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Un modo più chiaro: Francesco Scannelli and the Physiology of Style*

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The mid-seicento in Italy witnessed a sustained proliferation of writers on art scattered throughout more regions than had been common in the previous century, leading to an era defined by arguments over the qualities and values of style.[1] In the Preface for his *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti* of ca.1673-79, Giovanni Battista Passeri lamented the fact that: «Today it is fashionable for painters to do nothing but squabble among themselves about manner, taste, and style, and this arose because the reasoning is not established according to solid principles».[2] The querulous nature of the age has made it difficult for scholars to reconcile the various and competing models for art production that multiplied in the Seicento; infighting, *campanilismo*, arguments over the role of antiquity in modern art, and even today's «idealist-historicist-relativist tenets of modern art history» have conspired to obscure the commonalities of art theory and criticism of the period prior to the advent of "normative aesthetics".[3] In the numerous publications that touted the superiority of art in different regions, the role of nature in art figured prominently. Inherited from the Renaissance, the relative merits of reliance on nature as a model and to what extent artists were expected to improve upon it were both metaphysical and pedagogical issues.[4] In the perceived quest for stylistic perfection, artists often modified their styles, radically at times, throughout their careers. In the case of Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1591-1666), nicknamed il Guercino, the painter progressed from an early style grounded in the naturalism of the Veneto-Lombard tradition (FIG. 1) to one that favored the precepts of the classical Roman baroque (FIG. 2). Denis Mahon first noted the phenomenon and offered the most comprehensive analysis of the change beginning in the 1620s that was announced by a brighter key and became increasingly composed in a sequence of parallel planes on a stage-like space.[5] Although the later Bolognese biographer Carlo Cesare Malvasia wrote a complete biography of the artist,[6] the most insightful treatment that elucidates the critical environment in which the artist was working during his own lifetime comes in the form of a very enigmatic publication in defense of Veneto-Lombard painting, which Mahon also treated most extensively.[7]

Though often mined for biographical data,[8] Francesco Scannelli (1616-1663) and his *Il Microcosmo* have not received substantial inquiry. The difficulty in systematic analysis of the text resides in its often impenetrable syntax, chimerical fusion of theory, biography and regional art history, and finally the medicalization of art criticism. Nevertheless, the post-Renaissance, allegorized manner of framing the arts offers an insight into the change later in the careers of the Carracci School, including Guercino, Francesco Albani and Guido Reni (1575-1642) and represents the intersection of science, medicine and art in the contribution of physicians to the development of art theory and criticism. As one of the writers who were openly critical of the mo-

* Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

del for art production that had dominated central Italy since Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* of 1550 and the establishment of the Florentine Accademia del Disegno in 1563, Scannelli's argument for the superiority of Lombard painting synthesized the various epistemological models of the early modern period utilized by a wide range of art critics, biographers and theorists; physiognomy, humoral psychology, the physiology of aging and the intellective properties of *disegno* in the "Roman *idea*" were seen by Scannelli to have conspired to produce a stylistic approach that is *non-finito* at the preparatory stage, while in the final version rigidly composed and finely painted.[9] This article will argue that through an understanding of Scannelli's alternate art-theoretical position, and demonstrated in the art of the cinquecento painter Correggio, the criticisms leveled against the move towards *un modo più chiaro*, or «a lighter manner» in the oeuvres of these Carracci pupils cannot be understood reductively as mere distaste for the classical Roman school. Instead, through an interdisciplinary investigation into early modern treatments of aging, and the processes by which artists attempted to overcome its deteriorating effects, the often seemingly self-contradictory approach of Scannelli actually attempts to refute the success of the idea, leading to Neoplatonic transcendence. The process, Scannelli argues, actually leads artists further from the path that would by virtue lead to true and beautiful naturalism.

Scannelli and *il Microcosmo*: The Body of Painting

Born in Forlì in the Emilia-Romagna, Scannelli was a physician by profession, like the critic Giulio Mancini, and attended the University of Perugia. In his capacity as an amateur-connoisseur, he was particularly familiar with the Bolognese school of painting, being personally acquainted with Reni, Albani and Guercino. Later in his career, Scannelli was employed by Francesco d'Este I, Duke of Modena and Reggio, as the *protégé* of Geminiano Poggi, the Duke's secretary.[10] Poggi, and later, Scannelli, was responsible for the Duke's collection of paintings, which would become one of the great art galleries of Italy, and on occasion Scannelli acted as the secretary's representative in acquiring works and as an art consultant for the Duke.[11] Most of the information concerning Scannelli is derived from his only work *Il Microcosmo della Pittura* published in 1657 (Fig. 3), and dedicated to Duke Francesco.[12]

Though seemingly atypical when considering Seicento art treatises, *Il Microcosmo* can trace its mnemonic origins to classical rhetoric; the very title of the work references the Vitruvian conception that the human body, being created in God's image, is a microcosmic reflection of the entire universe.[13] Renaissance Neoplatonists like Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) had used the metaphysical schema to assist in explaining the descent of beauty into matter, and clarify man's relationship to his creator and the immutable world of Ideas.[14] Scannelli, on the other hand, extends the conceit to the allegorical *corpus* of painting as a diagnostic map, which he represented as a human body of which Michelangelo Buonarroti is the backbone, Titian the heart, Antonio Allegri da Correggio (1489-1534) the brain, Raphael the liver, the Carracci and their followers the skin, and Paolo Veronese the organs of generation.[15] The particular artists chosen, and their corresponding biological functions, relate Scannelli's divisions of different schools and reveal his Northern Italian orientation. The liver, Scannelli explains, is responsible for nourishment and the creation of the blood and is least noble; the heart, responsible for heat and life comes next; the brain, seat of the imagination and intelligence, is the most noble. Raphael is the liver for having drawn nourishment from mother antiquity and having himself nourished artists of the Tuscan-Roman school; Titian added heat and movement to the achievements of Raphael and his contemporaries; and Correggio took the contributions of Raphael and Titian, refining them into an "exquisite naturalness" («*esquisita naturalezza*»).[16] The first half of his treatise is concerned with describing three of these schools, corresponding to different regions: the Tuscan or Roman school, headed by Raphael, is noted for its reliance on *disegno*; the Venetian school, headed by Titian, is praised for its «*spiritosa naturalezza*», or "vigorous naturalism",

and spontaneity of technique; and the Lombard school, which combines the most laudable aspects of the Tuscan and Venetian, is embodied in the art of Correggio (FIG. 4) (the artist central to the duke's collection in Modena). Later in his treatment, the Bolognese school is also added, represented by the Carracci as the derma of the body.[17] The manner in which the amateur-connoisseur divided the schools had been accepted in both central and Northern Italy, and is attested to four decades earlier in the *Trattato* (ca.1607-15) of Monsignor Giovanni Battista Agucchi, co-authored by Domenichino, where one finds similar defining characteristics of each.[18]

Scannelli's work was not unique in its psychosomatic methodology. The astronomer and sculptor Pietro Francavilla, the famous pupil of Giambologna, had a good deal of personal experience in anatomical dissection and wrote a treatise (now lost) on the human body entitled *Il Microcosmo*, which was accompanied by his own illustrations. According to Filippo Baldinucci, the text was comprehensive and discussed those related branches of natural philosophy that dealt with physiognomy and the various humors and temperaments.[19] The physician and critic Giulio Mancini, in his *Considerazioni,* for example, used the diagnostic approach to physiology and humoral theory in explaining the aesthetic preferences of different nations. Blue-eyed northerners have a cooler cranial temperature and cooler temperaments, and hence he adduces that they prefer cool colors and weak tonal contrasts. Dark-eyed Italians are hot-tempered and consequently prefer strong contrasts of light and dark.[20] By the time Scannelli would publish his work, such psychosomatic and physiological methodologies had been well-represented in art theory and criticism.[21]

The Tuscan-Lombard Quarrel: In Defense of Correggio

Since Vasari's unabashed praise for Florence and Florentine masters in the *Vite* of 1550/ 1568, *campanilismo* remained an integral part of art theory and criticism. While bolstering his defense of Lombard art, and especially that of Correggio, Scannelli developed a critical model that favored the middle-ground between Tuscan intellectual *disegno* and Veneto-Lombard colorism and imagination. In its hostility to the dominant Roman model for art production, *Il Microcosmo* can be classified as anti-theoretical in the sense that it attempts to refute the position that painting should be an intellectual process, laboriously acquired.[22] However, the treatise remains one of the most complete attempts to construct an Emilian-Lombard baroque art theory. Responding to such classical theorists as the Roman academician and *Principe* of the Accademia di San Luca, Federico Zuccaro, *maggiordomo* Agucchi, and the biographer Giovanni Baglione, who espoused the necessity for eclectic appropriation of ideal models, filtered through the ancient statuary; Scannelli emphasized the "non-intellectual" or intuitive aspects of style.[23] The untaught and instinctual elements of the creative process were important for the critical approach that was not intellectually based, and which bordered on notions of artistic genius.[24] The reluctance to concede to the superiority of intellectual process, which was most notably captured in the central Italian idea of *disegno*, is seminal to the attempt made by the author to establish aesthetic qualifications that favored the art of the North. In like fashion, we find Scannelli turning to Cesare Ripa and Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo for the following way of defining *bellezza*, which is: «not [...] so much desired beauty, that is a reflection of supreme light, and like a divine ray of light, which appears to me composed with good symmetry of parts and reconciled with sweetness of colors, abandoned as a remnant in earth and cloaked in the immortal and celestial life».[25] The definition parallels Ripa's in his *Iconologia,* where the Neoplatonic notion of divine light exists alongside the phenomenal need for measure and proportion.[26] The process an artist would follow necessitated bringing together the measure, proportion and *symmetria* of Rome with the knowledge of colorism expertly rendered by Northern Italian artists.

This equanimity of both approach and technique and the process by which an artist extracts beauty is evinced in the praise of Scannelli's favored

FIG. 1 Guercino, *Erminia finds wounded Tancred*, 1618-19. Oil on canvas, cm 145 x 187. Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili

painter, Correggio.[27] In stressing the diversity of individual natural genius, the author finds that although the painter did not consciously seek out idealization, his mode of painting was superior as it expressed *naturalezza*, "naturalism". The term, as Scannelli applies it, does not refer to an exact transcription of nature (*mimesis*), but rather the utilization of the best aspects of nature (FIG. 4). This approach differed from the classical doctrine of selectivity, or the Zeuxinian model, in that it is a process of selection, but does not consciously search for idealization.[28] At the core of his ambivalence for the artists under investigation, Scannelli distances himself from the Neoplatonic remnants of beauty in his definition since he stresses appropriation directly from nature: the Neoplatonic philosopher Marsilio Ficino, translator of Plato's *Symposium* in 1482, had stated that it was ridiculous «that things which are not beautiful of their own nature give birth to beauty».[29] Instead, the Forlian critic relates that the goal of the painter is *la vera e bella naturalezza*, or «the true and beautiful naturalism».

In *naturalezza* an important part is played by *uniformità*, or "uniformity", which is expressive of the fluid and integrating characteristics of Veneto-Lombard painting. By contrast, the great vice of the Florentines, who were appreciated in Agucchi's estimation for their use of *disegno*, are criticized by Scannelli for their *snaturata seccaggine*, or «shallow perversion of nature».[30] The adjectives *seccaggine* and *crudezza* are continually used for the art of the Tuscan-Roman school, particularly in terms of sculpture.[31] The *errori* of that school, Scannelli concludes, are easily recognizable to a viewer of «good taste and sufficient intelligence», and that after viewing wish to «escape and loathe it».[32] Therefore artists outside the influence of the Tuscan school did not benefit by traveling to Rome to study. In fact, the experience generally ruined

FIG. 2 Guercino, *The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine of Alexandria*, 1650. Oil on canvas, cm 115 x 152, Modena, Galleria Estense

them by poisoning their styles. To illustrate the point, Scannelli poses the question: what if Correggio, whose style embodies *la vera e bella naturalezza,* had traveled to Rome? It would have, Scannelli believes, compromised his innate genius and have «taken him from the proper path».[33]
The centrality of Tuscany, and especially, Rome was something that all early modern artists and writers on art in Italy had to contend with when evaluating the relative merits of individual styles. In fact, M. Vaccaro has noted that Rome held an inescapable position of educational authority, not only for Tuscan artists, but for artists throughout the peninsula (and to a lesser extent the rest of Europe through the end of the eighteenth century).[34] In defending Correggio, Scannelli, who used his *Microcosmo* to celebrate the painter and in turn the duke's collection, noted that the working method of the artist differed from his contemporaries, even in Parma itself from Parmigianino. Relating the method by which artists become great masters, Scannelli notes:

> With long effort and intensive study they [Raphael and Parmigianino] constructed a specific, precisely researched concept of the beautiful. So fluent and accomplished were they in drawing that they may be easily said to be the very best in the practice of this studious activity. The other side can be seen in the painter from Correggio [...] [who] abhorred the practice of making designs [...] [and] used to reply that he had his designs at the tip of his brush [...]. [Correggio] was endowed with so great a natural ability to paint with the most beautiful colors, and in the most truly naturalistic manner, whereas the other two painters, with different preferences and methods, made designs with extreme perfection.[35]

While Raphael and Parmigianino produced endless preparatory studies (FIG. 5), Correggio

eschewed the practice. According to Vasari, the artist's Cinquecento biographer, Correggio was the first Lombard artist to work in the "modern style" and hails his achievement in terms of his use of colors (FIG. 4).[36] The artist's style was, however, lacking as it was not founded in *disegno*. Discussed in the technical introduction to the 1568 edition, the multivalent term as a conception combines theory and practice, hand and intellect:

> disegno [...] proceeding from the intellect, draws from many things a universal judgment similar to a form or idea of all things in nature, which is most singular in its measures...from this knowledge there is born a certain conception and judgment, so that there is formed in the mind that something which when expressed by the hands is called disegno [...] what disegno requires, when it has derived from the judgment an image of something, is that the hand, through the study and practice of many years, may be free and apt to draw and to express correctly [...] whatever nature has created. For when the intellect puts forth with judgment concepts purged [of the accidents of nature], the hand that has practiced drawing for many years makes known the perfection and excellence of arts as well as the knowledge of the artist.[37]

A mastery of the five *regole* of art, according to Vasari, was impossible without the firm foundation of *disegno*, mastered through the process of producing endless drawings to develop the intellective faculty of *giudizio*, or "judgment".[38] Only then could nature be purged of all impurities to reveal the intended universal essences or forms. Of course, said mastery of an artist's intellect and the corresponding dexterous ability to transcribe the most beautiful examples from nature and capture «a visible expression and declaration of the inner concept» could only be achieved if one were to travel to Tuscany. Vasari laments this fact in the case of Correggio in that attaining true perfection would have required the Emilian artist to visit Rome: «If this accomplished painter had left Lombardy for Rome», as Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), Guercino and Reni would in the following century, «seeing what he produced without ever having set eyes on any antiques or any good modern works, it inevitably follows that if he had done so, his style would have gained immeasurably and he would eventually have reached absolute perfection».[39]

More than the animating prin-

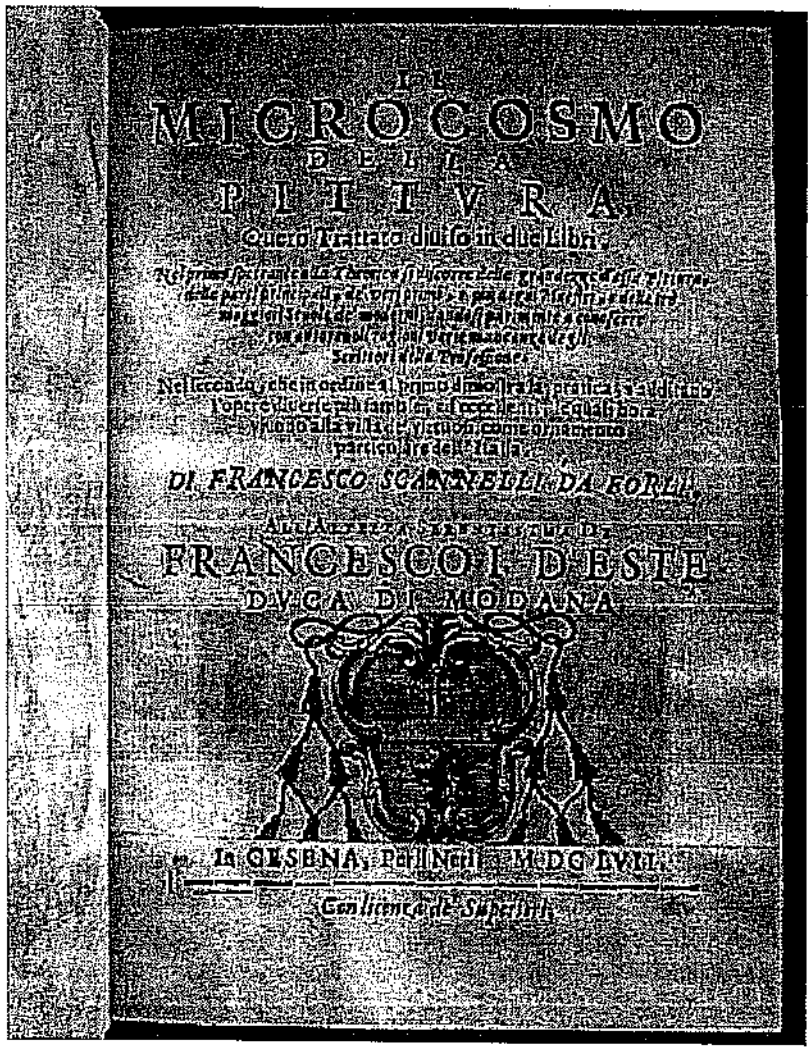

FIG. 3 Francesco Scannelli, Title page, 1657. Woodcut from *Il Microcosmo della Pittura*, Cesena1657, np. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

ciple of all of the *arti del disegno* embodied Vasari's championing of the superiority of Tuscan art to Venetian colorism. As in the case of the first great Venetian painter, Giorgione, Vasari relates that without developing the judgment based on a careful study of Roman art, the artist «conceals under the charm of his coloring his lack of knowledge of how to draw, as, for many years, having never seen Rome or any completely perfect works of art, did the Venetian painters».[40] Venetians, like the Lombards, were master colorists in Vasari's estimation, but their practice was not intellectually based, and sought instead the emotive impact of *colore*. The theoretical construct of the *Microcosmo* seemingly purports the opposite position: the superiority of the imaginative and natural and immediate colors of Correggio, and, later in the Seicento, the early works of Guercino and Reni. Scannelli takes great pains to illuminate the manner in which artists were taken from the "proper path", tracing this unfortunate divergence to their education and what they adopted from the Roman approach of moving from perception to intellection with Vasarian *disegno*.

The Carracci School: Skin of the Body of Painting

Correggio did not travel to Rome, and, according to Scannelli, was spared its "poisonous" after effects. Many other artists from Lombardy did, however, travel to the *caput mundi* for training, education and commissions; among them was one of the founders of the Bolognese academy of art, Annibale Carracci. Ironically, the Accademia degli Incamminati or the "Academy of those who set out on a journey", and by implication the proper path to correct art and glory, was founded by Scannelli's foil for Correggio, who was, in fact, diverted from «the proper path [...] and in corroboration of this position they present as a bad example the highly talented Annibale Carracci and other good artists of more than ordinary ability, endowed with a fine manner, who after they had seen and studied the works of the *prima scuola*, rather than improving, found in part that their exceptional skills had diminished».[41] The stylistic change under investigation actually began with Annibale for after he moved to Rome, his work became increasingly based on the classical models encountered.[42] The physician-critic believed that the deliberate combination of different perfections in this model of eclectic appropriation resulted in a "superfluous artifice", and was an unnatural growth on the corpus of painting.[43] He expands on this metaphor when discussing the Carracci and their followers, who formed the skin of the corpus, the «external order of this composite body». Relating their place in the history of painting, the great "reformers" are first praised:

> the Carracci were estimated the most praiseworthy reformers, who had in their days rescued the profession from the decline of beauty, encouraging the most excellent masters to imitate the good and natural [...] they are able to compose a particular excellent style that is mitigated by beauty and nature, that was afterwards the safe guide of future Professors.[44]

In the estimation of writers in the Seicento, the Carracci wrested art and beauty from the decline seen waning in the previous century. The body of painting constructed by Scannelli, more specifically, was composed of artists from that previous era from throughout the peninsula; the Carracci merely finished the body by providing the «principles of their school [...] that served as the universal membrane for covering and finishing the then well-formed Microcosm of Painting».[45] However, the skin which merely covers the body is the «less noble, and less necessary [part] of the composite human». Scannelli continues:

> similarly, in our great body of painting, they are able to serve as a membrane for other good subjects [in other schools] [...] which, all united, form the external order of this composite body. Next to these integral and necessary parts of this body we should finally add those which appear by accident and which sometimes form hard and callous growths and sometimes are filth applied to the skin, like superfluous clothing. The first are the product of excessive labor, the latter are added to the surface by those depraved individuals who seek

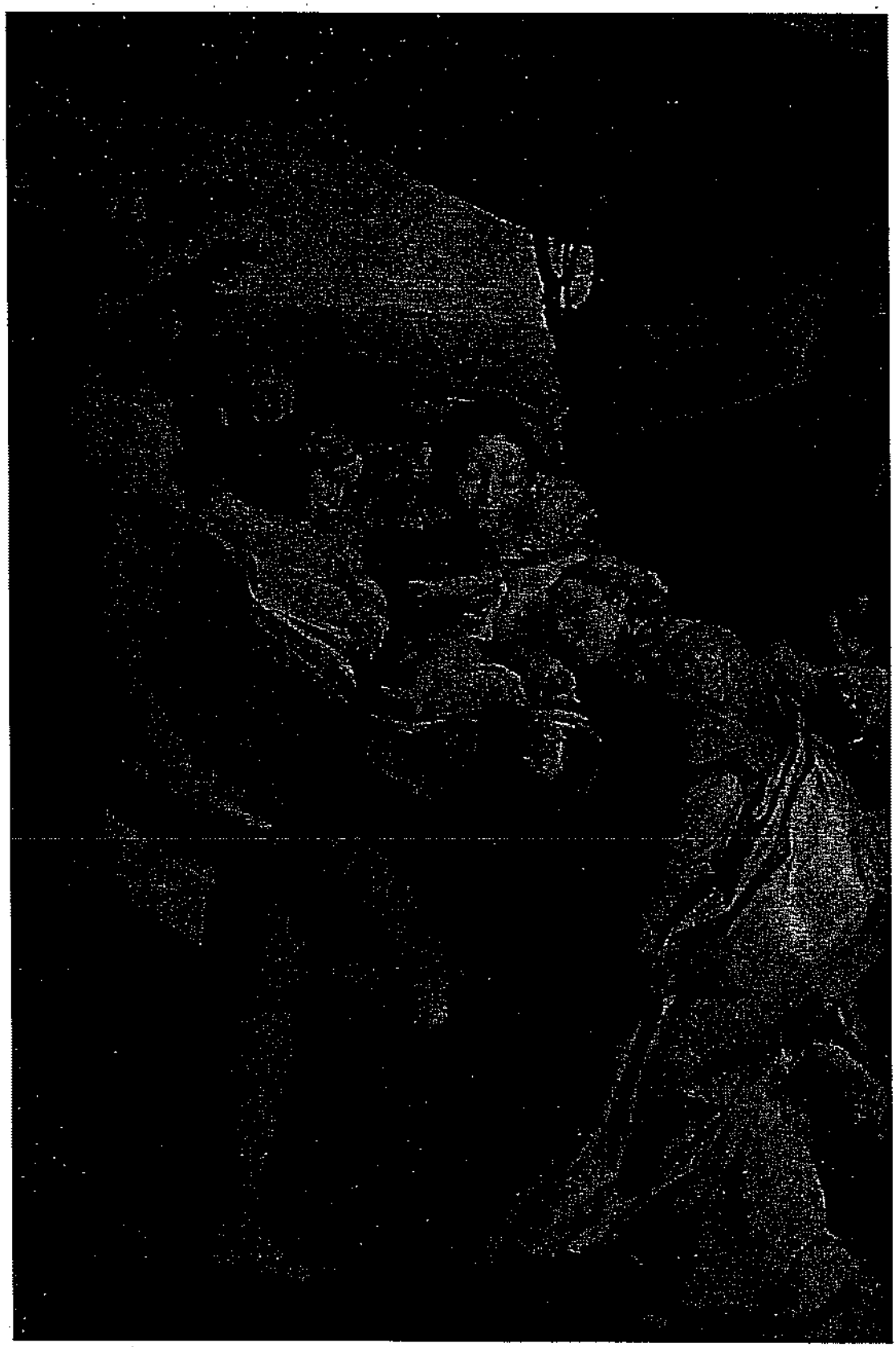

FIG. 4 Correggio, *Madonna and Child with Sts. Jerome and Mary Magdalen*, after 1523. Panel, m 2.35 x 1.41. Parma, Galleria Nazionale

thus to add a foolish beauty to a noble body which is already perfectly finished by Mother Nature.[46]

As the skin of the *Microcosmo*, the Carracci and their school clothe and are able to ennoble the "body". Howbeit, the style practiced by the Carracci, though grounded in Lombard naturalism, evolved in the intervening six decades until the time Scannelli was writing to encompass a wide variety of styles that included Roman classicism. Over idealization, achieved through "excessive labor", and moving beyond nature in adding "superfluous clothing" to the composite body of painting was an egregious error by the physician's estimation. The excesses of employing unnecessary artifice are the equivalent, in the biological metaphor, to smearing excrement on skin, or a cancerous growth in the modern understanding. In other words, once an artist moved beyond the limitations of natural beauty by idealizing his art, it produced grotesqueries. In the model for judging good art constructed by Scannelli, it is not surprising that the early Bolognese works of Annibale are praised while the later Roman works, including the grand program for the Farnese gallery, are criticized.[47]

FIG. 5 Parmigianino, *Virgin and Child with Saints*, ca. 1526-1527. Pen and brown ink, brown wash, cm 25.8 x 15.6. London, British Museum

The next generation of artists that succeeded the Carracci-Domenichino (co-author of Agucchi's *Trattato*), Guercino, Albani, Lanfranco and Reni- inherited their role as the skin of the body of painting. Reni in particular would embody, for Scannelli, the abnormal growth that could occur on the dermis if nature were to be shunned in the creative process. Although generally considered a prominent member of the Carracci School, Reni began his training with the Flemish painter Denys Calvaert around 1590 in Bologna, who continued to practice in a mannerist idiom. Even after joining the Accademia degli Incamminati and studying under Ludovico Carracci (1595), remnants of his early training persisted even after he moved to Rome.

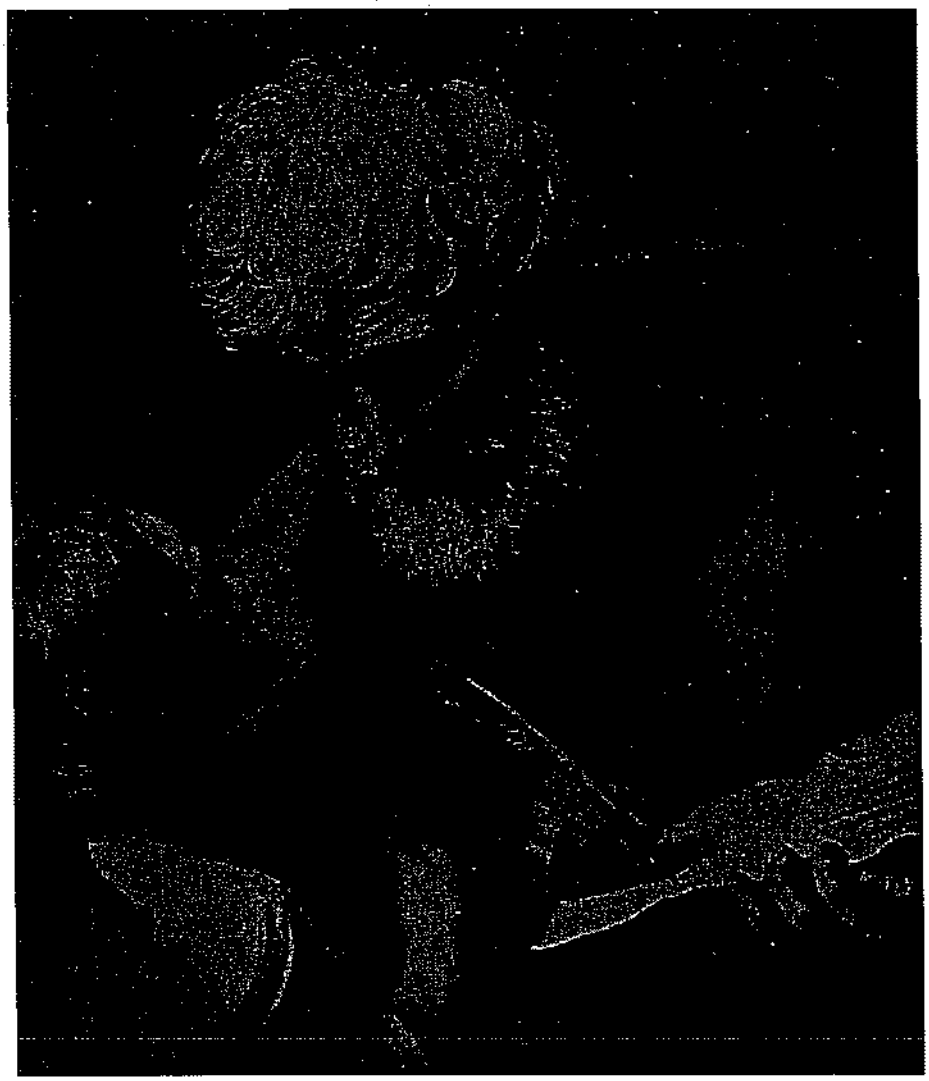

FIG. 6 Guido Reni, *St. Matthew and the Angel*, 1635-40. Oil on canvas, cm 86 x 68. Città del Vaticano, Pinacoteca Vatican Museums

His professional rivals even commented on the regression apparent in Reni's manner after his mature period.[48] Malvasia records that:

> They set about to criticize his style, which reverted, so they said, to the same weak languid manner of Zuccheri and Vasari in Rome, of Samacchini, Fontana, and Procaccini in Bologna, from which the Carracci, with great effort, redeemed art and exalted the true style.[49]

The approach of the artist in old age, which was obvious to his contemporaries had fostered platonic tendencies, would be one such complaint that Scannelli found with the artist later in his career.
In Book I, Chapter XVII Scannelli sets forth his understanding for a change from a naturalistic style to a brighter, more abstract one: «*un modo più chiaro*», "a lighter manner". This stylistic trajectory he notes in the careers of several artists, but in the examples of Guido Reni and Annibale Carracci in Bologna we find the originations of such a desire to change their method of working. The impetus was «born from studious artifice» and caused *accidenti* that resulted in the «excessively bright manner», which was mediocre in the estimation of the critic who favored Lombard naturalism.[50] As Scannelli writes,

> And turning to more universal and adequate reasons; we can observe similar changes not only in the works of the second manner of the same Guido Reni and Peter Paul Ruben, but also today in the works of Giovanni Francesco Barbieri [Guercino], of Francesco Albani, and similarly, in the last works by Pietro da Cortona. All of these men, who are the most capable and famous masters of our time, have afterwards, during the period of their greatest acclaim, changed over in their manner of working to the lighter colors.[51]

The change in style to *"un modo più chiaro"* noted in the career of Guido Reni was evident to many Seicento writers, though they differed on its primary defining characteristics. Whereas an overall lightening of the artist's palette is commonly noted in contemporary treatments, the emphasis and negative evaluation of the artifice is

largely confined to writers favoring art produced outside the *prima scuola*. Scannelli identified the bright local color palette as a characteristic of Roman painting and classicism; while Lombard and Emilian art sought unified shadows, or "*uniformità*". Malvasia, for instance, elucidates the new manner of paint application and degree of finish present in Reni's later work. Malvasia discusses works like the *St. Matthew and the Angel* of 1635-40 (FIG. 6) as incorporating an increasingly painterly technique. As he wrote,

> Also those old men Guido painted were not left smooth and unified like those by other artists, but with masterful strokes, full of thousands of subtleties, he depicted their sagging skin [...]. Nor did he use a sketchy technique in the manner of Cavedoni to indicate their sagging beards with quick loose strokes and their hair like softest feathers. On the contrary, he made use of the ground paint almost as if it were a space to play on, rapidly sketching in with great brio and equal skill in a manner never before practiced by anyone else (if not perhaps by Titian at times, although not with so much daring) the locks turned in various directions, toned down and highlighted in relation to the relative position, giving then the finishing touches at the top with the principal highlights.[52]

The modern critical vocabulary for discussing the stylistic change of artists later in their careers, seen here in Malvasia's description, was inherited in the form of biography. With the carefully constructed literary conceit that paralleled the development of art to the lifecycle of man, Vasari introduced to early modern biographies of artists the tripartite division of early, mature and late; which was likewise applied to the stylistic evolution of artists. In his Giunta edi-

FIG. 7 Titian, *Perseus and Andromeda* ca.1554 - 1556. Oil on canvas, cm 175 x 189,5. London, Wallace Collection

tion of 1568, the physiological understanding of the "life-cycle of style" was expanded and most directly articulated in the distinction between the early and late styles of Titian; between the diligent finish of the former and the bold brushwork of the latter.[53] As Vasari wrote of a group of mythological works for Philip II, between 1551 and 1562, including the *Perseus and Andromeda* (FIG. 7) of ca. 1554-56, which he identified as the artist's "*seconda maniera*", or "second manner":

But it is true that his method of painting in these late works is very different from the technique he had used as a young man. For the early works are executed with a certain finesse and an incredible diligence, so that they can be seen from close to as well as from a distance; while these last pictures are executed with broad and bold strokes and smudges, so that from nearby nothing can be seen whereas from a distance they seem perfect.[54]

The style noted by Vasari, which began to manifest itself in the 1550s, escalated, and became freer until the artists death in 1576. The technique that Vasari describes reveals a control of the various mimetic possibilities of the artist's medium made possible through decades of experience. After celebrating the vigorous strokes and patches of Titian's late "*pittura di macchia*" (or "painting with splotches"), Vasari warns against believing such painting to be easy.[55] He notes how repeatedly Titian returned to those canvases: «for it is obvious that his paintings are reworked and that he has gone back over them with colours many times, making his effort evident».[56] The deceptive easiness of those richly worked and open-structured surfaces attests to the painter's *sprezzatura*, his skill in concealing the effort, «the ability of his art to hide art».[57] The hallmarks of the working method and effect of Titian's late paintings by Vasari are present in Malvasia's analysis of Reni: the appearance of rapid execution, and the order of paint application producing an effective subject at a distance. However, the vocabulary and technical description of Malvasia can be situated within a dialogue that had been developing since Vasari published his analysis of Titian's late style. The subsequent publications of *Maraviglie dell'Arte* in 1642 by Carlo Ridolfi, and *Carta del navegar pittoresco* of 1660 by Marco Boschini, had championed the idea that *pittura di macchia*, or "painting with splotches", was not the end result of working without *disegno*, but instead a viable, and even superior alternative.[58] Reni's painterly evolution was not similar to that of Titian, and as such, necessitated these alternative understandings of *pittoresco* in order to apply it to the *Life* of the Bolognese artist.

Economic Motivations for Change

Neither Malvasia nor Scannelli viewed Reni's «*seconda maniera*» as an adoption of alternative painterly precepts. Malvasia, for instance, emphasizes the speed of execution throughout his description of the later technique as a segue to the economic motivation for the change. As Malvasia makes evident throughout the end of the *Life*, it was Reni's gambling debts that prompted the utilization of such a rash technique.[59] The criticism of artists who continue to produce works for public display of their physiological decline can again be traced to Vasari's biography of Titian in his 1568 *Vite*. Vasari implies that the elderly Titian should have set aside his brushes before this physiological decline impaired his abilities, and the motivation of greed, which compromised the artist's judgment:

> during these last years he would have done well not to have worked save to amuse himself, for then he would have avoided damaging with inferior work the reputation won during his best years before his natural powers started to decline.[60]

A similar reason is recorded by Scannelli in his evaluation of the style produced by Reni late in his career, as he quotes another painter with whom he was acquainted, Guercino:

> Evidently the more convincing reason is that which the painter from Cento [Guercino] gave in response to this question when he explained to me that it was the taste of the majority, and above all of those who ordered works; and he had often heard complaints from those who possessed works of his first manner that in these the eyes, the mouth, and other members were hidden (so they said) in dark shadows

and that as a result they could not consider certain parts as fully executed; very often they assured him that they could not recognize the faces or occasionally the actions of the figures. And so, in order to satisfy the majority as far as possible, and especially those who paid money for the requested work, he had executed the paintings in a lighter manner.[61]

The overriding concern of patronage pressure would become a reoccurring theme in the later treatments of Passeri and, as mentioned, Malvasia. The specific complaint of figures being hidden in darkness became commonplace in later criticism as well: fifteen years after Guercino's testimony, the biographer and theorist Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613-1696) criticized Caravaggio (1571-1610) and his followers for hiding their deficiencies in shadows, instead of following the precepts of art and learning proper anatomy and clear spatial construction.[62] However, in his recent treatment on old-age style, Sohm charted the earnings of different Seicento artists in relation to their age and determined that they actually earned less later in their careers.[63] In the cases of Reni and Guercino the economic pressures of patron's demands does not account for their adoptions.

One of the motivations for contemporary painters adopting Reni's style, as Scannelli saw it, was not so much due to his technical motivations, but simply because the public enjoyed it. These painters, even distinguished ones, «find themselves to be a long way away from the necessary competencies of good painting». Not only are they incompetent, they, like Narcissus, do not even «recognize their inabilities» and are generally too self-absorbed to notice. The same warning had been made when Vasari discussed the effects Titian's late working style had on the younger generation: «This method of painting has caused many artists, who have wished to imitate him [Titian] and thus display their skill, to produce clumsy pictures».[64] In like fashion, in Book I Chapter XVII Scannelli discusses the function of the Carracci and their followers in the *Microcosmo*, bemoaning the fact that some contemporary painters:

> either do not want to recognize, or do not know how to recognize, how the charming brightness of colors should be used [...]. Most painters today may be somewhat stylish and even learned, but one still finds them to be missing an essential and true life-likeness and to be by far inferior to the first modern and most perfect masters [Raphael, etc.] and not even the equal of their first followers and sounder inheritors. One can say without dispute of these kinds of characters, however, that they do not breed such mistaken opinions except by the intensity of their feelings, which, in turn, obfuscate their learning. In time, this also corrupts the imagination of similarly inclined individuals [...] who are endowed much more with good luck than good understanding, come to be deceived by a too great affection for themselves.[65]

The critic relates the physiology of style with northern aestheticism in this description. First, he credits their ill-informed education to a focus on intellect over imagination, which «obfuscates their learning». Scannelli describes this in terms of physiology as contemporary painters are only interested in the skin, surface appearances. Again, this is partly a consequence of their Carracci inheritance as the skin of the *corpus* of painting, but by mid-century the follower's skin had turned into «hard and calloused excrescences».[66] He blamed Guido Reni's late style for introducing the vulgar to this seductive style:

> Whence the judgment of those proficient in painting will reveal how every day the vulgar are dazzled when they see distorted paintings that satisfy superficially. These painters indiscriminately represented painted beauties that satisfy at first glance [...]. They only praise as the final goal of painting a mere representation of appearances with bright colors that reveal lascivious charms deprived of proportion and perspective [...]. They immediately cite in their defense the example of the famous Guido Reni who, they assert, was heaped with lofty praise, and through his extraordinary charm, attracted to himself as if by magic the eyes of the greatest rulers [...]. But I adhere much more to the foundation of good intellects than to the appearances and opinions of the vulgar when I say that the use of more white and less black should not be considered in painting except by chance and only for the proper external finish of natural objects.[67]

The laudatory praise that Reni's defenders offered as the reason for his later change in style, and

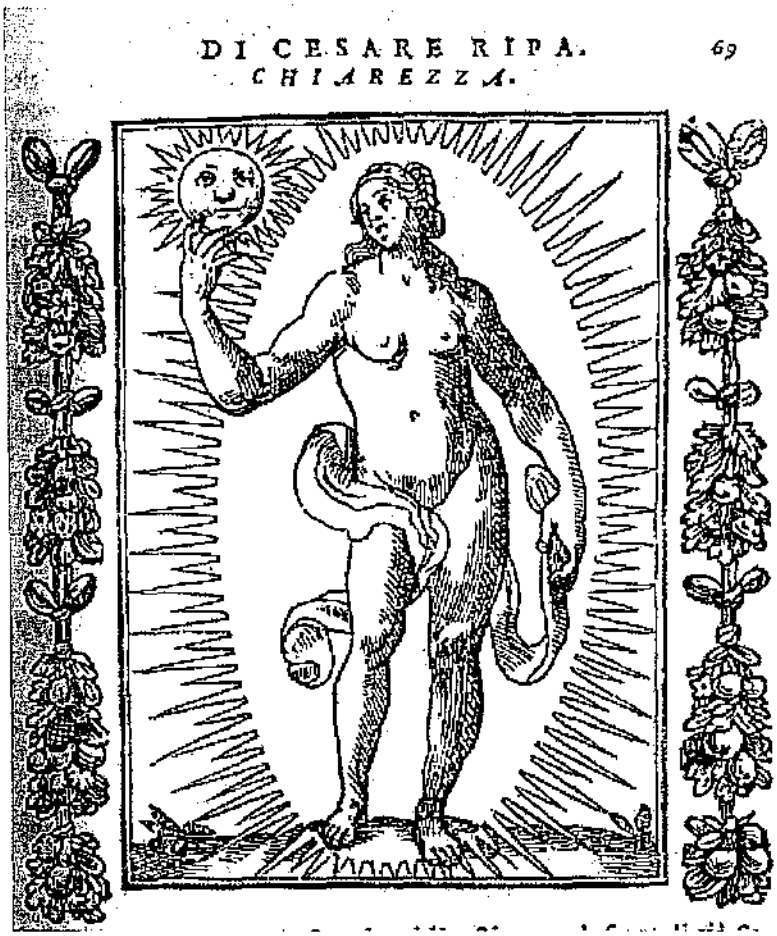

FIG. 8 Cesare Ripa, *Chiarezza*, 1602. Woodcut from *Iconologia*, 1602, p. 69. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

their own, should be considered within the context of the term Scannelli uses to identify the «*seconda maniera*». When discussing the "excessive brightness" in the later works of Guercino, Albani and Reni, he chooses to use the term *chiarezza*.[68] More than a common noun describing the brightness of a work, the term was illustrated in Ripa's *Iconologia* (1602) (FIG. 8) as a nude woman radiating light from an oval mandorla, who holds a smaller sun in her right hand. Ripa describes the allegorical concept as such:

A nude young woman, encircled by the splendor of all the bands, who holds in her hand the Sun. One says that if one is better able to see the middle of the light, that illuminates and makes the brightness, demands he the fame that man himself gains by nobility or virtue.[69]

The specific term employed by the critic not only describes the brightness of a work of art, but also the desired honor its production and style might bring its creator. In close association with "*purezza*", or "purity", the lightness and brightness can be connected with the allegorized notion of "immaculacy" or "whiteness"; an association not alien to discussions of the angelic Reni.[70] The desire for praise, like that received by the Reni, has in turn blinded painters to the "poison" that pure white brings to art in Scannelli's estimation.

The criticism directed at the artist by various critics, connoisseurs and artists illustrates that Reni's approach was not dominant and acceptable in the century. In fact, it seemed to those around him, that the artist had regressed from the model of the Carracci that was established to reinvigorate art and wrest it from the clutches of decay in which the later Cinquecento found it. On the other hand, it is important to note that, although unpopular-Reni's approach was blamed for a whole generation of stylistic degeneracy, according to Scannelli-such a style found an audience and was emulated.[71] In fact, at the same time Reni had regressed to aspects of his mannerist training, there existed strains of thought that supported, and even glorified, such an approach. To address the celebration or condemnation of an aged artist's work, it is necessary to consider the contemporary understanding of the physiology of old age and old-age style.[72] The two notions outlined by Sohm in his recent treatment on old-age style divide interpretative accounts roughly between the Aristotelian view, which focused on physical deterioration, and the Neoplatonic view that emphasized transcendence: «Old age has a history, one that revolves around two incompatible views: one of physical, mental, and psychological decline; the other of a spiritual liberation from our corporeal limitations».[73]

Old-Age Style: Physiognomic Transference

The effects of aging on early modern man were the subject of investigation by natural philosophers, poets, church authorities, and, relevant to this discussion, of primary interest to physicians, such as Scannelli. The physiological understanding of style-demonstrated by the construct of the *Microcosmo* itself- led critics to be able to deduce in what stage of an artist's career a work was produced based on the relationship between the artist's body and the artist's corpus of work: it was read as a dependent form of the artist's mind and soul. Thus they were able to engage metaphoric parallels to explain how the artist's life is manifested pictorially. The diagnostic training received by physicians, allowing them to determine an ailment by its visual symptoms, prepared them for the analysis of the pictorial arts, as well. Todd Olson has demonstrated that such training led to Giulio Mancini, another amateur-connoisseur and physician, famously concluding that a corpse had been used as the model for the Virgin Mary in Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*. As he noted, «For the physician and his intellectual community, aesthetic theory relied on contemporary knowledge of medicine».[74] With a similar training and background, it is not surprising to find Scannelli appending to Guercino's explanation of patronage pressure on himself and Reni an evaluation of the physiology of those artists under his review. The physician-critic, interestingly, does not elaborate on the detrimental stylistic influence of the *prima scuola* on these painters; nor does he argue for the influence of patrons' demands in a workshop setting. Instead, he relates that, as in the case of Francesco Albani, another member of the Carracci School, the later change to a lighter manner was due to the artist's age. As Scannelli writes,

> Although I believe such a cause [patronage] is sufficient in part, I dare say that it is not the safest, age being a more common factor, for once a drawing was shown to Francesco Albani, Master in charge of the Academy of Bologna, [made] by a man who for lack of sufficient sight appeared to have satisfied every other part thanks to excessive bright colors. On the first occasion, Albani told him, using his usual prudent wit, that it had snowed out of season, to let him understand that so much white was superfluous. By the same token, the winter of age is most likely the principal and most powerful cause of this snow.[75]

As in the case of Guido Reni, Guercino and Albani modified their later styles as a consequence of old age: having entered «the winter of his life» they resultantly painted «so excessively white that it seems to have snowed out of season». Quoting the Cinquecento physician and mathematician Girolamo Cardano (*Libro delle sottigliezze*), he concluded that painters should treat white as a poison.[76] In other words, as the artist's hair grows white and his skin pale from age, so does the lightening of tone carry over in his painting. Though alien to modern investigations, and seemingly too literal an influence, the methodology of Scannelli as physician was well-accepted and promoted in the scholarly and medical communities.

Early modern interpretations of old age were inseparable from the constitution of the universe and, subsequently, all elements found within. Following a system of correlations developed by Galen, medieval scholars had developed elaborate diagrams that grouped the four elements, humors, seasons, and ages of men into a quadripartite schema. In this system, the defining characteristics of cold-wet, water, phlegmatics and winter were related with old age.[77] The relationship between the two would have been obvious for physicians and art critics alike and explain the analysis of Scannelli. Moreover, the belief that physiognomy effects style had a long literary and medical tradition by the time Scannelli composed his work.[78] In the fourteenth century, we find an anecdote in which the poet Dante asks the famous Trecento painter Giotto how it is that his own children are so hideous, when those that he paints are quite beautiful. Always quick with a witty retort, the painter replied that it was because he created his paintings by daylight, but his children at night.[79] Later in the Sixteenth century, we find Vasari recording a conversation had with Michelangelo:

A priest, a friend of his, said:

> It's a pity you haven't taken a wife, for you would have had many children and bequeathed to them many honorable works.

Michelangelo answered:

I have too much of a wife in this art that has always afflicted me, and the works I shall leave behind will be my children, and even if they are nothing, they will live for a long while. And woe to Lorenzo di Bartoluccio Ghiberti if he had not created the doors of San Giovanni, for his sons and nephews sold and spoiled everything he left them while the doors are still standing.[80]

The anecdote reveals a physiological belief that lasted to varying degrees well into the Eighteenth century, which is that physiognomy is transferred to one's offspring as well as one's art.[81] Moreover, the relationships did not end with mere physical appearance, but were deeply connected to the subject's soul. The Neoplatonic Ficino attempted to discuss the connection between physical and spiritual beauty, illustrating this point. The relationship of the two he discussed in a letter addressed to his friends and titled «A picture of a beautiful body and a beautiful mind». In it Ficino referred to the "beautiful form" of a young woman and remarked that it was more effective than words at «calling forth love». As he explains:

Now, in order to reflect more easily upon the divine aspect of the mind from the corresponding likeness of the beautiful body, refer each aspect of the body to an aspect of the mind. For the body is the shadow of the soul; the form of the body, as best it can, represents the form of the soul; thus liveliness and acuteness of perception in the body represent, in a measure, the wisdom and far-sightedness of the mind; strength of body represents strength of mind; health of body, which consists in the tempering of the humors, signifies a temperate mind. Beauty, which is determined by the proportions of the body and a becoming complexion, shows us the harmony and splendor of justice; also, size shows us liberality and nobility; and stature magnanimity.[82]

The belief that the body is merely a reflection of the soul sat at the center of humoral and physiognomic theory. Vasari had referenced this belief in several of his biographies. As Vasari notes, when Michelangelo had made the acquaintance of the handsome son of Francesco Francia, «And on this same subject, when Michelangelo encountered the Francia's son, who was a very handsome boy, Michelangelo said to him: "Your father makes more handsome figures in life than he does in painting"».[83] Furthering the notion, in the *Vita di Michelangelo* that opens his discussion on the third and final stage in the development of the arts, Vasari introduced a new type of artist: the artist as beauty, noted by M. Rogers.[84] Not only could this genius endow his figures with a superhuman grace, his actual person possessed an angelic beauty suggesting divine favor. Among Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) abundant heaven-sent gifts, the author notes:

beauty, grace, and ability, so that, whatever he turns himself to, each action is so divine that he surpasses all other men, thus making it evident that it is a gift from God, and not acquired through human skill. This men saw in Leonardo da Vinci, who apart from physical beauty, which could not be praised enough, displayed infinite grace in every action.[85]

In the first sentence of his *Vita di Leonardo*, Vasari uses the phrase *celesti influssi* to explain Leonardo's physical grace, revealing a Neoplatonic origin for his belief that exterior beauty signals God's favor and thus an elevated interior.[86] Likewise, the German humanist Joachim Camerarius linked Albrecht Dürer's fine person and intellect: «Nature bestowed on him a body remarkable in build and structure, and not unworthy of the noble mind it contained».[87] In the Seicento, the interpretative method was utilized by Bellori, as he included physiognomic readings for the twelve artists he chose for his *Vite* of 1672.[88] Bellori believed that the individual styles of artists could be understood by examining their physical appearance. For example, he noted that Caravaggio's physiognomy was directly related to his "dark manner", which «always used a black ground or background, and used black also in painting the flesh, restricting the force of the lights to only a few parts of the body».[89] According to Bellori, this particular use of color was related to the artist's appearance, as seen in the frontispiece to his *Vite* (FIG. 9). As Bellori wrote,

These ways of Caravaggio were in keeping with his physiognomy and appearance: he was dark, and he had

dark eyes and black eyebrows and hair; and he naturally proved to be the same in his painting as well. His first sweet, pure style of coloring was his best, and in it he attained supreme merit and showed himself to be an excellent Lombard colorist, to great acclaim. But then he shifted to that other dark style, attracted to it by his own temperament, just as he was troubled and quarrelsome in his conduct as well.[90]

FIG. 9 Charles Errard, *Frontispiece to Life of Caravaggio*, 1672. Engraving from G. P. Bellori, *Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, p. 178. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

The order of transference that Bellori recorded here was that the artist's temperament, his humoral balance, or rather imbalance, in turn affected his physical appearance and behavior. The physiognomy of the artist in turn affected his style and appearance of the work that he produced. Earlier, Mancini had laid the foundation for such readings when he turned to antiquity and Galen to reconcile Leon Battista Alberti's influential model for art production with a medical definition of the virtuous body.[91] Galen had linked beauty to the perfect proportion of members, as in the fifth-century BCE "*Canone*" of Polykleitos, while health was the correct proportion of the elements and humors.[92] Brushwork, colors and humors were understood as inextricably linked. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writers used the words "humor" and "temperament" as synonyms because they explained disposition by the dominant element in the body. If the hot wetness of fire predominated, a person was choleric, quick to fierce action and emotion; if the hot wetness of air was prevalent, that person was sanguine, cheerful and pleasure-loving; if the cold wetness of water abounded, the individual was phlegmatic, slow in both mind and body; and if the cold dryness of earth was most common, the subject was melancholic, solitary and depressed.[93] The Roman sculptor Orfeo Boselli had discussed the necessity for balance in art in Book I, Chapter XXXVI of his treatise *Osservazioni della scoltura antica* entitled "*On the Necessity for Expressions*". Boselli observed that:

> Now, when these [humors] are in equilibrium, the soul is the perfect master of the natural powers, and according to the external forces is angered, perturbed, or rejoices. Because in the composition of the body, the elemental humors most often have one that has the upper hand, one face thus has a naturally melancholic physiognomy, another glad and another majestic, for which reason one can conclude that in the face one of these powers will be expressed either naturally, or

through external causes. Therefore, in making the face, one should first think of which of these affects is underlying, and to throw oneself into expressing that one.[94]

Because humors also determined skin color, "complexions" became an alternative term when discussing style and humoral balance. When Lomazzo became blind and abandoned painting for writing, he advised his fellow artists to mix their colors to make the skin of sanguine figures rosier, melancholics swarthier, cholerics yellower, and phlegmatics paler.[95] Scannelli was aware of the Milanese theorists work, and cited his works often in *Il Microcosmo*.[96] The engraved portrait of Caravaggio (FIG. 9) illustrates many of these beliefs. The engraver, following Bellori's instructions, has represented the painter with unkempt and disheveled hair, along with black, bushy eyebrows, mustache and goatee. Even the banner, on which the painter's name is inscribed, seems to be battered and warn. He also grasps the handle of his rapier and wears the Maltese cross around his neck. The presentation not only emphasizes the painter's behavior, but his approach to art. Alternatively, when discussing artists producing a vastly different style, such as the angelic Reni, Bellori states that the grace and elegance of his style derived from his appearance and comportment:

> Now, together with this master's noble and worthy inner qualities of heart and mind, of which we shall proceed to speak next, by God's will he was adorned externally with the properties of a well-formed and proportioned body, not at all exceeding average stature and size. He had a sound and robust figure and carried himself with dignity and decorum; a broad and magnanimous brow, lively sky-blue eyes, and a nose with a nice profile; his cheeks were rosy, which made them all the more pleasing against the very light coloring of his complexion. The same elegance informed the other parts of his body; he was so beautiful as a boy that Ludovico, his master, used him as a model when forming angels, for he was modest and shy as well.[97]

Whether it be the swarthy Caravaggio or angelic Reni, Bellori offers a popular estimation of their styles development based on their own bodies' natural components. And as the taxonomic approach to art theory of Scannelli was antithetical to Bellori it is clear that the belief that physiognomy affected style was not confined to poets, such as Petrarch, or physicians, such as Scannelli and Mancini.

Old-Age Practice: Guercino

Nevertheless, physiognomy was not the only factor that in his treatment Scannelli related to the later change in style of painters. Along with the affectation of coloring and tone, he noted that the physical aspects of aging affect the working procedure and motivation of the painter as well. As he stated:

> For it is appropriate that at the outset of old age, the body and the spirit are equally debilitated; which is ordinarily true for the same good Masters, find themselves in the youthful age accustomed to the study of the rarer beauty of subjects, and to the affectedly better naturalism, like those that find themselves with a robust body, and more pure spirits [...] with the major types ready in their minds, through which they want afterwards to further search for natural bodies [...] in order to appropriate the operations, not only of extreme light and dark, but also [...] a diversity of half tones in various forms, that they distinguish with different reflections the parts between them, and they represent to the eye a most exact imitation of the truth.[98]

The emphasis placed on the study of "natural bodies" that is common in youth produces a variety of colors and tones, from extreme light to deep shadow, which results in *uniformità*. *Naturalezza*, as it is championed, cannot be achieved with an overly bright local palette as it abandons the "uniformity" seen in nature. The polemic adopted by Scannelli here finds its roots in classical rhetoric in the examples of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the first century BCE, who related Lysias' orations to early, archaic paintings that were known for their simple and unblended colors and clear outlines; contrasting this approach was modern paintings that had nuanced color and an interplay of *chiaroscuro*:

> In order to clarify further the difference between the two men, I shall use a simile from the visual arts.

There are some old paintings which are worked in simple colours without any subtle blending of tints but clear in their outlines, and thereby possessing great charm; whereas the later paintings are less well-drawn but contain greater detail and a subtle interplay of light and shade, and are effective because of the many nuances of colour which they contain.[99]

The rhetorical model adopted by Seicento authors exploited this notion from antiquity that the modern, and thus superior, approach to art required subtle approaches to color and tone. According to Scannelli, the painters that best represent a proper usage of color scheme were the most celebrated Venetian painter Titian and his younger contemporary Veronese. In their "marvelous works", Scannelli notes that the painters demonstrated «a knowledge of different lights, including most delicate half-shades and various reflections, in order to produce the more beautiful and true naturalism».[100] Scannelli then returns to Girolamo Cardano, who served as a warning against unnatural brightness in a discussion of Guercino, to make his point on colors, stating that a painter must use «well-set out colors», for «the use of extreme white should be regarded as a poison [...] because it takes away the beauty of a work with too much brightness, and with less dark colors, that offends the contrast of shadows».[101] Alberti is also quoted, as noting a «similar abuse» in colors, whereby «those painters deserve much disapproval if they use white excessively, and black without any diligence, but should desire that white be dearer to the painter than the most precious gems».[102] If an artist followed the proper working method that included the study from nature and the proper attention given to natural bodies, such an artificial approach would be avoided.[103] Reni is cited as the source for such a method that was also given undue praise by «ignorant spectators» that view these works, who are «dazzled by the unnecessary brightness of pure colors». The unnecessary and undue praise must, Scannelli warns, be stopped by the learned to prevent artifice from dominating painting, as «they are not capable of distinguishing the artifice of the colors».[104] As in the case of Guido Reni, Scannelli finds that the misuse of color palettes is merely symptomatic of a radical change in working method later in Guercino's career. The new adoptions from the 1620s onwards, departing from his earlier style of deep, vibrant colors and *chiaroscuro* (FIG. 1), were marked by clear, even lighting, bright colors, sharp outlines, and attention to detail, along with an insistence on composing in a sequence of parallel planes on a stage-like space (FIG. 2). At the same time his style became increasingly painstakingly rendered, we find that over the next two decades there is a dramatic decrease in the number of preparatory studies produced by the artist. This is an extreme deviation for the *Centese* painter who began his career drinking in the style of Ludovico Carracci and Venetian naturalism at the Carracci Academy in Bologna.[105] The significance of life study encouraged at the academy as foundation of good art remained central to Guercino's preparatory process throughout his early and mature periods.[106] In point of fact, he inaugurated his own drawing academy in 1616, the Accademia del Nudo, continuing the practice as an instructor, which attracted students from as far away as France.[107]
The early drawings that we have from the artist, a notoriously proficient and prolific draftsman, illustrate a close observation of nature, often in the form of nude studies (FIG. 10).[108] Such preparatory studies in chalk and charcoal, with their gentle gradations of tone and delicate hatching, slowly disappear over the course of the artist's life, until, as Nicholas Turner has noted, we find in the last two decades of his production (1650-66) they are almost non-existent.[109] The technique was replaced by rapidly executed pen-and-ink sketches, designed not to capture the structure of form or the dispersion of light over figures, but overall compositional arrangements and figural gestures (FIG. 11). There is an evident energy and spontaneity that accompanies these later works that was absent early in his career. The artist, using an "economy of line", what Malvasia would refer to as "*guizzanti*" - meaning to «dart with a flick of the tail, as fishes» - would include only the necessary elements needed to identify a scene and the characters included.[110] Though a departure for the careful draftsman, the practice had been encouraged by Leonardo da Vinci to ensure inventive compositions that were revealed through the process of working, rather than work-

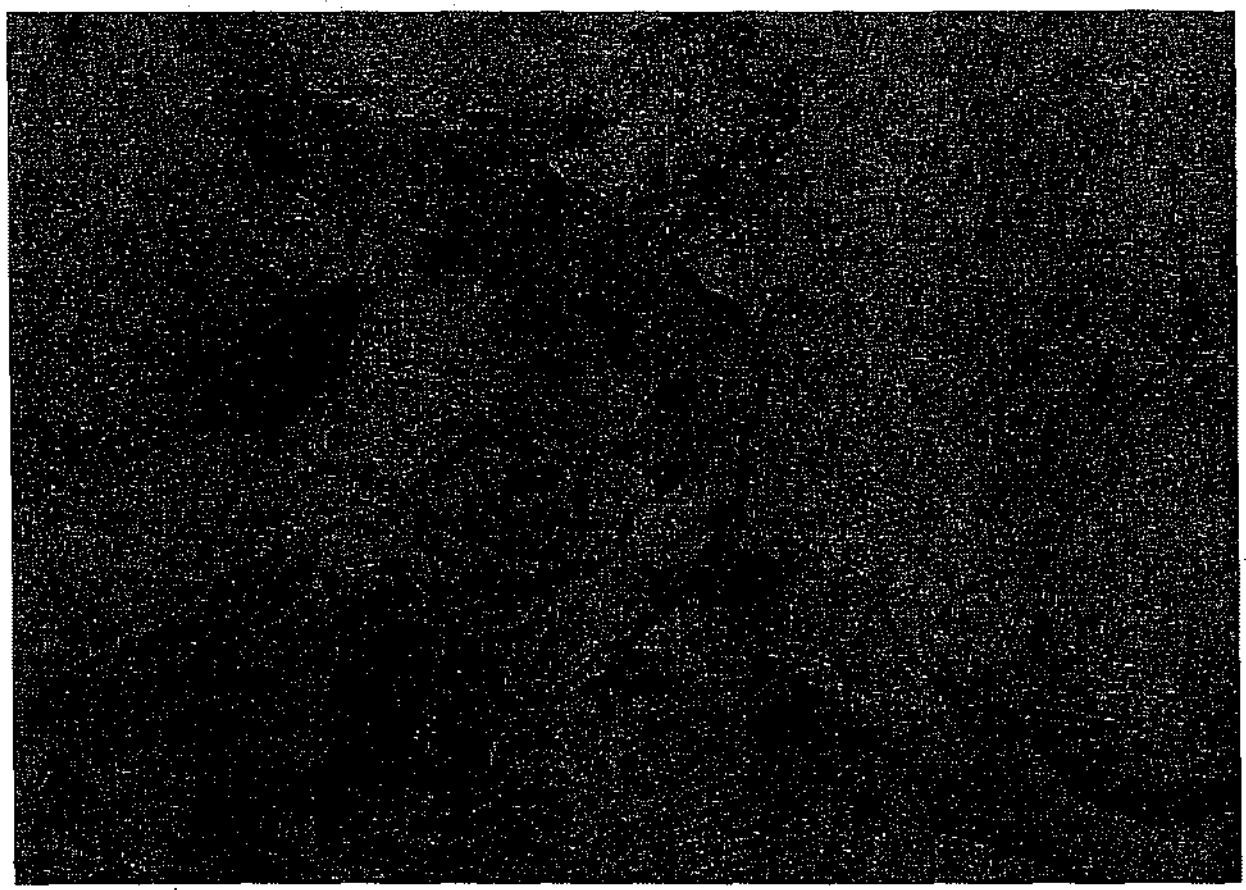

FIG. 10 Guercino, *Seated Old Man with Right Arm Upraised (Tithonus)*, ca. 1621. Red chalk on blue paper, 9 1/4 x 12 11/16 in., cm 23,5 x 32,2. Rogers Fund, 1970 (1970.168). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

ing from a pre-established model. As a passage from his so-called *Trattato* illustrates:

> For you must understand that if only you have hit off such an untidy composition in accordance with the subject, it will give all the more satisfaction when it is later clothed in the perfection appropriate to all its parts [...] and even though such shapes totally lack finish in any single part they were yet not devoid of perfection in their gestures or other movements.[111]

Carrying on Leonardo's suggestion for immediate changes made while working, Guercino reworked his compositions in process, visible by the many *pentimenti,* creating kinetic effects unseen earlier in his career. [112] As E. Gombrich explained, the «fantasies of his old age» do away with the careful preparation and observation of youth and reveals «a chaos of superimposed lines».[113] The recommended process to rouse «the mind to various inventions»,[114] advocated by Leonardo, revealed a repeated pattern in artists drawing styles in the following centuries where many adopted the method and his "*componimento inculto*", or "rough composition" that appeared unfinished.[115] Though not dissimilar in technique or appearance from Renaissance *non-finito* works produced in old age, Scannelli does not praise the painter from Cento for his mastery of his medium, learned over the course of a lifetime (how could he when it was only at the preparatory stage that these works appear "unfinished"). Returning to a physiological explanation, the physician pronounced that the artist, affected by age, is predisposed to the effects of aging, whereby he is «weakened by age and the extraordinary toil of his study». The careful preparatory procedures learned early in his career are bypassed, as «the types learned in the past are toned down in the memory»; resulting in, as the physical condition of the artist dictates, «weakened

sentiments and spirits». Therefore memory also becomes blurred, which is transferred to the figures of a work, painted as languid and vitiated. Scannelli finds, that in this late period «customary study» is ignored, in favor of demonstrating «the adulterated and distant truth with the strength of severe brightness, which is well-concealed by the dense mastery of coloring that good studies would simply desire by their advantage».[116] The estimation is overwhelmingly negative. Scannelli is aware of the artist's change in preparatory procedure, and understands that because careful life studies for each figure are not being produced, the final paintings are not well-grounded in nature; this overlooked step in production is hidden under a new bright key, masking the deficiency.

The Elusive Idea: *non finito*

Staving off the debilitating effects of aging in the twilight of an artist's years required the retention of their good judgment and taste. Though age caused artists to lose their keen eyesight and strict dexterous control, they were compensated in the Neoplatonic model with transcendent knowledge made knowable from a lifetime of transcribing the most beautiful from nature. The Neoplatonic associations and applicability to Scannelli should not be overlooked for the understanding of the "body of painting" conceived in terms of the microcosm-macrocosm pair is bound up in the Ficinian understanding of universal interconnectivity. The whole point of the

FIG. 11 Guercino, *Endymion Sleeping*, 1635-1650. Pen and brown ink, brush and light brown wash, sheet, cm 21,2 x 24,8, Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.171). New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

microcosm is its relation to the macrocosm, and the memory system organized around the microcosm implies participation in the memory of God. The end of art is the contemplation of God and the understanding of the divine, which is more easily perceived in old age.[117] It was within such a context that in viewing the art produced by the aged artist, early modern viewers noted that the Idea could be more easily glimpsed. In speaking of Michelangelo's "poetical style", the Jesuit priest Giovanni Domenico Ottonelli, along with his collaborator and painter Pietro Berrettini da Cortona, noted that in the artist's shift to his *ultima maniera*, or "old-age style", he shed the corporeal body to reveal the transcendent spirit of his subjects. In their *Trattato della Pittura e Scultura*, published in 1652, late works such as the *Rondanini Pietà* group (FIG. 12) are discussed in terms of their *non-finito* character:[118]

I do not want to leave out reporting what a great professor said to me concerning the most famous Michelangelo, who many times left unfinished [abbozzate] works in Rome; because they were so good that they serve as examples to other masters, nevertheless for him they did not succeed by most perfect satisfaction [...] it is possible that is it not an unusual nor indecent thing to abandon a consummate artifice [...] and to remake it according to the fullness of his total satisfaction: because this demonstrates that there is not much fault in the work, but instead much perfection, and very excellent is the Idea that guides it, which has formed in the mind of the master.[119]

The understanding of Michelangelo's later style as expressing his preconceived *idea* that is more clearly revealed by an unfinished technique was further discussed by Berrettini and Ottonelli in their treatise as they also found that the inability to complete a work, as evinced in the career of Leonardo, was related to the artist's inability to capture the perfection that existed in his mind:

He [Vasari] said that because of his knowledge of art, Leonardo found himself beginning many things and not finishing them, as it appeared the hand could not reach the perfections of artifice that he imagined: because they were formed in the Idea with some difficulty and many marvels, rather than with the hands, they [Ideas] were still more excellent than ever could have been expressed.[120]

Such impotence in the face of translating what could not be captured on canvas resulted, philosophically, from the nature of the conception to be transferred. Reni's stylistic development paralleled in many ways those of Michelangelo and Titian, where both can be seen as having a stylistic trajectory guided by a Neoplatonic approach. In fact, Malvasia continues in his biography to insist on the intentional method of Reni's late painting style after commenting on Correggio, he wrote:

The same thing can be seen in our day in the case of Guido Reni, who, as I mentioned earlier, also composed with studious and time-consuming effort, in accordance with his own extraordinary talent, in his own individual manner, and with the unique concepts that he extracted from examples of the rarest beauty. But often, especially toward the end of his life, not being able to satisfy himself with his concept, he would more than once paint out what he had begun, so that only with great effort was he able to finish the work in the way that he wished.[121]

Like the difficulty Leonardo faced in his compositions, Reni was seen to be unable to «satisfy himself with his concept». Though it is possible to dismiss such statements through the physiology of aging alone, the theoretical estimations cannot be overlooked. The forms, as conceived by the artists, could not be approximated on earth in physical form; the taxation of wrestling with unenmattered form results in frustration and creative impotence. The impossibility of resolving the subject-object dilemma by the Bolognese artist derived from his working methods, which illuminate his art-theoretical predisposition. As Bellori noted in his biography of the artist, even though he would make drawings from life, they would be used to «stimulate his beautiful idea, albeit he kept loveliness and beauty in the concept in his mind»[122] In his *Considerazioni*, Giulio Mancini made a similar observation concerning Reni's working method and approach to drapery, «which depend more on the imagination and the fantasy of the master than on the actual appearance of the ob-

ject».[123] Although Malvasia and Bellori would insist on Reni's preference for only the most beautiful models, sublunar examples were insufficient for his conceptual process. The most direct insight into the formative process of the artist comes down to us in the form of a letter to Monsignor Massani, chamberlain of Urban VIII, concerning *The Archangel Michael* of 1635. In the letter, Reni states that:

> I should like to have had the brush of an angel and forms of paradise, to form the archangel, and to see him in heaven, but I was unable to ascend so high, and on earth I sought them in vain, so I looked at the form that I established for myself in my idea. The idea of ugliness is also to be found, but this I set forth in the devil and leave it there.[124]

Although the case in point is an extreme example, whereby an artist wished to portray an angelic, non-earthly form, it reinforces the numerous accounts of the artist's intentions and how he set about transferring his spiritual *grazia* to his paintings.[125]

Overcoming Old Age: Theoretical Approaches

The accounts cited relate the desire in the case of each artist to capture their intellective conception and translate it into material form, with varying success according to the sources. Though often seen to have failed, the very fact that such diverse personalities as Michelangelo, Leonardo and Reni all strove towards enmattering a theoretical precept in their old age is telling. As Campbell related, the fear of physical deterioration on the part of the artist's abilities increased pressure on the image of the learned artist and, simultaneously, offered a solution: in old-age an artist could rely on theory when his body failed, maintaining the relevance of his works.[126] Lomazzo produced the most ambitious attempt in the late Cinquecento to establish a theoretical foundation for the arts, which formed the basis for pedagogy and remained an edition referenced by artists until the late eighteenth century. Lomazzo argues that artists, who base their styles on the study of theory, or the principles of art, are able to transcend the physiological effects of aging; styles based on rote practice decline in old age with the deteriorating of the body, but styles based on theory transcend the decay of the flesh and resist corruption.[127] The discussion appears in *L'Idea del tempio della pittura* of 1590, conveyed through the metaphor of a temple and, as noted, was influenced by astrology and humoral psychology.[128] The consideration of old age is broached in a section on the problem of

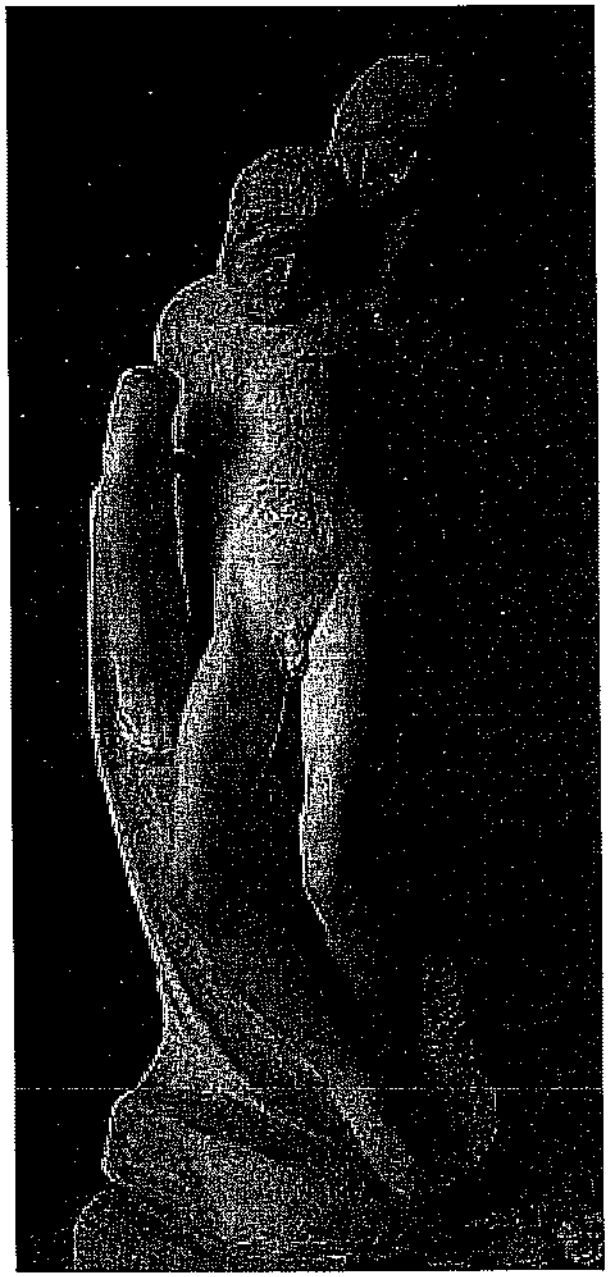

FIG. 12 Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Rondanini Pietà*, 1552-1564, cm 195. Formerly in the Palazzo Rondanini, Rome. Milan, Castello Sforzesco

working according to rote practice, which is defined as the unreasoned copying of other artists without theoretical guidance. Artists who have developed their practice based on theory, Lomazzo assures, never «lose the beauty of spirit and the keenness of judgment that serves art and refined practice regulated by theory».[129] In his chapter *De la forza de l'istruzione dell'arte e della diversità dei generi* Lomazzo argues that there are two ways of working: one by study, the other by imitation. The latter he views as mere copying of the works of other artists. He associates this vice with «*la pratica grossa e priva d'arte*», and with the aged body.[130] The Milanese theorist established that the power of theory through the metaphor of the body is as a union of the spiritual and the corporeal. Theory is associated with the soul and, therefore, with ageless immortality, artistic practice with the labor of the corruptible body.[131] The belief in the efficacy of studying the principles of art to prevent or stave off stylistic decline in old age can be related to the case at hand. Guercino would then be seen to have based his practice later in life more on theory than had earlier been witnessed. The only contemporary to mention that this could be the case is Scannelli himself, who argued that it was in fact his reliance on the theoretical approach to artistic conceptualization, not on calculated, rote practice, that defined his later style. Scannelli had concluded his section «On why artists had changed to the lighter manner later in their careers' by bringing together physiology, style, working method and economic motivations in the importantly overlooked concept of *l'idea*. The initiative taken by the younger artist to carefully study nature and desire close observation of sense-perceptible form, including mathematics, proportions and symmetry, gives way in the «winter of life» to «the ease of working with the more vague, and beautiful idea».[132] Criticism in the Seicento commonly referred to the «failure of the spirits» in old age. As Scannelli discusses the change in *gusto*, or taste in the aged artist, he reinforces its close relationship to the senses. This had earlier been discussed by Raffaello Borghini who attributed the stylistic decline in old age to the loss of *giudicio fermo* or "firm judgment", which includes "keen eyesight" and a "practiced and steady hand".[133] Borghini's concept of *giudicio fermo* relates to Vasari's understanding of *giudizio dell'occhio*, which brings the faculty of judgment close to practice.[134] Since *giudizio dell'occhio* relies on a union of the judgment of sense with performative skill, Borghini links the loss of *giudicio fermo* with the deterioration both of the senses and of manual skill. As Scannelli carried on Borghini's analysis, the effects of age on Guercino irrevocably influenced his *gusto*, or "taste" for what was proper, moving markedly away from "*esquisita naturalezza*" to embrace the artificial "idea" of Tuscany. The perfection of Correggio, according to Scannelli, arose from his bringing together of the strengths of the Tuscan and Venetian schools, a synthesis that served as a model for all later Lombard artists, such as Guercino. The school of Lombardy, following Correggio, had combined *disegno* and the *bella Idea* of Tuscany with the *colore* and *naturalezza* of Venice, with the addition of delicacy and grace. If one had preeminence over the other, perfection could not be achieved.

Scannelli's estimation of the late style of Guercino resulted from the conditions imposed on him both professionally and by old age: related to his physiological state, cold-wet, water, phlegmatics and winter, coalesced in old age to "dull" his memory, and with the deterioration of his faculties (mental and physical) the artist sought to compensate by adopting the Tuscan theoretical approach. In favoring the eternal essence of the "Roman Idea", his paintings lost the immediacy of natural coloring and his figures, now frozen as in a Classical frieze, became permanent, but lifeless. The preparatory stage of his production merely allowed the artist to work through the fantasies of his conception, and in not heeding the wisdom of the brain nor the nobility of the heart of the Microcosm of painting, as the skin of that body, like his figures, he became a lifeless growth no longer adorning the principle and necessary parts. In his estimation, Guercino had been blinded by *chiarezza* and the desire for praise (and commissions) promised by the laudatory Roman

approach; blinded by "whiteness" of age and "dulling" of the mind, he could not reclaim that necessary balance between naturalism and idealism reached a century earlier by Correggio. The appeal to the intellect (*disegno interno*) interpreted in the *non-finito* works of Michelangelo, and late works of Leonardo and Reni all lacked proper coloring, and therefore did not appeal to the senses and did not reference nature; the conceptual and intellectual approach replaced the measured *uniformità* of the Veneto-Lombard tradition. Consequently, the stylistic adoptions by Guercino later in his career, in the estimation of the Forlian critic, not only betrayed his Northern Italian compatriots, but demonstrated that the artist had been betrayed by his own body and mind.

Notes:

[1] P. Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*, Cambridge 2001, pp.19-34. For a discussion of normative aesthetics see: P. Crowther, *Defining Art, Creating the Canon: Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt*, Oxford 2007.

[2] «*A nostri giorni, non si costuma tra Professori di questa, che garrire tra di loro della maniera, del gusto, e dello stile, e questo nasce perche non sono bene stabilite le ragioni con suoi saldi principij*». G. B. Passeri, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti che hanno lavorato in Roma, morti dal 1641 fino al 1673*, ca.1673-9, Arnaldo Forni (ed.) 2002, p. 11.

[3] D. Summers, *Conditions and Conventions: On the Disanalogy of Art and Language*, in S. Kemal, I. Gaskell (eds.), *The Language of Art History*, Cambridge 1991, p. 183.

[4] As beauty is the artist's ultimate goal, Leon Battista Alberti asserted in the early Quattrocento that the traditions of mimesis and improving upon nature were both necessary for producing laudable art. L. B. Alberti, *On Painting*, J. Spencer trans., New Haven and London 1966, p. 43.

[5] In the 1930s Denis Mahon began research into the stylistic change evident in Guercino's oeuvre. In his famous treatment that resulted, Mahon first called attention to this phenomenon in two works by the Emilian painter: the *Elijah fed by Ravens* (1620) and *St. Francis* (1645). D. Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, Connecticut 1947, pp. 48-52.

[6] C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice: vite de' pittori bolognesi*, Bologna 1678, vol. II, pp. 358-386.

[7] D. Mahon, *Eclecticism and the Carracci: further reflections on the validity of a label*, in "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", 16, 1953, pp. 303-41; *Art Theory and Artistic Practice in the Early Seicento: Some Clarification*, in "Art Bulletin", 35, 1953, pp. 226-232; *Notes on the Young Guercino: II. Cento and Ferrara*, in "The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs", 70, 409, April 1937, pp. 176-189.

[8] Sohm, *cit.* (note 1), p. 24; E. Cropper, *Ancients and Moderns: Alessandro Tassoni, Francesco Scannelli, and the Experience of Modern Art* in J. Marino, M. Schlitt (eds.), *Perspectives on Early Modern and Modern Intellectual History*, New York 2000, pp. 303-324.

[9] Cropper, *cit.* (note 8), pp. 303-324.

[10] J. Southorn, *Power and Display in the Seventeenth Century: The Arts and Their Patrons in Modena and Ferrara*, New York 1988, pp. 28-71.

[11] Mahon, *cit.* (note 7), p. 322.

[12] F. Scannelli, *Il Microcosmo della Pittura*, Cesena 1657, G. Giubbini (ed.), Milan 1966, dedication page, n.p.

[13] The rhetorical device of *memoria* involves a speaker memorizing a speech for delivery through mnemonic images. One such powerful image for the classification of knowledge and its memorization was the microcosm. For a treatment of the rhetorical devices adopted by Scannelli see: C. Goldstein, *Rhetoric and Art History in the Italian Renaissance and Baroque*, in "The Art Bulletin", vol. 73, n. 4, December 1991, pp. 641-652; esp. 650-52; Vitruvius, *The Ten Books on Architecture*, M. Morgan trans., New York 1960, pp. 72-74.

[14] M. Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, S. Jayne trans., Dallas 1985, p. 94.

[15] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 11-21; discussed in R. Enggass, J. Brown (eds.), *Italy and Spain: 1600-1750*, [Sources and Documents in the History of Art Series], New Jersey 1970, p. 99.

[16] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 17-19.

[17] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 109-110. The Lombard perspective also comes from Agucchi, Malvasia, and Gherardi. These authors saw the "pure" style to derive its roots from the North, and the Tuscan style as defined by "artificiality", evidenced in its spawning of Mannerism. Mahon, *cit.* (note 5), p. 143.

[18] G. B. Agucchi, *Trattato della pittura in Diverse figure... da Annibale Carracci intagliate in rame...* Rome 1646, in Mahon, *cit.* (note 5), p. 256.

[19] F. Baldinucci, *Notizie de' Professori del disegno*, vol. 3, [1681], Florence 1974, pp. 56-71. Also see: O. Temkin, *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy*, Ithaca 1973.

[20] G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla Pittura*, vol 1, A. Marucchi, L. Salerno (eds.), Rome 1957, pp. 128-30.

[21] Z. Filipczak (ed.), *Hot Dry Men Cold Wet Women: The Theory of Humors in Western European Art 1575-1700*, New York 1997, p. 16.

[22] The source for such an approach could be derived from the anti-classicist Marco Boschini (who may have been involved with advising the Duke's agents about the purchase of paintings), since Scannelli shows in the *Microcosmo* that he is aware of the existence of Boschini's *Carta*, although the latter was not published until three years later. M. Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco*, A. Pallucchini (ed.), Venice-Rome 1966.

[23] Agucchi, *cit.* (note 18), pp. 256-257.

[24] Mahon, *cit.* (note 7), p. 322.

[25] «*non* [...] l*a tanto desiderata bellezza, che riflesso di supremo lume, e come raggio d'espressa divinità, la quale n'appare composta con buona Simetria di parti e concertata con la soauità de' colori, lasciata in terra per reliquia e caparra della* [*vita*] *Celeste ed immortale*». Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), p. 107.

[26] C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, New York 1970, pp. 40-42.

[27] For a discussion of Duke Francesco's interest in Corregesque art see: R. Lightbrown, *Princely Pressures: 2. Francesco I d'Este and Correggio*, in "Apollo", 1963, pp. 193-199.

[28] E. Mansfield, *Too Beautiful to Picture: Zeuxis, Myth and Mimesis*, Minneapolis 2007.

[29] Ficino, *cit.* (note 14), p. 88.

[30] For Scannelli's evaluation of the Tuscan school of painting see: Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 20, 273, 277, 304, 305.

[31] For a discussion of the critical vocabulary adopted by Scannelli to describe the Tuscan-Roman school see: M. Spagnolo, *Correggio: Geografia e storia della fortuna (1528-1657)*, Correggio 2005, p. 268.

[32] «*che lo spettatore di buon gusto, e di sufficiente intelligenza non può dopo la vista se non fuggirlo ed abbominarlo*». Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), p. 305.

[33] «*che se bene venga considerate all'applicatione de'maggiori Maestri di prima Scuola, pure però non possa,che restar contrariato anco in buona parte con la maniera il proprio genio*», *Ibid.*, pp. 358-359.

[34] M. Vaccaro, *Correggio and Parmigianino: On the Place of Rome in the Historiography of Sixteenth-Century Parmese Drawing*, in "Artibus et Historiae", vol. 30, 59, 2009, pp. 115-124.

[35] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 358-359. Quoted in: Vaccaro, *cit.* (note 34), p. 115.

[36] G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori*, [1568], G. Milanesi (ed.), Firenze 1878-1885, vol. 4, p. 112.

[37] Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 2, p. 111. Quoted in: P. Rubin, *Giorgio Vasari: Art and History*, New Haven 1995, p. 241.

[38] K. Barzman, *Perception, Knowledge and the Theory of Disegno in Sixteenth-Century Florence*, in Feinberg (ed.), *From Studio to Studiolo*, Seattle 1992, pp. 37-48.

[39] «*se l'ingegno di Antonio fosse uscito di Lombardia e stato a Roma, averebbe fatto miracoli, e dato delle fatiche a molti che nel suo tempo furon tenuti grandi. Con ciò sia che essendo tali le cose sue, senza aver egli visto de le cose antiche o de le buone moderne, necessariamente ne seguita che se le avesse vedute, arebbe infinitamente migliorato l'opere sue, e crescendo di bene in meglio, sarebbe venuto al sommo de'gradi*», Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 4, p. 112.

[40] «*disegnando in carta, si viene a empiere la mente di bei concetti, e s'impara a fare a mente tutte le cose della natura, senza avere a tenerle sempre innanzi, o ad avere a nascere sotto la vaghezza de'colori lo stento del non sapere disegnare; nella maniera che fecero molti anni i pittori viniziani, Giorgione, il Palma, il Pordenone, ed altri che non videro Roma nè altre opere di tutta perfezione*», *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 427-438.

[41] «*e per corroboratione di ciò adducono male l'esempio del Valorosissimo Annibale Caracci, ed altri buoni Maestri, i quali, anchorchè fossero di non ordinaria sufficienza, e forsi dotati di miglior maniera, hanno poscia dato a conoscere dopo l'osservatione dell'opere di prima Scuola in vece d'auanzarsi, haver in parte diminuito i loro straordinarj talenti, facendo vedere in ultimo più tosto con apparente artificio quello*», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 93-94.

[42] The pattern was noted in the 1672 biography of the painter by Giovan Pietro Bellori, who used Annibale, his favored artist, as a model for others in the treatment's series. G. P. Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, H. Wohl, A. Sedgwick Wohl trans., Cambridge 2005, pp. 71-114.

[43] Mahon, *cit.* (note 7), p. 322.

[44] «*che gli eccellentissimi Carracci furono stimati laudabili riformatori, havendo procurato a loro giorni, quando veniva esercitata la Professione con maniere declinanti dalla bella, e buona naturalezza di participare mediante uno studio industrioso gli effetti dell'opere più eccellenti de'migliori Maestri* [...] *& in un tal modo poterono comporre particolar maniera in eccellenza temperata, bella, e naturale, che fu poscia sicura norma de'futuri Professori*», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 109-110.

[45] «*ond'eglino con altri principali della loro Scuola si può dire, che habbiano servito, come temperate cute, e membrana universale per ricoprire, e terminare, il già ben formato MICROCOSMO DELLA PITTURA*», *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

[46] «*similmente nel nostro GRAN CORPO DI PITTURA possono servire per cuticula altri buoni soggetti, ma però meno principali di detta Scuola, i quali tutti unitamente concorrono in ordine all'esterno compimento di un tal composto, e così non restando in oltre, che aggiungere in riguardo delle parti integranti, e necessarie se non quelle, le quali solo hora appariscono per accidente, che sono alle volte nelle parti estreme l'escrescenze callose, e dure, ed altre escrementitie dell'ultima cuticula, come diversi fuchi, e somiglianti superflui abbigliamenti; le prime prodotte dall'eccedenti fatiche, e gli altri sóministrati alla superficie da persone vitiose per apportare sciocca bellezza a quel nobil*

composto, che fù già perfettamente compito nel suo essere dalla Madre Natura», Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[47] J. R. Martin, *The Farnese Gallery*, Princeton 1965; S. G. Carignani, *Annibale Carracci a Roma: gli affreschi di Palazzo Farnese*, Roma 2000.

[48] R. Spear, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, Sex, Money, and Art in the World of Guido Reni*, New Haven 1997, p. 275.

[49] C. C. Malvasia, *The Life of Guido Reni*, C. Enggass and R. Enggass trans., University Park 1980, p. 44.

[50] «*D'onde poi nasca, che lo studioso Artefice; il quale non intende, se non operare mai sempre in ordine all'avantaggiata perfettione, venga in fine per lo più ad esprimere con la successive eccedente chiarezza anco più debili i suoi dipinti fuori del proprio intento; dirà, che dopo haver più volte considerato, ritrovo finalmente, che varij possono essere gli accidenti, che vengono a causare una così fatta mutatione nell'operare*», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), p. 114.

[51] «*E discendendo a ragioni più universali, ed adequate; osservandosi simili mutationi non solamente nell'opere della seconda maniera del medesimo Guido Reni, di Pietro Paolo Rubens, mà anco alla giornata in quelle di Gio. Francesco Barbieri, di Francesco Albani, e similmente ne gli ultimi operati di Pietro da Cortona, i quali tutti essendo a nostri giorni i più sufficienti, e famosi Maestri, hanno poscia nel tempo del maggior grido inclinato il proprio modo di operare alla maggior chiarezza*», *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

[52] Malvasia, *cit.* (note 49), p. 134.

[53] D. Rosand, *Style and the Aging Artist*, in "Art Journal", 46, 2, Old-Age Style, Summer 1987, p. 92.

[54] «*Ma è vero che il modo di fare che tenne in queste ultime, è assai diferente dal fare suo da Giovane: con ciò sia che le prime son condotte con una certa finezza e diligenza incredibile, e da essere vedute da presso e da lontano; e queste ultime, condotte di colpi, tirate via di grosso e con macchie, di maniera che da presso non si possono vedere, e di lontano appariscono perfette*», Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 7, p. 452.

[55] For a discussion of the impact on the critical lexicon of the *pittoresco* see: P. Sohm, *Pittoresco: Marco Boschini, his critics, and their critiques of painterly brushwork in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy*, Cambridge 1991.

[56] «*e ciò adiviene perchè, se bene a molti pare che elle siano fatte senza fatica, non è così il vero, e s'ingannano; perchè si conosce che sono rifatte, e che si è ritornato loro addosso con i colori tante volte, che la fatica vi si vede*», Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 7, p. 452.

[57] D. Rosand, *Titian and the Critical Tradition* in D. Rosand (ed.), *Titian: His World and His Legacy*, New York 1982, pp. 1-39.

[58] D. Rosand, *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, New Haven 1969, pp. 34-6; Boschini, *cit.* (note 22).

[59] The particular neutral colors (mainly white, brown, black) that Reni chose as his palette for these later works were the cheapest of the pigments available at the time, and therefore substantiate Malvasia's account. Malvasia, *cit.* (note 49), pp. 134-136.

[60] «*Ha guadagnato assai, perchè le sue opere gli sono state benissimo pagate; ma sarebbe stato ben fatto che in questi suoi ultimi anni non avesse lavorato se non per passatempo, per non scemarsi, coll'opere manco buone, la riputazione guadagnatasi negli anni migliori, e quando la natura per la sua declinazione non tendeva all'imperfetto*», Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 7, p. 459.

[61] «*pare, che sia anco più valeuole ragione quella, che già in tal proposito mi significò il medesimo Pittore da Cento, venendomi a dimostrare ciò succedere per ritrovarsi di tal forma il gusto della maggior parte, e di quelli in particolare, che vengono a richiedere l'opere loro, e l'haver 'egli sentito più volte dolersi coloro, che possedono i dipinti della propria sua prima maniera, per ascondere (come essi dicono) gli occhi, bocca, ed altre membra nella soverchia oscurità, e per ciò non havere stimato compite alcune parti, coll'asserire bene spesso non conoscere la faccia, e tal volta anco l'attioni particolari delle figure, e così per sodisfare a tutto potere alla maggior parte, massime quelli, che col danaro richiedevano l'opera, havea con modo più chiaro manifestato il dipinto*» Scannelli, *cit.* (nte 12), pp. 114-115.

[62] G. P. Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni*, Rome 1672, E. Borea, G. Previtali (eds.), Turin 1976, p. 112.

[63] For instance, Guercino's income peaked when he was fifty-years old when he was making 2,750 ducats annually, and then began to decline dramatically once he hit sixty-years old. P. Sohm, *The Artist Grows Old: The Aging of Art and Artists in Italy, 1500-1800*, New Haven 2007, p. 14.

[64] «*E questo modo è stato cagione che molti, volendo in ciò immitare e mostrare di fare il pratica, hanno fatto di goffe pitture*», Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 7, p. 452.

[65] «*che per ritrovarsi raccolta di Pittori hodierni ad essi per ogni parte cari, e perché non vogliono, ò non sanno riconoscere sopra la vaga chiarezza de'colori, non cessano di palesare simili dipinti per li più belli, e migliori, che si possono osservare, e frà questi ritrovarsi soggetto per altro di non ordinaria veneratione, e debita riverenza, il quale non manca in occasione magnificare in estremo opere...che per non penetrare il recondito della Pittura, non possono, ne meno ancorchè vogliano, cavare la sostanza di quelle perfettioni, che in occasione riconoscono i veri intelligenti nelle compitissime operationi del supremo Rafaello, e nell'altre parti debitamente principali del già formato MICROCOSMO DELLA PITTURA, il quale dovendo comparire nel cospetto del Mondo, se non di fatto reale, almeno di forma al vero proportionato, non dovranno concorrere quelle parti, che sono insufficienti, e non poco lontane dall'apparenza del vero, e così ritroveremo non solo ostare sentimenti di tal sorte al ragionevole, ma anco alla commune de' più purgati intelligenti della Professione, i quali in tal caso*

sentono concordemente, che buona parte de gli Artefici hodierni», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 108-09.

[66] «*che sono alle volte nelle parti estreme l'escrescenze callose, e dure, ed altre escrementitie dell'ultima cuticula, come diversi fuchi*», *Ibid.*, p. 110.

[67] «*Onde potrà scoprire il giudicio versato nella Pittura quanto s'abbagli alla giornata copia de' volgari nel vedere alterati dipinti, i quali rappresentano indifferentemente fucate bellezze, che resi sodisfatti del primo cognito, nè valendo per inoltrarsi col giudicio alla debita intelligenza dell'opera, stimano solo per ultimo termine di buona Pittura una mera rappresentatione di più chiare tinte, che palesano ordinariamente lascive vaghezze, prive della necessaria proportione, e prospettiva, dipinte bene spesso a fine di palesare un'idea casualmente fabricata, et un'effigie, se bene ad un tal vero in qualche parte rassomigliante, priva nondimeno del sufficiente fondamento riesce poi anco da quello, che pretendono esprimere, non poco lontana. E per iscampo loro apportano tantosto l'esempio del famoso Guido Reni, il quale, come questi asseriscono, fu ricolmato de' più eccelsi pregi, e mediante la sua straordinaria vaghezza tirò a sè a guisa d'incanto gli occhi de' maggiori regnanti* [...] *Mà io professando adherire molto più al sodo de' buoni intelligenti, che all'apparenza de' volgari, dirò in tal caso, che il più, e meno del bianco, e nero non si considera nella Pittura che per accidente, e solo in ordine al debito compimento esterno del corpo naturale*», *Ibid.*, pp. 110-111.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] «*Una Giovane ignuda, circondata di molto splendore da tutte le bande, & che tenga in mano il Sole. Chiaro si dice quello che si può ben vedere per mezzo della luce, che l'illumina, & fà la Chiarezza, dimandaremo quella fama che l'huomo, ò con la nobiltà, ò con la virtù s'acquista*», Ripa, *cit.*, (note 26), pp. 68-69.

[70] Spear, *cit.* (note 48), pp. 102-115. The relationship between Ripa and Scannelli may also be educational, as both attended the university in Perugia.

[71] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 110-111.

[72] A. Seefe, E. Anselfo (eds.), *Aging and the Life Cycle in the Renaissance: The Interaction between Representations and Experience*, Newark 2000; M. Chojnacka (ed.), *Ages of Woman, Ages of Man: Sources in European Social History, 1400-1700*, London 2002; P. Thane (ed.), *A History of Old Age*, Los Angeles 2005.

[73] Solum, *cit.* (note 63), p. 7.

[74] T. Olson, *Caravaggio's Coroner: Forensic Medicine in Giulio Mancini's Art Criticism*, in "Oxford Art Journal", vol. 28, 1, 2005, pp. 83-98; esp. 89

[75] «*Mà io quantunque mi dia à credere, che una tal causa sia in parte sufficiente, ardirei però dire non essere la più sicura, che la maggiormente commune dell'età; perchè sicome una volta essendo mostrato un disegno a Francesco Albani Maestro soprastante all'Accademia di Bologna da soggetto, che per mancanza di sufficiente vista pareva col troppo chiaro haver sodisfatto ad ogni altre parte, li disse al primo incontro con la sua solita prudente argutia, per dar ad intendere la bianchezza superflua, che era nevato fuor di stagione; così potrassi ancora verisimilmente credere, che l'inverno dell'età, sia la principale, e più potente causa di simil neve*», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 115-116.

[76] *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118. For the section cited by Scannelli see: G. Cardano, *De subtilitate*, Basel 1560, Elio Nenci (ed.), Milan 2004, vol. 4, chapter on "*luce e lume*".

[77] The hot-dry group contained fire, cholerics, summer and maturity. Filipczak, *cit.* (note 21), p. 17. Also see: S. Jackson, *Melancholia and the Waning of Humoral Theory*, in "Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Science", 33, 1978, pp. 367-76; G. E. R. Lloyd, *The Hot and the Cold, the Dry and the Wet in Greek Philosophy*, in "Journal of Hellenistic Studies", 84, 1964, pp. 92-106.

[78] E. Evans, *Physiognomics in the Ancient World. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 5, pt. 5, [American Philosophical Society] Philadelphia, pp.17-29. Also see: D. Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago 1989.

[79] J. Schlosser, *Le Letteratura artistica; manuale delle fonti della storia dell'arte moderna*. 3rd ed., Firenze 1964, p. 348.

[80] G. Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, J. Bondanella, P. Bondanella trans., New York 1991, p. 479.

[81] The anecdote related here, actually derives from a classical source, the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, where it is attributed to the Roman painter Lucius Mallius. A. Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, Leipzig 1970, p. 2:2.10.

[82] M. Ficino, *Letters*, Book 7. Quoted in: D. Hemsoll, *Beauty as an aesthetic and artistic ideal in late fifteenth-century Florence* in F. Ames-Lewis, M. Rogers (eds.), *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, Vermont 1998, p. 71.

[83] Vasari, *cit.* (note 80), p. 438.

[84] M. Rogers, *The Artist as Beauty* in F. Ames-Lewis, M. Rogers (eds.), *Concepts of Beauty in Renaissance Art*, Vermont 1998, p. 93.

[85] Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 4, p. 15. Quoted in: Rogers, *cit.* (note 84), p. 93.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 94.

[87] J. Koerner, *The Moment of Self-portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, Chicago 1993, p. 143.

[88] Passeri on the other hand, working in the 1670s also in the Accademia di San Luca with Bellori, begins his *Vita* with an astrological reading of each artist. Passeri, *cit.* (note 2).

[89] Bellori, *cit.* (note 42), p. 181.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 185.

[91] Galen, *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, vol. 1, P. Lacy trans., Berlin 1980, p. 303.

[92] Olson, *cit.* (note 74), p. 89.

[93] Filipczak, *cit.* (note 21), p. 17.

[94] «*hora quando queste sono in equilibrio, è l'anima*

perfetta signora delle potenze naturali, e secondo li accidenti si altera, si turba, si ralegra: ma perche nella compositione del corpo li elementary humori per il più sempre, una parte prevale più dell'altra in loro, quindi è che un Volto è di fisonomia naturale mesto, l'altro lieto, l'altro Maestoso, onde si può concludere, che sempre nel Viso una di queste potenze, o naturalmente; o acidentalmente sia da esprimersi. Però nel far la faccia si deve prima pensare a quale di questi affetti soggiaccia, et alla espressione di quello che dimonstra totalmente buttarsi». O. Boselli, *Osservazioni della scoltura antica dai Manoscritti Corsini e Doria e altri scritti*, P. Weil (ed.), Florence 1978, fol. 23v-24r.

[95] G. P. Lomazzo, *Scritti sulle arti*, 1584, Florence 1973, vol. 2, pp. 262-269.

[96] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 16, 27, 29, 30.

[97] Bellori, *cit.* (note 42), p. 364.

[98] «*per esser il proprio anco della prima vechiezza il debilitare parimente in parte col corpo gli stessi spiriti; sendo che per l'ordinario i medesimi buoni Maestri, che si ritrovano nella loro verde età, sono assuefatti allo studio delle più rare bellezza d'oggetti artificiati, et al ricercamento de' migliori naturali, come quelli, che si ritrovano col robusto del corpo. Ancora gli spiriti più puri, e velocissimi, e le specie maggiormente pronte nella mente, mediante le quali vengono poscia al buon ricercamento de'corpi naturali, ed a palesare con più adequata puntualità in ordine alle proprie operationi non solo l'estremo del chiaro, ed oscuro, ma anco framezzate ad un tempo diversità di meze tinte in varie forme, le quali distinguono con differenti riflessi le parti fra di loro, e rappresentano all'occhio un esatissima imitatione del vero*». Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 115-116.

[99] D. Halicarnassus, *Isaeus*, 3-4, pp. 177-181. Cicero and Quintilian used similar parallels in their rhetorical theory. Cicero, *Brutus* 10 and 70; Quintilian, *Institutione oratoria* 12.10.7.

[100] «*che fabricate coll'artificio di detta mischianza de'colori, e non altrimente di pura bianchezza, come procurano dimostrare diversi Artefici alla giornata di gusto depravato, operando assai più in ordine al compiacimento del volgo, che per sodisfare al debito di buon Pittore*», Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), p. 117.

[101] «*dove tratta dell'ordine, che il Pittore deve tenere per ben disporre i colori, e sentiranno convenire all'opera la necessaria varietà de'contrarij per ornamento, e decoro della Professione, e finalmente, che si debba guardare il Pittore, come dal veleno dall'uso dell'estremo bianco,* apportando ad un tempo la ragione col dire, *perchè leva col troppo di chiarezza la bella gravità dell'opera, et insieme non meno oscura i colori, che offenda il contrario dell'ombre*». *Ibid.*

[102] «*che sono degni di molto biasmo quei Pittori, che si servono del bianco intemperatamente, e del nero senza veruna diligenza, che però desiderava, che fosse il color bianco assai più caro al Pittore delle pretiosissime gemme*». *Ibid.*, p. 118.

[103] «*E se per avventura nelle Pitture di questi, e d'altri ancorchè di gran fama, ed eccellenza incontrerassi di quelle, che in effetto facciano assai più pompa con la chiara vaghezza de'colori, che col mezzo di conveniente studio, e debita naturalezza, a guisa di scoglj nocivi dovrà in ogni tempo fuggire non solo chi opera, ma quello ancora, che viene ad applicare coll'osservatione della Pittura solamente per sodisfare al genio connaturale*». *Ibid*, p. 117.

[104] «*direi in fine, che a simili spettatori dall'ignoranza confusi, ed abbagliati dalla chiarezza superflua de'puri colori dovessero essere tralasciati dall'erudito senza veruna osservatione, perchè ritrovandosi ciechi insieme co la fortuna de'loro partiali Artefici, come tali, ed affatto privi d'intelligenza non possono, nè tampoco devono distinguere l'artificio de'colori*». *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[105] G. Feigenbaum, *Practice in the Carracci Academy* in S. Dixon (ed.), *Italian Baroque Art*, Oxford 2008, pp. 87-97.

[106] N. Turner, *Guercino: Drawings from Windsor Castle*, Washington 1991, pp. 86-87.

[107] S. Prasad, *Guercino: Stylistic Evolution in Focus*, Seattle-Washington 2007, p. 2.

[108] D. Mahon (ed.), *Il Guercino (Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, 1591-1666)*, Bologna 1991, p. 220.

[109] Turner, *cit.* (note 106), pp. 86-87.

[110] J. Brooks, *Guercino: Mind to Paper*, Los Angeles 2006, pp. 12-13.

[111] «*per che tu hai a'intendere che se tal componimento inculto ti reussira apropriato alla sua invention tanto maggiormente satisfara essendo poi ornato della perfettione apropriata a'tutte le sue parte. Io ho gia veduto nelli nuboli e'muri machie, che m'anno deste a belle invention di varie cose le quali machie anchor ache integralmente fussino in se private di perfetione di qualondue membro non manchavano di perfetione nelli loro movimenti o alter actioni*». L. da Vinci, *Trattato della pittura, Codex Urbinas Latinus 1270*, A.P. McMahon (ed.), II, Princeton 1956, fols. 62r.

[112] Brooks, *cit.* (note 110), p. 13.

[113] E. H. Gombrich, *Leonardo's Method for Working out Compositions* in idem, *Norm and Form* London 1966, p. 63.

[114] «*una nova invention di speculation* [...] *a destare le ingegnio a varie inventioni*». L. da Vinci, *cit.* (note 111), fol. 35v.

[115] Gombrich, *cit.* (note 113), p. 63.

[116] Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 115-116.

[117] Ficino, *cit.* (note 14).

[118] P. Fehl, *Michelangelo's Tomb in Rome: Observations on the 'Pietà' in Florence and the 'RondaniniPietà'*, in "Artibus et Historiae", 23, 2002, 45 pp. 9-27; J. Paoletti, *The Rondanini 'Pietà': Ambiguity Maintained through the Palimpsest*, in "Artibus et Historiae", 21, 2000, 42, pp. 53-80.

[119] «*Non voglio lasciar di riferire ciò, che mi disse un gran Professore intorno al famosissimo Michel'Angelo, cioè che più volte lasciò in Roma l'opere abbozzate; perchè se bene*

erano tali, che potevano servir d'esemplari ad altri Maestri, non dimeno à lui non riuscivano di perfettissima sodisfattione [...] *che non è cosa insolita, ne indecente ad un consumato Artefice lasciar, ò guastar un' opera, non finita, e rifarla secondo la pienezza della sua totale sodisfattione: imperoche questo dimostra, non che l'opera sia in se molto difettola, mà che molto perfetta, e molto eccellente sia l'Idea, che nell'animo hà formato il Maestro per condurla».* G. D. Ottonelli, P. Berrettini, *Trattato della Pittura e Scultura (1652)*, Roma 1973, p. 210.

[120] «*E quanto alla Pittura non mancano esempi, anche de' primi Valent'huomini; mà io li tralascio per brevità, contentandomi di ricordar solamente quel, che di Lionardo da Vinci hà scritto il Vasari. Trovasi, dice, che Lionardo per l'intelligenza dell'Arte cominciò molte cose, e non le finì, parendoli, che la mano giungere non potesse alla perfettione dell'artificio, che egli s'immaginava: conciosia che formavasi nell'Idea alcune difficoltà tanto maravigliose, che con le mani, ancorche elle fussero eccellentissime, non si sarebbero mai espresse». Ibid.*, p. 210.

[121] C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, A. Arfelli (ed.), Bologna 1961, vol. 2, p. 57; quoted in: Spear, *cit.* (note 48), pp. 299-300.

[122] Bellori, *cit.* (note 42), p. 367.

[123] G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, A. Marucchi, L. Salerno (eds.), Rome 1957, vol. 1, pp.134-135.

[124] Bellori, *cit.* (note 42), p. 367.

[125] Spear, *cit.* (note 48), pp. 102-127.

[126] E. Campbell, *The Art of Aging Gracefully: The Elderly Artist as Courtier in Early Modern Art Theory and Criticism*, in "The Sixteenth Century Journal", 33, Summer 2002, 2, p. 325.

[127] *Ibid.*

[128] «*Ma prima abbiamo da sapere che il fondamento di tutto, cioè delle parti principali e dei suoi generi, sopra il quale ogni cosa come sopra saldissima base si riposa, et onde deriva tutta la bellezza, è quello che i Greci chiamano euritmia e noi nominiamo disegno*». G. P. Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura*, Milan 1590, R. Klein (ed.), Florence 1974, p. 109.

[129] «[...] *mai perdere la bellezza dello spirito e la sottigliezza del giudicio che serve all'arte et alla practica sottile regolata dalla theorica*». Lomazzo, *cit.* (note 95), vol.1, p. 252.

[130] « *Ma poi, scemandosi naturalmente le forze del corpo e però non potendo più durar fatica, divengono a un tempo e vecchi, perdute le forze, et ignoranti, perduto in conseguenza la facultà di poter più imitar, sì che morendo senza alcun nome, vengono a render più celebre quell'altra sorte di pittori, i quali dotati dalla natura et instrutti dall'arte, benché in lor manchino le forze del corpo». Ibid.*

[131] «*La difficoltà grandissima della pittura si trova, e particolarmente nella prima introduzione, è causa che ella è molto meno intesa che forsi non sarebbe, se ella nel principio non ci si rappresentasse così difficile; e pur così necessaria è la cognizione di lei, che è come lo spirito e l'anima della pratica, talmente che senza lei non è possible che la pratica lodevolmente ci riesca. Imperoché l'una con l'altra ha d'aver quella convenienza che ha l'anima col corpo, perché da lei ne risultano poi effetti tali che, a chiunque li vede, paiono Maraviglie. Et è certissima cosa che la pratica tanto più si fa perfetta, quanto più è regolata dall'arte». Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 248-249.

[132] «*si stima Ancora venisse a palesare in opere di tal sorte la maggior prattica, e facilità d'operare insieme con la più vaga, e bella idea; e Gio.Francesco Barbieri uniformandosi ad un somigliante gusto, vogliono i buoni intelligenti, che nella mutatione habbia facilmente perfettionato la simetria con più decoro, e gratia, come il maggiore studio, e naturalezza de'panni*». Scannelli, *cit.* (note 12), p. 116.

[133] «*La scultura, e la pittura, rispose il Sirigatto, son arti difficilissime, che ricercano giudicio fermo, vedere acuto, e mano pratica, e salda, le quai tutte cose il tempo indebolisce, e consuma*», R. Borghini, *Il Riposo*, Florence 1584, p. 196.

[134] Vasari, *cit.* (note 36), vol. 1, pp. 44-45.

ABSTRACT

The author investigates the Seicento response to the stylistic change of Guercino, who later abandoned emilian naturalism and embraced a classicizing manner. The evolution was discussed and criticized by the physician-connoisseur Francesco Scannelli in his *Il Microcosmo della pittura* (1657). Through an understanding of Scannelli's alternate art-theoretical position, the criticisms leveled against the move towards *un modo più chiaro* in the oeuvres of the Carracci pupils cannot be understood reductively as mere distaste for the classical Roman school. Instead, through an interdisciplinary investigation into early modern treatments of aging and the processes by which artists attempted to overcome its deteriorating effects, Scannelli actually attempts to refute the success of the idea, leading to Neoplatonic transcendence.