

Sight Unseen: How Every Painter Paints Himself

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Chapter


4

Chapter Four

FORMS AND TRANSFORMATION

*'My mind is bent to tell of bodies changed into new forms.
Ye gods, for you yourselves have wrought the changes,
Breathe on these my undertakings,
And bring down my song in unbroken strains
From the world's very beginning even unto the present time.'*

Ovid, Opening lines of *The Metamorphoses*

 style, the traditional method of classifying art, is rarely mentioned on this site because it has little effect on interpretation, especially on the esoteric level. Mark Roskill has written:

‘discussion[s] of style provide measures of constancy in artistic language...which reach beyond the individual to the group, and beyond that potentially to some larger cultural entity. They also serve as ways of....grouping under a single descriptive heading particular, identifiable ways of doing things. But while all of this makes style an apt and adaptable tool for classificatory purposes, it is not clear if, so understood, it either has or is left with any kind of a role for interpretative purposes’¹

Style may influence individual taste and the popularity of one school over another but it is unlikely to effect the judgment of centuries.² Great masters always develop their own personal style (unlike most minor painters) which is why they look original but style itself does not change their meaning. For example, contrary to conventional perception, Picasso’s essential meaning remained constant throughout multiple changes of style as I intend to demonstrate in a later chapter. (Despite all his hints and suggestions, Picasso’s meaning has little to do with his personal biography. If it had, it would not be meaningful for later generations. He merely used the figures in his life to express the inner life of mankind, the universal soul we all share.) Forms, as far as meaning is concerned, are far more important. What artists look for in developing their own pictorial vocabulary are those aspects of the canon which are inherited and which can be seen evolving from one variety to another down through the ages as the Inner Tradition itself does in all its many forms. In this respect great artists are very conservative. They share a common understanding of human perception, a deep communion with nature and common ideas that express basic truths. Much of this is communicated through the use of similar forms which evolve with modifications from artist to artist. Though some scholars use *form* to mean *style*, here *form*

always means *shape*.³

No-one argues that words are meaningless but many writers on art think forms are and scorn anyone investigating their etymology. It used to be common to identify sources and there was much prestige to be had in academic circles when a scholar could show that one artist had borrowed a figure from another. The word ‘source’ used to appear frequently in the titles of scholarly articles, as in “A New Source for Manet’s *Olympia*”. However, after formal analysis fell out of favor, source-hunting also fell victim. By 1985 David Carrier was writing of Manet’s art: ‘..forms are not of interest in themselves. We learn nothing by tracking them to their sources.’⁴

Three years later John Shearman, a Harvard professor, said:

‘The study of sources is treated now, in art history, with widespread contempt. People can lose their jobs for doing it in public. To the extent that source hunting becomes an end in itself, it falls to one of the lower levels of the historical enterprise, and contempt in such cases may be well deserved.’⁵

In 1998 Leo Steinberg criticized ‘a propensity to induce....similarities between dissimilar things’ as a ‘pathological streak in art historical practice.’⁶ Today most scholars run scared of that tar brush though museum curators have recently discovered that the public enjoys exhibitions where one great artist’s influence on another is illustrated. Exhibitions named “Matisse Picasso”, “Bacon – Picasso” and “Turner Whistler Monet” have all been shown in the last few years. Despite this counter-trend in the museum world, one eminent writer recently “reassure[d] the reader that I have no intention of reviving it [source-hunting.]”⁷ It is a dreadful bias that has long hindered interpretation because, as Rudolf Arnheim explained, an object ‘can be said to be truly perceived only to the extent to which it is fitted to some organized shape.’⁸ The separation of form from content in recent scholarship is bewildering. It denies the well-established belief since Plato that form equals content.⁹

Any great European artist would have assumed that a borrowed form borrows meaning and that there was no difference between an *idea* for a painting and a composition of form. Plato's word for form was *idea*.¹⁰ Nevertheless from the supportive criticism of Emile Zola to the scholarly writings of the 1950s, it was generally accepted that 'subject, narration and symbol were alien to Manet' and that 'no object had any meaning beyond its formal function.'¹¹ A handful of scholars, though, without particular reference to Manet, were investigating forms in other ways. In 1934 Henri Focillon restated St. Augustine's argument from a millennium earlier that artists do not simply copy nature, form for form, but that nature's shapes are transferred alive into the artist's mind for significant transformation.¹² Forms, Focillon argued in *The Life of Forms in Art*, are in constant motion, not only in the mind of the artist but as they are transmitted from one work of art to another. The metamorphosis that a form undergoes in the mind of a great artist, he declared, is unavailable to the unimaginative painter who cannot recognize the common element or even effect the change.¹³ Later research by psychologists into visual perception expanded on some of the same ideas. Arnheim, once a prominent voice in art scholarship, noted that:

'what we need to acknowledge is that perceptual and pictorial shapes are not only translations of thought products but the very flesh and blood of thinking itself..¹⁴

Forms encapsulate ideas which we subconsciously translate into words for speech and writing.¹⁵ This means that language, like the sound from Mozart's violin, is the product of intelligence and not its medium. We do not think in words. While still controversial, this position has had the support of some eminent creators who, unlike most of us, actually sensed the inner workings of their mind. They have or had access to greater depths and their description of the processes are eerily similar. Albert Einstein observed that words or language 'as they are written or spoken, do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought'. Charles Darwin complained that his lack of facility with words was a serious impediment to conveying the *clarity* of his ideas and Jacques

Hadamard, the French mathematician, said that ‘words....remain absolutely absent from my mind until I come to the moment of communicating the results in written or oral form.’ Words are not even the most important medium for storing information which is far more efficiently done in visual images, genetic traits and the human memory. The wings of birds, for example, contain an understanding of aerodynamic laws. Even Horace, whose medium was words, recognized that *images* are more stimulating to the mind.¹⁶ We could not learn to read as children if we had to think in words because spelling (at least, in English) is rarely phonetic. The words themselves must be remembered visually. It is also perfectly clear from metaphoric language that that we think in images; the visual metaphors we use every day prove it. We say:

‘I *see* what you’re saying though it *looks* different from my *point-of-view*. What is your *outlook* on that? I *view the whole picture* differently. Let me *point something out* to you, an *insightful* idea. That was a *brilliant* remark and totally *clear*. Could you *elucidate* your thoughts? It was a *murky, opaque* discussion though with a *transparent* argument. No, it wasn’t; it was *opaque*.’¹⁷

Buried metaphor is sometimes a key to knowledge that mankind was once aware of or intuitively understood. Great masters know this. They take metaphors literally while we usually ignore them as meaningless habit. Not surprisingly then, when we view *their ‘metaphors’* in paint we tend to perceive the forms *literally* and miss the metaphor.

Forms in the mind, the elements that construct a mental image, are a difficult concept for scientists to investigate. They are unlikely to resemble an actual image, like a painting or sculpture, but generate neural activity that resembles in some way the neural activity of our visual system, perhaps using similar pathways. Thus we call them ‘images’, as opposed to ‘writing’ or ‘music’. Einstein, who was frequently conscious of them, tried to explain how the process works. He noted that ‘memory-pictures’ emerged in his head which are then ordered into a series and when ‘a certain picture turns up in many such series’ it formed connections between series of pictures which thus became a concept. Elsewhere he wrote more simply that:

‘The physical entities which seem to serve as elements in thought are certain signs and more or less clear images which can be ‘voluntarily’ reproduced and combined.’¹⁸

Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously described falling to sleep while reading a book on Kubla Khan. Then, as he recounted in the third person, ‘*images* [italics added] rose up before him’ and:

‘On awakening he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved.’

Music too is formed from the firing of neurons which more closely resemble those that occur in the visual system than the aural. Mozart said that on completing a long composition he could:

‘survey it, like a fine picture or beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once.’¹⁹

The description must be accurate because Beethoven also pictured his compositional thought process as a three-dimensional work of art he could see from all sides:

‘...In my head, I begin to elaborate the work in its breadth, its narrowness, its height, and its depth, and as I am aware of what I want to do, the underlying *idea* never deserts me. It rides, it grows up. *I hear and see the image in front of me from every angle, as if it had been cast...*’ [italics added].²⁰

The shapes in the mind of a great artist are gathered from many sources beyond art but the most significant forms are from art itself. A great master changes the form to his own particular use but it retains inherited meaning from its prior incarnations.²¹ This explains why an educated eye, familiar with the canon, instinctively recognizes another work of art as important even though it may not consciously recall the form or understand the meaning. Thus one scholar can write of a painting by Rembrandt without any embarrassment: ‘Although the image clearly makes sense as a whole, what sense it makes cannot be easily decided.’²²

The growing specialization of art scholarship over recent decades has resulted in a vast increase in information about art – the data has become overwhelming - but it has not been matched by a comparable increase in understanding because the need to specialize emphasizes the differences

between one area and another rather than their common links. Nevertheless, as mystics and artists intuitively sense, beauty must be looked at as a whole not just as individual pieces because unity transcends diversity. One painting does not make a great master; it is his or her *oeuvre* that counts. One artist or one period do not make a whole culture; it is the combination of artists and their common links which count. St. Augustine of all people made this exact point about art.²³ However disparate individual works may seem, and there are of course differences, there are just as many links. Indeed many European masterpieces have been produced from such a small number of original sources, weaving their way through the canon and thereby helping to unify it, that the same forms appear again and again in totally different contexts. Thus, the meaning of each work can only be fully realized by a conscious recognition of that form through the use of that now-forbidden practice: source-hunting.²⁴

Now let's look at some art.



Fig. 1 *Exhibition of Paintings*

This charming but unexceptional drawing by Edouard Manet is a simple example of how great masters practice compositional metamorphosis. Once called *At the Salon* and dated 1873, it cannot be a view of the Salon, as Françoise Cachin pointed out, because the picture at upper left on the far wall is Manet's *On the Beach* which was never exhibited at the Salon. She suggested that it was a later exhibition in Manet's studio which four thousand people were said to have visited. In support, she noted that there is:

‘an easel at the left, and a dark ceiling answering to descriptions of the studio, “an enormous room paneled in old blackened oak, with a ceiling of alternating beams and coffers of dark color,” so that this may indeed be Manet's studio at 4, rue de Saint-Pétersbourg.’²⁵

That may have been Manet's fantasy but the scene does not match Cachin's quote. The drawing is obviously based on Velázquez's studio in *Las Meninas* and it is difficult to understand how art scholars have never recognized this before. It was even included in the landmark 1983 exhibition in Paris and New York without anyone noticing.



Fig. 2 *An Exhibition of Paintings*



Fig. 3 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail)

The central girl, turned to face the wall, is a substitute for the Infanta and is accompanied by two women, one higher than the other with her head bowed. The pictures on the rear wall are of similar proportion to those in *Las Meninas*. On the ceiling are two unused lamphooks just as there are two in *Las Meninas* though Manet has placed them side-by-side. The door is in the same position with a few dots indicating a similar design and a figure is in the doorway. The ‘mirror’, perhaps now a door, has been enlarged though a faint line half way up suggests Manet thought of making it identical. To the left Manet-Velázquez leans over though somewhat further than in the source with a dark diagonal line that may indicate a palette. To the left is the sloping easel.



Fig. 4 *At the Prado I*, 1st State



Fig. 5 *At the Prado II*, 1st State



Fig. 6 *An Exhibition of Paintings*



Fig. 7 Detail of fig. 4



Fig. 8 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail)



Fig. 9 Detail of fig. 5



Fig. 10 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail)



Fig. 11 Detail of fig. 6

A decade earlier Manet made two etchings of a street scene called *At the Prado* (figs. 4-5), outside the museum apparently where *Las Meninas* is the crown jewel.²⁶ Both include background figures with bowed heads and angled hats derived from Goya's *Tauromaquia*.²⁷ One of them also reappears on the right, fused with a lady-in-waiting by Velázquez, in the little sketch of Manet's "studio", the one we just looked at (figs. 4-6). In Manet's mind these background figures represented artists, though in the second state of *At the Prado* (fig. 5) they are doubled like the two in *Le Déjeuner* or Manet and his artist-friend at the edge of *Music in the Tuileries*. Artists often represent themselves as doubled.²⁸ In both states of *At the Prado* the background figures lean like Velázquez's figure in Manet's variation on *Las Meninas* (figs. 7-10), which also leans to the right while the large foreground figure in each etching represents the Infanta, their 'model'. The

‘model’, however, in both states also has a crooked arm like Velázquez’s to indicate that she also represents the artist, *every painter painting himself* (figs. 4-10).²⁹ The crooked arm became one of Manet’s signs for the brush-arm of a painter with a great deal of variation from image to image. It is worth noting that Manet’s artist in the drawing leans further over than Velázquez himself (figs. 10-11). If it were not for the whole composition and the other links, few scholars would accept the figure of Velázquez as the source. This demonstrates an important point: that a source may not look like its progeny when the forms alone are placed side-by-side. It is the whole range of connections within an image, within an *oeuvre* or even the canon which provide the evidence.



Fig. 12 Velázquez,
Las Meninas (detail inverted)



Fig. 13 *At the Prado I*
(detail)



Fig. 14 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail)

Forms not only vary but combine so that the principal woman in *At the Prado I* has both the turned head of the Infanta *and* the crooked arm of Velázquez (figs. 12-14). She refers to both artist and model (see note 29). Although the comparison between Manet’s sketch and *Las Meninas* is obvious, this link is not.³⁰ Only someone with an in-depth knowledge of Manet’s sources would recognize it. Let us look further, though, at Manet’s use of Velázquez’s jutting elbow.



Fig. 15 *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* (detail)



Fig. 16 *The Plum* (detail)



Fig. 17 *Portrait of George Moore* (detail)

The ‘artist’ in Manet’s *Le Déjeuner*³¹ whose pose does not match his source in Marcantonio’s print looks remarkably like other figures by Manet based on the figure of Velázquez (figs. 15-17). Note also the forearm that props up the head in all three illustrations above, even though that same arm in *Le Déjeuner* does not belong to the same figure! Even if some colleagues dismiss these links, there is one painting by Manet that all writers accept as based on Velázquez in *Las Meninas*: Manet’s *Self-portrait*.



Fig. 18 *Self-Portrait*



Fig. 19 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail)

Yet even though it is indeed derived from *Las Meninas* (figs. 18-19), Manet’s palette is different; the brush is at a different angle and the head is upright. The only similarities are the turned torso, the arms and the slanting hat which suggests the top of Velázquez’s angled head. If it were not a self-portrait, few would recognize that the crown of Velázquez’s head has become Manet’s hat.



Fig. 20 Velázquez, *Portrait of Philip IV in Hunting Costume* (detail)



Fig. 21 *Portrait of Mme. Brunet*



Fig. 22 Velázquez, *Las Meninas* (detail inverted)

Once variation is accepted as a natural part of the process, it becomes evident that many figures by Manet are based on Velázquez's self-portrait and occasionally, as Armstrong recently observed, on a copy of Velázquez's *Portrait of Philip IV in Hunting Costume* of which Manet made a print. The king, though, also represents the artist, Velázquez's purest self. In *Mme. Brunet* the hanging arm imitates the king's but the bulging contour of both sleeves and the hand crossing her torso derive from the artist. The head unlike in Manet's self-portrait *is* angled like Velázquez's in the other direction (figs. 20-22). All Manet's single-figure portraits represent the artist in some way or other; once known, you know what to look for, and discovery becomes much easier.

The larger purpose of this chapter was to demonstrate that forms and the search for a form's origin are of crucial importance to art scholarship and that the study of them – long reviled - should be reinstated. The new examples in these pages alone, if accepted, fundamentally alter our understanding of Manet's art. It is time to think differently. In the next chapter I will reveal how Manet's well-known yearning for the *Légion d'Honneur*, awarded as he lay dying, had strong and important foundations in art even if his snobbery and desire to be recognized played their part as well.

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NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

¹ Roskill, 1989, pp.99-100

² Raphael's style, for instance, has gone in and out of favor but artists never doubted the importance of his painting. If important artists remain little known for long periods after their death, there are usually other reasons than a dislike of style. The superficial subject matter, a small *oeuvre* or limited availability to view their *oeuvre* are more often the cause.

³ Arnheim clearly expressed the confusion surrounding style when he wrote of visual perception: 'A popular prejudice has it that what is not sharply outlined, complete, and detailed is necessarily imprecise. But in painting, for example, a sharply outlined portrait by Holbein or Durer is no more precise in its perceptual form than the tissue of strokes by which a Frans Hals or Oskar Kokoschka defines the human countenance.' (Arnheim, 1969, pp.108-9). It is important to remember that the structure of a sonnet or Alexandrine hexameters or even the symphony and concerto of a composer are only shells. It is the thought expressed within those structures which carry meaning. Equally, there is nothing in common between a tragedy by Shakespeare and one written in Hollywood because the words reveal the thought not the classification.

Paul Klee, a 20th century master, said that: 'word-making and form-building [by which he meant shape not style] are the same thing.' *Form*, a word confusingly used by writers in the early twentieth-century to mean *style*, is always used to mean *shape* in this book. Even as late as 1963 Ernst Gombrich entitled an influential essay "Norm and Form" meaning "Norm and Style." Form as shape is not even mentioned, an oversight which leads him to conclude that Caravaggio rejected the possibility of Raphael's influence 'and struck out on a path of his own'. Had he considered form as shape he would have noticed that Caravaggio's forms are very dependent on Raphael's, far outweighing the influence of any other artist. This will be demonstrated in an upcoming chapter. (Gombrich, 1971, pp. 81-98).

⁴ Carrier, 1985, p.331; in Carrier's favor, though, is that he is one of the few, if not the only previous writer on Manet, to question whether Charles Baudelaire, Emile Zola and Stephane Mallarmé had any understanding of Manet's art at all (*ibid.*, p. 328). In fact, nothing is more indicative of Mallarmé's misunderstanding than the following comment: 'But the chief charm and true characteristic of one of the most singular men of the age is, that Manet (who is a visitor to the principal galleries both French and foreign, and an erudite student of painting) seems to ignore all that has been done in art by others, and draws from his own inner consciousness all his effects of simplification, the whole revealed by effects of light incontestably novel.' ("The Impressionists and Edouard Manet" published in *The Art Monthly Review* I, no. 9, Sept. 1876, reprinted in New York, 1998, p. 40)

⁵ Shearman, 1992, p.233; Robert Herbert, an authority on Manet and Impressionism was equally dismissive: 'I also take my distance from the kind of art history that is devoted to finding precedents and "influences" in earlier art. Too many writers mix and match reproductions of pictures, looking for earlier examples of the same theme within the seemingly autonomous world of images. It is a great temptation to assume that the "answer" to a given picture's cafe table or river bridge is found among earlier representations of tables or bridges; this pseudo-method should be called "iconodolatory".' (Herbert, 1988, p.xiii)

⁶ Steinberg, 1998, p.100; Fried, like a voice in the wilderness, has discriminated between Manet's use of a source from popular imagery and one from high art, noting that the latter tend to play an active role 'in an ideal viewer's consciousness' while the former are useful in 'the painting's construction but in effect got used up, rendered null and void, in the process'. (Fried, 1996, p.183).

⁷ Wright, 2004, p.10

⁸ Arnheim, 1969, p.27; In literature Sarah Annes Brown has correctly identified the importance of source-hunting and her point-of-view regarding the nature of poetic influence is remarkably similar to that suggested here for the visual arts. Unfortunately she fails to see that the same is true of painting and sculpture and falls back on literal allusion when discussing the source of Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* (Brown, 1999, pp. 1-21, esp. pp.1-5, 14-16).

⁹ Klee, *The Thinking Eye*, ed. J. Spiller, 1961, p. 17, cited in London 2002, p. 54; Panofsky, in an attempt to distance himself from Heinrich Wölfflin and the previous generation of scholars whose 'formal' theories of art were based on analyses of style, wrote in the opening sentence to his influential book, *Studies in Iconology*: 'Iconography is that branch of the history of art which concerns itself with the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form.' (Panofsky, 1968, p. 3) Freud's theory about the origins of artists' creativity also ignored forms from art itself, giving precedence to artists' unconscious ability to

retrieve childhood images and feelings. Roger Fry rightly chided Freud in his essay, *The Artist and Psychoanalysis*, for ignoring the importance of form. (Kessel, 1989, p.206).

¹⁰ Plato's definition of ideas as forms was based on their eternal, unchanging nature. Seneca described Plato's definition of *Idea* as 'that from which all things visible are made and according to which all things are shaped' and as 'the eternal model of the things which are made by nature' (cited in Panofsky, 1968, pp.24-5) He further asserted that 'God has within himself these models of all things...He is full of these figures, which Plato calls 'ideas' (Panofsky, *ibid.*, p. 125); Aristotle stated that 'the form of a work of art is present in the soul of the artist long before being translated into matter' (Panofsky, *ibid.* p.27).

¹¹ Brombert, 1994, p.487

¹² St. Augustine 'acknowledged that through art a kind of beauty is revealed that, far from being merely derived from the creations of nature and transferred to the work of art by a simple act of copying, *lives in the mind of the artist himself* (author's italics) and is directly translated by him into matter' (Panofsky, *ibid.*, p.35)

¹³ Focillon described the influence of forms on the minds of artists of varying abilities: 'With a mere imitator, a reliance on memory narrows the field of metamorphoses; with a virtuoso, such a reliance does not necessarily diminish their intensity in any way. To a visionary, the sudden, imperious nature of an image seems to impose itself on the life of forms with no little violence. There are, finally, those intellectuals who strive to think of form as thought and to adapt its life to the life of ideas.' (Foçillon, 1989, p.125)

¹⁴ Arnheim, 1969, p.134

¹⁵ The belief that words are a component of thought is of long-standing. In eighteenth-century England, for example, the term *belles-lettres* described not only literature but all the humanities. It is also an idea that literary minds, apt to confuse words with intelligence, are loth to discard. Nevertheless it should be clear to just about everyone that we think too fast to use language as a medium in our minds. Although Gestalt psychologists in the mid-twentieth century supported the individual observations of men like Horace and Einstein it was not until cognitive scientists overcame stimulus-response dominance in the early 1980s that mental images gained wide scientific support (For the use of *belles-lettres*, see Garber, 2001, p.15; on recent science, see Damasio, 1994, pp. 106-8, 280, n.13).

¹⁶ The comments by Einstein, Darwin and Hadamard are cited in Simonton, 1999, pp.29-30; the idea concerning the wings of birds: *ibid.* p.26; John Pfeiffer described the use of cave paintings as the 'tribal encyclopedia', cited in Mithen, 1996, p. 172; Horace, *Ars Poetica*, trans. T.S.Dorsch, in *Classical Literary Criticism* (Baltimore: Harmondsworth) 1965, p.85, cited in Rosand, 1984, p.38. Recent studies have also shown that language interferes with the ability to recognize colors, judge taste and make aesthetic evaluations. It is even believed to hinder insight, a talent which great masters must have in large measure. See Schooler, Fallshore and Fiore, 1995, p.583

¹⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 48. These examples were provided to support the authors' argument that metaphor is not just rhetorical flourish but structures our conceptual system and cultural values. They did not make the case that metaphor reveals an underlying truth. It is possible in this case that when language first developed people had to assume that they thought in images because words were novel or rudimentary. This may explain why sight is used to describe thought and why prehistoric people are unlikely to think that they thought in words. The examples of metaphoric language provided in the text are sometimes thought to be 'dead' metaphors but were persuasively shown by Lakoff and Johnson to actively structure the way that we think. They are 'alive' but are so common, or ancient, that we do not normally notice them (*ibid.* pp. 54-55).

¹⁸ Einstein quotations cited in Holton, 1988, pp. 385-6

¹⁹ "Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Prefatory Note to *Kubla Khan*" in Ghiselin, 1952, p.85; "Mozart: A Letter" in *ibid.*, p.45

²⁰ Beethoven, quoted by Louis Schlosser, in Hamburger M (trans-ed), *Beethoven: Letters, Journals and Conversations* (New York: Pantheon Books) 1952, p. 195, cited in Rothenberg, 1976, p. 20; Frank Gehry, a contemporary architect, has described the financial acumen of Norton Simon in similar terms which, though quite credible, is more literally a description of an architect's mental image of a building: 'Simon could finance three-dimensionally. He could turn a deal in space and visualize it.' (*The New York Times*, Arts & Leisure Section, July 18th 1999, p. 34); The connection between mental images and perceptual images was explained by Arnheim: 'perception consists in the grasping of relevant generic features of the

object. Inversely, thinking, in order to have something to think about, must be based on images of the world in which we live. The thought elements in perception and the perceptual elements in thought are complementary.' (Arnheim, 1969, p.153) Or, as another scholar noted: 'Thoughts need shape, and these must be derived from a perceptual medium.' (R. Smith, 1993, p.6). Cognitive psychologists continue to believe that 'through our vast experience with the objects and ideas in the world we form generalized impressions, or "idealized" forms, much like Platonic forms.' (Solso 1997, p.120)

²¹ Arnheim argued that an artist's intelligence is evident not only in the structure of the form but, as importantly, in the depth of meaning conveyed by the form (Arnheim, 1969, p.269).

²² Bal, 1998, p.127; Kenneth Clark wrote of Leonardo's standard of perfection in painting as including 'scientific accuracy, pictorial logic and finish' but, as far I know, did not define pictorial logic other than as producing a sense of satisfaction. Satisfaction in a knowledgeable observer is hardly a very rigorous definition of logic, although he is correct (Clark, 1989, p. 65). Another example is Roland Penrose's comment that though Picasso's work often seemed incomprehensible, serious critics had to 'admit their admiration for his talent', a talent which could not have been based on technical facility alone (Penrose, 1958, p.15); Picasso himself stressed the need for intelligence which demands explanation beyond the matter of aesthetic judgment. Picasso said: 'Painting is a thing of intelligence. One sees it in Manet. One can see the intelligence in each of Manet's brushstrokes, and the action of intelligence is made visible in the film on Matisse when one watches Matisse draw, hesitate, then begin to express his thought with a sure stroke' (Ashton, 1972, p.16).

It is seldom acknowledged, though, that judging great art on its aesthetic merits cannot possibly be subjective because there has always been wide agreement on five superstars: Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian and Rembrandt. Recognition of Velázquez was delayed because most of his works remained relatively isolated in Spain. Separately, the fact that even knowledgeable critics must be unaware of the principles upon which they make aesthetic judgment has been discussed before. See Ackerman, 1973, p.318

²³ Summers, 1981, p.309

²⁴ The influence and unconscious recognition of form is the critical factor behind Beatrice Farwell's observation, for example, that while the Old Master references in Manet's *Olympia* and *Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe* were missed by contemporaries they 'must have had the look of familiar compositions in the humanist tradition' (Farwell, 1981, p.214). Kenneth Clark noted in 1939 that the work of all great draughtsmen is composed of relatively few forms which constantly reoccur, adding that:

'the development of such an artist as Leonardo is not marked by the frequent discovery of new forms but by the rendering of inherent forms more finally expressive.' (K. Clark, 1989, p. 79).

It should moreover be mentioned that scholars have been aware of *metamorphosis* in great art but have had trouble either detecting or explaining it. Kenneth Clark, again, wrote of Rembrandt that 'when borrowing a classic motive...he practically always changed the subject, and often modified the form in a way which revealed a long and enlightening process of thought.' The process, though, is not unique to Rembrandt because it is true of almost all great masters (K. Clark, 1968, p.101). Ernst Gombrich, noting that Leonardo da Vinci had turned a cat into a lamb into a unicorn, incorrectly concluded that Leonardo had divorced form from meaning, an implication which he himself wisely found 'astounding'. (Gombrich, 1971, pp. 61-2). Other scholars have been troubled by the manner in which artists used sources, sensing metamorphic form without seeing it. Svetlana Alpers wrote:

'Rembrandt was practicing imitation as *transformation* and as *dissimulation* - the artist effectively hiding his sources by absorbing them into his works' (Alpers, 1990, pp.73-4)

Another scholar has recently written of Goya's use of Rembrandt's art that:

'we are concerned not with the traditional issue of copying or imitation - possibly not even strictly with 'influence' in the narrow art-historical sense of the term - but with a specific form of optical stimulation and enlightenment that is peculiar to the nature of an artist's visual inquiry.' (Amsterdam 2000, p.13)

One wrote of Picasso: '...that it is in the nature of his genius to digest his sources so thoroughly that we sense allusions rather than quotations.' (Rosenblum, 1973, p.48) Richard Wollheim expressed a similar idea about Manet:

'as a further complication...there is Manet's tendency to borrow from more than one source at a time and to blend them in a single painting. His borrowings display massive condensation, often beyond the point at which his paintings could continue to extract historical meaning from them. It is not simply that the spectator could not be expected to recognize the historical source under the

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- disguise - indeed in some cases there was nothing to make him suspect that there was an historical source - but, more to the point, even if the spectator had this knowledge in his cognitive stock, it would be beyond his powers to bring it effectively to bear upon his perception of the picture. The task would be too complex. (Wollheim, 1987, p.237)
- Even when a painting is directly inspired by another as is Cezanne's *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* by Manet's eponymous painting, it has been written that:
- 'The language typically used to describe the relation between an art object and a "source" is inadequate to describe the relation between Cezanne's and Manet's paintings' (Locke, 1998, p.122)
- ²⁵ New York 1983, p. 346 and citing a report in Moreau-Nélaton, 1926, II, p. 8
- ²⁶ Manet had not yet visited Spain so the scene is entirely imaginary. *At the Prado I* is titled in Manet's hand below the image. It appears that the second version has been titled *At the Prado II* by others based on its similarity.
- ²⁷ The two figures also appear in the background of Manet's *The Spanish Ballet*. See New York, 2003, p.226.
- ²⁸ Luca Signorelli painted his self-portrait with Fra Angelico at the edge of a mural in the Capella Nuova in Orvieto; Raphael painted himself with another man whose pointing gesture indicates he is an "artist" in the painting once known as *Raphael with His Fencing Master*. In Goya's *Self-portrait* with his doctor, the doctor represents an artist behind Goya.
- ²⁹ I did not mention in the website entry on *Las Meninas* that the Infanta also represents Velazquez. She represents, on the esoteric level, the reincarnation of his soul having reached perfection in the creative moment. The infant Christ is the principal Christian example of the same process. That means that not only is Velazquez painting *Las Meninas* as the mirror of his mind but his model, the Infanta, eyeing her own reflection, is a representation of himself as well. He is both artist and model.
- ³⁰ Einstein's observation about the obstacles to progress in science is equally true of art scholarship:
- "Concepts which have proved useful for ordering things easily assume so great an authority over us, that we forget their terrestrial origin and accept them as unalterable facts. They then become labelled as 'conceptual necessities', 'a priori situations', etc. The road of scientific progress is frequently blocked for long periods by such errors." (Cited in Holton, 1988, p. 5)
- ³¹ See the entry on *Le Déjeuner* :
- http://www.everypainterpaintshimself.com/essay_pdfs/SA_ManetForWebx1.pdf