

share with their followers.¹ Establishing further relationships between a man's character and his individual work, by the end of the fifteenth century, the phrase «*ogni dipintore dipinge se*» was in vogue. Girolamo Savonarola used it, so did Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, and, above all, Giorgio Vasari.² However, the writer who really put «influence» on the map, according to Martin Kemp, an authority on the subject, was Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo who developed the astrological model of influence, according to which the individual temperaments of artists can explain their particular styles.³

In *Idea del tempio della pittura*, 1590, Lomazzo takes the Neoplatonic understanding of the *pneuma*, or *spiritus* of the individual soul, to unprecedented lengths. In diagrams clearly indebted to Giulio Camillo's theaters of memory, the parts of art (proportion, motion, color light, perspective, composition, and form), arranged along the vertical coordinate of his temple, make up the walls, vault, and lantern. Artists and their temperamental affinities are arranged around a horizontal coordinate in the ground plan. As the *spiritus* of each painter's soul descends, it is subject to the successive influences of the planets in the particular configuration they occupy at his birth, in union with the four elements. Without delving into details here, Lomazzo granted each temperament a set of expressive qualities and associated that with each artist's palette, enabling him to bring abstract formulae to bear on individual artistic practice.

The word «influence» is sometimes contrasted with the word «intention». David Summers, writing on the history of that term, remarks that metaphors like «influence» and «development» point away from «intention» which assume that the work of art has a certain privileged kind of unity.⁴ In the Aristotelian sense, «intention» requires a positive act of analysis with respect to the purposefulness of something. Aristotle used the metaphor of a house, the formal and final cause of which are linked; Augustine used the term «*intentio animi*» (attention of the mind), associated with will, or «interested sight». Ar-

Claire Farago
Influence

«*Aries* (March 21–April 19): Love, intrigue and entertainment are all in a high cycle, so don't waste your time sitting around by yourself. Do whatever you can to raise your confidence, make new contacts or pamper yourself. You will come out on top.»

I don't put much stock in astrology, though I often start the day reading my horoscope in the morning paper that, along with tea and toast, offers a brief respite from the «news» of death and destruction in Iraq, the latest corporate scandals, more disastrous implications of climate change, and so on. The predictions are at odds with my daily schedule as often as they are in sync with it – in this morning's case (above), clearly at odds since I will spend the day «sitting around by myself» writing the article you («dear reader») are now reading.

«Influence» is a term tossed out lightly in introductory art history courses. However problematic it may appear to those who contemplate its deeper significance, it is as ubiquitous as it is annoying. «Influence» is a term that enables art historians to construct their narratives as a list of bequests without giving artists credit for making active choices in what they choose to imitate or emulate, while implying that art has an autonomous history of its own. Historically, the word «influence» has its origins in astrology. In the fourteenth century Francesco Petrarca discussed *aria* as the quality of resemblance that masters

tistic intention introduces the aspect assignable to the artist as the agent of the work: the real question, writes Summers, is how intentions are visible.

Yet is this not also the real question regarding influence – how is ‘influence’ manifest in the individual work of art? Both in the case of ‘intention’ and ‘influence’, the role of individual judgment is key – the artist’s individual judgment in making things and the spectator’s judgment in judging them. As unrelated as they seem to be in terms of the explanations they offer, ‘influence’ and ‘intention’ both explain the appearance of the work of art. And both explanatory models are structured in terms of the producer. ‘Influence’ implies a Neoplatonic cosmology, while ‘intention’ implicates an Aristotelian model of experience. There comes a point at which their different origins in ancient Greek philosophy are not clearly distinguishable – for they both involve magical thinking, whether the meaning of the work is explained by recourse to the inwardness of the artist – his intentions – or by recourse to some external factor – the configuration of the stars, the artist’s master, the girl next door – in short, his influences. In fact, positing of a direct relationship between the artist’s mental state and his artistic productions led to one of the most embarrassing chapters ever written in the history of the history of art. Racializing theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries asserted that what makes French art French, Dutch art Dutch, and so on, depends on the external expression of an inward state of mind. Mental capacity impresses itself on the material. The soul of the artist is expressed directly in the work of art. While this ideology may have been meant to shape the collective cultural identities of modern nation-states, its unfortunate side effect is that some peoples and their art are judged better than others according to European standards of value. Too much has been written about art history’s debt to racial science and Social Darwinism to warrant a rehearsal of the issues here. It will be sufficient to summarize by saying that no one has direct access to another’s mind.

Artistic production comes in many different shapes and forms – many of the cultural products associated with the term ‘art’ today do not fit comfortably under the rubric of ‘influence’ or ‘intention’. What if this discourse about objects and their makers is not significant to the culture of the object’s origin? Right now the question of whether art history is a ‘global’ enterprise is the subject of heated debates. One question on the table is whether a practice of distinctively European origin can be re-fitted and imposed on other peoples’ cultural production. We should first interrogate the art historical program for making visible objects legible, Donald Preziosi insisted in a critique of the discipline published in 1989.⁵ If the art historian’s task is to discover the preexisting meaning of the work of art – a work in which the thoughtful reader can read the character of the artist, as the word ‘influence’ implies, then all analysis consists entirely in evocation. And every work tells the same story. If, on the other hand, the function of the art historian is to question metaphors whose metaphoricality has been forgotten (such as the core metaphor that conflates the artist and/as his work), then there is hope.

In the case of Lomazzo’s temple of art, the question for us is how knowledge came to be formatted so that entities such as ‘subject’ and ‘object’ are visible and distinct. To restate the same concern in more general terms, the assumption that the intelligible is distinct from the sensible and prior to it resonates everywhere in art history’s interpretive practices. Yet it is through corporeality that we infer concepts.⁶ The artwork remains a medium through which concepts, intentions, influences, meanings, the signified, and so on pass.⁷ Instead of assuming that the work of art ‘means’ and the art historian ‘interprets’, there is the possibility of attending to the process through which meaning is constructed. Erwin Panofsky, writing about Iconology as an interpretive science, once expressed his concern that iconology might behave like astrology.⁸ It is time to take Panofsky’s worry seriously, and time to leave astrology to the morning paper.⁹

Notes

- 1 Francesco Petrarca, *Prose*, ed. Guido Martellotti et al., Milan/Naples 1955, p. 1018.
- 2 Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Ezechiel*, Venice 1517, fol. 71v; Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Urbinas*, fol. 45r; Albrecht Dürer, *MS Sloane 5230*, London, British Museum, fol. 14v; Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, Florence 1568.
- 3 Martin Kemp, «Equal excellences»: Lomazzo and the Explanation of Individual Style in the Visual Arts», in: *Renaissance Studies* 1987, nr. 1, p. 1–26, discussing Gian Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura*, 1590, in the edition by Robert Klein, Florence 1974. My previous citations to period sources are cited by Kemp.
- 4 David Summers, «Intentions in the History of Art», in: *New Literary History*, Winter 1986, vol. 17, nr. 2, p. 305–321.
- 5 Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science*, New Haven/London, 1989.
- 6 Amelia Jones, «Body», in: *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff, Chicago/London 1996, 251–262.
- 7 Preziosi 1989 (as note 5), p. 110.
- 8 Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Garden City NY 1955, p. 32.
- 9 I did not have a chance to speak of «love» and «influence», although (some debased understanding of) «love» is obviously a major component in my *Daily Camera* horoscope of June 7, 2007, just as «love of wisdom» is the central theme in Lomazzo's Neoplatonic explanation of individual style, indebted as it is to Ficino's treatise on love, as Panofsky recognized (*Idea: a Concept in Art Theory*, trans. by J. S. Peake, New York 1968, p. 122, citing *Sopra lo amore o ver convito di Platone*); both as cited by Kemp 1987 (as note 3), p. 20. Here I thank David Summers, Martin Kemp, Donald Preziosi, and Amelia Jones, for their mentoring and friendship. All errors of judgment are entirely my own.