CHAPTER FIVE: THE MECHANICS OF GENIUS

Logomachia: The mathematics of taste

As was said earlier, Garbett subscribed to a notion formally belonging to both theology and contemporary science which assigned a purposive habit to nature. That habit could be verified by the identification of an implicate order in the phenomena of nature. This assumption allowed Garbett to talk about artistic creativity in terms of the *discovery* of *laws* and *truths*. The notion of discovery, as opposed to invention, places the formulation of a precept upon an objective plane. With reference to the certainty of purposive order in the universe, discovery is considered *better* than invention. Discovery reserves the privilege of invention for a primordial external agent. This agent is God; his invention is Nature. All that is the artist's own is his perspicuity in having discovered, disclosed, deduced, or traced the principles, lamps, laws, truths of architecture that lay hidden within the hieroglyphs of nature or within the creations of true architects.

In Garbett's view of the artistic process, the artist does not wish his discoveries and consequent formulas to be dependent on his own imagination. Instead he wishes them characterised by the self-evidence inherent in the possibility of deduction. His own creative role is reduced to that of medium between his public and created nature. [1] The question then arises: Why does Garbett want this?

The desire to be a mere medium within a necessitarian scheme of things feeds on two interrelated traditions. One is science, the other religion. What they share in common is that the nature of their judgements are a-priori. They satisfy the desire for certainty, necessity and predictability. In the early nineteenth century science and religion were not mutually exclusive. This is amply proven by the flourishing of natural theology in the writings of William Paley and the

1. For a good example of such an attitude cf. John Dee, Essential readings ed. by Gerald Suster, London 1986, p. 30.

Bridgewater Treatises. Garbett wanted architecture to be based on the same certainties as science and religion. He wanted a *science of architecture*, or a *natural architecture*, just as Paley wanted a natural theology. The scientific theorist actively goes out of his way to deny his own creativity so as to safeguard his credibility. Garbett wanted to classify one aspect of human experience -beauty in architecture- into irreducible qualities which could measure *rightness and wrongness*, which could reveal truths and paths, merely by adding and subtracting:

The existence of professors of [architecture], implies in itself that they profess to have attained, by special study, the ability to do rightly that which others, without that preparation, do wrongly. That is, it implies the existence of such things as <u>right</u> and <u>wrong</u> taste in architecture, or, in other words, the dependence of this art on fixed PRINCIPLES,-otherwise the profession would be useless. [2]

Garbett considered it essential that the principles of architecture be seen as laws which pre-exist their formulation. The positive was being set up against the arbitrary.

The fall of the Gothic system had allowed the theoretical channels guiding architects to erode to the point where design choices became arbitrary. Architecture was no longer concerned with the substance of a building, but with clothing. Form had been artificially separated from content. This had caused architectural theory to slip into an easy system of reproducible forms. Choices were made on the basis of near arbitrary motives such as *novelty* and *antiquity*. As these were not considered by Garbett to be valid motives for the selection of forms, then what was the solution? How could this hollow and merely nostalgic historicism be

2. *Treatise*, p. iv. The modulations in typography are always the author's

stopped? The answer he proposes and which we shall be discussing in greater detail later on, was a new system of construction which had, as yet, not been allowed to develop into a style. If that system or style of construction would be consistently applied, it would generate a new style of architecture. A systematic analysis of nature and of past *pure* styles would make contemporary architects refocus on the real problems of architecture and make them forget about stylistic pluralism. The question was not the Hübschian one of *which style*? The question to be answered was, *What is style*? If contemporary architects could be made to understand of what an architectural style was constituted, how it erupted by necessity, then that understanding would make them realise that to achieve true architecture, they would have to refrain from trying to separate form from content, that is clothing from structure.

Prior to that, the creative process had to be understood in terms of necessary, as opposed to arbitrary developments. The mind of the artists had to be shown to be working according to a predetermined *plan*. A positive and rigid metaphysical substructure was prerequisite to the understanding of artistic progress. There was something called perfection and Garbett assumed it to be external to the perceiving subject, that is, it was an objective quality. The possibility of such an objective perfectibility related to a self-consistent system, was essential to his theory: A style progressed until it reached perfection; it then capitulated into decline. But if there is something called perfection, and if perfection exists independently of the beholder, how then to account for apparent and persistent differences in taste? Garbett had a solution to that:

`There is,' says a proverb, `no disputing about taste,' i.e. affectations of the palate or other senses. It is far otherwise with Taste - another word for sound and cultivated sense, judgement, and perception of fitness. This is a most legitimate, instructive, and fertile subject for useful discussion and

conclusive argumentation. Most of the differences that appear between persons of acknowledged good taste will be found on examination to arise from their different acceptations of the same words, and to vanish when these words are defined and carefully limited to one meaning. [3]

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3. He goes on: *Thus a late writer* [Ruskin, *Seven Lamps*, Section XIX, in "The Lamp of Beauty,"] *on architecture lays this down as `a principle of common sense. Wherever you can rest, there decorate. Where rest is forbidden, so is beauty.' Now, taking these words in their accustomed meaning, the latter part of the statement is very disputable, since common sense and the observation of nature fail in discovering that beauty is forbidden anywhere, or in any circumstance; but when we learn that this word, as used by the author, is synonymous with ornament or decoration, our objection vanishes.* In: *Treatise*, p. v-vi He later goes on to deny the interchangeability of beauty and ornament.

The passage is part of a long polemical tradition concerning the nature of taste. The problem, here, is not the definition of taste however. The problem is the definition of words in general. Garbett is not bothered about aesthetics, he is worried about semantics. That is, as far as the two can be separated. The passage just quoted was directly inspired on Reynolds' Seventh Discourse:

The common saying that tastes are not to be disputed, owes its influence, and its general reception, to the same error which leads us to imagine this faculty of too high an original to submit to the authority of an earthly tribunal. (...) We often appear to differ in sentiments from each other, merely from the inaccuracy of terms, as we are not obliged to speak always with critical exactness. [4]

Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and*

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4. Reynolds (1907) p. 95-96.

the Beautiful (1757) had also started with similar desires to standardise meaning. [5] All of these emphatic demands for univocality descend directly from Locke's plea in his physiology of the human understanding and more distantly and less intentionally from Hobbes' work in the same field. [6]

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5. In the preface to the first edition Burke writes of his motives: *The author...found that he was far from having any thing like an exact theory of our passions, or a knowledge of their genuine sources; he found that he could not reduce his notions to any fixed or consistent principles; and he had remarked that others lay under the same difficulties. He observed that the ideas of the sublime and the beautiful were frequently confounded; and that both were indiscriminately applied to things greatly differing, and sometimes of natures directly opposite.... Such a confusion of ideas must certainly render all our reasonings upon subjects of this kind extremely inaccurate and inconclusive. Could this admit of any remedy, I imagined it could only be from a diligent examination of our passions in our own breasts; from a careful survey of the properties of things which we find by experience to influence those passions; and by a sober and attentive investigation of the laws of nature, by which those properties are capable of affecting the body, and thus of exciting our passions. If this could be done, it was imagined that the rules deducible from such an inquiry might be applied to the imitative arts, and to whatever else they concerned, without much difficulty*. Edmund Burke (1987) p. 1.

6. The phrase is Kant's: *In recent times the hope dawned upon us of seeing this dispute settled, and the legitimacy of her claims established by a kind of* ***Physiology*** *of the human understanding -that of the celebrated Locke*. Immanuel Kant (1969) p. 2. For Locke on words see his *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Esp. Book III, chapters IX-XI.

In the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Locke recounts resolving an argument with his colleagues about whether any liquor passed through the filaments of the nerves. [7] The argument was nullified as soon as everyone present was agreed on the definition of a liquor. The point of this illustration was to show that there would be general philosophical consensus as soon as the Babylonian curse was lifted. People not only spoke in different tongues but also with different meanings. Looseness of terminology was seen by Locke as the main cause of metaphysical obstructions. These obstructions were made even worse by the individual fastening of meaning. Personalised dictionaries, when undeclared, could create impenetrable dams of exclusion, hard circumferences of meaning which would obstruct the easy flow of discourse, causing everybody to be talking at crossed purposes. In the end Locke was able to resolve the argument about liquor and nerves by forcing everyone to declare their dictionaries. Locke's *essay* provided many with the impetus to quantify and standardise meanings at the outset of their theory. It must be remembered that this tendency was a response to the metaphysical implications of Galilean and Newtonian physics. Science had revealed how useful exactness and quantification was and had inspired a mechanical vision of the universe. [8] Locke had worked out the implications of such a natural order for the human understanding and one of his many bequests to the nineteenth century was the desire for a mathematics of meaning to

7. *The debate having been managed a good while, by variety of arguments on both sides, I (who had been used to suspect, that the greatest part of disputes were more about the signification of words than a real difference in the conception of things) desired, that, before they went any further on in this dispute, they would first examine and establish amongst them, what the word liquor signified. (...) ..there was no one there that thought not himself to understand very perfectly what the word liquor stood for; which I think, too, none of the most perplexed names of substances. However..upon examination [they] found that the signification of that word was not so settled or certain as they had all imagined; but that each of them made it a sign of a different complex idea. This made them perceive that the main of their dispute was about the signification of that term; and that they differed very little in their opinions concerning some fluid and subtle matter passing through the conduits of the nerves; though it was not so easy to agree whether it was to be called liquor or no, a thing, which, when considered, they thought it not worth the contending about*. Locke, *Essay*, III, IX, 16.

8. *Specifications*, § X.

create the possibility of a semantic and/or moral calculus:

I am bold to think, writes Locke, *that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics: since the precise real essence of the things moral words stand for may be perfectly known, and so the congruity and incongruity of the things themselves be certainly discovered; in which consists perfect knowledge.*[9]

The possibilities of referring ethical discourse to precise external standards, provided a strong impetus to Garbett's scientification of art theory. The ideal, as he envisioned it, would be to sharpen words to such a degree that one would ultimately be able to *deduce the complete Doric order from simply understanding the principle of contrast.*[10]

Garbett's solution to the problem of taste and subjectivism was simply to deny that any intrinsic difference in Taste between individuals was possible. Taste was the *perception* of fitness, its discovery. Taste was not dependent on whim and invention. A quality such as propriety could be assumed external, pertaining to the object, so that individual differences in perception needed only small semantic adjustments to align themselves along constant values. Taste was a matter of overcoming communication difficulties, of conforming each individual's metaphysical landscape to universally valid standards, instituted and maintained by way of a social contract. To assume an intrinsic difference in the perception of individuals was to deny even the possibility of communication. Such a position would create greater philosophical problems than it could get rid of in the attempt to explain away any intersubjective differences in Taste.

Univocality would level the subjective element in such a complex issue as aesthetics and make it conform to rules and axioms as simple as those of mathematics. The phenomena of nature, or rather the values inherent in them could then be considered both positive and

9. Locke, *Essay*, III, XI, 15-16.

10. *Treatise*, p. 142.

permanent. Only language was arbitrary and whimsical. Language was the cause of all dissent. Once an exact mathematical univocality was established, all misunderstandings would be cleared up and all differences of opinion would dissolve into a uniform physical landscape of objective references which had always existed but which had hitherto simply been veiled by wilfulness and ignorance.

Principles and the mechanics of genius

In the light of the above it is possible to defend the idea of genius as part of a mechanical operation. Vitruvius concludes the preface to his emperor with the claim that he has succeeded in disclosing (aperui) all the principles of architecture. [11] The act of disclosure specifically implies a prior and concealed existence of principles, presupposing an external reality to which a key exists. At the same time the word *all*, precludes any further movement on the subject. Whatever the motive for such a wildly confident claim, and whatever the spirit in which such a claim has to be taken, the shift in Garbett's position in relation to that of Vitruvius consciously exhibits the prudence of an acquired scientific attitude: Garbett did not pretend to *state all the principles now known in the history of architecture, nor perhaps even the most important of them.*[12] He had a narrower purpose for his book:

It rather aims to dwell on those [principles] which are most neglected in the present (notoriously defective) practice of this art. [13]

Vitruvius could see little room for artistic progress, nor was he particularly looking for it. His theory proposes an academic

11. *Namque his voluminibus aperui omnes disciplinae rationes.* F. Granger (1931) translates the passage with *In the Following books I have expounded a complete system of architecture*. p. 4; Fensterbusch (1968) translates the passage with: *ich habe in diesen Büchern alle Lehren der Baukunst dargelegt.* p. 23; Morris Hicky Morgan (1914): *In the Following books I have disclosed all the principles of the art.* p. 4.

12. *Treatise*, p. v-vi.

13. *Treatise*, p. v-vi. Ruskin, similarly does not pretend that *all, or even the greater number of, the principles necessary to the well-being of the art, are included in the inquiry*. Ruskin, *Seven Lamps*, p. 27. Interestingly enough, Bartholomew, with his encyclopaedic tendencies, does not allow this point to come forward. His striving is for completeness.

historicism referring back to permanent values embodied in the image of Greece. Garbett, on the other hand, was about to propose a system of building from which a new style of architecture could arise sometime in the future. To maintain a sense of control over that future, theoretical discourse had to be provided with a model for artistic progress which followed an ordered path into the unknown. This model arranges artistic principles according to an anabatical ladder or chain. Artistic discovery thus becomes subject to rigid procedures of discovery, but which, unlike Vitruvius, does not preclude the possibility of future change and development:

The principles of Taste in Architecture, as in every other fine art, can never be all elicited: if they could, the art would cease to be a fine art: it would no longer afford a field for genius, which consists in the discovery and practice of principles previously unknown. (...) Every principle in Art (unlike one in science) has to be discovered twice; first, by the artist of genius who introduces it into the practice of his art, but would be quite unable to state or explain it in words; and secondly, by the critic who translates it into verbal language, and thereby makes it part of the theory of art. Many centuries may elapse between these two discoveries of the same principle: when at length it is absorbed into the theory of art, it becomes common property, and the practice of it ceases to be a mark of genius, for genius consists in outstripping theory. The advance of theory, however, does not narrow the field of genius, but urges it on into a higher sphere. As its secrets are, one by one, wrested from it, so it must wrest others from nature. [14]

One must not immediately infer that scientific principles according to Garbett were considered to be somehow different to artistic principles. The fact that the one needs to be discovered twice while the other is discovered only once does not indicate a fundamental difference

14. *Treatise*, p. v. Compare Reynolds' "Sixth Discourse"

between art and science. Both try to overcome and unfold nature. Instead the distinction between a scientific and an artistic principle indicates the basic similarity between the roles of art-theorist and the scientist. The scientist has set about unravelling the divine, his action is that of understanding and representing. The theorist of art is in this sense a scientist, the two only differ in the object of their interest. The art- or architectural theorist has for his field of interest the productions of man, while the scientist has for his field of interest the productions of nature. But when the productions of man are pure and truthful they obey the laws of nature, as was the case with the Greek and Gothic architects.

Organicism and the use of art

The most frequent criticism of science and scientific procedure during the early part of the nineteenth century, concerned the separation of entities which many felt should be seen as one whole. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had insisted on the importance of a conception of the world whereby the whole was allowed to remain in tact. [15] His ideas go some way to represent the doubts and hesitations to which the appeal of science was subject during this period. On the one hand science had infused all inquiry with a desirable measure of objectivity: setting external standards by which things could be quantified and their relations measured. This had obvious advantages for the normative sciences. On the other hand, science was successful in dislocating the world into fragments, instituting differences without referring them back to a greater resemblance.

That fragmentation was not all due to the exigencies of science however. In some ways science could be seen to support an organic world-view. In 1831 Peter Legh had identified a crisis in contemporary architecture which, he said, lacked dignity

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15.Stephen Prickett (1976) p. 2. This book was kindly recommended to me by Caroline van Eck.

because of an absence of system. [16] The desire for system involved Legh in a rather interesting syncretic eclecticism reminiscent of Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Diderot: [17]

Legh's objective was to establish *a regular, systematic, universal, and scientific arrangement of important theories, well weighed, compared, and modified by each other, that can alone establish the restoration of architecture..*[18]

Legh proposed a systematisation of all systems, a synthesis of all the best parts of earlier architectural theories. This super-theory, a music of the eye as he called it, was justified by a direct analogy to science:

In any science, all the leading and important principles intimately depend on one another; and (..) they are excellent only in respect of their relative use and importance. [19]

Legh's eclecticism was intended to bring together all the *true* principles of architecture, from whatever source. Their truth would guarantee their interdependence and their interdependence would in turn indicate their truth. In other words, science was seen to be a system which supported an integrated view of the world.

There is no evidence that Garbett had read Legh. If he had, he would certainly have approved of this idea. As it is, Garbett practised what Legh preached. Garbett's system is the result of a conscious eclecticism, a bricolage-critique of previous theorists. The guiding principle in this critique postulates that the interdependence of principles is itself an indication of their validity.

16. *If system then be all, that an art requires to bring it to perfection, how lamentable it is that so noble an art as Architecture should, in modern days, be without system.* Peter Legh (1831) p. ix.

17.cf. Peter Collins (1965) p. 17.

18.Legh (1831) p. 25.

19.Ibidem.

The important analogy here is the one where art is seen as equivalent to nature. The interdependence of the laws of nature is paradigmatic for art. This in fact can be defined as one aspect of an organic approach to art. Garbett's organicism may in fact be related to the Germanic idealism of Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle [20] if only because they had directly influenced the development of transcendentalism in America. [21] Apart from the fact that Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay on *Art* provided Garbett with a small but necessary insight for the *denouement* of the first chapter of the *Treatise*, and despite Garbett's dismissive remarks about Emerson's qualities as a philosopher, the essay on *Art* obviously moulded much of Garbett's attitude to the relation between art and nature.

Emerson's preliminary thesis in the essay on *Art* is that the Kantian distinction between beauty and use is detrimental to sound ethics. Emerson allowed that the act of semantic distinction was responsible for making human creativity possible in the first place. But the effect of this was that it put art on the same level as science. Emerson conceived the proper purpose of art to be similar to that of science, namely, to further the understanding of nature. [22] This led

20.cf. Willey (1972), also Orsini (1964, 1969 and 1973); J. Benziger (1951) 24-48; C. Howard (1980); G. Mackenzie (1939). More recent literature on Coleridge's organicism is Prickett (1970) and for the most penetrating discussion of organicism in nineteenth century architecture see Van Eck (1994)

21.On the influence of Coleridge and Carlyle on Emerson see Thomas Krusche (1987) & David van Leer (1986).

22. *The virtue of art*, writes Emerson, *lies in detachment, in sequestering one object from the embarrassing variety. Until one thing comes out from the connection of things, there can be enjoyment, contemplation, but no thought...(...) It is the habit of certain minds to give an all-excluding fullness to the object, the thought, the word they alight upon, and to make that for the time the deputy of the world. These are the artists, the orators, the leaders of society. The power to detach and to magnify by detaching, is the essence of rhetoric in the hands of the of the orator and the poet. This rhetoric, or power to fix the momentary eminency of an object, -so remarkable in Burke, in Byron, in Carlyle,- the painter and sculptor exhibit in colour and stone. The power depends on the depth of the artist's insight of that object he contemplates. For every object has its roots in central nature, and may of course be so exhibited to us as to represent the world.*

Emerson to try to diminish the philosophical gap between nature and culture. Such a gap assumes that culture, as represented by the productions of man, is somehow intrinsically different to nature, as represented by the productions of God and the animals and other forms of life. Emerson was determined to see good art as an expression of natural law:

What is man but nature's finer success in self-explication?.. and what is his speech, his love of painting, love of nature but a still finer success? [23]

The processes of good art are identical to the processes of nature. Good art is man's attempt at divine creation. Art can therefore unfold nature. The relationship between man and art approaches the relationship between God and Nature. It is not for nothing that the good artist is often labelled divine:

A true announcement of the law of creation, writes Emerson again, *if a man were found worthy to declare it, would carry art up into the kingdom of nature, and destroy its separate and contrasted existence.* [24]

This is the program of Garbett's *Treatise*. His primary objective is to find an architecture which is completely founded on natural law. As far as Emerson is concerned, this justifies a complete and rigorous organicism with regard to art. It also makes art supplementary and even secondary to nature. Emerson's essay on art is in fact an essay on nature. Emerson's organicism leads to a function for art which is ethical and didactic. The highest function of art is to teach what is natural. Garbett accepted that as we shall see when discussing his concepts of the architectural polite and architectural poetry.

Therefore each work of genius is the tyrant of the hour, and concentrates attention on itself. Emerson (1883) p. 78.

23.Emerson (1883) p.77.

24.Emerson (1883) p. 81.

Back to genius

The difference between the artist and the scientist or art-theorist is best expressed by the role played by language in their respective activities. Artistic genius relies on a sharp division between doing and saying, between practice and theory. Artistic genius is the human embodiment of a *natura naturans* and, as such, purely performative. In its search for expression, artistic genius paradoxically outstrips nothing but language: it is silent in that it does not have the tools to perform a constative translation of what it does. Moving and rupturing the borders of experience, genius is unable to describe and analyse what it comes across or what it does or makes. The artist cannot represent his work of art in any other way but in the medium the artist has chosen for his or her mode of expression. The artist, does not *understand* his work of art in terms of prescriptions to reproduce his magic touch:

[Principles] are the secrets of great artists, kept secret, not from any selfish motive, but because artists, seldom much skilled in the use of verbal language, can rarely translate into that language even the principles with which they are most imbued. Nay, the most important of these are often of so refined and delicate a nature as hardly to admit of statement in words. `Yet,' says Sir Joshua Reynolds, `It does not follow but that the mind may be put into such a train as to perceive, by a kind of scientific sense, that propriety which words, particularly words of unpractised writers such as we are, can but feebly suggest'. [25]

The postulation of a scientific sense by Reynolds is presumably meant as a complement to the better known moral sense postulated by Francis Hutcheson. It represents an intuitively guided surgical instrument for the discovery of *scientific truths* which correspond to an external reality. The scientific sense prefigures

25. *Treatise*, p. v.

science in that it is an intuitive instrument by which it is possible to act but not to represent. The artist of genius has an intuitive grasp of the principle he has discovered, his understanding of that principle constitutes the ability to use the principle, but cannot represent it. For this reason Garbett insists that the principle be discovered twice, if necessary across the space of centuries. The intuitively held principle, lying both hidden and for all to see in the particular configuration of visual signs as kneaded, hacked, painted or drawn into shapes by the artist of genius, has to be decoded, or, if you will, re-coded into words and precepts. That process makes the principle part of art-theory.

The implications of this immediately relegate the theory of art into a role that is supplementary to the artist; a role that is retrospective and merely affirmative. Genius on the other hand, finds new metaphysical paths and obstacles through which to channel experience. That particular way of doing dominates the work of art, becomes its focal point, its character. Theory maps this character by translating it into words and precepts. Theory conventionalises style and character; holds them up for all to understand and possess. Theory drowns genius by making its discoveries part of language. And language by virtue of its raison d'être, is communal. The purpose of language is to make the unique accessible. Artistic genius is allied to practice, the *quod significatur*, it is mute and proposes an hierarchical relationship between doing and saying by isolating itself until it is overcome and disseminated by theory. Artistic genius does not represent nature, instead it *does like nature does*, and this is Garbett's main precept for imitation, derived from Quatremère de Quincy and the Renaissance.

What does this say of Garbett's theory? Does he consider himself merely supplementary to genius? The answer is, of course, no, not in the least. By confining Genius to the mute act of perpetual penetration, by making it intuitive and

uncontrollable, Garbett's theory is not addressed to genius. The *Treatise* is an exhortation addressed to those who follow, those who afterwards live upon the achievements of genius as translated into precepts by the supplementary theorist. The main short-term purpose of Garbett's *Treatise* is to lift mediocrity a notch or two. That does not mean the *Treatise* cannot help genius on to its next act of penetration into the unknown. However, by declaring to have finally understood the meaning of Nature in terms of contemporary science, and by declaring to have grasped the causes of Greek and Gothic architecture, Garbett's theory does become a motive force for genius to climb higher, to a level of which the vague outlines have been discerned or at least predicted by Garbett. His understanding of nature's relationship to architecture, of the way the Greeks and the Gothicists looked at nature will finally exhaust their respective levels of principles and will force genius onto the next level of principles, causing a new architecture to arise. That architecture will, Garbett is sure, be based on the tensile style of construction.

Taste

'"Taste", he says....."er, taste is a thing....." (Well, I don't know what he said it was...), Diderot, *Rameau's Nephew.*

Within the dialectic of what has here been dubbed the mechanics of genius, taste represents an underlying logic, it is the judgement of genius:

Genius and taste, writes Sir Joshua Reynolds, *in their common acceptation, appear to be very nearly related; the difference lies only in this, that genius has super-added to it a habit or power of execution; or we may say, that taste, when this power is added, changes its name, and is called genius. They both, in the popular opinion, pretend to an entire exemption from the restraint of rules. It is supposed that their powers are intuitive; that under the name of genius great works are produced, and under the name of taste an exact judgement is given, without our knowing why, and without our being under the least obligation to reason, precept, or experience... One*

can scarce state these opinions without exposing their absurdity.[26]

Taste, when language has become fully mathematical, stands for nothing more than *the good*. The artistic genius wields a sense which perceives the structure of the world and acts upon it. Taste is the good which genius is able to broaden or refine when he grasps new principles. It is the theorist who later makes that broadening or refining of the good a part of general discourse. One could put the relationship Garbett perceives between principles, taste and genius in the following way. Taste the raw material, the perception of the good. Genius represents the agent by which taste is broadened or refined intuitively. Principles are the axioms of action, laws by which the good can be achieved. These principles are plucked from Nature by a process of intuition and then coded into norms by which the effect which genius has mastered intuitively can be reproduced systematically.

The implications for the concept of nature are that nature must be infinite in a finite sort of way: like a ladder, one dimension is finite and constant, the other is infinite and progressive. Genius, having depleted one level of principles, is forced onto ever higher levels. This combination of an infinite number of finite levels from which principles can be deduced, implies that there is progress in art, a form of teleological evolution, an inevitable movement towards ultimate perfection.

26.Reynolds (1907) p. 95.