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Gombrich on the Greek Art Revolution

E.H. Gombrich's discussion of the Greek art revolution in *Art and Illusion* (in the chapter "Reflections on the Greek revolution") is central to the argument of the book. This chapter is also an important contribution to the efforts to explain the remarkable changes in image production which we call the Greek art revolution. In a later review¹ Gombrich questions, however, his own interpretation and suggests another explanation of the Greek art revolution, but he does not develop his critical view in this review nor elsewhere. In this paper I will follow Gombrich's hint at a different interpretation of the Greek art revolution from the one given in *Art and Illusion*.

Description and characterization of the Greek art revolution

In *Art and Illusion* Gombrich points out that most art historians agree upon the description and characterization of the development from archaic to classical Greek sculpture, but that there are divergent views on

¹ E.H. Gombrich, *Reflections on the History of Art: Views and reviews* ed. by Richard Woodfield, Oxford: Phaidon 1987, p. 16. This comment is taken from a review, "The art of the Greeks," in *The New York Review of Books*, 6 January 1966.

the explanation of the phenomenon. The following is a brief summary of the most common descriptions of the Greek art revolution among art historians:

1. The development of Greek art from the archaic period to the classical period shows an increasing technical ability (skill).

2. There is also an increased observation of natural occurrences. The sculptures show that the sculptors learnt more and more about bodies in action, about movements, about muscles in tension, etc.

3. Further, most art historians agree that there is a change from schematism to naturalism. The standard exemplification of the schematized way of representation in opposition to the naturalistic way has for a long time been the Egyptian sculptural tradition.

4. There is also a change from sum to organic whole; that is, the representation of, for instance, the human body starts in the archaic age as a sum of essential parts and turns into a representation of an organic whole.

5. Another way of describing the change from archaic sculpture to classical sculpture is to point to the representation of space that surrounds the persons acting in the representation. It is common among art historians and archaeologists to talk about perspective in a more or less precise sense and to describe the development in the direction of a more unified space.

6. Finally, we can use Gombrich's words, echoing an ancient tradition, to point to a remarkable change which we can see directly in a comparison between archaic and classical sculpture: "Life seems to enter the marble."

The explanation of the Greek art revolution

But why did the Greeks and just the Greeks change the look of paintings and sculptures in the drastic way they did? Why did they not stick

to the traditional, conceptual and additive images that had been used universally for many thousands of years?

a. Many art historians of the nineteenth century saw the Greek art revolution as a natural development. Emanuel Löwy, for instance, believed that the change from schematism to naturalism is, in the light of the Darwinian theory of cultural evolution, a natural evolutionistic development.

b. Heinrich Schäfer pointed out that this development is not, after all, a 'natural' one. In a larger perspective the Greek art revolution is an exception and something deeply original.² The rule in most pre-Greek cultures is to develop a form of schematism and then to keep this formula as long as images of this kind are needed. Again, why did the Greeks not follow this almost universal rule? Or, to use Gombrich's own words in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse*: "How, then, should we interpret the great divide which runs through the history of art and sets off a few islands of illusionist styles, of Greece, of China, of the Renaissance, from the vast ocean of 'conceptual' art?"³

Alois Riegl and Erwin Panofsky, for instance, posit a 'Kunstwollen' of the Greeks which drove them to change the ancient paradigm of representation. But, again, the hypothesis of a Greek 'Kunstwollen' does not explain why just the ancient Greeks changed the representational mode of pictures.

c. A rather common view in this century is that the Greek painters and sculptors strived for the same thing as their much younger colleagues of the Renaissance, namely, the representation of a unified space.

² Heinrich Schäfer, *Von ägyptischer Kunst besonders der Zeichenkunst. Eine Einführung in die Betrachtung ägyptischer Kunst*. 2nd ed, Leipzig: Heinrichssche Buchhandlung 1922, pp. 77-79.

³ *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art*. London: Phaidon 1963, p. 9.

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Gombrich seems to agree with many of the descriptions given by earlier art historians but considers it necessary to continue to look for explanations of the development.⁴ Gombrich accepts the requirement of high technical ability in which the representation of pictorial space is included. But he also looks for another factor: "If one may here apply the scholastic distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions, my hypothesis would be merely that the Homeric freedom of narration was as necessary as was the acquired skill of craftsmanship to open the way for the Greek revolution."⁵ He also states a general law: "In the whole history of Western art we have this constant interaction between narrative intent and pictorial realism."⁶ And even more generally: "Narrative art is bound to lead to space and the exploitation of visual effects."⁷

It is interesting to see that Gombrich, in *Art and Illusion*, does not exploit the characterization he has given of the Greek art revolution, namely: "[L]ife seems to enter the marble." He sees that the representation of life is an important characteristic of Greek classical sculpture, but he does not use it as a point of view from which to explain the Greek art revolution. In a review from 1966, however, he has doubts about his own views on the Greek art revolution:

It was at the same time that the sculptors' statues were also seen to 'come to life'. We sense the tension of the muscles under the surface, we see the play of the body under the garment, we feel the presence of a mind behind the smile. In discussing the illusions created by art, art historians (including this writer) have concentrated too much on the pictorial inventions of foreshortening, perspective, or light and shade, and failed to analyse the illusion of life that a Greek statue can give. It is not a delusion, of course. We are not 'taken in', as

⁴ "As a description of what happened, Loewy's account still seems to me unsurpassed. But in itself it explains little. For why was it that this process started comparatively so late in the history of mankind?" *Art and Illusion*, 5th. ed. 3rd impression, Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1983, p. 101.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

we may be by a wax figure in suitable setting. And yet it is hard to remain conscious of the fact that we look at an opaque block of stone rather than a breathing body beneath the clinging drapery.⁸

Xenophon and the representation of life

Gombrich refers to a well-known anecdote in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* as evidence of the classical Greek interest in the representation of life. In his discussion with the sculptor Kleiton, Xenophon's Socrates mentions the representation of the quality of life (*to zotikon*) as the most important characteristic of Kleiton's sculptures. It is not the beauty of Kleiton's sculptures that people admire first of all but their capacity to represent *to zotikon*, the principle of life or the very fact that the body is alive.

Xenophon is not the only author praising this quality of Greek art. On the contrary, from the early classical period and onwards an important issue in talking and writing about sculptures was their lifelikeness. In a fragment from a satyr play by Aeschylus, a sculpture is said to lack only the voice; otherwise it would be experienced as perfectly alive.⁹ And all through antiquity the representation of life plays a dominant role in the discourses on sculptures. There are further examples: In a mime by Herodas a woman describes a sculpture by saying that, "you could expect the sculpture to speak, if you did not see that it is made of stone," and she goes on to say that, "the time will come when man also will be able to put life into the stone."¹⁰ The story of Pygmalion's love of his sculpture and how Aphrodite put life into it in order to fulfill his wish to unite with the beauty he had created, belongs to the same family of ideas.¹¹ Another revealing example is from Petro-

⁸ Cf. note 1.

⁹ *Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 2162* published in *Egypt Exploration Society 26: The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, part 18, ed. by E. Lobel, C.H. Roberts, and E.P. Wegener, London 1941, pp. 14-22.

¹⁰ Herodes, *Mime* 4.32-34.

¹¹ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X, 243-297.

nius' *Satyricon*. Trimalcho brags about his fortunes: "Myself I have a great passion for silver. I own about a hundred four-gallon cups engraved with Cassandra killing her sons, and the boys lying there dead – but you would think they were alive [et pueri mortui iacent sic ut vivere putes]." ¹² Petronius ridicules not only Trimalcho's mistake in mythology (Cassandra did not kill her sons; Medea did) but also his misuse of a common way of speaking about pictures in praise of their ability to render life. In *The Greek Anthology* we find other examples: "The Bacchante is of Parian marble, but the sculptor gave life to the stone, and she springs up as if in Bacchic fury" ¹³; and "A cunning master wrought me, the Satyr, son of Bacchus, divinely inspiring the monolith with breath..." ¹⁴ Even Plotinus asks: "[A]re not the more lifelike [*tsotikotera*] statues the more beautiful ones, even if the others are better proportioned?" And he answers: "Yes, because the living is more desirable; and this is because it has soul..." ¹⁵

The predominance of interest in lifelikeness, which we find so abundant in ancient texts, has often, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, been (mis)understood as ancient Greek attempts towards realism, naturalism, and even illusionism. The theory of imitation, the theoretical expression of this trend, was seen as a simple-minded recommendation that paintings and sculptures be made as similar to individuals or things as possible. ¹⁶ Such simple realism does not fit what

¹² *Satyricon* 52. Transl. by Michael Heseltine in *Petronius with an English Translation*. London, Cambridge, Mass.: Loeb Classical Library 1969.

¹³ IX.774. Transl. by W.R. Paton in *The Greek Anthology with an English Translation*. London, Cambridge Mass.: Loeb Classical Library 1958. Cf. also Callistratus' description of the same sculpture: "On the statue of a bacchante" K. 423.23–24: "[T]hough void of the faculty of life, it nevertheless had vitality." Transl. by Arthur Fairbanks in *Philostratus: Imagines & Callistratus: Descriptions* in Loeb Classical Library, London, Cambridge, Mass., 1960.

¹⁴ IX.826. Transl. cf. note 13.

¹⁵ 6.7.22. Transl. by A.H. Armstrong in *Plotinus with an English Translation*, vol. 7, in Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass. & London 1988.

¹⁶ Some anecdotes are understood in the same direction. Cf., for instance, Pliny's anecdote on the competition between Zeuxis and Parrhasius (35.64–66): Zeuxis made a picture which mocked birds to believe the grapes were real, whereas Parrhasius made a curtain which Zeuxis himself believed to be real. When Norman Bryson finds it "hard to imagine a more revealing story about painting in the West" (*Vision and Painting: The logic of the gaze*, London, Macmillan 1983, p. 1) he is, I believe, on the wrong track.

Greek art shows us, it was maintained. The Greek verbal formulation and description of their experience and understanding could, then, be sorted out as uninteresting.

The much sought-for lifelikeness can, however, also be understood as attempts to render what is most important in human life, namely, life itself understood as the interplay between body and soul. Let us look into the growth of the conceptions of life, body, and soul, of sum and whole.

The concept of body in ancient Egypt

In her book *Früformen des Erkennens. Am Beispiel Altägyptens*¹⁷ Emma Brunner-Traut has in certain respects elaborated Schäfer's distinction between Greek and pre-Greek art, although she applies the distinction not only to picture-making but to all forms of cultural expressions such as religion, literature, mathematics and empirical sciences, the idea of history, law, etc. She starts with pictorial representation and coins the term "aspective" as denoting ways of making pictures which are different from modes of picture-making we term perspective. The Greek art revolution is, according to her view, the origin of the perspective mode of picture-making, which, it seems, follows the general trend of interpretation of the Greek art revolution of this century as a technique of representation of a unified space.

Basic to the Egyptian aspective way of making pictures is, as is well known to art historians, the additive principle. A painting of a man, for instance, represents a sum of parts put together in a way easy to perceive and comprehend, most often in a rule-governed manner. This way of making images is not only a technical procedure, Brunner-Traut maintains, but is a reflection of a way of understanding the world. In a number of chapters she demonstrates how this fundamental principle works also outside picture-making. Generally speaking, the basic difference is the one between regarding something as an additive sum of its

¹⁷ (Early Forms of Knowledge: The example of ancient Egypt) Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 1990.

components and seeing it as a functional unit, as a whole with a functional center to which all parts contribute. To see things in the latter way is a typically Greek invention: "The discovery of the organic unity was left to the Greeks."¹⁸

One of her examples is the ancient Egyptian notion of the human body.¹⁹ The body was not seen as an organic unity but as a composite sum of its parts.²⁰ In the tale of the fight between the head and the stomach the point is, in its Egyptian version, the hierarchical order between two separate parts. Whereas in Aesop's version²¹ of the fight (this time between the stomach and the feet), the organic unity of the whole body is stressed; they both necessarily contribute in an organic way to the existence of the body as a whole. The same idea is used when Menenius Agrippa tells the story in order to conciliate the two parties in Rome, the plebeians and the patricians.²² Brunner-Traut concludes: "That the body is represented as an anatomically and physiologically functional unit, that the bodily organs are mutually interdependent, is far from Egyptian understanding. And no less far from it is the idea that life is a process which takes place in time. To regard life as a process never occurred to the Egyptians."²³

This difference is also evident in Egyptian and Greek medical writings. The Greeks saw sickness as a process and the body as an organic unit, whereas the Egyptians "saw the body as an addition of parts and not as an organism with mutually interdependent parts."²⁴ Something similar can be seen in Egyptian love-poems. The beloved is praised for one part lovelier than the other and the result is a sum total of lovely parts.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 155: "Die Entdeckung organischer Einheit war den Griechen vorbehalten."

¹⁹ Ibid. pp. 71–81.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 71: "Wie in aspektivischer Sicht ein differenzierter Gegenstand primär nicht als Einheit erkannt, vielmehr sukzessiv erfasst wurde, d.h. als ein Nebeneinander seiner vergleichsweise selbständigen Teile, so wurde der menschliche Körper nicht als Organismus, sondern als ein Kompositum seiner Glieder verstanden."

²¹ Fable nr. 132. Brunner-Traut refers also to Plutarch, *Vita Coriolani*.

²² Livy II.32.

²³ Brunner-Traut. p. 73.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 75.

Early Greek conceptions of the human body and soul

Homer belongs, Brunner-Traut maintains, to the aspective period. He has no word for the body as an organic unit, and paintings and sculptures from the archaic period are similar to the Egyptian ones in respect of their additive composition. But early in this period the Greeks had a strong interest in the dynamic powers of man. As can be seen in archaic Greek sculpture, this internal power almost explodes the person represented. When the Egyptian sculptor represents man, it is static, calm and absolute (timeless) existence that appears to the spectator.²⁵ Brunner-Traut concludes: "The unity as something essential was unknown also to the early Greeks. Yes, Homer did not even have words for arm and leg but only for their parts such as upper arm and forearm and in the same way thigh, shank, foot (and joint!)"²⁶ When Brunner-Traut describes the ancient Egyptian conception of the human body she does not even mention the idea of a soul coupled to a body. She discusses the difference between the Egyptian and the Greek outlook on the human body. It is obvious, she writes, that "the Egyptians have understood the body in a sequence, member for member, whereas the unity of the members first presented itself in classical Greece."²⁷

In this context Brunner-Traut refers to Bruno Snell, who in the 1930s and 1940s published a number of papers which he later collected in a book, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes*.²⁸ These papers have become very influential and are still in the center of the discussion. Jan Bremmer comments in his book *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*: "Snell's

²⁵ Ibid. p. 76: "Der Grieche bekundet schon in archaischer Zeit ein auffallendes Interesse an der Dynamis des Menschen, an seiner Bewegung, an seinen flinken Beinen und demnach an den Scharnieren der Knie, wie er auch in gleichzeitiger Rundplastik eine Spannung der Figur erkennen lässt, die das Gebilde nahezu sprengt, während der Ägypter bei einer rundplastischen Darstellung der Menschen, der in Haltung und Stellung der archaisch-griechischen vollkommen gleicht, die statische Ruhe, das absolute Sosein artikuliert."

²⁶ Ibid. p. 79.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 79.

²⁸ An English translation was made from the second edition, Hamburg: Claassen und Goverts 1948, under the title *The Discovery of the Mind. The Greek Origins of European Thought*, Harvard University Press 1953. Quotations are from the Harper Torchbook edition 1960.

analysis has been corrected, supplemented, and refined, but not superseded, by later scholars.”²⁹ The book traces the development of soul conceptions from Homeric to classical time in the Greek literature.

Of fundamental importance for Snell is to show that in Homer we cannot find a concept of soul nor a concept of body as we do in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Nor were these concepts coupled together into the unit we are familiar with since classical times.³⁰ “Nevertheless it is the lyric writers who give us the clearest picture of the spirit of innovation which thus burst upon the world. For they used words, and they are explicit; and from them we learn what the new discovery was – a discovery of hitherto unmapped areas of the soul.”³¹

Bremmer showed that the word “*psyché*” connoted a free soul which represented the individual in the existence after death. *Psyché* was regarded by the archaic Greeks as necessary for the living person. But it did not have any physical or psychological characteristics participating in the consciousness of the living individual; consciousness, will, emotions, thought, perception, etc., were taken care of by ‘body souls’. *Psyché*, on the other hand, could leave the body through breath or through wounds in swoons and left the body for good in the moment of death in order to wander down to Hades. But in addition to having an eschatological soul, man had, in the Homeric world-view, body souls which were necessary parts of man as a living organism: *thymós* (breath, spirit), *nóos* (mind, thought) and *ménos* (spirit, temper).

The most frequently occurring form of the ego soul in the Homeric epic is *thymos*. Unlike *psyché* *thymos* is active only when the body is awake. *Thymos* can urge people on. [...] Sometimes *thymos* expresses hope, but it is always the hope to act, not to receive something. [...] *Thymos* is, above all, the source of emotions. Friendship and feelings of revenge, joy and grief, anger and fear – all spring from *thymos*.³²

²⁹ Princeton Univ. Press 1983, p. 8.

³⁰ Snell, *The Discovery of Mind*, p. 69: “We have shown that Homer was not yet capable of understanding the soul basically opposed to the body.”

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 69.

³² Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul*, p. 54.

Nóos is the consciousness in a more intellectual direction and *ménos* is impulses to act. Further, several organs were given psychic functions: “*phrénes*” (the seat of life or life itself as opposed to *psyché*), “*kér*” (heart), and “*étor*” (heart). Thus, the archaic Greek conception of mental life can be seen as a conglomerate of organs and functions where the mental totality is the sum of these organs and functions. Bremmer concludes: “Greek soul belief might best be characterized as multiple. The Greeks separated where other traditions do not and a unitary soul can only be found in the period after the Archaic Age.”³³ And he continues a bit further on:

By the end of that century [i.e. the fifth century] *psychē* became the center of consciousness, a development not yet fully explained but upon which, most likely, a strong influence was exerted by the rise of literacy and the growth of political consciousness. And it seems likely that the systematic reflection on the soul started precisely at the end of that century because the *psychē* had become the center of consciousness and for that reason would have provoked a much stronger interest than before.³⁴

The classical Greek unitary concept of soul

It is not until the fifth century that we find the words “*psyché*” (soul) and “*sóma*” (body) coupled together. Actually, in Homeric Greek “*sóma*” always meant “corpse,” i.e. the dead body. The word “*psyché*,” which for the archaic Greeks connoted the free soul, came in the classical period to connote the soul as a unitary whole. A number of organs and functions of the additive sum understood as a human being in the archaic period, were put together in the classical period into one thing called “*psyché*.” The individual is not only seen as the sum of the organs and functions but is understood to be something more. The individual is a whole in which the participating parts are necessary. In this way

³³ Op. cit. p. 66.

³⁴ Ibid. p. 68.

eschatological, physical and psychological functions were moulded into a unit which in turn was coupled to the human body. But it was not only so, that the word “*psyché*” was used to denote a given sum of functions. These functions were also seen as having certain necessary relations to one another and to the body.

From the fifth century B.C. the Greeks developed a way of understanding body, soul and life as three necessarily coexisting things: life is defined as the conjunction of body and soul; a corpse is a body bereft of its soul; the soul of a living being cannot exist without a body. The soul is presented as the essence or the form of the living body: “[T]he soul is in a sense the principle of animal life,” Aristotle states in the very beginning of his book *On the Soul*.³⁵ In the conjunction body – soul it is precisely the unification of the two that constitutes life: any living thing is ensouled materia.

The following quotes from Plato exemplify this tripartite conjunction: “Death, in my opinion, is nothing else but the separation from each other of two things, soul and body.” (*Gorgias* 524 B)³⁶

Then tell me, what must be present in a body to make it alive?

Soul.

Is this always so?

Of course.

So whenever soul takes possession of a body, it always brings life with it?

Yes it does.

Is there an opposite to life, or not?

Yes there is.

What?

Death.” (*Phaedo* 105 C ff.)³⁷

³⁵ Aristotle, *De anima* 402a7-8. Transl. by W.S. Hett in *Aristotle on the Soul, Parva Naturalia, On Breath*. London, Cambridge Mass.: Loeb Classical Library 1964.

³⁶ Transl. by W.D. Woodhead in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, Ed. by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, New York: Random House inc., 1966. Cf. *Phaedo* 67 D: “Is not what we call death a freeing and separation of soul from body?”

³⁷ Transl. by Hugh Tredennick in *the Collected Dialogues of Plato...* Cf. Note 36.

In *Cratylus* Plato speculates about the origin of a large number of words and among them the word “*psyché*”: “[T]he name *psyche* meant to express that the soul when in the body is the source of life, and gives the power of breath and revival, and when this reviving power fails then the body perishes and dies” (*Cratylus* 399 D). And in this context he continues: “What is that which holds and carries and gives life and motion to the entire nature of the body? What else but the soul?” (*Cratylus* 400 A)³⁸ The role of the soul in relation to the body is also characterized in *Phaedro* (245 E):

And now that we have seen that that which is moved by itself is immortal, we shall feel no scruple in affirming that precisely that is the essence and definition of soul, to wit, self-motion. Any body that has an external source of motion is soulless, but a body deriving its motion from a source within itself is animate or *besouled*.³⁹

In *Charmides* Socrates claims that body and soul are necessarily coupled to each other. T.M. Robinson, in *The Psychology of Plato*,⁴⁰ comments:

Socrates has apparently seen, first, that any talk of the self or person involves talk about *both* body and soul, and, second, that the relationship between the two is not the crude one of numerical addition and subtraction, but the philosophically more respectable one of entailment.

Aristotle seems to have shared the view that body and soul are the two fundamental ingredients of life: “A living creature consists in the first place of soul and body, and of these two, the one is by nature the ruler and the other the subject” (*Politics* 1254a34–35). And in *De anima* he writes: “So the soul must be substance in the sense of being the form of a natural body, which potentially has life.”⁴¹

³⁸Transl. by B. Jowett in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato...* Cf. Note 36.

³⁹Transl. by R. Hackforth in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato...*Cf. Note 36.

⁴⁰ University of Toronto Press 1970, p. 8.

⁴¹ 412a20–21. Transl. cf. note 35.

Hellenistic medical theory

The Hellenistic medical treatises misunderstood the circulation of the blood. They maintained that the arteries distributed blood as food for the different parts of the body. The venal system was believed to be a sort of pipeline distributing *pneuma* to the different parts of the body. "*Pneuma*" meant "warm air or breath." It was distributed from the heart as well as blood. This "warm air or breath" coming from the very center of the body was believed to be the mental force which is diffused all through the body.

This medical conviction became an important background to stoic and epicurean thoughts about body and soul. The *pneuma* itself was the soul or its immediate vehicle. It was seen as the mental force which gave life to the body.⁴² This medical theory is another version of the idea that the soul is the power which renders life to the body and that the soul is the life-giving center of the body as an organic unity.

The classical conception of body–soul and the Greek art revolution

The growth of the body-soul-life triad matured in Greek language, practice and philosophy of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. and is seen, I think, not only in literary texts and in the political consciousness of the age, as Bremmer claims, but also in painting and sculpture of the archaic and classical periods: archaic paintings and sculptures represent living persons and animals as sums of parts showing different kinds of action, whereas the classical sculptures "have come to life" as organic units of body and soul.

It is symptomatic that in the discussion of the representation of the quality of life, the lifelikeness, Xenophon's Socrates uses terms referring to body and soul. The soul is invisible, the painter Parrhasios says in the anecdote. With this outlook Parrhasios was in good com-

⁴² Cf. Julia Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind*. University of California Press 1992, p. 17 ff.

pany. When Aristotle in his book *On the Soul* concludes his survey of his philosophical predecessors' view on the soul, he writes that almost all agree that the soul is incorporeal and cannot, thus, be perceived and thus represented in painting and sculpture. But, Socrates maintains, at least the "works" (*erga*) of the soul are visible and thus possible to represent. The works of the soul have colours and shapes which painters and sculptors can show in their works. Kleiton and Greek painters and sculptors in general, we can assume, wanted to represent man as a body-soul unit and did so through representation of the actions of the body. This is the basic message of Xenophon's anecdote. To Xenophon and the educated Athenians of the fifth and fourth centuries it was obvious that the difference between the paintings and sculptures of the Greek art revolution, on the one hand, and archaic paintings and sculptures and also paintings and sculptures from other cultures, on the other hand, was exactly what they strived to represent. The innovation of the Greek art revolution was first of all that the Greek painters and sculptors managed to represent a new conception: man as a living body-soul individual. In this way what we see in the sculptures is related to our conceptions of human existence as a body endowed with consciousness which is a whole containing will, thought, perception, imagination and emotion.

My basic hypothesis is, then, that the Greek art revolution not only occurred at the same time as the development of the mind-body distinction but in some way or other was related to it. Or put in a stronger form: The Greek art revolution was the contribution of the Greek sculptors and painters to the development of this new outlook on human existence; human life, and maybe also life in general, is the necessary interplay of body and soul. The ability to represent the body-soul unit was the remarkable innovation of the classical period which changed the whole history of picture-making and picture-understanding.

