernst Haeckel, *Kunstformen der Natur* (Leipzig, 1914).

18. *Wolkenbilder: Die Erfindung des Himmels*, ed. S. Kunz, J. Stückelberger and B. Wismer (Munich, 2005).

19. At the beginning of Act IV of Goethe's *Faust*, for example, Faust glimpses, in the cloud with which he has returned from Arcadia, Juno, Leda, Helen and even, in the rising mist, Gretchen.

20. Gernot Böhme, "Der Raum leiblicher Anwesenheit und der Raum als Medium von Darstellung," in *Performativität und Medialität*, ed. Sybille Krämer (Munich, 2004), 129–140. English version to be published in: *Throughout: Art and Culture Emerging with Ubiquitous Computing*, ed. Ulrik Ekman (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010).

21. Stefan Niessen, *Traum und Realität: ihre neuzeitliche Trennung* (Diss., Darmstadt Technische Hochschule, 1989).

22. Natascha Adamowski, *See You on the Holodeck! Morphing into New Dimensions*, <http://www.ifs.tu-darmstadt.de/fileadmin/gradkoll/Publikationen/space-folder/pdf/Adamowsky.pdf>.

23. See Diotima's speech in Plato's dialogue *The Symposium*.

24. That was the illumination of the philosopher Jacob Böhme. Cf. my essay "Ästhetik des Ephemeren," in Gernot Böhme, *Für eine ökologische Naturästhetik* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989, 3rd Edition 1999).

25. Gernot Böhme, "Das Glück, da zu sein," in *II. Jahrbuch für Lebensphilosophie*, ed. R. J. Kozljanic (Munich, 2006), 209–218. Also in *Glück*, ed. Renate Breuninger (Ulm, 2006), 57–69.